

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**  
**16 JANUARY 2020**

**Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance – Outdoor Recreation Facilities  
and New Housing Development**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval to consult on a draft Outdoor Recreation Facilities and New Housing Development Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document.

**2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities**

- 2.1 The adoption of this Supplementary Planning Guidance will assist in the implementation of Policies within the adopted Bridgend Local Development Plan (LDP), the Council's statutory land-use Planning document.

**3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) explains in detail the Council's approach to the provision of outdoor sport, children's playing space, allotments and public open space (including accessible natural green space) for all new housing developments and how LDP Policy COM11 will be implemented. The SPG encourages links between the provision of open space sought under Policy COM11 and its contribution to green infrastructure in Bridgend. Once adopted its contents will be taken into account as a material consideration in the determination of relevant Planning applications.

**4. Current Situation**

- 4.2 Recreational spaces are vital for our health, well-being and amenity and can contribute to an area's green infrastructure. They provide a place for play, sport, healthy physical activity and a place to relax often in the presence of nature and they contribute to our quality of life and are a key ingredient of 'place making'. Networks of high quality, accessible green spaces and recreation spaces will also promote nature conservation, biodiversity and provide enjoyable opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in a wide range of physical activities. These activities are important for the well-being of children and adults and for the social, environmental, cultural and economic life of Bridgend and Wales.
- 4.3 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) receives a high number of applications each year for new housing development. These new residents create a demand for the improvement of existing and the provision of new recreational facilities. To meet this demand Policy COM11 of the LDP requires the provision of a satisfactory level and

standard of outdoor sport, children's playing space, allotments and public open space (including accessible natural green space) for all new housing developments.

4.4 In summary the draft SPG covers:

- Introduction & Background
- Legislation & Policy Context
- Public Recreation & Open Space – Definitions and Standards
- Accessibility Benchmark Standards
- Assessment of Outdoor Play Space Provision
- Calculating the Requirement
- Outdoor Play Space – General Requirements
- Management & Maintenance
- Financial Contributions in-lieu of On Site Provision
- Administration of the Policy

## **5. Effect Upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules**

5.1 The draft SPG expands upon the existing land-use Planning policy framework contained within the LDP giving the public and developers certainty in the Council's expectations in relation to recreation facilities and new housing development

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 The policies contained within the LDP required an Equalities Impact Assessment to be carried out. Once adopted the SPG will become a material consideration in the determination of Planning applications received by the Local Planning Authority for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

## **7. Financial Implications**

7.1 None

## **8. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

8.1 The Replacement LDP will be prepared in accordance with the seven Wellbeing goals and the five ways of working as identified in the Act.

## **9. Recommendations**

9.1 That the Development Control Committee:

(a) approves Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance – Outdoor Recreation Facilities and New Housing Development (**Appendix 1**) as the basis for a public consultation period of 6 weeks;

(b) authorises Officers to carry out the public consultation and to report the results of the public consultation back to a meeting of the Development Control Committee.

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**Background documents**

**Appendix 1** - Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance – Outdoor Recreation Facilities and New Housing Development

# APPENDIX 1

## SPG 5

### DRAFT OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES AND NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT (2020)

DRAFT

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) explains in detail the Council's approach to the provision of outdoor sport, children's playing space, allotments and public open space (including accessible natural green space) for all **new housing developments** and how Policy COM11 will be implemented. The SPG encourages links between the provision of open space sought under Policy COM11 and its contribution to green infrastructure in Bridgend. Once adopted its contents will be taken into account as a material consideration in the determination of relevant Planning applications.

## 2. BACKGROUND CONTEXT

- 2.1 Recreational spaces are vital for our health, well-being and amenity and can contribute to an area's green infrastructure. They provide a place for play, sport, healthy physical activity and a place to relax often in the presence of nature and they contribute to our quality of life and are a key ingredient of 'place making'. Networks of high quality, accessible green spaces and recreation spaces will also promote nature conservation, biodiversity and provide enjoyable opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in a wide range of physical activities. These activities are important for the well-being of children and adults and for the social, environmental, cultural and economic life of Bridgend and Wales.
- 2.2 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) receives a high number of applications each year for new housing development. These new residents create a demand for the improvement of existing and the provision of new recreational facilities. To meet this demand Policy COM11 of the Bridgend Local Development Plan (LDP) requires the provision of a satisfactory level and standard of outdoor sport, children's playing space, allotments and public open space (including accessible natural green space) for all new housing developments.
- 2.3 In cases where proposed new development may result in the loss of existing or proposed open space on a site Policy COM7 of the LDP (which aims to protect existing and proposed social and community facilities) may require equivalent alternative provision elsewhere or enhancement of the existing facility. This may be secured by means of a Planning agreement/obligation in accordance with Policy SP14 of the LDP.

