

2015 OPEN SPACE AUDIT - SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

To inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan (2014) and future Plans, the Council began an Open Space Review in 2011, with the first stage identifying the open spaces to be included in the LDP Proposals Maps. In response to the Scottish Planning Policy (2014) requirement for development plans to be based on up to date audits, the Council completed an open space audit in 2015. This audit assessed the distribution and quality of the open spaces identified in the Proposals Maps and will:

- inform the preparation of the next LDP, in terms of which open spaces could, after consultation with local communities, be removed from the LDP or identified for an alternative use
- contribute to the development of an Inverclyde Green Indicator by GCV Green Network Partnership

The audit could also potentially inform:

- funding proposals and projects which seek to enhance existing open spaces and/or create new spaces.
- the possible development of an Open Space Strategy, which would set quantity and quality standards for open space provision and establish clear policies and priorities for action.
- resource allocation within the Council, i.e. maintenance programming

This report provides background information on the audit, outlines its scope and the methodology used, summarises the findings and identifies possible future stages of the wider open space review.

Background

This audit meets a requirement set out in Scottish Planning Policy (2014) for development to be *“informed by relevant, up-to-date audits, strategies and action plans covering green infrastructure’s multiple functions, for example open space...”*.

In addition to the above, the data collected during the quality audit also supported the development of the Inverclyde Green Network Indicator, which is currently being finalised by the GCV Green Network Partnership. The development of this indicator, which was agreed by the Environment Delivery Group, will measure the extent of the functional delivery of a green network across the Inverclyde local authority area. It will also assess progress toward delivery of a comprehensive functional green network, which will provide multiple benefits to the people and the environment of Inverclyde, and contribute toward the delivery of the GCV Green Network and the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN). By providing a way of measuring and assessing the Green network, the GNI will also enable the contribution of the Green Network to Local outcomes 4 and 7 in the Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2017 to be measured for the first time.

Scope

The audit identifies the distribution of open space types across Inverclyde and within individual settlements. It covers the 11 typologies below, which are based on Planning Advice Note 65: Planning and Open Space:

- Natural/Semi-natural areas
- Green Corridors
- Public Parks and Gardens
- Residential amenity
- Amenity Other (includes both Transport and Business Amenity)
- Play Areas/MUGA’s
- Sports Areas
- Civic
- Allotments
- Institutions

It was decided, in consultation with the GCV Green Network Partnership, that quality assessments would be most appropriate to six key open spaces types; natural/semi natural areas, green corridors, residential amenity areas, public parks and gardens, Play Areas and MUGA’s. This approach is consistent with other Local Authorities within the Glasgow and Clyde Valley region and will allow the audit results to be comparable across the region.

While this report identifies trends in the distribution and quality of open space across the local authority area, individual settlements and typologies, it does not identify sites for enhancement works or those which should be removed from the next LDP. This will require quality standards to be set, along with a more in depth analysis of the individual spaces. It is expected that this level of analysis will be carried out during the preparation of the next LDP.

Methodology

The audit was largely based on the open space typologies and boundaries identified in Stage 1 of the Open Space Review. Where necessary, primary typologies were amended following site visits, while secondary uses were added to allow the multi-functional nature of some spaces to be recorded, i.e. a public park which also functions as a natural woodland.

Quality

The approach taken to the quality assessments was based on the need to allow:

- a consistent and, as far possible as possible, objective assessment of open space quality
- consistency with the approach and datasets of other local authorities within the GVC region.
- a simple, effective system capable of allowing a meaningful in-the-field assessment of quality without the need for lengthy site visits
- the identification of gaps in the distribution and quality of open space provision

In light of the above, it was decided to use the quality assessment sheets developed by the GCV Green Network Partnership, as these had already been used effectively by several local authorities within the region and would enable consistency across the area. The GNP's assessment sheets were tailored to each typology, with grouped criteria looking at issues such as 'access relative to function', 'supporting infrastructure', 'management and maintenance' and 'biodiversity and contribution to habitat network'. Numerical scoring was, with a scale typically structured from 1-5 with: 1=Failing, 2=Poor, 3=Acceptable, 4=Good, 5 = Excellent. Where necessary, the scoring was supplemented by notes. In addition, a photographic record was collected for all sites. All quality assessments were carried out on site and typically took 20mins to complete. This approach provided a clear, consistent and transparent assessment and a simple basis for future monitoring.

