



**STEPHENSON
HALLIDAY**

Planning, Landscape & Environment
an **RSK** company

TORBAY OPEN SPACE STUDY PART 3: PUBLIC OPEN SPACES



Final report
Prepared by Stephenson Halliday

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Document history

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 Torbay Council are in the process of reviewing and updating the Local Plan, working towards the new local plan *Torbay Local Plan Update: A Landscape to Thrive*. Torbay Council has commissioned Stephenson Halliday (an RSK Group company) to produce a Strategic Landscape Study to form part of the evidence base to support the Local Plan update and inform strategic planning decisions and policies related to land use, development and conservation.
- 1.1.2 The Strategic Landscape Study is an independent consultant's report, with the aim of providing expert knowledge and analysis to assist policy making. Torbay Council is not obligated to follow any specific recommendations.
- 1.1.3 The Strategic Landscape Study comprises four related studies that will provide a tool to understand the Torbay landscape and assist in monitoring and guide future landscape change. The studies are:
- Landscape Character Assessment for Torbay.
 - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (in two parts, for Residential and Commercial development and Wind and Solar development).
 - Open Space Study (this report, in three parts).
 - Review of Valued Landscapes.
- 1.1.4 The Open Space Study will provide an overview of the existing open spaces within Torbay, including:
- Part 1: Urban Landscape Protection Areas (ULPA).
 - Part 2: Local Green Spaces (LGS).
 - **Part 3: Public Open Spaces (POS) – this document.**
- 1.1.5 This study provides an analysis of the Public Open Spaces (POS) that are designated in the Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan¹. The overall aim is to understand what contribution these spaces make to the landscape of Torbay. This study does not address the criteria that are not related to landscape.
- 1.1.6 This is a separate study from the related Urban Landscape Protection Area (ULPA) and Public Open Space (POS) studies, but there will be some need to cross-reference with the other documents to understand the relationship between the POS (Neighbourhood Plan

¹ Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan Policy Document, Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Forum, Adopted June 2019

designations) and ULPAs (Torbay Local Plan designation) and LGS (Neighbourhood Plan designations) and where they overlap.

1.1.7 The study is aimed at the following user groups:

- Planning Officers (plan making and development management)
- Developers and their consultants.
- Neighbourhood Forums.
- Elected Members.

2 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies that “*access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change*”².
- 2.1.2 It also states that “*planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities...*”³.
- 2.1.3 The NPPF defines open space as “*all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity*”⁴.

2.2 Torbay Local Plan

- 2.2.1 There are various references to ‘open space’ within the Torbay Local Plan⁵, including protection of existing and creation of new open spaces. Section 4.4 of the Torbay Local Plan refers to the green infrastructure network. It identifies that this comprises interconnected open spaces with a variety of benefits, which link through urban spaces to the wider countryside.
- 2.2.2 Policy SS8 Natural Environment requires development to “*have regard to its environmental setting and...positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural assets and setting of the Bay*”. This includes maintain or restoring open spaces.
- 2.2.3 Policy SS9 Green Infrastructure seeks to “*protect and provide high quality green space at a local level*”. This includes delivering and enhancing existing open space as part of the wider green infrastructure network.
- 2.2.4 The justification for Policy SS11 Sustainable Communities identifies that open spaces contribute to the character of the area and should be considered in future development.
- 2.2.5 Policy C5 Urban Landscape Protection Areas identifies 57 areas of special landscape within the urban areas of Torbay and seeks to protect them as “*essential landscape features*”.

² NPPF – Paragraph 103, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, last updated 2024

³ NPPF – Paragraph 103, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, last updated 2024

⁴ NPPF Annex 2: Glossary, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, last updated 2024

⁵ Torbay Local Plan A Landscape for Success – The Plan for Torbay: 2012 to 2030, Torbay Council, December 2015 - <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/planning-policies/local-plan/local-plan/> - accessed January 2025

2.3 Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.3.1 Various policies and text within the Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan⁶ seek to preserve the open spaces within Brixham.
- 2.3.2 Policy E4: Local Green Spaces, identifies and protects Local Green Spaces as defined in the NPPF.
- 2.3.3 Policy E5: Public Open Spaces, seeks to protect Public Open Spaces from development. The justification for Policy E5 states that each site has been carefully selected according to criteria as specified in the NPPF⁷. These spaces have typically been designated to provide for sport and recreation, with links to wellbeing.
- 2.3.4 There are 26 Public Open Spaces (POS) designated within the Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan, under Policy E5 (shown in Figure 3.1).