- 2.4** The Council urges anyone intending to submit an application for residential development within the County Borough to read this SPG. To discuss any issues on a site-specific basis they may contact BCBC in advance of making a Planning application for pre-application discussions on the details provided (see protocol, charging regime and contact details for pre-application advice at the end of the SPG).

### **3. LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:** The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 is a key piece of legislation which aims to further improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales now and in the longer term. The Act puts in place a ‘sustainable development principle’ which is a duty for public bodies to “act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The Act is underpinned by seven well-being goals, which public bodies must work to achieve (a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language and a globally responsible Wales).
- 3.2 Environment (Wales) Act, 2016:** The Environment (Wales) Act puts in place the legislation needed to plan and manage Wales’ natural resources in a more proactive, sustainable and joined-up way. It requires Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to report on the principality's natural resources and detail their ability to respond to pressures and adapt to climate change. Therefore, NRW published the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) in 2016. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 provides a context for the delivery of multi-functional green infrastructure. Its provision can make a significant contribution to the sustainable management of natural resources and, in particular, to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in terms of the diversity between and within ecosystems and the extent, condition and connectivity of ecosystems and their ability to adapt. This means that the development of green infrastructure is an important way for Local Authorities to deliver their Section 6 duty.
- 3.3 Planning Policy Wales – Edition 10 (December 2018):** PPW states that Planning Authorities should provide a framework for well-located, good quality sport, recreational and leisure facilities and develop clear policies for the provision, protection and enhancement of sport, recreation and leisure facilities. These policies should set standards of provision so that local deficiencies can be identified and met through the Planning process and set out policies to avoid or resolve conflict between different activities.

- 3.4 Formal and informal open green spaces should be protected from development, particularly in urban areas where they fulfil multiple purposes. As well as enhancing quality of life they contribute to biodiversity, the conservation of the historic environment, nature and landscape, better air quality, the protection of groundwater and as places of tranquillity. Such open spaces also have a role in climate protection and in enabling the adaptation of urban areas to the impacts of climate change, for example by contributing to flood management and helping to reduce the effects of urban heat islands. Many parks and gardens are historically significant and are listed in the Historic Parks and Gardens in Wales Register.
- 3.5 All playing fields whether owned by public, private or voluntary organisations should be protected from development except where:
- facilities can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site;
  - alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available locally, avoiding any temporary loss of provision; or
  - there is an excess of such provision in the area.
- 3.6 Planning Authorities should protect playing fields and open spaces which have significant amenity or recreational value to local communities from development. They should indicate the ways in which previously developed or disused land and water bodies can be used for sport and recreation uses, particularly in relation to urban regeneration.
- 3.7 Planning Authorities should encourage the multiple use of open space and facilities, where appropriate, to increase their effective use. 'Beyond the Six-acre Standard' produced by Fields in Trust, is a source of helpful advice to Planning Authorities on providing open space and outdoor sport and play through the Planning system.
- 3.8 Planning Authorities should consider scope to use disused land and routes as parks, linear parks or greenways in urban areas and encourage the provision of safe and attractive cycle routes and footpaths. Where recreational use of redundant railway lines or spaces alongside canals or rivers is proposed, Planning Authorities should ensure that there is no detriment to adjoining users, wildlife or flood defences.
- 3.9 The PPW is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs) including TAN 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space. Welsh Office Circular 13/97 'Planning Obligations' endorses the use of Planning obligations by stating that they can have a positive role to play in the Planning system and can help enhance the quality of development. The Circular advises that if a proposed



development would generate a need for particular facilities, then it is appropriate to expect developers to contribute to the cost of their provision. The extent of what is sought or offered should be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development as well as being reasonable in all other aspects.