Findings

Distribution of Open Space

Table 1 and Diagram 1, below, provide a breakdown of open space distribution across Inverclyde. There are a total of 125 sites and 611.62ha, with 66.4% within settlements and 33.6% within the Greenbelt.

It should be noted that in order to accurately show the total amount of open space across Inverclyde, these figures do not include those sites which are within a wider open space. For example, play areas and MUGA's within Public parks and residential amenity area.

Table 1

Area	No. of Open Spaces	Land Area (ha)
Port Glasgow	30	86.48
Greenock	59	243.88
Gourock	10	42.13
Inverkip	6	8.54
Wemyss Bay	8	13.77
Kilmacolm	3	7.47
Quarriers	2	4.34
Total Settlements	118	406.61
Greenbelt	7	205.01
Total	125	611.61

Diagram 1

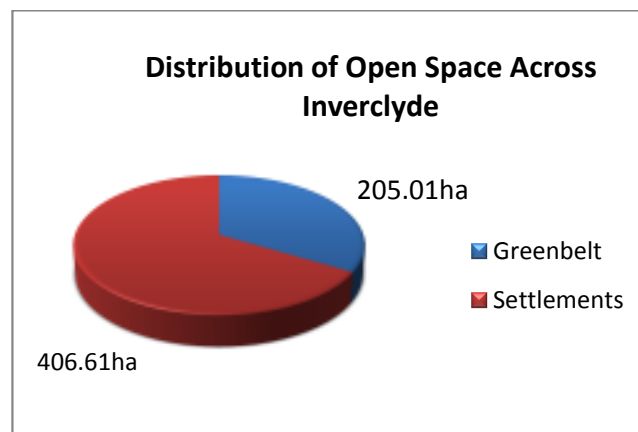


Diagram 2 shows the distribution of open space typologies within the greenbelt. It can be seen that sports areas account for the majority of the open space, with golf courses being the predominant sporting use. The natural areas within the greenbelt include designated natural heritage sites, i.e. Renfrewshire Heights SPA and SSSI.

In relation to the distribution of open space within settlements, while Table 1 showed that Greenock has significantly more sites and a much larger land area than any other settlement, Diagram 3, shows that both Quarriers and Port Glasgow have a greater provision of open space (including all open space types) per head of settlement population. It should be noted that the high provision of open space within Quarriers is largely attributed to the very low population in this settlement. Please see Appendix 1 for a detailed breakdown of open space provision within each settlement.