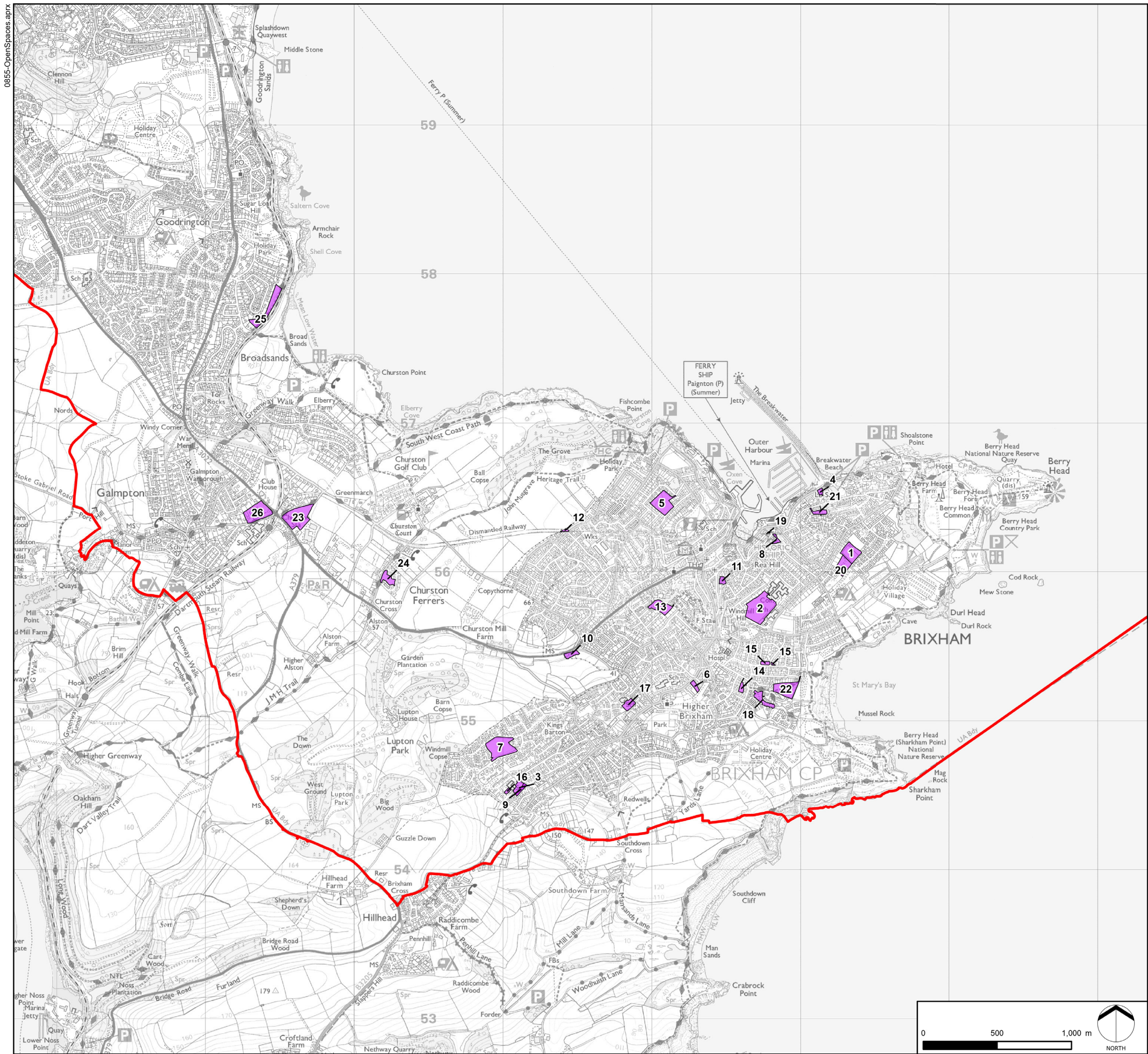
⁶ *Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan Policy Document*, Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Forum, 2019

⁷ Referencing *National Planning Policy Framework*, page 18, paras 73 and 74, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2012

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TORBAY STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE STUDY OPEN SPACE STUDY PART 3

FIGURE 3.1
Public Open Space - Brixham



KEY

Torbay Council Boundary

 Public Open Space (Brixham Neighbourhood Plan Policy Prefix E5)

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The purpose of this study is to understand the landscape qualities and contribution that each Public Open Space (POS) makes to the character of the landscape/townscape within which it is located. The study does not consider other purposes and features of the POS such as the provision of sport, recreation, biodiversity or cultural heritage.
- 3.1.2 It should be noted that Public Open Spaces (POS) are designated under Policy E5 in the Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan⁸. During this study, it has been noted that some of these spaces do not have public access. It is not the purpose of this study to determine if a POS should or should not be designated under Policy E5 of the Neighbourhood Plan, and this would be subject to further work.
- 3.1.3 The assessment has been carried out through a combination of desk study and field survey work. Initial assessment work was done through desk study, using aerial imagery, OS mapping and relevant documents. The analysis was then tested and confirmed at several locations through field survey by qualified and experienced landscape architects.
- 3.1.4 The study provides a high-level analysis of existing POS within Brixham Peninsula. It identifies the key landscape/townscape features of each of the POS, where applicable, as defined below:
- **Path:** Main pedestrian link(s) through the POS.
 - **Existing green link:** Identifies where there is existing connectivity between the POS and other green spaces or features.
 - **Potential green link:** Identifies where there is no existing connection, but potential for connectivity to be established between the POS and other green spaces or features.
 - **Access:** Public entrance point into the POS.
 - **Gateway:** A particularly notable feature that identifies the entrance to the POS.
 - **Node:** The focal/meeting point of the POS.
 - **Landmark:** An identifiable feature/object within or related to the POS.
 - **View:** Key view into / out of / across the POS.
- 3.1.5 A short description and inset maps illustrating the location of these key landscape/townscape features are provided for each of the POS in Section 4 of the report.
- 3.1.6 Where a potential green link has been identified, this is based upon the desk and field survey work carried out for the purposes of the study, in terms of potential visual and/or physical

⁸ Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan Policy Document, Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Forum, 2019

connectivity. In reality, it may not be achievable due to other considerations and practicalities.

