

Ebbsfleet's Parks & Open Space // Design Criteria

The design criteria has been developed to guide the delivery of parks and open spaces within Ebbsfleet. The criteria pull together EDC's design standards and guidance for outdoor space within Ebbsfleet into a single place, to provide a brief for design teams, and an assessment checklist for Ebbsfleet's planning applications.

Ebbsfleet Parks programme

A total of 56 parks are proposed within Ebbsfleet and are categorised into the following types: City Parks, Local Parks, Neighbourhood Parks and Pocket Parks.

It is intended that the design criteria is applied to all parks that are at a Neighbourhood Park scale and above.

The design criteria is structured following the nine public realm health-check indicators established in Ebbsfleet's Public Realm Strategy, ensuring consistency with the reporting structure established at Ebbsfleet and allowing the criteria to easily translate into the formal reporting process.

1. Design with the Community	2. Walking, cycling and Public Transport	3. Identity and sense of place
4. Engaging the Community	5. Safety & Natural Surveillance	6. Safety & Natural Surveillance
7. Garden in the City	8. Water sensitive design	9. Responsive to microclimate & environment

1. Design with the community

Objective: Provide a platform for community engagement, reflecting the community, and inspiring residents to take ownership of their public spaces.

- 1.1 **Co-design:** Deliver a minimum of two co-design sessions with local residents to test the park design concepts as they emerge.
Stage 1: Develop the vision, and associated brief for the park with local residents
Stage 2: Agree concept proposals are in line with local ambition before detailed design with local residents.
- 1.2 Develop and deliver an events programme for the first 12-months of operation, to encourage community engagement, use, ownership and stewardship.
- 1.3 Include a water supply and electrical supply for all parks that are to hold events and identify any additional infrastructure needed to support the programmed activities and events. (e.g. power supplies and event pillars)

- 1.4 Review opportunities to include spaces to support local primary and secondary school sports and recreation programmes.
- 1.5 Parks should incorporate large, flexible spaces to accommodate a range of community events. (in particular at Local and City park scale)

2. Space for everyone

Objective: To ensure people of all ages and backgrounds are able to enjoy the space.

- 2.1 Local parks and City parks should provide an accessible toilet and a water fountain within the park, or within a community facility in close proximity to the park.
- 2.2 Neighbourhood, Local and City parks should identify a programme of activities and events to support communities come together. The programme should be informed by park typology and vision, taking into account feedback from community engagement, and the role of the park within the wider Ebbsfleet park network.
- 2.3 All parks should incorporate wayfinding, and using the specified furniture set out within the [Ebbsfleet wayfinding guidance](#).
- 2.4 All parks should undertake a dementia-friendly design audit at RIBA Stage 2, to ensure the park is designed to support those suffering from visual impairments, mobility issues, dementia, Alzheimer's or neurodiversity. Appropriate tools include the [Environment for Ageing and Dementia Design Assessment Toolkit R1](#)
- 2.5 All public spaces should include places to stop and rest.
- 2.6 All parks should be designed with all ages of the community in mind and a mix of quiet and active spaces should be provided, to promote the use of public realm by various users groups.

3. Easy to walk, cycle, and access public transport

Objective: Encourage people to choose to walk, cycle and use public transport rather than the car.

- 3.1 Provide cycle parking at entrances to parks, or at other key facilities within the park, and include space for scooters.
- 3.2 Incorporate cycle tracks within parks and open spaces to deliver the Ebbsfleet citywide cycle network.
- 3.3 Footpaths and cycle tracks should connect with wider sustainable travel and public transport networks, as set out in Ebbsfleet's Implementation Framework and Sustainable Travel Strategy.
- 3.4 Parks should be designed with the surrounding bus, cycle and pedestrian network in mind, e.g. locating entrances adjacent to bus stops and key desire lines.

4. People feel comfortable

Objective: The public realm must respond to the local micro-climate, mitigate air pollution and potential disturbance from excessive noise

- 4.1 Play should be integrated into natural surroundings and allow children to be within green spaces and enable water-play, away from adjacent roads.

