

Summary of North Felixstowe Citizens Panel – Workshop 2

Held on:
18th March 2024

Present

Name	Inits.	Company	Inits.
Jeni Watts	JW	East Suffolk Council	ESC
James Goldberg	JG	East Suffolk Council	ESC
Tom Shopland	TS	LDA Design	LDA
Seb Burchell	SB	LDA Design	LDA
Judith Sykes	JS	Expedition Engineering	EE
Jane Healey	JH	Transition Woodbridge	TW
Tom Evans	TE	LDA Design	LDA
Ian Houlston	IH	LDA Design	LDA
Citizens Panel	CP		

Introduction:

The topic of Workshop 2 was to address environmental concerns specific to the topic of green and blue infrastructure and explore opportunities to make the new community more accessible and resilient through the use of nature-based solutions.

The plan for this workshop was to hear from guest speakers from the appointed team appointed by the Council in the first half and then after the break to have an activity to harvest the Citizens Panel's recommendations about the use and look/feel of natural spaces around the site.

The session opened with the Citizen's Panel sharing its reflections from visiting the site and their hopes for the place in the future.

Responses included:

- Retain beautiful vistas from the site, including the view towards the River Deben.
- To take grandchildren to make dens in the Grove - it will need lots more space with the increase in the local population and number of people using the woodland.
- Please do not remove the three oaks trees on the bridleway (Hyem's Lane). They are very special to many of us (and our families) and contain a variety of habitats including for skylarks.
- By comparison to Trelawny Estate, this masterplan must be 100 times better in its consideration for street trees and open space.

Work done since previous workshop:

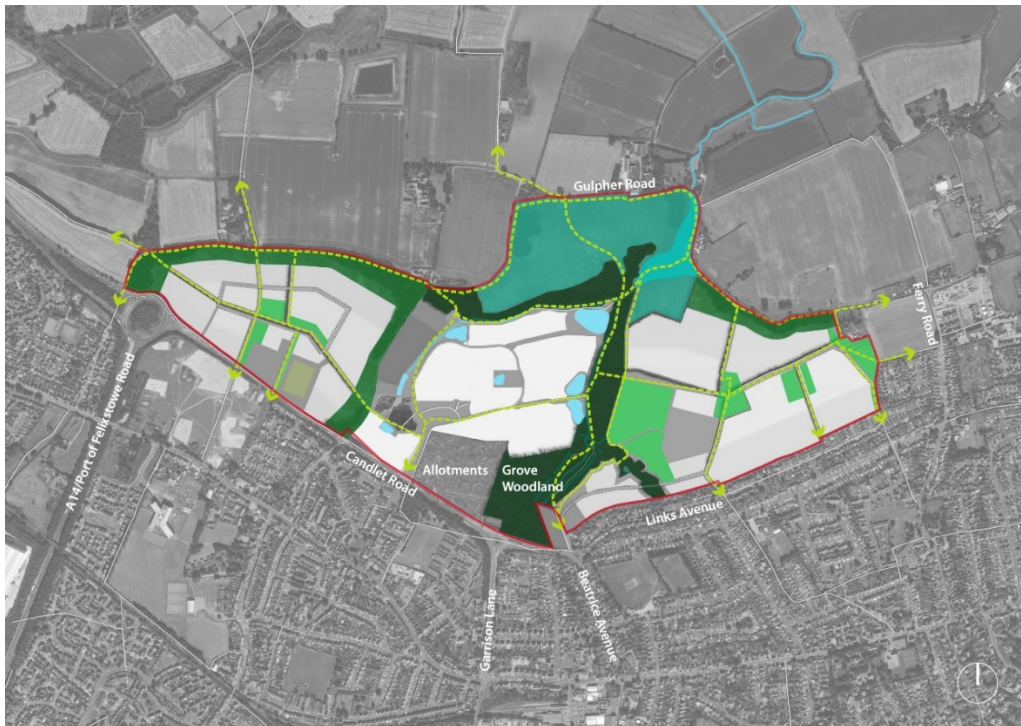
A summary of questions and answers from Workshop 1: A common starting point, had been created where outstanding questions have been answered by experts in different council departments. This summary has been sent around to the Citizens Panel and will be uploaded to the website. The use of planning and technical terminology was highlighted in Workshop 1 as a concern to the group, and therefore we have created a glossary of terminology and definitions relevant to the topic of the session.