4 ASSESSMENT

E5 – 1: Brixham AFC Football Ground - Haycock Ln



Description

Brixham AFC Football Ground is c.1 hectare in area and bordered by residential housing, Wall Park Allotments and an area of private land (rough grassland and pasture) to its northeast. The POS includes a football pitch with associated floodlighting, spectator viewing areas, hardstanding and a clubhouse. To the east of the POS is an area of trees and scrub. Access is via a single entry point from Wall Park Road. There is an existing green connection and access through to Wall Park Allotments, as well as a green link to the adjacent pasture fields. The rear of private gardens bounds the north-western boundary, adding further green links.

Analysis



E5 – 2: Brixham College Playing Fields



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Description

Brixham College Playing Fields is c.2.6 hectares and located within the school grounds and is located within ULPA C5.54. It is bordered by school buildings and residential streets and houses. The POS is an amenity grass area with multiple marked out sports pitches. There is one key access point via the school grounds on the northeastern edge. There are other gates within the security fencing, such as to the south-eastern boundary but limited public access. There are other areas of green space in the vicinity such as a sports pitch to the east, with some limited connectivity. Green links to this POS are more typically made through adjacent hedgerows associated with surrounding residential development and private rear gardens.

Analysis



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E5 – 3: Chestnut Heights School Playing Field

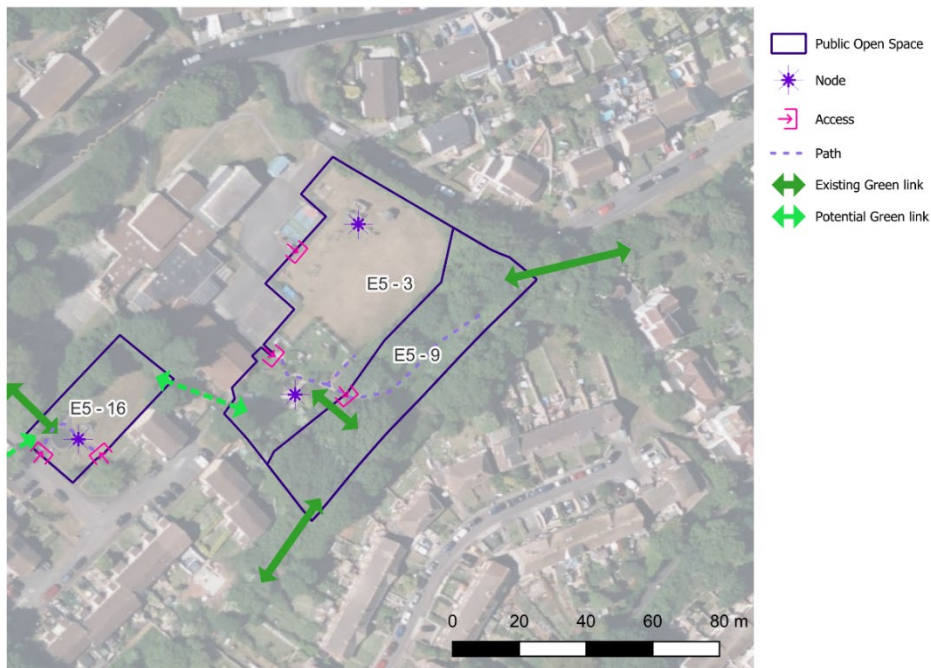


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Description

Chestnut Heights School Playing Field is located within Chestnut Heights School, with restricted access via the school grounds. It comprises amenity grassland with play equipment in the north-east; with a more naturalistic space incorporating elements such as benches, trees and linked paths to the south-west. The POS sits immediately north-west of Indigos Go Wild POS, and there are existing green links and paths between the two areas. There is substantial tree cover around the POS, which connects with the adjoining Indigos Go Wild POS and links southwest to the surrounding countryside.

Analysis



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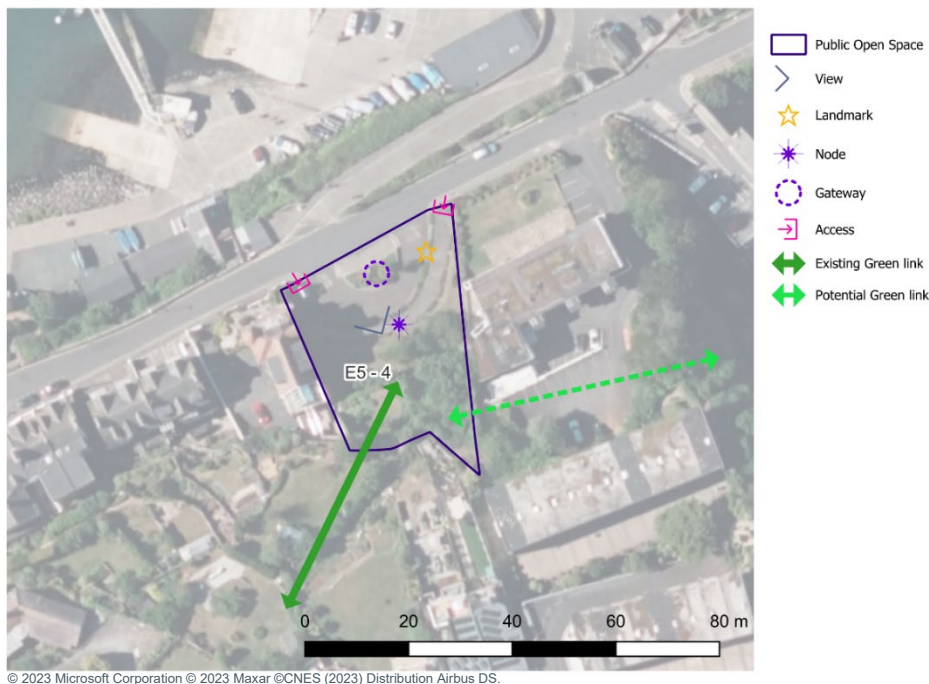
E5 – 4: Churchill Memorial Gardens