Diagram 2

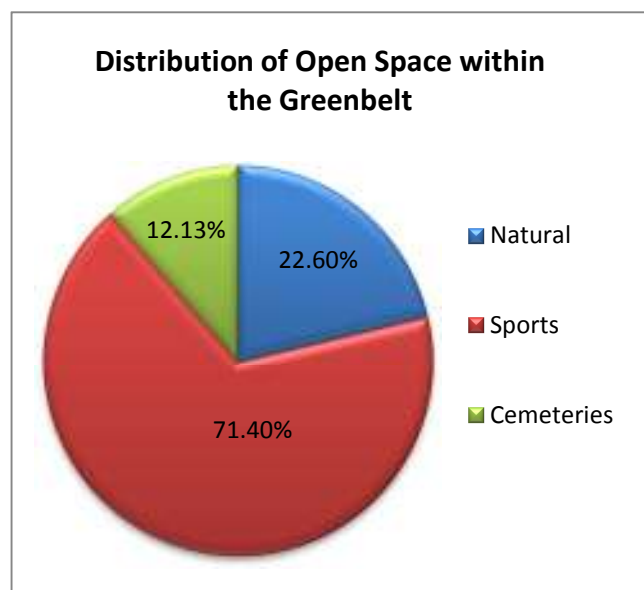


Diagram 3

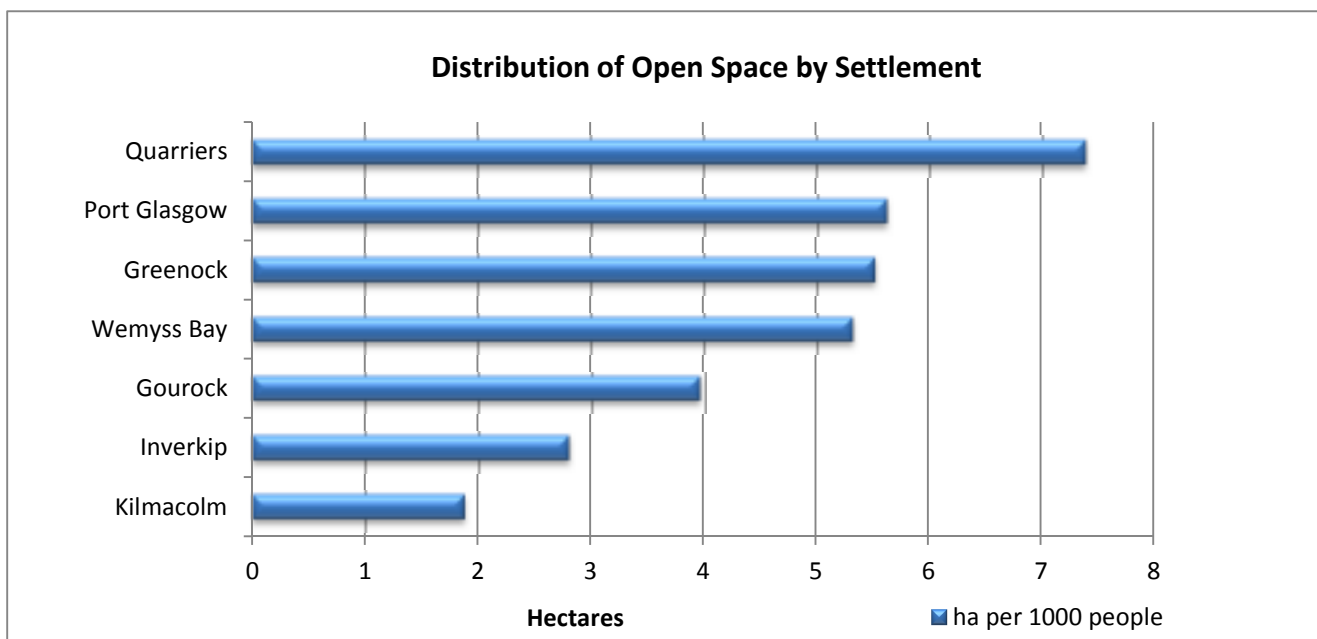
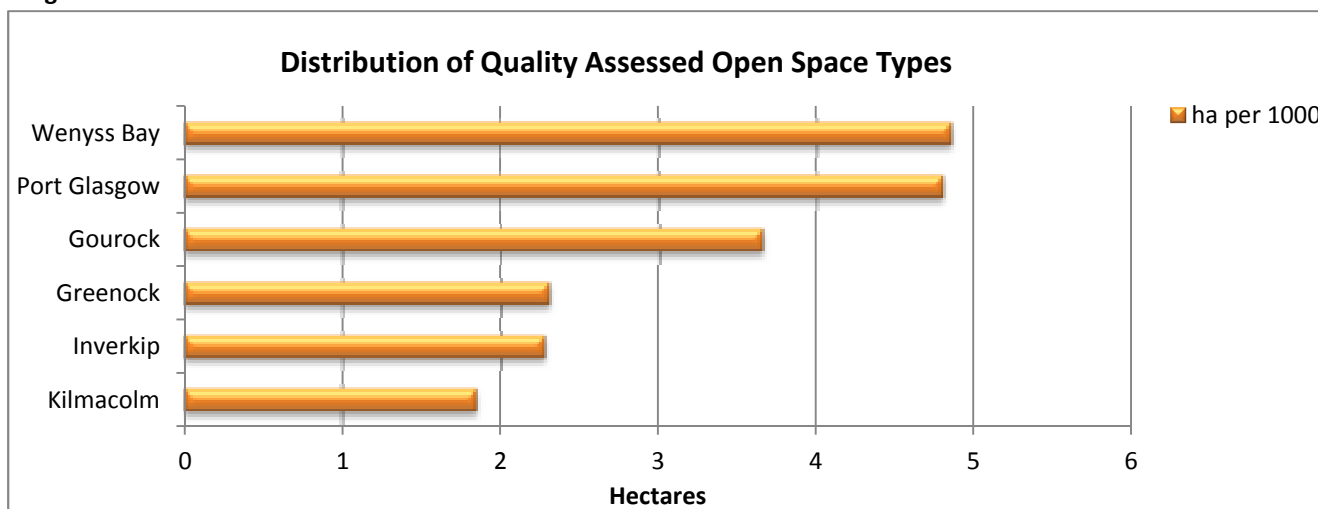