We have invited guest speakers (as requested by the Citizens Panel) from the Highways consultants and the Local Authority's Planning team for Workshop 3. The council's leisure team will also explore the 'leisure-led' narrative in Workshop 3.

Overview of presentations from guest speakers:

- SB gave a presentation on how the Citizens Panel can influence the key green and blue infrastructure elements of the masterplan.
- He added that LDA Design has engaged with stakeholders, collaborated with other consultants and reviewed relevant policy to inform the high-level green and blue infrastructure strategy.
- SB then clarified that the objective of the workshop was to present the green and blue infrastructure proposals and to then receive the Citizens Panel's reactions and feedback.
- Judith Sykes discussed the environmental challenges and the sustainability/regenerative strategy that has informed the design so far, including water stress and how developments can respond to the raised global average temperature of 1.5 degrees.
- Ian Houlston and Tom Evans from LDA Design then presented the concepts of multi-functionality, grey infrastructure and green and blue infrastructure which is the focus of this workshop.
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- Next, they covered the work that has been carried out to-date with stakeholders and technical experts to develop a green and blue infrastructure concept plan and masterplan framework.
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- TE provided an overview of the 5 key moves for green and blue spaces proposed in the framework.
 1. **The Grove Woodland:** The most significant area of biodiversity on the site. It is proposed that the woodland habitats are protected and extended north creating an ecological corridor along the stream on a south to north axis through the site.
 2. **The Meadows:** A key open space proposed on the northern edge of the site. A mix of grassland, wetland, scrub and pockets of woodland are proposed that will enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, and store water. Policy requires the project provides "suitable alternative natural greenspace" (SANG) – and The Meadows will make an important contribution to this.
 3. **Landscape edges and green buffers:** These buffers are proposed along the northern edge of the site to provide a natural transition to the countryside and designated Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape to the north. It is proposed that that the buffers incorporate woodland planting to help integrate the development into the landscape through views towards buildings from locations to the north of the site. This planting will also benefit biodiversity and contribute towards carbon storage and urban cooling.
 4. **Strategic greenways:** These green corridors will run through the built-up areas of the development and allow for safe, attractive, and direct movement for pedestrians and cyclists between destinations. The alignments are based on the location of existing green infrastructure, as well as the alignment of Public Rights of Way. The corridors will incorporate retained trees and hedgerows and new planting to support biodiversity, urban cooling and sequester and store carbon.

5. **Public parks and green spaces:** A variety of accessible green spaces including parks, sports pitches, and space for growing food will be integrated into the new neighbourhood. Key spaces will be located at the heart of the community, where routes meet one another. The existing Eastward Ho pitches will be reprovided in broadly the same location and new artificial sports pitches will be provided at the leisure centre.



- Jane Healey discussed how Transition Woodbridge have been addressing environmental concerns locally through community action and the stewardship of unloved places. Projects include community orchards, mini nature reserves on street corners, food growing in public spaces and food forests. Projects are self-funded through raffles and fundraising for residents to build a sense of community ownership and overall place improvements.

Clarification questions to guest speakers

- **Trelawney Place is already being constructed; how will green connections be provided across the new neighbourhood given the limitations of this development?**

Answer from LDA Design: Providing green connections between the east and west parts of the new neighbourhood will be a challenge. However, the proposals will make the most of the opportunity to establish a strong green corridor along the northern edge of the site, where the existing woodland has been retained (and will be extended) and where a key strategic east-west footpath has been provided. The proposals also link into the key east-west footpath that runs through the southern part of the Trelawney Place development.