Description

Churchill Memorial Gardens is an area of formal planting with raised amenity grassland, with a crescent of benches from which there are views out to sea across Brixham Harbour. There are two larger trees and a variety of landscape plants. A memorial plaque and lettering are set into the wall, commemorating Sir Winston Churchill. The crescent at road level is used as a bus stop and layby/turning area; with the formal planting at this level forming a gateway to the POS; separating it from the adjacent Berry Head Road. There is some green connectivity south-west into private gardens, and potential to link east to the substantial vegetation around Brixham Marina car park.

Analysis



E5 – 5: Dixon Field Allotments



Description

Dixon Field Allotments is c.1.5 hectares and enclosed by housing on most sides. The POS comprises allotment areas, occasional small trees and shrubs, as well as some more established tree and shrub areas towards its centre. There are two access points to the POS, via Alma Road and Holborn Road; paths throughout the allotments enable access to each strip of land. A potential green link is available to the area of woodland to the north of The Close. Otherwise, the POS has limited green links to surrounding areas, comprising links to the rear gardens of surrounding properties.

Analysis



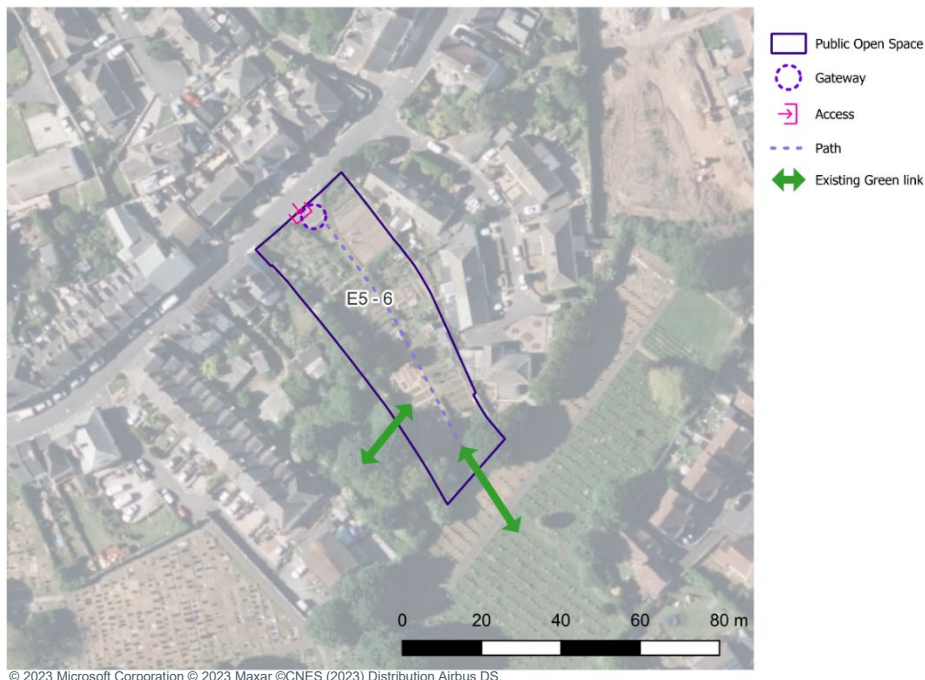
E5 – 6: Drew Street Allotments



Description

Drew Street Allotments is located and accessed off Drew Street, it is c 0.2 hectares in area. The access is flanked by stone walls, which form a gateway feature to the site, as well as enabling limited parking at the entrance. The POS is enclosed by housing on two borders and abuts a cemetery. It has green links to the cemetery to the south-east and a block of woodland to the south-west. A path runs centrally through the site enabling access to each allotment.