- 3.10 **Technical Advice Note (TAN) 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space:** The document (adopted in 2009) provides guidance designed to supplement policy set out in PPW. It gives additional advice on the role of the Planning system in making provision for sports, recreation and informal open space. It offers instructions on planning for sports and recreation uses as well as appropriate levels of provision.
- 3.11 There are no statutory national standards for the provision of sport, recreation and open space in Wales. Paragraph 2.9 to 2.11 of TAN 16 identifies the Field in Trust (FIT)<sup>1</sup> 'Benchmark Standards' for outdoor sport and play as being helpful to Local Authorities. The standard recommends a minimum level of outdoor space of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 head of population. The standard is categorised into three types of provision - formal outdoor sport, informal play space and designated equipped play space. Further definitions on these three categories are provided later.
- 3.12 Paragraph 2.18 of TAN 16 notes that CCW (now NRW) has developed a toolkit to help ensure everyone in Wales has access to natural greenspace. CCW recommends that provision should be made for at least 2ha of accessible natural greenspace per 1,000 population and that no one should live more than 300 metres from their nearest natural greenspace. While this SPG does not formally address the provision of accessible natural greenspace, it will look to encourage new open spaces that have the potential to contribute to both standards through the introduction of multifunctional spaces.
- 3.13 The TAN identifies that Local Authorities undertake an Open Space Assessment covering all forms of open space provision in order to provide a basis for establishing a strategic vision. It is acknowledged that the SPG is more focused in its scope than an Open Space Assessment. This is considered to be the most appropriate way forward and is in line with paragraph 2.29 which states Local Authorities 'should not delay work on the preparation of Local Development Plans where an assessment is not available. Instead they should make use of information which is to hand and in which they have confidence'.
- 3.14 Paragraph 4.15 of TAN 16 states that Planning conditions and obligations can be used to provide open space, sport and recreational facilities in order to safeguard and enhance existing provisions and to provide for their management.

3.15 **Bridgend Public Services Board Local Well-being Plan 2018–2023:** The Well-being Plan outlines how Bridgend Public Service Board will work together over the next five years to deliver the seven wellbeing goals for Wales as referenced in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The Plan is framed around the sustainable development principle and focusses on addressing the underlying causes of problems and helping to prevent them worsening or occurring in the future. Four well-being objectives have therefore been developed, which are:

1. Best Start in life
2. Support communities in Bridgend County to be safe and cohesive
3. Reduce social and economic inequalities
4. Healthy choices in a healthy environment

3.16 This plan recognises the importance of improving green spaces and the contribution these assets can provide to help improve people's health and wellbeing.

3.17 **Bridgend Local Development Plan (2013-2021):** The Bridgend LDP sets out the Council's land use Planning policies up to 2021. Relevant policies include:

3.18 **Policy COM11 – Provision of Outdoor Recreation Facilities:** reflects the guidance set out in TAN 16 and the Fields in Trust (FIT) 'Benchmark Standards'. New residential developments are required to adhere to the minimum 2.4 ha of various forms of outdoor play space per 1,000 population.

Other Policies of particular relevance include:

- Strategic Policy SP13 – Social and Community Facilities
- Policy COM7- Protection of Social and Community Facilities
- Policy ENV5 - Green Infrastructure
- Policy COM12 - Provision of Playing Fields
- Policy COM14 - Provision of Allotments and Community Food Networks
- Policy ENV6 - Nature Conservation

#### **4. PUBLIC RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE – DEFINITIONS AND STANDARDS**

- 4.1 The Council's adopted minimum standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population for open space, sport and recreation is derived from the FIT (formerly NPFA's) minimum 'Benchmark Standards' for outdoor sport and play. This replaces the 'Six Acre Standard' set out under the organisations old name of National Playing Fields Association (NPFA). It is the only nationally based standard provided for outdoor sport and play space and is therefore still recommended as best practice.
- 4.2 The FIT standard represents a minimum level of provision and should be sought as such across the County Borough of Bridgend. Outdoor sport and play space refers to land for sport, recreation and children's play.
- 4.3 For the purposes of the LDP and this SPG, outdoor recreation facilities are defined as follows:-
- 4.4 **Outdoor Sports – 1.6 Hectares**
- 4.5 Outdoor Sport is defined as all areas marked and laid out for formal active recreation purposes. It includes area such as pitches, green, courts, athletics tracks and training areas. It also includes facilities ancillary to the purposes of outdoor sports such as changing rooms, toilets, pavilions and clubhouses. Also included are land and facilities associated with schools if these are available for the wider community.
- 4.6 **Children's Playing Space – 0.8 Hectares** (includes Informal Playing Space – 0.55 Hectares & Equipped Children's Playing Space – 0.25 Hectares)
- 4.7 Children's Playing Spaces are designated areas for children and young people that have been designated to provide focussed opportunities for outdoor play. These can include areas containing recreational equipment and grassy areas for small children or older children to enjoy recreational activities. For the purposes of Policy COM10 and the LDP, the Fields In Trust standard of 0.8 hectares per 1000 population is used as a benchmark standard of provision.
- 4.8 **Allotments – 0.2 Hectares**
- 4.9 Allotments are recognised as providing multi-functional benefits to communities in terms of sustainability, leisure and biodiversity. They are areas of open space within and accessible to the urban environment that can provide moderate exercise, relaxation and the production of fresh fruit and vegetables. They also provide community, health and social benefits, encouraging interaction