- 4.2 Designs should identify areas of excessive shading, open exposure and significant wind exposure. Tree coverage should be provided to ensure areas of shade and shelter are created within the park, providing an escape from adverse weather conditions.
- 4.3 Planting should provide visual interest during all seasons to enable enjoyment of the space year round.
- 4.4 Noise pollution should be mitigated through the layout of the public realm, sufficient soft landscaping and the reduction of adjacent vehicle speeds.
- 4.5 Develop a comprehensive management and stewardship strategy for the park, encouraging the community to take ownership of the space.

5. People feel safe

Objective: People feel safe, secure using the streets and public spaces throughout the day.

- 5.1 Provide a good level of surveillance and lighting along primary footpaths, desire lines and to key facilities, preventing vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
- 5.2 Provide a robust material palette that is aligned with Ebbsfleet's Public Realm Strategy and considers long-term cost and maintenance.
- 5.3 Comply (or explain non-compliance) with Secured by Design requirements.

6. Places to meet exercise and play

Objective: People are able to meet, exercise and play within the public realm.

- 6.1 Review opportunities to include fitness trails, sensory gardens, meeting points, communal exercising spaces, and areas to sit and chat within the natural environment to support physical and mental wellbeing and reduce health inequalities in existing communities.
- 6.2 Local and City parks should aim to provide a disabled parking space adjacent to the park.
- 6.3 All parks should include adequate bins, street furniture and lighting aligned with the Ebbsfleet Public Realm Strategy.
- 6.4 Neighbourhood, Local and City parks should test the feasibility of including a café / pop-up refreshment provider within the park, increasing activation and surveillance.

7. Garden in the city

Objective: Parks and public realm to be filled by colourful and memorable planting that reflects each site's ecological health, fluctuating water levels and seasonal changes.

- 7.1 Use Ebbsfleet's Public Realm Strategy planting approaches to create a distinctive place in response to Ebbsfleet's design narrative, soil and climatic conditions. Drought tolerant or water loving planting palettes should be provided where appropriate.
- 7.2 Ensure all trees and planting comply with good practice relating to sizing, management and maintenance as set out in Ebbsfleet Public Realm Strategy.
- 7.3 Provide a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain within the area of the park (or explain non-compliance)

- 7.4 Consider embodied and operational carbon emissions when developing the design, materials specification, construction, and long-term maintenance of parks. (preferably through RICS whole lifecycle carbon modelling approach).
- 7.5 Provide shelter and shade within every park to limit the exposure from harsh winds and direct sunlight. Specifically look to provide shade to play areas and seating areas.
- 7.6 Biosecurity and climate resilience should be considered in the choice of planting.

8. Water sensitive design

Objective: Surface water is sustainably managed by rain gardens, planting and retention areas.

- 8.1 Demonstrate how the neighbourhood water system has been considered, and how the parks can use sustainable urban drainage systems that integrate with the neighbourhood drainage system.
- 8.2 Demonstrate how water retention measures and opportunities for water re-use have been considered, and where they have been included.
- 8.3 Review opportunities to improve water quality and include water-play within the park, either as part of a formal playground, or as a natural play facility.
- 8.4 Support the water management and flood resilience of the surrounding area by using water sensitive urban design (see page 51 of Implementation Framework for more details).

9. Characterful places

Objective: The public realm celebrates Ebbsfleet's history and cultural heritage to create a local sense of place.

- 9.1 Use the landscape character and materiality of Ebbsfleet to reinforce the local distinctiveness and identity of the park, and to create a sense of place and encourage a sense of belonging and pride for residents. See Public Realm Strategy Landscape characters and materials sections for more info.
- 9.2 Retain and utilise existing features that reflect and enhance the existing landscape character.
- 9.3 Utilise waste materials donated from construction sites to help reduce construction waste, where possible.
- 9.4 Embed public art within the design of parks and public realm, including wayfinding, furniture, paving, lighting, landscaping etc. as well as standalone pieces designed to creatively interpret the site's local history, culturally significant moments and contemporary culture.
- 9.5 Include reference to the edible Ebbsfleet initiative, by providing edible species of plants. (e.g. fruiting trees, herbs, seasonal vegetables, brambles etc) to encourage 'grown your own'.
- 9.6 Use Ebbsfleet's Public Realm Strategy planting approaches to create a distinctive place in response to Ebbsfleet's climatic and soil conditions.