Analysis



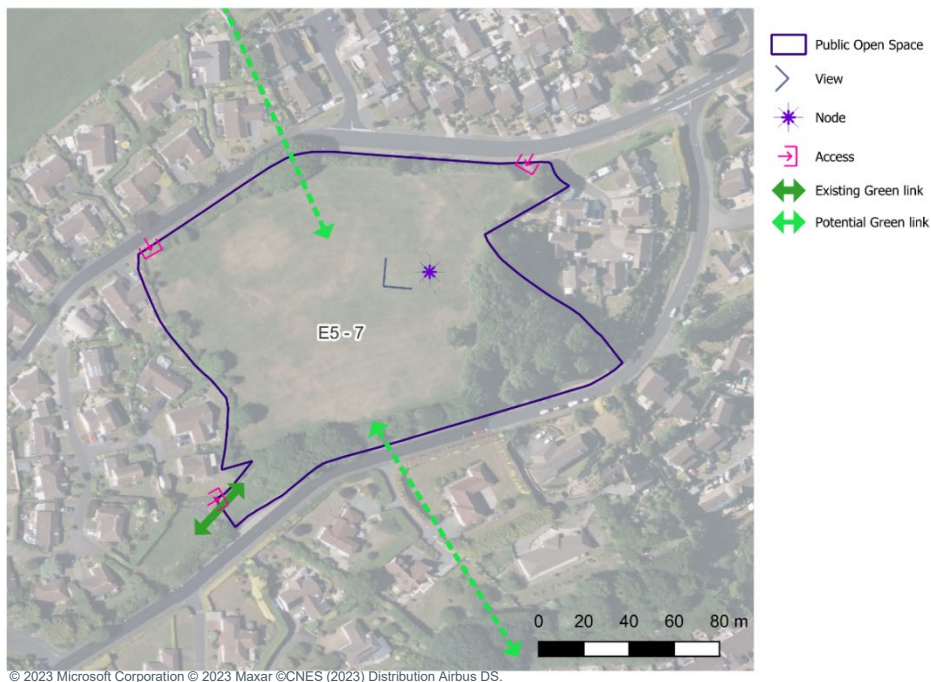
E5 – 7: Field off Summercourt Way



Description

The Field off Summercourt Way in Higher Brixham is a c.2 hectares open field surrounded by residential housing and roads, located within ULPA C5.57. It is an informal green space comprising amenity grassland with hedgerows and clusters of trees bordering the POS. There is a substantial block of trees in the east of the POS, connecting into the mature trees along the southern site boundary. There are three access points to the northern and south-western boundaries; the south-western access point is also the location of a green link to adjacent amenity grassland. There is the potential for a green link to be established from this POS to the countryside to the north, as well as to the block of woodland to the south.

Analysis



E5 – 8: Garlic Rea and North View Road



Description

Garlic Rea and North View Road forms a key pedestrian link between access points on North View Road and Garlic Rea; it is c. 0.1 hectares in area. The POS is surrounded by housing to the west and south; with a large block of woodland present to the east; providing green links. The green space is a mixture of amenity grassland and private garden space. The raised topography of the POS offers long-distance sea views throughout the space across Tor Bay.

Analysis



E5 – 9: Indigos Go Wild

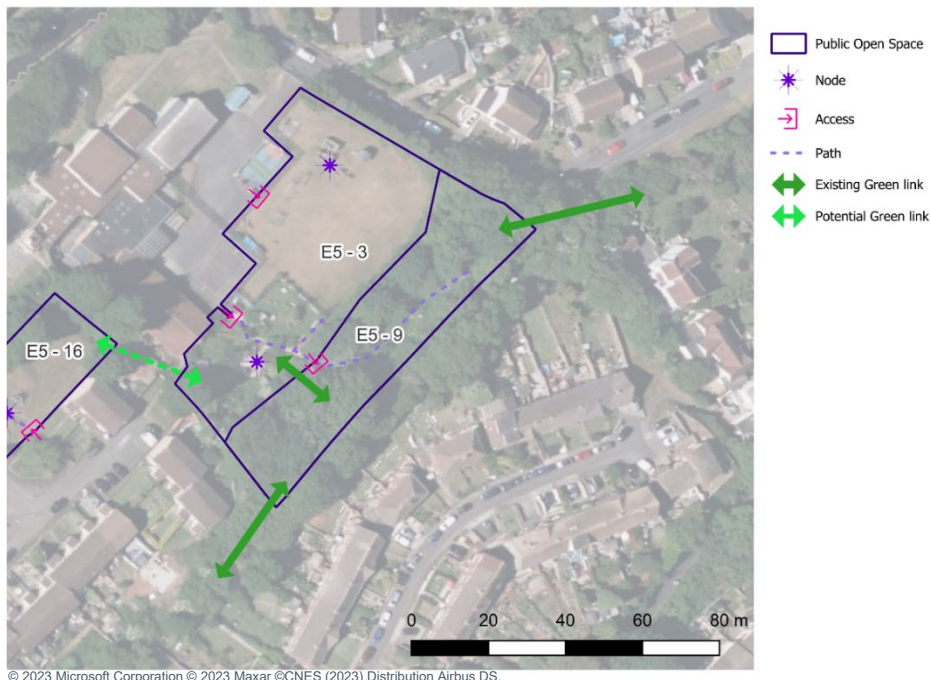


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Description

Indigos Go Wild is located between the Chestnut Heights School Playing Field POS and adjacent housing. It is a c. 0.1 hectares community adventure playground for natural play which also offers an educational centre and outdoor learning areas. The POS is largely wooded, with green links to surrounding tree belts to the north-east and south-west. Paths connect the amenities, and access is via the school grounds.

Analysis



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E5 – 10: Monksbridge Road Skate Park



Description

Monksbridge Road Skate Park is c.0.3 hectares in area and accessed via one entry point off Monksbridge Road, located within the South Devon National Landscape. The POS comprises a skate park, with adjacent areas of amenity grassland. The boundaries of the site comprise a mix of trees and shrubs which link to the surrounding countryside to the east, south and west. A path runs from the entrance to the skate equipment.