- **Why is there no green buffer on the southern edge of the site?**

Answer from TE: The high-level framework plan only shows the largest green buffers that will be provided in the new neighbourhood e.g. those located on the northern edge of the site which are there to respond to the sensitivities of the adjacent National Landscape/countryside. Although the framework plan doesn't show any green buffers on the southern edge of the site, smaller scale green spaces or corridors may be provided in these locations once the scheme is worked up in more detail. Where housing is provided, it will be orientated to ensure there is an appropriate relationship with the adjacent properties, e.g. by providing gardens up against existing gardens. This is a detail that can be controlled through the Design Code.

- **How will the allotments work with the new neighbourhood?**

Discussed internally by the Citizens Panel: The allotments have security issues relating to the lack of perimeter fencing meaning people can access the site.

Answer from LDA Design: We will establish a better understanding of how the allotments are used including informal access to them. The current framework plan assumes there will be no strategic footpaths running through the allotments. The framework also assumes Candlet Road and the new footpaths running through the Trelawny Place development, will deliver the key east-west movement corridors through the neighbourhood.

- **How will different portions of the site (east/west) connect and where will the main access points be for the three parts?**

Answer from LDA Design: The main vehicular access to the Trinity site (west) is proposed via a fourth arm to the new roundabout on Candlet Road that will serve the Walton North development. Persimmon already have an existing vehicular access point from Candlet Road. The main vehicular access to the eastern part of the scheme is proposed via the existing Grove Road access. Key pedestrian and cycle links between the east and west parts of the new neighbourhood will be provided via routes linking into the key Trelawny Place routes, as well as via new routes to the north and via an improved Candlet Road. Access and road infrastructure will be covered in the next workshop.

CP comment: Candlet Road will be very important to address. It is very unattractive for pedestrians. We would like it to be more walkable. It is the main road into the town and old Felixstowe so making it a 'quiet street' would be very difficult. We have lost lots of trees on Candlet Road and have been burnt by two previous developments where they have not been sympathetic to our need for them to keep their promises.

Answer from LDA Design: The proposals will seek to make Candlet Road more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists and to make it feel more like a main street than a car-dominated road.

- **Concern about losing views outwards from the Northwest of Eastward Ho pitches**

Answer from LDA Design: We have undertaken visual analysis and would welcome the Citizens Panel to advise the design team of particular viewpoints on the maps, and why they are valued for further consideration.

- **Will Gulpher Road stay a quiet road? – question answered after the session**

Answer from LDA Design: The intention is that Gulpher Road will remain a quiet lane, whilst providing an important and attractive strategic pedestrian and cycle route along the northern edge of the new neighbourhood. The vehicular access points into the new neighbourhood shown in the framework plan all avoid Gulpher Road.