between users of all ages, providing the opportunity to teach and learn and enhancing local biodiversity.

#### 4.10 **Accessible Natural Green Space (including public open space)**

4.11 These are defined as predominantly natural areas which contribute to the quality of life of urban areas, and where these areas contain features such as woodland, shrubbery, heath and rough grassland. They also include wetlands or coastal areas characterised by open water, reeds, sand dunes or rocky shores.

4.12 The Countryside Council for Wales recommends that provision should be made up of at least 2 hectares per 1000 population according to a system of tiers into which sites of different sizes fit:

- No person should live more than 300 metres from their nearest area of natural green space;
- There should be at least one accessible 20 hectare site within 2km from home;
- There should be one accessible 100 hectare site within 5km;
- There should be one accessible 500 hectare site within 10km.

4.13 Although it is expected that local authorities should aspire to meet the provision set out by the above model, the toolkit recognises that this may not be appropriate in all urban contexts. Therefore, the model should be used to inform policy in conjunction with an understanding of the needs of the local community and the value of accessible natural greenspace to it. The standard is promoted as an aspirational target against which local priorities can be set and progress measured. In this regard, given the extensive network of accessible natural greenspace throughout the County Borough, the Council has chosen to adopt the approach that no person should live more than 300 metres from their nearest area of natural greenspace.

#### 4.14 **Amenity Space**

4.15 For the purpose of the SPG 'amenity space' are areas of green space, the primary purpose of which is to soften the environment associated with residential development creating a more attractive environment for residents and improving health and well-being however, with intuitive design, amenity space can have a dual function in providing opportunities for enhanced recreational uses.

## 5. ACCESSIBILITY BENCHMARK STANDARDS

- 5.1 Accessibility benchmark standards will be applied to outdoor sport and play provision. These standards are again derived from FIT guidance and are set accordingly for each type of provision. These should be used as indicative only as no assessment of physical barriers has been undertaken. Nevertheless, they provide a good indication of the level of coverage within walking distance from different types of facilities.

Type	Accessibility standard (Distance in metres)
Outdoor sport	1,200m
Informal playing space	400m
Designated equipped playing space	100m from LAPs
	400m from LEAPs
	1000m from NEAPs
Accessible Natural Green Space	300m

## 6. ASSESSMENT OF OUTDOOR PLAY SPACE PROVISION

- 6.1 A review of outdoor play space in Bridgend has been undertaken by the Council to assess the level of provision against the FIT standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population. The overall findings for the County Borough as a whole is that there is a surplus of approximately 7.5 hectares of Outdoor Sport and Children's Playing Space (based on the 2016 MYE population) and a surplus of 16.5 hectares of Outdoor Sport and Children's Playing Space (based on the 2011 Census population).
- 6.2 The Sub-Area and Ward analysis included in the document is based on the 2011 Census population (due to the unavailability of more up-to-date population data at the sub Local Authority level). At the Sub-Area level, the overall surplus of provision across the County Borough is translated into overall deficits within the Llynfi Valley, Garw Valley, Valleys Gateway and Porthcawl with surpluses in overall provision in the Sub-Areas of the Ogmore Valley, Pencoed, Bridgend and Pyle-Kenfig. There is considerable variation across the County Borough in terms of the different types of Outdoor Recreation Facility provision (Outdoor Sport and Children's Playing Space), as well as for Equipped Children's Play. These are:-
- 6.3 *Sub-Area Level*  
In terms of Outdoor Sport, there are deficits of provision in every Sub-Area across the County Borough. There is a much better picture with respect to overall Children's Playing Space, with the Garw Valley being the only Sub-Area with an "overall" deficit however, these findings in terms of overall Children's Playing Space mask deficits in Equipped Children's Playing Space in every Sub-Area across the County Borough.
- 6.4 *Ward Level*  
The deficiencies in Equipped Children's Playing Space are also evident at Ward level with only one Ward, Llangeinor, having a surplus in Equipped Children's Playing Space provision. This is largely attributed to the large equipped area of play at Bryngarw Country Park (when set against the relatively low Llangeinor Ward population of 1,243).
- 6.5 The Summary Assessment of results provision by Sub-Area is presented in Table 1 of the 'audit' and the more detailed ward assessments for Children's Playing Space are presented in Table 2.