Analysis



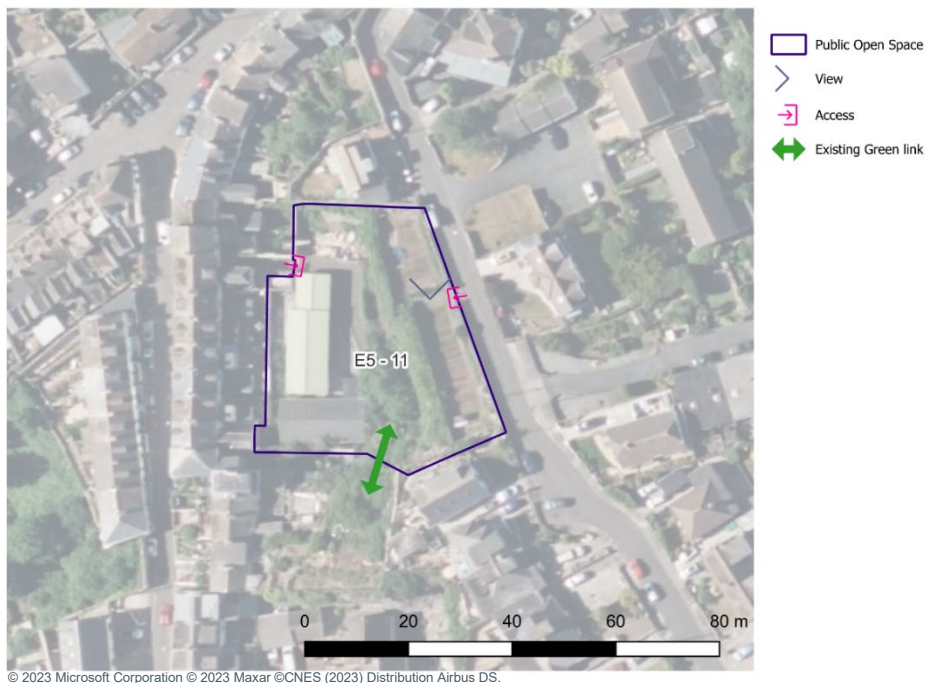
E5 – 11: Mount Pleasant Allotments



Description

Mount Pleasant Allotments is located between Windmill Hill and Mount Pleasant Road; the site is c.0.2 hectares in area. It comprises two halves which are separated by a level change and a hedgerow; to the east are allotments and to the west is a series of buildings and scrub vegetation. The eastern half is accessed from one point off Windmill Hill; whereas the western half is accessed through a gap in the ground floor of the terraced houses on Mount Pleasant Road. The east of the POS offers views north across Brixham and out to sea.

Analysis



E5 – 12: North Boundary Road Playpark



Description

North Boundary Road Playpark is c. 0.1 hectares in area and accessed from one point off North Boundary Road, located within the South Devon National Landscape. It is an informal green space with amenity grassland and playing equipment. The northern boundary of the POS is formed by a hedgerow with mature hedgerow trees and links to a wider hedgerow and tree belt to the north-west of the POS. There is the potential for a green link to be established between the site and the surrounding countryside to the north.

Analysis



E5 – 13: Parkham Field



Description

Parkham Field is a c.0.9 hectare informal green space comprising amenity grassland with some wooded areas, to the north and south-west, located within ULPA C5.53. The woodland encloses the site and provides a green link to surrounding woodland blocks. There is one access point to the POS via Parkham Lane.

Analysis



E5 – 14: Penn Meadows Allotments



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Description

Penn Meadows Allotments is enclosed by housing and is c. 0.2 hectares in area. There are two access points via Penn Lane and Briseham Road. A path links the two access points together and enables access to each allotment. The POS contains some small trees and has a green link to adjacent rear gardens.

Analysis



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E5 – 15: Penn Meadows extended green verges



Description

Penn Meadows Extended Green Verges is formed of two separate parcels of land that are separated by Edinburgh Road, which form part of the Adopted Highway. The POS is c.0.1 hectares in area and surrounded by housing. It comprises an informal green space comprising amenity grassland with individual street trees. The grassland areas are open and can be accessed via any point; they are bounded by pavements to the south and a path to the north.