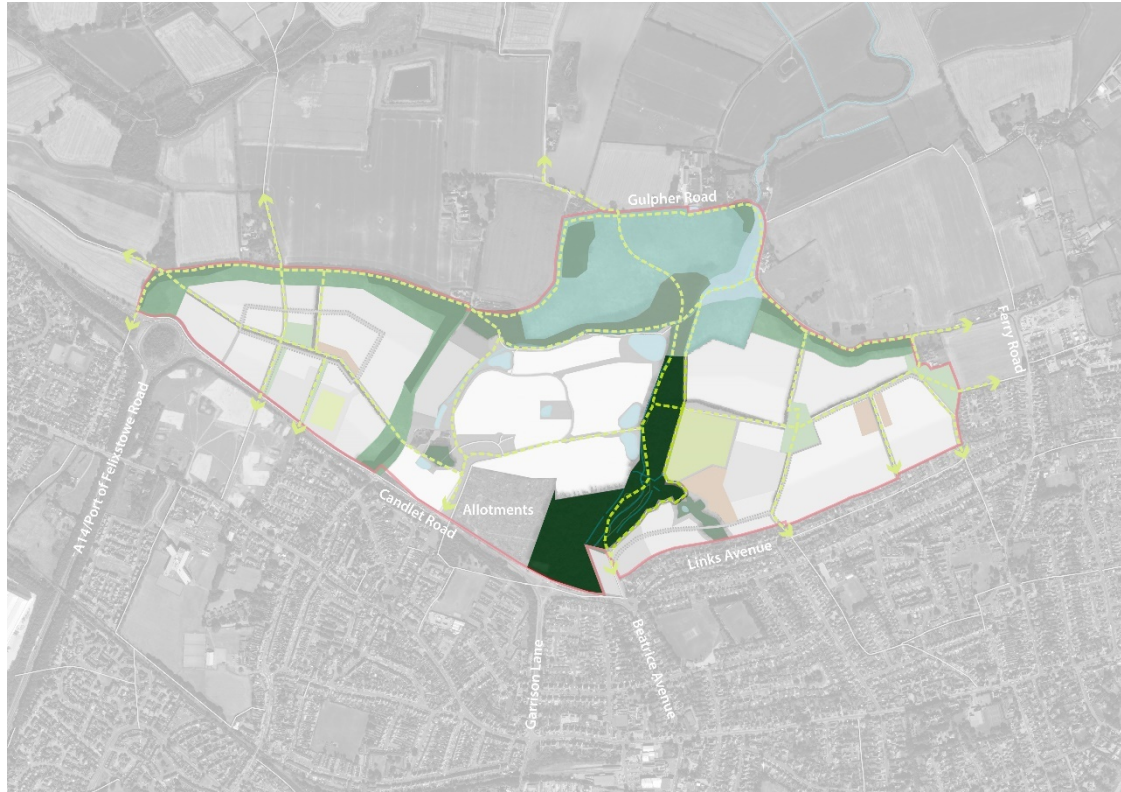
Comfort break

During the break, the Citizens Panel had the opportunity to pin up pictures and share reflections from their visit to the site. Images and stories were shared about key parts of the site, including trees and views that were of high value to the Citizens Panel.

Activity to acquire Citizens Panel recommendations in response to key moves around green and blue spaces:

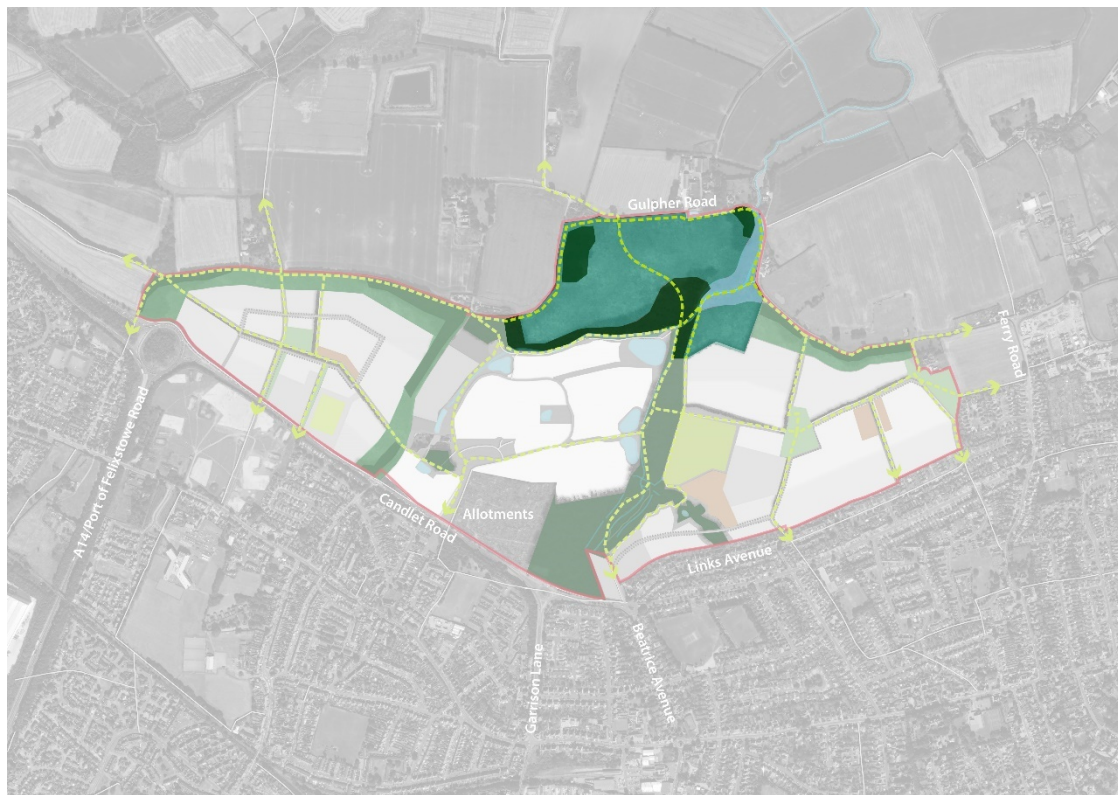


For the second half of the session, the Citizens Panel split into five groups each covering one of the key moves proposed by LDA Design. Each group was asked to respond to the proposition area and create ideas for uses, character, look and feel. They were then asked to prioritise recommendations before presenting back to the main group. Key recommendations are below per group area, with the recommendations ordered by priority.



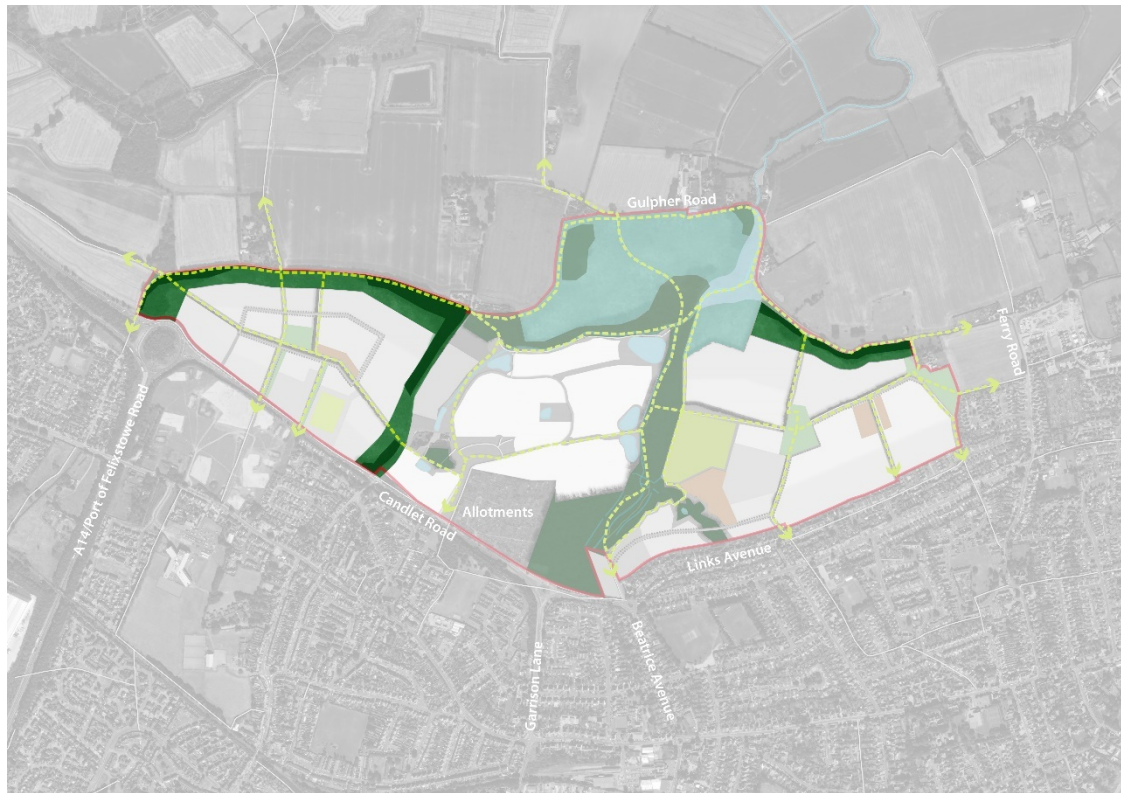
Recommendations regarding Grove Woodlands.