<https://democratic.bridgend.gov.uk/documents/s12793/LDP%20open%20space%20audit%20appx.pdf>

- 6.6 Reference to the findings of the most recent assessment of condition will be made when assessing the impact of a proposed residential development on public open space in Bridgend. **Where a ward has sufficient provision to meet the FIT standards, developers may still be required to contribute to outdoor play space if it can be demonstrated that the quality and condition of play area fails to meet current quality standards which would be exacerbated by an increase in population** however, developer contributions sought will relate to the scale and impact of the proposed development and will not be expected to offset existing deficiencies in provision.
- 6.7 Consideration will also be given to the accessibility of existing facilities within the locality of the proposed residential development. Important considerations in providing adequate and usable facilities for children are the walking time involved and physical barriers such as main roads. Children do not restrict their play habits to ward boundaries so when assessing the impact of a proposed residential development, a number of wards within the vicinity of a proposed scheme could form part of the assessment of existing provision.
- 6.8 The assessment of outdoor play space is an on-going exercise for the Council. In this respect, more up-to-date information relating to usage and quality of existing provision could be taken into consideration in determining outdoor play space requirements when it becomes available. Discussions with Planning early on in the Planning process to highlight play provision issues relating to the locality of a proposed residential development are strongly advised.

## 7. CALCULATING THE REQUIREMENT

- 7.1 Provision of a satisfactory level and standard of outdoor play space should be sought on all new housing developments because an increased population will exert additional pressure on existing facilities. A contribution will be sought for all new residential development.
- 7.2 The total outdoor play requirement for a development will be calculated by multiplying the number of dwellings by a given occupancy rate relevant to each dwelling. The number of bedrooms a dwelling has will determine the most appropriate occupancy rate. The average occupancy levels used by the Council for the purposes of the SPG are:

Household Type	Average Occupancy
1 bed flat	1.5 persons
2 bed flat	2 persons
3 bed flat	2.5 persons
1 bed house	1.5 persons
2 bed house	2 persons
3 bed house	3 persons
4+ bed house	4 persons

- 7.3 The FIT 'Benchmark Standard' of 2.4 ha per 1,000 population can be broken down to a square metre requirement per person as follows:

FIT Standard	
Designated equipped playing space	0.25 ha per 1,000 pop = 2.5m <sup>2</sup> per person
Informal playing space	0.55 ha per 1,000 pop = 5.5m <sup>2</sup> per person
Outdoor sport (formal)	1.6 ha per 1,000 pop = 16m <sup>2</sup> per person

- 7.4 The estimated development population can then be assessed against the FIT standard to calculate the required amount of outdoor play space relevant to the development.

### Worked example

A development of 50 three bedroom houses would give a development population of 50 x 3 (based on average occupancy rates) = 150. The outdoor play space requirement would therefore be:

Designated equipped playing space	150 x 2.5m <sup>2</sup> = 375 m <sup>2</sup>
Informal playing space	150 x 5.5m <sup>2</sup> = 825 m <sup>2</sup>
Outdoor sport (formal)	150 x 16m <sup>2</sup> = 2400 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total provision</b>	<b>= 3600 m<sup>2</sup></b>



7.5 The guide to the level of provision required depending on the estimated development population is therefore:

Development Population	Equipped playing space (m2)	Informal playing space (m2)	Outdoor sport (m2)	Total development provision (m2)
<b>50</b>	125	275	800	1200
<b>100</b>	250	550	1600	2400
<b>200</b>	500	1100	3200	4800
<b>500</b>	1250	2750	8000	12000

7.6 The type of equipped playing space considered acceptable by the Council will be judged on a site-by-site basis however, the sort of equipped play likely to be required based on the size of the development population is indicated as:

Development population	Equipped playing space (m2)	Type of equipped play
<b>100</b>	250	Local Area for Play
<b>150</b>	375	Local Equipped Area for Play
<b>250</b>	625	Local Area for Play and Local Equipped Area for Play
<b>350</b>	875	Neighbourhood Area for Play

7.7 Outdoor play space provision on new housing developments must reflect the requirements of future occupiers and the particular characteristics of the site. The exact form and type of open space will be determined with regard to the nature and size of the development and the availability of facilities in the local area.

