



East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Open Spaces and Facilities Service Delivery Plan 2026 to 2027

Overview of the service

Open Spaces

To manage the Council's parks and open spaces to a high standard ensuring a welcoming, safe, clean and well-maintained environment.

Maintenance

To provide an efficient and cost-effective maintenance service for the Council's offices and other assets owned or leased.

Trees and woodlands

To manage the Council's tree stock to ensure it is safe, healthy, and continues to provide amenity and ecological value.

Open Spaces service

The Open Spaces strategy aims to ensure that the district's parks and open spaces reflect the shared vision of the council and its partners to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in East Cambridgeshire.

Parks and open spaces are important elements of all the district's community plan themes: living safely; living well; creating and sharing prosperity; learning achievement, leisure and excellent public services.

The service has the responsibility for the management, maintenance and development of approximately 68 hectares of public open space. The service is also responsible for the inspection and maintenance of 19 play areas. In addition, the service is responsible for the management and maintenance of approximately 26 miles of awarded watercourses and 11 closed churchyards.

Key functions and responsibilities

Grounds maintenance of all public open space, closed churchyards and the Council's 12 public car parks.

Award ditch maintenance controlling vegetation and removing silt deposits and debris to ensure the free flow of water to protect local land and properties from flooding.

Weekly inspections of play areas carrying out maintenance work as required.

Working with both Strategic Planning and Development Management and Legal Services on the adoption of public open space.

Maintenance Service

The maintenance service assists with the maintenance and repair of assets owned or leased by the Council, including the management and maintenance of 6 public toilets.

Key functions and responsibilities

Assist with the maintenance and repair of Council owned buildings.

Assist with the maintenance and repair of Council owned public footpaths, fencing and boundary walls.

Assist with the maintenance and repair of 2 Traveller's sites.

Cleaning and maintenance of the Council's 6 public toilets.

Installation, maintenance and repair of street nameplates and street furniture including benches, litter and dog bins.

Both the open spaces and the maintenance service provide support to Democratic Services during election periods through the delivery and collection of polling booths, putting out signage and assisting with the setting up of the count station.

Trees and Woodlands Service

The Council aims to ensure that the district's trees and woodlands implement the industry best management practices. This is to ensure that the Council tree stock continues to be safe, healthy and provide amenity and ecological value to the district.

Trees and woodlands form an essential part of the district's parks and open spaces, and are important elements of all the district's community plan themes.

The service has the responsibility for the inspection, recording, management and maintenance of approximately 5,000 individual trees and tree groups, some of which are located within the 11 closed churchyards. The service is also responsible for replacement tree planting and ensuring the councils tree stock is diverse in terms of age and species.

Key functions and responsibilities

Carry out a risk based regular inspection of Council tree stock (ideally every 18 months, in some cases more regular inspection required).

Record inspections and map trees on tree data system.

Maintaining or enhancing the tree population.

Facilitating the removal of dangerous or potentially hazardous trees.

Promoting biodiversity and conservation of the tree and woodland eco-system.

Conserving veteran trees with significant ecological, historical and amenity value.

Establishing a tree population with a balanced diversity of age class.

Key Partners

The open spaces and maintenance services work closely with other internal services and also with local organisations, community groups and other partners including those listed below:

- other local authorities include Cambridgeshire County Council, Ely City Council and parish councils
- other public bodies include the Environment Agency and Internal Drainage Boards
- other organisations include the Ely Society, Friends of Jubilee Gardens, Ely in Bloom committee, Ely Horticultural Society, Keep Britain Tidy, ROSPA, Victoria Green Open Space Group, Helping hands volunteer group, EARTH charities

Service objectives

To maintain the Council offices and other assets owned or leased.

To improve and develop the management and maintenance of public open spaces.

To ensure grass-cutting maintenance programmes are followed to provide a consistent and high-quality service.

To retain the Green Flag Award status for Jubilee Gardens and Country Park.

To improve and develop the management and maintenance of Award ditches to ensure the free flow of water

To involve users in the development of the Council's open spaces.

To ensure the Council's play areas provide a safe and secure environment.

Facilities Services

To ensure the Council's assets are legally compliant and fit for purpose, well maintained and managed cost effectively.

Key functions and responsibilities

Carry out inspections and testing to be compliant (legionella / fire / electrical testing examples).

Cleaning and maintain the Council's buildings.

Organise room booking and meeting arrangements.

Enforcing the Council's car park orders.

Manage the leases' and licences of third parties.

To maintain the Council's public toilets to ensure cleanliness and accessibility.

Cost of service

£1,724,000.00

Staffing Information

Open Spaces and Facilities

Open Spaces and Facilities Manager, Team Leader Parks and Open Spaces, Trees Officer, Health and Safety Officer (part time), Open Spaces and Facilities Administrative Assistant, Grounds Maintenance Operatives x 24 and Arborist x2.