Analysis



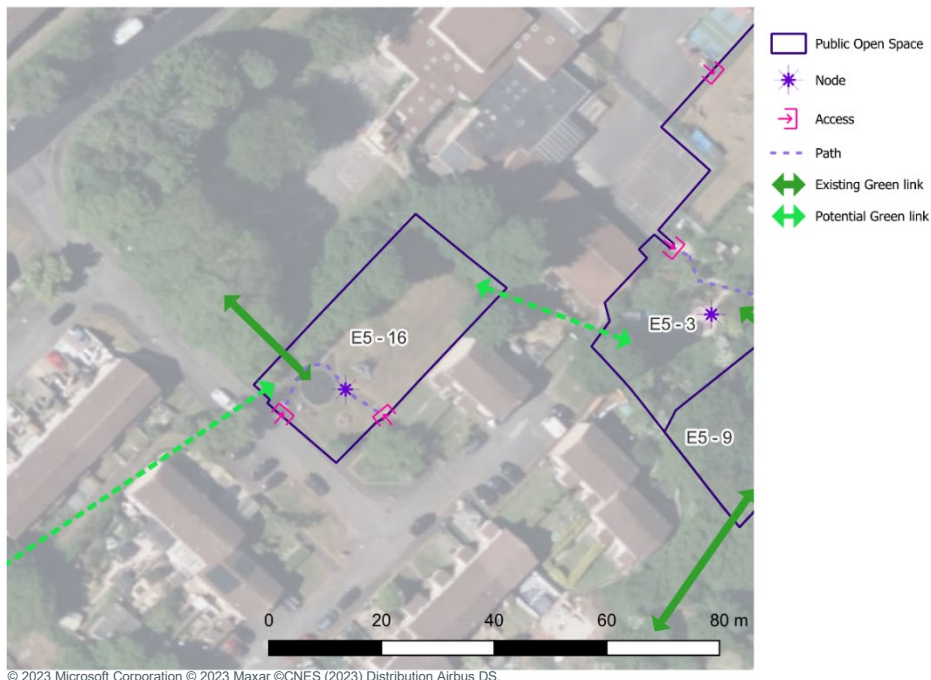
E5 – 16: Rowan Way Play Area



Description

Rowan Play Area is a c. 0.1 hectare informal green space with amenity grassland and playing equipment, bounded by mature trees to the north and west. There are two access points to the POS at its southern end. The POS is visually and physically connected to adjacent mature trees; with potential green links to the countryside to the south, and to E5 – 3 / E5 – 9 to the east.

Analysis



E5 – 17: St Margaret Clitheroe Primary School Playing Field

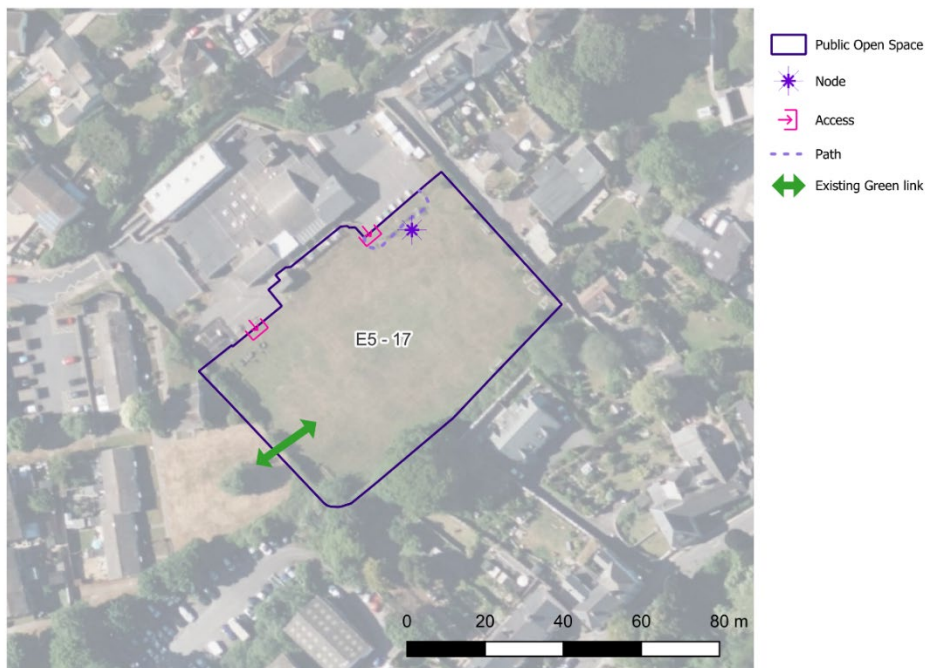


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Description

St Margaret Clitheroe Primary School Playing Field is accessed via school property from its northern boundary. It is an informal grass space with playing equipment such as a trim trail; this element forms a node within the space and there is a path between the elements. The POS is bounded by mature vegetation and there is a green link to the amenity grassland to the south-west.

Analysis



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E5 – 18: St Mary’s Hill Play Area



Description

St Mary’s Hill Play Area forms a c. 0.5 hectare green break in the surrounding housing. It is a formal green space comprising amenity grassland, blocks of ornamental shrubs, and trees, located within the South Devon National Landscape. There are multiple access points and paths through. Carved wooden sculptures form gateway features and landmarks within the green space. At the north point of the park there is children’s play equipment. The POS has an existing green link to St Mary’s Bay beach at its eastern end, which is described on interpretive and waymarking signage. Other green links are present to the north and the south-west of the POS to surrounding vegetation and woodland. There are glimpsed views to the surrounding countryside due to its elevated location, but no specific vistas or viewpoints.

Analysis



E5 – 19: Top of Queens Steps King Street



Description

Top of Queens Steps King Street is a small space of c. 160 square metres in area. The space itself is inaccessible due to surrounding stone walls. It provides a break in the surrounding housing to offer extensive elevated views over Brixham Harbour and the centre of Brixham. It is informal green space comprising amenity grassland and hedges.

Analysis



E5 – 20: Wall Park Allotments



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Description

Wall Park Allotments is adjacent to Brixham AFC POS and accessed via the grounds of the football club. The POS is c.0.9 hectares in area comprising allotments and a boundary of mature vegetation, located within the South Devon National Landscape. A path runs centrally through the site to provide access to each allotment. The POS has green links to the adjacent Brixham AFC POS, as well as the countryside and hedgerow network to the south.