7.8 In some circumstances, a variation from normal provision of recreational open space may be more appropriate. The Council will take a flexible approach to the level and type of open space provision sought on a development in order to reflect the likely population characteristics of the development. Also for sites of 10 dwellings or less, it may not be feasible to deliver the provision onsite. On this basis, a financial contribution in lieu of onsite provision may be considered. This will be spent in either 'enhancing' existing areas of public open space or Active Travel routes from the development site to the nearest area of public open space.

- 7.9 Significant large residential developments may be the subject of development briefs that will specify the amount, type and preferred location of open space.
- 7.10 The public recreational and open space requirement is seen an essential part of any housing layout and in general, should be provided as part of a new housing development however, the Council acknowledges that there may be circumstances where other Planning obligations e.g. highway improvements or education provision take priority over public recreation and open space. Therefore, it may be necessary to determine the relative priority of different forms of provision in the context of the individual circumstances and Planning objectives relative to each development proposal.
- 7.11 *The Green Infrastructure Approach*  
Bridgend Council is actively pursuing its agenda to adopt a Green Infrastructure approach to development. Opportunities to create multi-functional spaces and connections to the wider green infrastructure network should also be explored as per the requirements of SPG19 'Biodiversity and Development'. Open spaces that contribute to the FIT standards have potential to also contribute to other forms of open space, such as Accessible Natural Greenspace, as well as benefitting the environment and health and well-being more generally. In designing development layouts, developers should look to contribute to improving the accessibility and naturalness of open spaces and seek out opportunities to create or contribute to corridors of green spaces.

## **8. OUTDOOR PLAY SPACE – GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

- 8.1 The provision should, in most cases, continue to be made on site as an integral part of the development. It should be well related to the proposed residential properties and be of an appropriate type to serve the needs of the development.
- 8.2 The Council will no longer accept pocket sites, small strips of lands or corner sites for adoption as these rarely have significant public benefit or form part of a wider strategic scheme. It is imperative at the layout stage of the development that these sites are designed out of the scheme. Alternatively, design and layout could connect a series of spaces linking within or to adjacent off-site provision, which would be seen as a positive development and could be agreed for adoption. Land that has protected status, for example, Schedule Ancient Monuments, woodlands with a Tree Preservation Order or SINCS are also considered unsuitable for designation as usable outdoor play space within a development. In addition, areas that have a separate function, e.g. balancing ponds, attenuation areas or other engineered features, cannot be considered towards open space or informal play provision.
- 8.3 The most appropriate method of providing each type of outdoor play space is set out below with additional design principles set out in Appendix 1.
- 8.4 **Children's Play Space**
- 8.5 This includes equipped and enclosed children's play areas and open grassed areas suitable for ball games and other forms of casual play. It excludes formal pitches and other sports provision, amenity space or landscaping provided on the site. Facilities for children should, wherever possible, be provided within easy walking distance of related housing areas, readily accessible to the housing which they serve without the need to cross barriers such as major roads and should be sited to avoid or minimise disturbance to existing or potential nearby residents. In housing sites it will normally be possible to provide a children's play space onsite, particularly for the needs of very young children.
- 8.6 The FIT defines three types of equipped children's play area. The required design standards and play space characteristics are:
- Local Area for Play (LAP) – a small area of unsupervised open space specifically designated for young children for play activities close to where they live.
  - Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) – an unsupervised play area equipped for children of early school age.
  - Neighbourhood Area for Play (NEAP) – an unsupervised site serving a substantial residential area equipped mainly for older children with opportunities for play for younger children.

8.7 Casual playing space is included within the requirement for children's play space. It is defined as open space of a useful size and safe location providing opportunities for informal play activities. Grassed open space within a housing area with adequate separation would conform to the definition. To be a reasonable area for use by older children, a casual playing space should be a minimum of 0.05 ha (0.12 acres) but preferably at least 0.1 ha (0.25 acres).