Diagram 4 shows the distribution of the five key open space types which were assessed for quality during the audit. Port Glasgow again has a high provision of these spaces, while Wemyss Bay moves above Greenock. It can also be seen that Inverkip and Kilmacolm have the lowest provision of all open space types and those assessed for quality.

Diagram 4



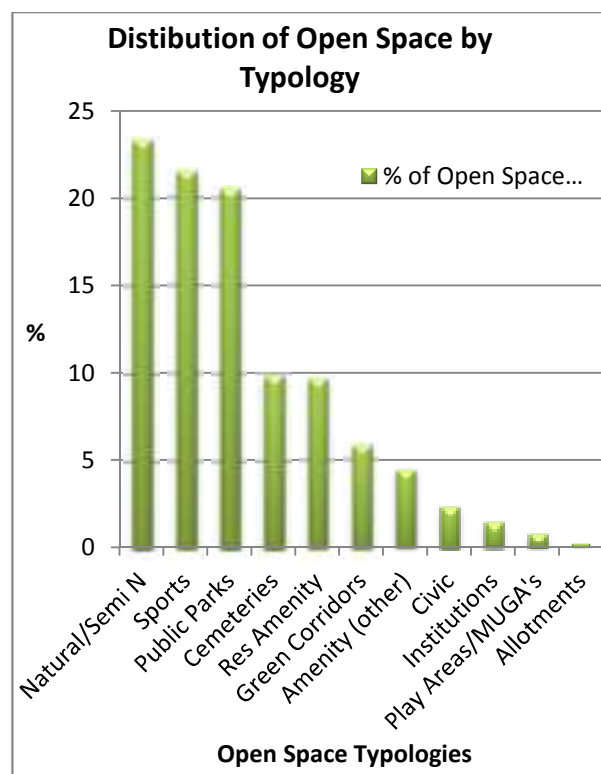
Open Space Distribution by Typology

Table 2 and Diagram 5 show the distribution of open space typologies across all settlements, with natural areas, sports areas, and public parks accounting for 65% of all open space.

Table 2

Typology	No. Sites	Land Area (ha)	% of Total Typology
Natural/Semi	21	95.23	23.3
Sports	14	88.02	21.5
Public Parks	14	84.03	20.5
Cemeteries	4	40.18	9.8
Res Amenity	28	39.3	9.6
Green Corridors	13	23.69	5.8
Amenity Other	14	17.98	4.4
Civic	3	9.57	2.3
Institutions	1	5.92	1.4
Play Areas	27	2.95	0.7
Allotments	2	1.16	0.2
MUGA's	5	0.28	0.06
Total	146	408.31	100

Diagram 5



Quality Assessment

While it is out with the scope of this report to analyse the individual scoring criteria for each site, this section provides an overview of open space quality across individual typologies and settlements. Please see Appendix 2 for a detailed breakdown of open space quality by typology.

Diagram 4 below shows the average quality score for each of the 6 typologies assessed during the audit. While play areas and MUGA's both have a high average score, significant differences in their scoring criteria mean that they cannot be directly compared with the other typologies, which should be considered as a separate group. Of the remaining typologies, public parks and gardens scores significantly higher (approx. 15%) than natural areas, green corridors and residential amenity areas.