1. Improve accessibility. Using eco-friendly, graded, all weather footpaths, enable wheelchair access. Mention of raised paths at Thetford. Better sign posting with information about area and walks. Natural seating.
2. Creating an area where the community can come together to work on eco-friendly projects to promote a sense of ownership.
3. Creation of elevated viewing areas to view the Deben / National Landscape and contribute to sense of wellbeing.



Recommendations regarding Northern Open Space:

1. Make it worth going to. Make the wetland a place people want to go to, can get to and want to spend time in. A place to educate and stimulate people. Somewhere with natural play. Beauty and excitement without formal built infrastructure. Example ideas to make it a destination include: a board walk over the wetland, a raised tree walk with viewing platform, bird hide, animals (horses or donkeys).
2. Multipurpose meadowland. Outside performance space, natural amphitheatre, picnic site with tables, sculpture park, wildflower meadow, somewhere to go for lunch (e.g a community café), BBQ areas, bins and toilets. Building on the theme of fairy homes in the Grove with magical woodland structures.
3. Planting a fruit forest or community orchard and a space to teach people how to make jam from it / learn skills. Community hub or place to learn skills.
4. Accessible / all weather paths, including for wheelchairs, from the Grove to create a walk or run loop.
5. General endorsement of the extension of the Grove Woodland



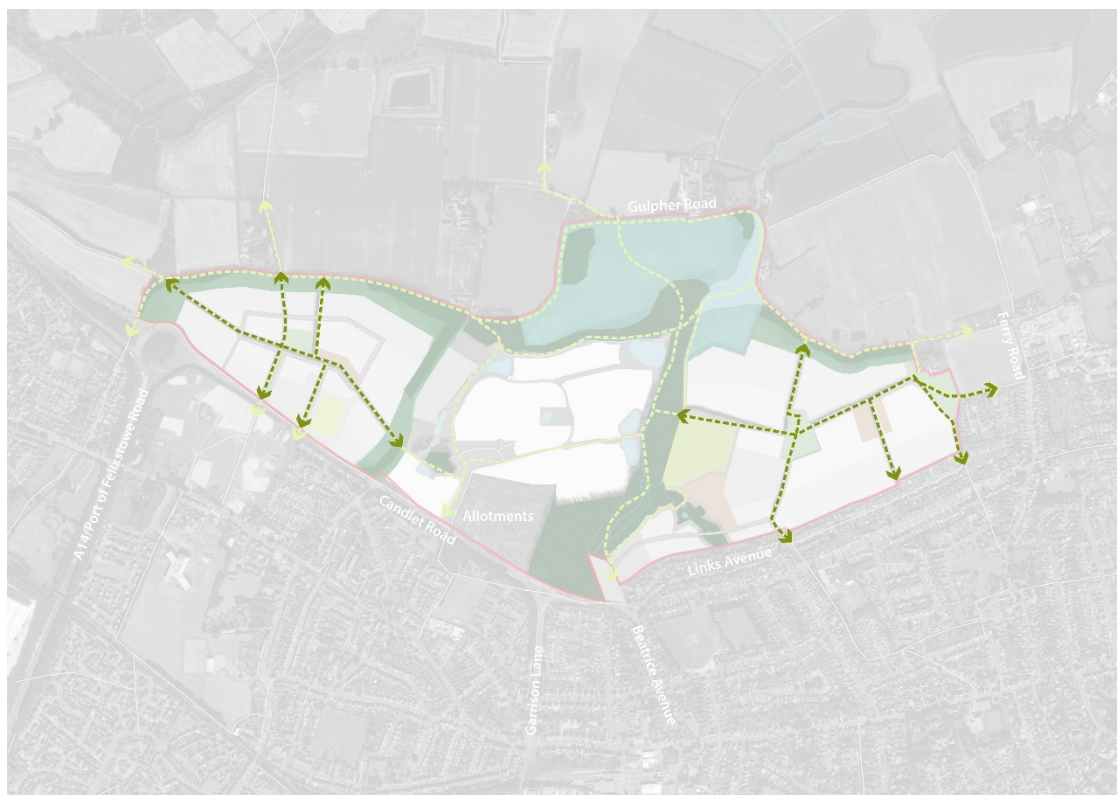
Recommendations regarding Landscape Edges and Buffers:

1. Green buffer along Southern edge to create community good will. Keep banking along Candlest Road and replant hedges where they have cut down trees. Green buffer along boundary with Upper Field Drive. Avenue of trees Ferry Road to Quintons Lane footpath. Natural buffer or wildlife corridor.
2. Potential of shifting the north to south green buffer from Gulpher Road to the southern edge.
3. Early planting. Trees need time to mature, if people can see green spaces growing in rather than only bulldozers it will appease animosity.
4. Views out across the Deben estuary need to be protected.
5. Strong tree lines surrounding primary schools.



Recommendations regarding Amenity spaces including parks, pitches and allotments:

1. Access and safety to be prioritised. Needs multiple connections and footpaths. Minimal traffic and reduced speeds near parks. Allow for independence and shared supervision.
2. Activities for all ages. Community farm, forest school, lots of natural play, treelines, natural structure (not necessarily a ring-fenced swing/slide park). Give teenagers somewhere to go, pump tracks, skateparks, climbing wall). Seating and shade.
3. Character – lots of trees, natural play structure. Planning that encourages play. Pathways and cycle route, trim trails, gym trail. Break away from swing parks. Positive reference to Allenby Park for tracks, trees and paths.
4. Eastward Ho pitches. Wet areas to the west and south-west of the pitches are often wet and unplayable. If the primary school were to be built to the east of the pitches as shown in the concept plan, it would negatively impact all the other schools that come to use the Eastward Ho pitches in the surrounding area plus the Felixstowe and Walton football club.



Recommendations regarding Green Links:

1. It needs to be safe and attractive to go across Candlet Road. Candlet Road needs a green link on the Southern boundary and Links Avenue too, to be accessible by foot, cycle, scooter, families, wheelchair etc. to open up all the facilities to the existing community.
2. Secure the existing allotments from vandalism with fencing and hedgerows. There is potential for a green link from west (Trinity side) to go across the back / north side of allotment area to stop cut throughs.
3. Gulpher Road stays a quiet lane. Keep hedgerows and minimal traffic to maintain the attractive look and feel. Put a walk/cycle lane alongside.
4. Beautify all existing rights of way, encourage stewardship and prevent litter.

Closing remarks

Next session 22nd April is on travel and connectivity. Optional homework – take a photo of your favourite street in Felixstowe for walking/cycling, think of your reasons why it is your favourite street.

<p>Workshop 1:</p> <p>Setting the scene and the intentions of the panel</p> <p><i>26th February</i></p>	<p>Workshop 2:</p> <p>Net zero, open space and nature recovery</p> <p><i>18th March</i></p>	<p>Workshop 3:</p> <p>Health and well-being, active travel and connectivity</p> <p><i>22nd April</i></p>	<p>Workshop 4:</p> <p>Housing, community facilities, and meanwhile uses</p> <p><i>20th May</i></p>	<p>Workshop 5:</p> <p>Identity and stewardship</p> <p><i>17th June</i></p>
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