## 8.8 **Sport Facilities**

8.9 These incorporate playing fields, tennis courts and other facilities for organised sports. Playing facilities such as playing fields can only reasonably be provided onsite within large developments. In some cases playing fields may be more appropriately provided in conjunction with or located close to existing or proposed playing fields. As far as possible, such off-site locations should be well connected to the residential development generating the need for it, i.e. through the use of cycle paths, walk ways and public transport facilities however, given the size of such facilities it is not uncommon for youth/adult sport facilities to serve a number of wards and therefore be situated in a different ward to the development.

8.10 Developers will be expected to provide a grass/artificial surface area of suitable size, gradient and condition to satisfy the regulations of the particular governing bodies of sport. The size must allow adequate surrounding area for the safe play of sport and the safety of the public and property adjacent to the playing surface.

8.11 Changing rooms/pavilions may be required in association with the sports area. This provision will vary depending on the size of the sports area and the sports provided for. Other facilities associated with the provision of formal play space include formal car parking which may be required specifically to accommodate users of the facility so as not to inconvenience local residents. Floodlighting should be carefully designed to avoid light spillage and should not interfere with the amenities of residents in close proximity to the facility. Developers are encouraged to discuss residential developments at an early stage to ensure appropriate provision to the required standard is provided.

## 8.12 **Allotments**

8.13 Allotments are recognised as providing multi-functional benefits to communities in terms of sustainability, leisure and biodiversity. They are areas of open space within and accessible to the urban environment that can provide moderate exercise, relaxation and the production of fresh fruit and vegetables. They also provide community, health and social benefits encouraging interaction between

users of all ages, providing the opportunity to teach and learn and enhancing local biodiversity

#### **8.14 Accessible Natural Greenspace**

- 8.15 Where there is no requirement for a development to contribute towards outdoor sports, children's play space and/or allotment provision as outlined in guidance notes 3, 4 and 5 and there is no access point to an area of accessible natural green space within 300 metres of the development site, the Council will expect the developer to create an access point or provide an appropriate contribution toward the creation of an access point.
- 8.16 Where a development is within 300 metres of a development site but is of an unacceptable standard, the Council will expect an appropriate contribution towards the upgrading of that access point.
- 8.17 Where the creation or upgrading of an access point is not possible, the Council will expect the creation of natural greenspace within the development proposal or an equivalent contribution towards the upgrading of an existing recreational facility to improve its naturalness.
- 8.18 Policy COM11 of the LDP states that no person should live more than 300 metres from their nearest area of accessible natural green space.
- 8.19 Whilst the Council recognises the importance of access to natural green space, it is considered that those who would generally access this space would be of an age where they could reasonably travel beyond the preferred 300 metres which is considered as an ideal situation rather than a necessity. Conversely, those who would rely on recreational facilities such as playgrounds and allotments are less likely to be able to travel greater distances and therefore these are given preference at this time.
- 8.20 Notwithstanding the above, where there is no requirement for outdoor sports, children's play or allotment facilities either because of an identified surplus in those facilities or where it is considered that the need for access to natural green space outweighs the need for alternative facilities, the Council will require the maximum contributions towards accessible natural green space provision.

## **9. MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OPTIONS**

- 9.1 The Council will adopt and maintain land as public open space within residential areas where the primary function of that land is public open space. This will be conditional upon the land fulfilling one or more of the following criteria by:
- Ensuring the health and safety of the public;
  - Enabling or supporting a sport or leisure function
  - Providing environmental protection or strategic landscape and visual enhancement
- 9.2 The Local Authority will not adopt under the heading of outdoor play space, apparatus or structures including their surface areas and standoff zones that have a primary function that is not open space. This includes incidental open space associated with underground installations and engineering features, storm water cells, balancing ponds and landform for storm water drainage. The Council will consider adopting Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) as part of the drainage system however, they will not be considered to be usable public open space.
- 9.3 Land that has potential historic liabilities associated with a former use, such as contaminated land, and is offered as public open space may be considered for adoption. Any such application within a development site will need to be supported by an impartial assessment based on its proposed long-term use as open space. Each application will be subject to separate risk assessments of its historic liabilities in relation to the proposed use as an open space.
- 9.4 Each site of potential outdoor play space will be considered on its own merits on a case by case basis. Full discussions on what land could be eligible for adoption should be held at an early stage in the development process. It is advised that proposed adoption be fully explored with the relevant Officers prior to submission of a Planning permission.
- 9.5 The adoption of land will always be subject to a payment by the developer of a commuted sum to cover the cost of future maintenance. The commuted sum for maintenance is payable on the transfer of the land. The figure is calculated using the current contract figures for maintaining the open spaces multiplied to establish a 25 year maintenance figure (allowing for inflation of the contract prices). Where developers make a financial contribution in-lieu of onsite facilities, a commuted sum for future maintenance costs will also be sought. Typical maintenance costs are outlined in Appendix 3.
- 9.6 Planning permission for development will be subject to a legal agreement that will include all the above details and commuted sums with these agreements will be index linked from the date the agreement is signed.