Diagram 4

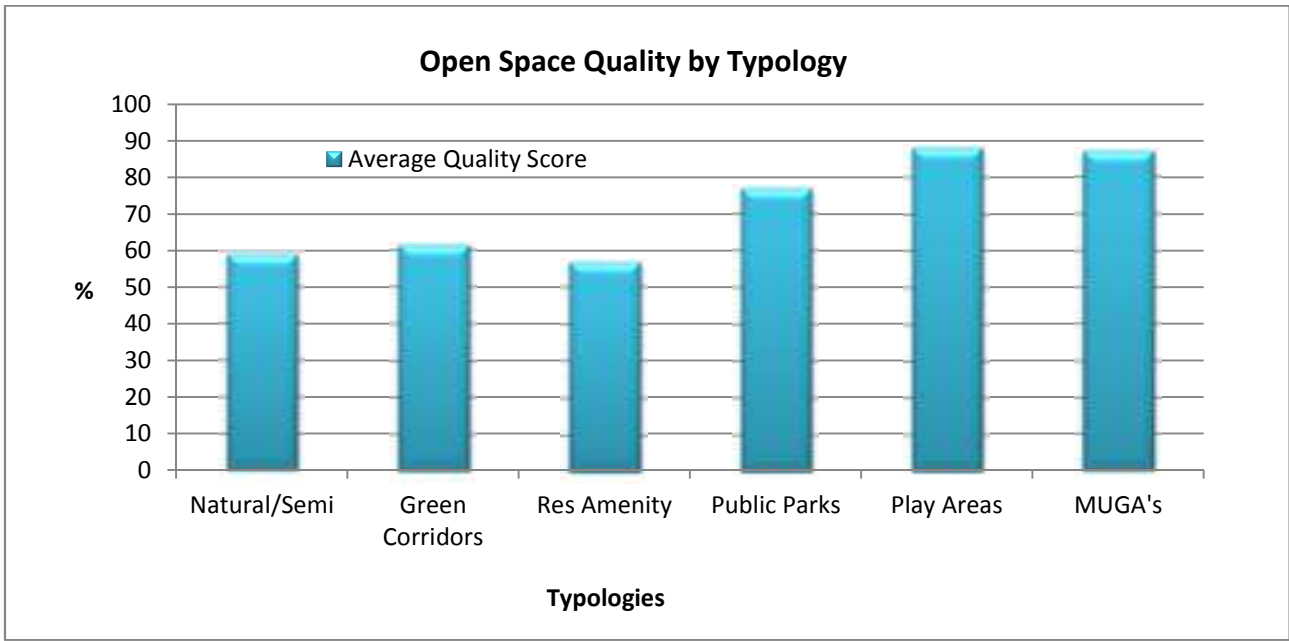
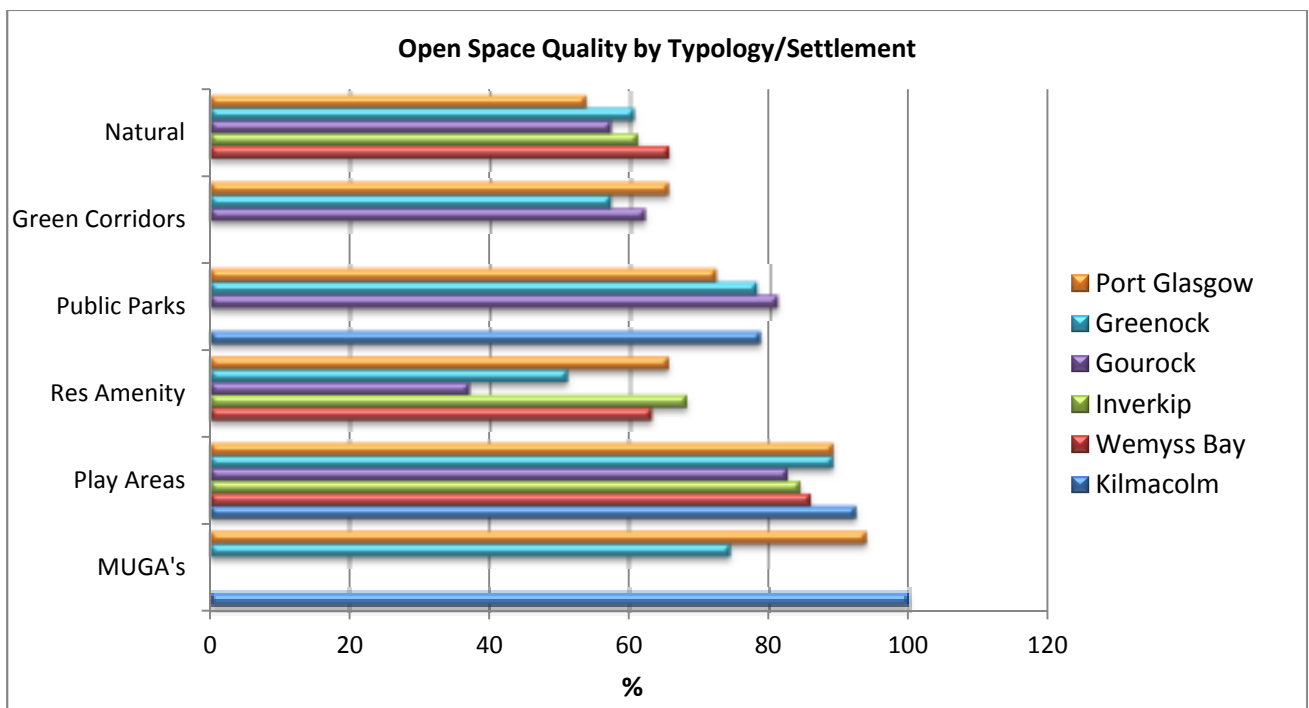


