

## 4.5 East of England Park

### Overview and Development Opportunities

**4.5.1.** The East of England Park was identified in the 2007 AAP Preferred Options. This identified the potential to create a major new contemporary park adjacent to the seafront walkway to celebrate the eastern most point of England and to provide a new cultural/events space for Lowestoft and connect to the existing, quality, public areas around the Ravine and to the historic High Street by way of the Scores. It would incorporate a neglected underutilised open space around the Birds Eye factory which contains fishing net drying racks that have high historical significance, and current industrial land around the eastern most point, further south.

**4.5.2.** The area to the north of the site is occupied by the North Dene's Caravan Site (currently vacant). Planning guidance for this area is set out in the Council's *Note on Implementation – North Dene's Caravan Site, September 2006*. This promotes the following development within this area:

- Static Caravan Park (immediately north of East of England Park);
- camping, touring and caravanning site, in conjunction with the static caravan area (north of The Ravine);
- Improved open space (remainder of site);
- Car parking (north eastern corner).

The plan advocates landscape improvements across the site. It will be important that these proposals are reflected in future plans for the East of England Park.

### Current Character

**4.5.3.** Located between the beachfront and Whapload Road, the site is characterised by underutilised and poorly maintained open space. The site also incorporates Ness Point, the most easterly place in the UK. A lack of east-west pedestrian connections, as well as impermeable industrial land uses to the south both contribute to the site being poorly integrated into the surrounding urban fabric.



Ness Point



Sea defences/view to OrbisEnergy from Ness Point



North Denes Open Space



Derelict tourism facilities, North Denes Caravan Park



Car parking adjacent to Ness Point



Sea defence and Birds Eye factory

### SSP5 - East of England Park – Proposals

The East of England Park will be created as a high quality landscaped area that celebrates its location as the most easterly point in the UK. The Park will seek to include the following features:

- Use of landscaping and public art to soften the visual impact of the Birds Eye factory;
- Cultural events field;
- Play facilities;
- Incorporation of historic net drying racks;
- Bold curving steps and ramps onto concrete promenade providing better access to the sea front;
- Better links to the historic High Street via the Scores and area to north including maritime museum and lighthouse;
- Use of high quality sculpture, lighting, banners to animate the seafront;
- Pavilion/café/orientation facilities at Ness Point;
- CCTV;
- Signage and wayfinding measures to integrate the park with the wider town;
- Integration with the North Dene's Caravan Park proposals;
- Provision of a landmark structure/sculpture to assist in the orientation of the site and Ness Point.

### Policy Links and Evidence Sources

- AAP Policies EMP 4, ENV1-5, FR1, WEW1-3;
- Great Yarmouth Borough and Waveney District Retail and Leisure Study (August 2006);
- Lowestoft URC Area Cultural Heritage Assessment (2006);
- Waveney Economic Regeneration Strategy 2008-2017 (March 2008);
- Note on Implementation – North Dene's Caravan Site (September 2006);
- Waveney Sustainable Communities Strategy.

### Alternative Options Considered

The Waveney Local Plan sought to balance employment and leisure uses, recognising both the potential for a high quality seafront park and the importance of employment uses to the south. In the Preferred Options AAP (January 2007), the East of England Park site boundary extended further south, incorporating employment uses associated with the Birdseye factory alongside proposals for a new park. This option has been discounted in favour of consolidating the proposed energy cluster at PowerPark and the leisure function of the East of England Park. Consequently, these employment uses are now incorporated within the PowerPark site or protected for employment use.

In assessing the preferred approach, the following alternatives have been considered:

- Option 1 – Preferred Option
- Option 2 – No policy

### Sustainability Appraisal Summary of the Preferred Option

	SSP 5 - East of England Park		
	Preferred Option	Previous Option	No Policy
Social	+	+	0
Environmental	+	+	0
Economic	+	?	0

**Social:** By enhancing an underutilised and poor quality open space, the preferred policy and previous policy will enhance the quality of the urban fabric for residents and increase opportunities for pursuing healthy lifestyles. By making the most of Ness Point, the park could provide a focus for community engagement and civic pride. In order to maximise their use and reduce fear of crime, open spaces should incorporate Secure By Design principles. Without a policy, there will be little impact on the identified shortage of high quality open spaces in Lowestoft. Moreover, an opportunity to improve Lowestoft's visitor offer may be missed.