Maintenance and caretaking

Caretakers (x2 part time), Maintenance Assistant, Public facilities cleaner (x6 part time), Office facilities cleaner (x10 part time) and Car Park Wardens (1 full time and 1 part time).

Forward planning for Councillors

Proposed item	Proposed date of decision	Committee
Asset update	Every meeting	Finance and Assets
Half year report 2026 to 2027	November 2026	Finance and Assets
Asset Management Plan	March 2027	Finance and Assets
End of year report 2026 to 2027	March 2027	Finance and Assets
Service Delivery Plan 2027 to 2028	March 2027	Finance and Assets

Open Spaces and Facilities Service Delivery Plan 2026 to 2027

This Service Delivery Plan describes what Open Spaces and Facilities service will be doing to deliver continuous improvement (service objective). Each performance measure relates to the Council's strategic outcomes and Corporate Plan 2023 to 2027.

Council's Strategic Outcome: Maintain sound finances. Improve systems and practices.

Open Spaces and Facilities' Strategic Objective: Maximise Council's income by offering services to partners/agencies as part of the Council's commercialism agenda.

Link to Corporate Plan: Sound financial management.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2025 to 2026	Owner and co-owners
Maximise the Council's income by offering services to partners / agencies as part of the Council's commercialism agenda	To maintain contact with all parishes and schools within Cambridgeshire, continuing to offer grounds maintenance/tree services.	Schools contract renewed, ongoing works for Parishes. The Trees Service is the largest growth area of the business with new school's annual tree inspections and works for National Trust sites.	Open Spaces and Facilities Manager Team Leader parks and Open Spaces Trees Officer

Council's Strategic Outcome: Customers are at the heart of everything we do.

Open Spaces and Facilities' Strategic Objective: Maintain ECDC assets to a safe, usable and legal standard for our customers' enjoyment.

Link to Corporate Plan: Sustainable Communities

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2025 to 2026	Owner and co-owners
Develop an Inclusive Open Spaces Strategy for East Cambridgeshire	Develop an Inclusive Open Spaces Strategy for East Cambridgeshire which will be informed by the Inclusive Play and Open Spaces Audit findings	Still awaiting final audit report for ECDC open spaces. Work due to commence on Strategy in spring 2026.	Open Spaces and Facilities Manager
Maintain ECDC Assets to a safe, usable, and legal standard for our customers' enjoyment	Ensure that ECDC buildings portfolio and assets are maintained to the correct legal standards through the Council's assets maintenance programme	As and when the service is advised of changes in leasing agreements, the adoption or purchase of new land, land sold or licenses of ECDC assets, the required legal obligations are adhered to through the Council's assets maintenance programme.	Open Spaces and Facilities Manager
Ensure that the Council's corporate risks are managed effectively and mitigations are put in place to reduce impact	To regularly review risks associated with Open Spaces and Facilities, including: - Emergency Planning - Business Continuity - Health and safety	Reviewed as necessary in Health & Safety Working Group and Officer Risk Management Group.	Open Spaces and Facilities Manager Health and Safety Officer

Council’s Strategic Outcome: A clean, green and attractive place.

Open Spaces and Facilities’ Strategic Objective: Retain Green Flag accreditation for the Country Park and Jubilee Garden. Wherever possible protect our environment keeping biodiversity at the forefront of our operations.

Link to Corporate Plan: Cleaner, greener East Cambridgeshire.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2025 – 2026	Owner and co-owners
Wherever possible protect our environment keeping Biodiversity at the forefront of our operations	Work with external partners, including The Wildlife Trust and Ely Wildlife Space, to support and protect the biodiversity of East Cambridgeshire. Activities will include ensuring rare plant species and animal habitats are protected	Habitat Management Plans for twenty of the Council’s public open spaces completed in conjunction with Wildlife trust. A workshop took place between grounds maintenance staff and Wildlife trust to understand the plans and their benefits.	Open Spaces and Facilities Manager Team Leader parks and Open Spaces Trees Officer
Use Green Flag grounds maintenance standards for all the districts parks and open spaces.	Ensure that Green flag standards are used across all parks and open spaces in the district Carry out monthly quality checks on public open spaces to ensure they meet the Green Flag standard. (Welcoming, clean, safe, free usable green space)	Monthly quality inspections completed.	Open Spaces and Facilities Manager Team Leader parks and Open Spaces Trees Officer Communities and Partnership Officer
Retain Green Flag accreditation for the Country Park and Jubilee Garden	Annually produce a desk top assessment for both the Country Park and Jubilee gardens, to be inspected annually by Green Flag judges.	Applications for 2026 completed and submitted on time.	Open Spaces and Facilities Manager Team Leader parks and Open Spaces Communities and Partnership Officer