Diagram 5, below, shows how the quality of each typology varies across the 6 settlements. For natural spaces, green corridors, public parks and play areas, the variation between settlements is within 10%. Residential amenity has the highest variation, although it should be noted that the low score for Gourock relates to a single residential amenity space. With regard to MUGA's, there is a 15% variation between Kilmacolm and Greenock.

Diagram 5



Next Steps

Future stages of the Open Space Review should give consideration to the:

- collection of community views on current open space provision and aspirations for the future.
- development of standards for open space quantity and quality across the local authority area. This would enable robust assessment of whether the current open space provision, in terms of quantity and quality, is sufficient and, if necessary, where additional provision or site enhancements are required.
- constraints to the extent, type, quality, accessibility and connectivity of greenspaces
- Identification of investment/enhancements priorities
- Development of an Open Space Strategy

Appendix 1

The tables below show the breakdown of open space provision by settlement, including the number of sites, land area, percentage of typology area, ha per 1,000 people, and average quality score.

Port Glasgow

Typology	No. Sites	Land Area (ha)	% of Total Typology Area	ha per 1,000 population	Average Quality Score
Natural/Semi	5	26.35	27.6	1.7	53.6
Green Corridors	6	12.07	50.9	0.78	65.3
Res Amenity	9	15.03	38.2	0.97	65.4
Public Parks	4	21.03	25	1.36	72.2
Play Areas	6	0.39	13.2	0.02	89.2
MUGA's	2	0.05	17.8	0.003	94
Sports Areas	1	0.53	0.6	0.03	n/a
Cemeteries	1	6.8	16.9	0.44	n/a
Amenity Other	4	4.67	25.9	0.3	n/a
Total	38	86.92			

Greenock

Typology	No. Sites	Land Area (ha)	% of Total Typology Space Area	ha per 1,000 population	Average Quality Score
Natural/Semi	6	33.7	35.3	0.76	60.5
Green Corridors	6	9.43	39.8	0.21	57.1
Res Amenity	15	20.79	59.2	0.46	51
Public Parks	6	39.8	47.3	0.89	78
Play Areas	12	1.52	51.5	0.03	89.2
MUGA's	2	0.11	39.2	0.002	74.5
Sports Areas	10	81.94	93	1.85	n/a
Civic Spaces	2	6.3	65.8	0.14	n/a
Cemeteries	2	33.01	82.1	0.74	n/a
Amenity Other	7	11	61.1	0.24	
Allotments	2	1.16	100	0.02	n/a
Institutional	1	5.92	100	0.13	n/a
Total	71	244.68			