Impact	
++	Major Positive
+	Minor Positive
-	Minor Negative
--	Major Negative
0	Neutral
?	Uncertain

**Environmental:** By retaining water and reducing runoff, the provision of a new high quality park may reduce vulnerability to climatic events. The proposals will conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of landscapes and townscapes. With no policy, there will be limited impact on this currently unattractive and underutilised space.

**Economic:** The proposals may enhance Lowestoft's visitor offer, bringing increased spending to the town and local businesses. By enhancing the setting of PowerPark, the East of England Park may improve investment prospects in the energy sector. The previous option involves a larger area of parkland, which may limit the growth potential of PowerPark.



Climbing wall, Blackpool



Climbing wall, Blackpool



Open space with integrated SUDs, Upton



Estuary Park, Merseyside



Wayfinding/Sculpture, Mile End



Pedestrian and cycle path



Image © 2010 Geomapping PLC Image © 2010 Terra Metrics

Figure 4.5.1 - East of England Park - Extent of site

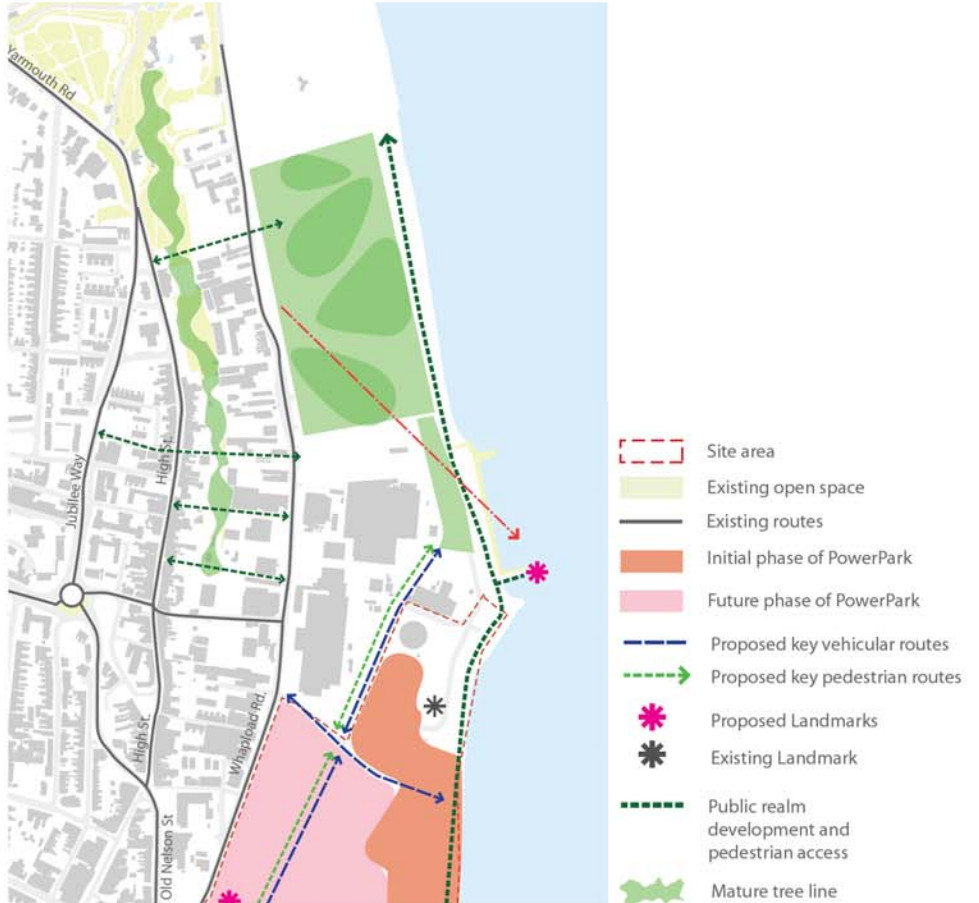


Figure 4.5.2 - East of England Park - Planning and Design Principles