Analysis



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E5 – 21: Washbourne Close Green



Description

Washbourne Close Green is enclosed by housing and c. 0.3 hectares in area. It is an informal green space comprising amenity grassland with hedgerows and mature trees bordering the POS. A path runs through the POS linking Washbourne Close to Heath Road, with the 2 access points for the POS found at either end of this path. The POS offers long views over Tor Bay and a bench within the space forms a node for enjoyment of these views. Private gardens adjacent to the POS offer some green links.

Analysis



E5 – 22: Wishings Field



Description

Wishings Field is enclosed to the north and south by housing and to the east by a holiday park. It is c.1.3 hectares of informal green space comprising rough grassland with scrub and mature trees, registered as a Village Green and partly located within the South Devon National Landscape. A path runs through the POS connecting St Marys Hill Road and Wishings Road; and desire lines are apparent within the rough grassland. There is an existing green link connecting the POS to St Marys Bay beach at its north-eastern and south-eastern extents, with green links to other mature trees to the western edge.

Analysis



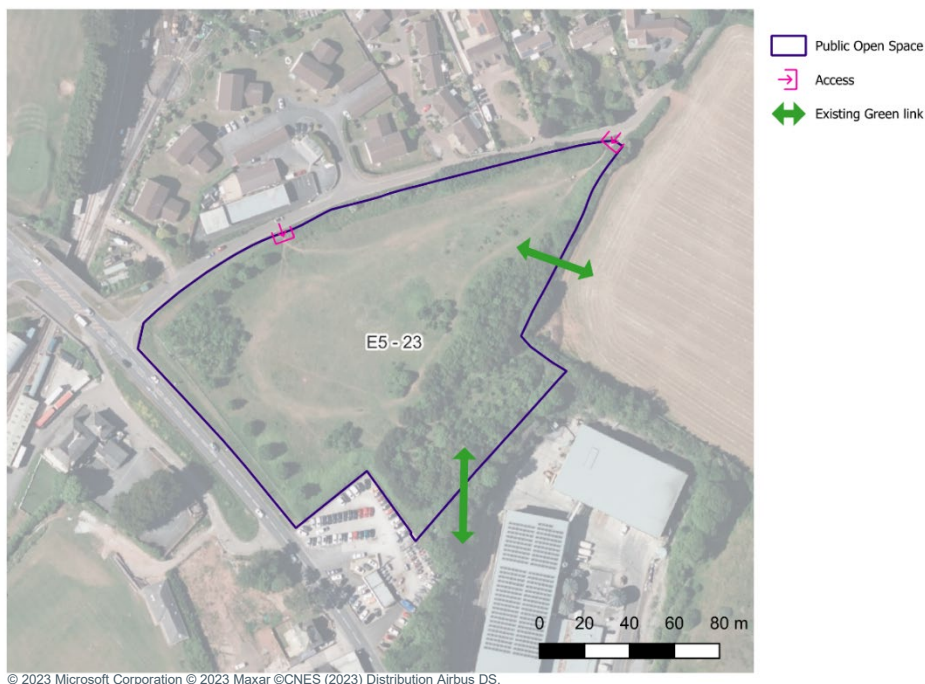
E5 – 23: Brokenbury Field



Description

Brokenbury Field is c.2.1 hectares of informal green space, comprising meadow grassland and scrub with clusters of small trees. There is a larger area of woodland and scrub to the south-east of the POS, with a tree clump also in the west. There are two access points – one at the far north-east and one from the northern boundary. The POS is crossed by a desire line which links the two access points, as well as a longer desire line which forms a loop around the space. The POS has green links to a woodland block to the south, as well as green links to the east to the surrounding countryside.

Analysis



E5 – 24: Ferrers Green



Description

Ferrers Green forms a green in between surrounding housing. It is an informal green space comprising amenity grassland with small clusters of and individual parkland trees. There is a node at the far north-west where a bench is present, and evidence of informal ball games within the space. The access points are located to the north-west, south-west and a more open access along the eastern boundary. There is a green link to the south to the surrounding countryside.

Analysis



E5 – 25: Field off Blue Waters Drive



Description

Field off Blue Waters Drive is c. 1.2 hectares in area, located between housing on the edge of Paignton and the coastline. It is an informal green space comprising of amenity grassland with clusters of scrub and trees. The South West Coastal Path runs through the site, with other paths connecting to Blue Waters Drive and providing desire lines through the POS. There is informal access to the POS from some of the adjacent rear gardens. The POS has a green link to adjacent farmland to the south, as well as a green link to the north along the route of the coast path. Much of the POS offers views across Torbay and out to sea. Benches form nodes and offer places to enjoy these views.

Analysis



E5 – 26: Galmpton Memorial Playing Fields



Description

Galmpton Memorial Playing Fields comprises a football pitch with a club house and outdoor seating; a tennis court is also located in the far north-west of the site. The POS is bordered on its north-western boundary by a combination of hedges and trees, with scattered tree clumps also present along the north-eastern boundary. Paths lead from the clubhouse to the edge of the football pitch and the dugouts. The POS is c. 1.5 hectares in area and has two access points on its southern boundary. There are potential green links to the nearby Churston Golf Club; otherwise, green links are restricted to adjacent rear gardens.

Analysis