Gourock

Typology	No. Sites	Land Area (ha)	% of Total Typology Area	ha per 1,000 population	Average Quality Score
Natural/Semi	4	19.34	20.3	1.81	57.2
Green Corridors	1	2.19	9.2	0.2	62
Res Amenity	1	0.5	1.2	0.04	37
Public Parks	2	16.09	19.1	1.51	81
Play Areas	4	0.17	5.7	0.01	82.7
Civic Spaces	1	3.27	34.1	0.3	n/a
Amenity Other	1	0.74	4.11	0.06	n/a
Total	14	42.3			

Inverkip

Typology	No. Sites	Land Area (ha)	% of Total Typology Area	ha per 1,000 population	Average Quality Score
Natural/Semi	2	4.97	5.2	1.62	61
Res Amenity	1	1.29	3.2	0.42	68

Play Areas	2	0.7	23.7	0.22	84.5
Sports Areas	1	1.21	1.3	0.39	
Cemeteries	1	0.37	0.9	0.12	
Total	7	8.54			

Wemyss Bay

Typology	No. Sites	Land Area (ha)	% of Total Typology Area	ha per 1,000 population	Average Quality Score
Natural/Semi	4	10.87	11.4	4.19	65.5
Res Amenity	2	1.69	4.3	0.65	63
Play Areas	1	0.02	0.6	0.007	86
Amenity Other	1	1.21	6.7	0.46	n/a
Total	8	13.79			

Kilmacolm

Typology	No. Sites	Land Area (ha)	% of Total Typology Area	ha per 1,000 population	Average Quality Score
Public Parks	2	7.11	8.4	1.78	78.5
Play Areas	2	0.15	5	0.03	92.5
MUGA's	1	0.12	42.8	0.03	100
Amenity Other	1	0.36	0.8	0.09	
Total	6	7.74			

Quarriers

Typology	No. Sites	Land Area (ha)	% of Total Typology Area	ha per 1,000 population	Average Quality Score
Sports	2	4.34	4.9	7.3	

Appendix 2

The tables below provide a breakdown of each typology, showing the number of ha per 1,000 people in settlements and the average quality score, where appropriate.

Natural

Settlement	Area (ha) per 1,000 pop	Average Quality Score
Wemyss Bay	4.19	65.5
Gourock	1.81	57.2
Port Glasgow	1.7	53.6
Inverkip	1.62	61
Greenock	0.76	60.5

Green Corridors

Settlement	Area by 1,000 pop	Average Quality Score
Port Glasgow	0.78	65.3
Greenock	0.21	57.1
Gourock	0.2	62

Res Amenity

Settlement	Area by 1,000 pop	Average Quality Score
Port Glasgow	0.97	65.4
Wemyss Bay	0.65	63
Greenock	0.46	51
Inverkip	0.42	68
Gourock	0.04	37

Public Parks

Settlement	Area by 1,000 pop	Average Quality Score
Kilmacolm	1.78	78.5
Gourock	1.51	81
Port Glasgow	1.36	72.2
Greenock	0.89	78

Play Areas

Settlement	Area by 1,000 pop	Average Quality Score
Inverkip	0.22	84.5
Kilmacolm	0.03	92.5
Greenock	0.03	89.2
Port Glasgow	0.02	89.2
Gourock	0.01	82.7
Wemyss Bay	0.007	86

MUGA's

Settlement	Area by 1,000 pop	Average Quality Score
Kilmacolm	0.03	100
Port Glasgow	0.003	94
Greenock	0.002	74.5

Sports Areas

Settlement	Area by 1,000 pop
Quarriers	7.3
Greenock	1.85
Inverkip	0.39
Port Glasgow	0.03

Civic Areas

Settlement	Area by 1,000 pop
Gourock	0.3
Greenock	0.14

Cemeteries

Settlement	Area by 1,000 pop
Greenock	0.74
Port Glasgow	0.44
Inverkip	0.12

Other Amenity

Settlement	Area by 1,000 pop
Wemyss Bay	0.46
Port Glasgow	0.3
Greenock	0.24
Kilmacolm	0.09
Gourock	0.06

Allotments

Settlement	Area by 1,000 pop
Greenock	0.02

Institutions

Settlement	Area by 1,000 pop
Greenock	0.13

