

Appendix 16 - Open Space, Play Space, Sport and Recreation

Open Space, Play Space, Sport and Recreation

1) Protection of designated open spaces

The existing provision of designated open spaces will be safeguarded from development unless in exceptional circumstances it can be demonstrated that:

- i) The open space is no longer required and;
- ii) Alternative provision of equivalent or better quality open space would be provided in close proximity; and
- iii) A deficiency of open space is not created through or exacerbated by its loss, now or over the plan period.

In all cases, an assessment will be required setting out as to whether the land in question makes a positive contribution to the character, environmental quality and amenity of the surrounding area.

2) Loss of Sport and Recreation facilities

Development proposals which result in the whole or partial loss of existing sport and recreation facilities will only be permitted where:

- i) The proposed development includes provision for alternative sports and recreation facilities of sufficient benefit to sport and recreation provision to clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use; or
- ii) Alternative provision of equivalent or better quantity and quality is made for the catchment area served by the sport and recreation facilities in an accessible location served by sustainable modes of transport; or
- iii) The proposal is ancillary to an existing leisure use and does not adversely affect the sport or recreation facility; or
- iv) An assessment is undertaken which clearly shows that a deficiency of ~~open space~~, sport and recreation facilities is not created through or exacerbated by its loss, now or over the plan period.

3) Loss of children's play space

Development proposals which result in the loss of, or prejudice the use of, any existing children's play space will only be permitted where:

- i) The play space that would be lost would be replaced by a facility of equivalent or higher standard in the existing area or
- ii) A partial reduction in the open space land on a site is justified by the need to provide essential community infrastructure.

4) New and improved Provision for Sport and Recreation Facilities

- i) Proposals for new or improved sport and recreation provision (including allotment space) will be supported where an identified need can be demonstrated. If new provision cannot be provided on site:
- ii) Developments should seek to explore opportunities to enhance/expand equipment range at existing sites to raise quality standards where there is suitable space to do so; and

- iii) Dual and multiple use of sports facilities will be encouraged, particularly involving public use. In appropriate circumstances the Council may grant planning permission subject to conditions or seek to enter into a planning obligation with the developer to ensure dual or multiple use of facilities are maintained over a long term period.
- iv) New/enhanced sport and recreation facilities will be expected to be designed in accordance with Sport England and sports governing body design guidance.

6) New open space provision in residential developments

- i) Where open space is provided onsite, the Council will seek to ensure the proper maintenance of the space. Where the council is in charge of maintenance a Section 106 or other legal agreement will be required to cover the costs of such maintenance.
- ii) In order to ensure that new residential developments do not exacerbate deficiencies in open space and children's play space, new residential development will be expected to provide for amenity and children's play space.
- iii) Where appropriate for the site, developments of 25 or more dwellings or 0.6ha (whichever is greater) should make provision on site for open space and play space in areas of deficiency and in accordance with the British Standards for play: BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177. Where the development is likely to be occupied by families with children, the open space area should provide formal equipped play facilities, in accordance with Fields in Trust standards.
- iv) Open space provided on site will be expected to be accessible to all and not be used only by those who reside on the development.
- v) Variations of these standards may be appropriate where the Council considers:
 - a. That on site provision of open space would not be an appropriate use of the land taking into account local need and the character of the locality, or
 - b. That the development is already fully served by existing open space within 300m or children's play space within 720m of the proposed development.

7) Design of Open Spaces

Proposals for new or existing open space should be designed to be multifunctional, to a high standard and should have regard to the relationship between the open space and its surroundings and seek to minimise the potential for crime and anti-social behaviour. It should also take into consideration the need to maintain a variety and balance of different forms of open space and the

need to maintain and enhance existing nature conservation interests and the benefits of creating new habitats.

Reasoned Justification

16.1 The Open Space Assessment Report 2019 assessed open space provision in the area, its condition, distribution and overall quality. Open Spaces assessed include parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural greenspaces, amenity greenspace, provision for children and young people, allotments, cemeteries and churchyards.

16.2 The NPPF states that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Open spaces can also deliver environmental benefits in terms of supporting nature and efforts to address climate change.

16.3 Public Health recommend that planning authorities include a policy in the Local Plan that ensures that existing green space/green infrastructure are preserved. Developers are expected to set out the provision of open space and green infrastructure at an early stage of development to encourage healthy and sustainable behaviours from the outset. The policy supports the provision of amenity and children's play space in residential developments and developments over 25 dwellings must provide on site open space and play space as per Natural England Angst standards.

16.4 Public engagement is encouraged with regards to creation of new recreation or sports facilities.

16.5 Open space should be designed in accordance with Sport England's Active Design to encourage physical activity.

16.6 The Council's Open Space Assessment Report (2019) identified a need for allotment space within the district as per the standard set by The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG). In order to meet the standard, there would need to be 23 hectares of allotment provision across the district. It is therefore important to safeguard existing allotment plots and be favourable to future allocations in order to meet current and future demand. There are currently 17 allotment sites within the district.

16.7 Local food production provides advantages in terms of community involvement, sustainability and mental and physical health. It also supports our climate and carbon emission policies (x) through reducing the carbon footprint of food production by minimising CO₂ emissions from transportation of food and through carbon sequestration.

16.8 The Council's Open Space Assessment Report (2019) further identifies the sustainability, health and social benefits of allotment and open space provision. The policy aims to safeguard existing allotment sites and to encourage additional provision where viable.