9.7 All S106 agreements run with the land so future successors in title are bound by the obligations.

## **10. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN LIEU OF ON-SITE PROVISION**

10.1 Wherever possible the provision of public open space should be made within the boundaries of the development site as an integral part of the development however, there may be circumstances where it is not possible or appropriate to accommodate the required open space within the development site (i.e. site may be too small or inappropriate to accommodate the certain open space category). In these cases the Council will accept a commuted payment in-lieu of physical provision. This arrangement will require developers to make financial contributions to the provision of off-site public recreational and open space or the improvement of existing outdoor recreational facilities in lieu of on-site provision.

### **10.2 Financial Contributions**

10.3 The contribution payable is calculated according to the current costs per square metre (sq m) of providing the different categories of open space generated by the development. The commuted payment calculations are based on the standard costs for land, design, layout and equipment which have been developed from current rates of tendered contracts by the Council. These figures will be reviewed annually to take account of changing circumstances in relation to costs. The exact level of contributions from developers may vary from the figures illustrated to take account of individual site characteristics. The current costs are set out in the Appendix 3.

### **10.4 ADMINISTRATION OF THE POLICY**

10.5 The implementation of the SPG strategy operates through a number of procedures which are broadly as follows:

#### **10.6 Pre- Application Stage**

10.7 Prospective applicants for housing developments are strongly advised to contact the Council's S106 Manager prior to submitting a Planning application, who will outline the Council's requirements relating to outdoor play space and other S106 contributions. This is to ensure that any costs relating to provision of public recreational and open space facilities are highlighted prior to or during the developer's initial site evaluation exercise.

## 10.8 **Application Stage**

10.9 Should pre-application discussions not take place, applicants for housing developments will need to ensure that the POS requirements comply with the requirements set out in this SPG. The applicant will be required to enter into a Section 106 legal agreement with the Council to ensure a contribution is made towards public and recreational open space facilities. A draft legal agreement will be forwarded to the applicant for consideration.

## 10.10 **Outline Applications**

10.11 In the case of applications for Outline Planning permission, the applicant will be required to enter into a legal agreement with the Council under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. In most cases, details concerning the amount and type of public recreational and open space facilities or level of commuted sums for the proposed residential development will not be known at this Outline stage. The Council will ensure the correct contribution is received when more details are submitted with the application for the approval of Reserved Matters.

## 10.12 **Planning Appeal Decisions**

10.13 If an appeal is made for reasons other than the open space element of the application, the applicant should ensure that an appropriately worded Unilateral Undertaking is signed prior to the determination of any appeal to make provision for outdoor play space. Failure to provide such an undertaking would be likely to result in the Council making an objection on open space grounds at appeal.

## 10.14 **Date of Introduction**

10.15 The public open space guidance set out in this document will be applied to Planning applications submitted on or after the date the SPG is formally adopted [*to be confirmed once the SPG goes through consultation*]. It will not apply to applications for Reserved Matters or Outline Planning permissions granted before that date however, extant permissions granted before the SPG document is adopted will come within its terms and conditions should an application for its renewal be submitted. The SPG will represent a material consideration and will be taken into account when determining such applications.



## APPENDIX 1 - General Design Principles

FIT guidance states the following general principles for children's play space as being:

- Appropriate to the needs of the local community.
- Accessible for every child within the appropriate walking time for LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs.
- Accessible without having to cross main roads, railways or waterways.
- Sited in open, welcoming locations.
- Separated from areas of major vehicle movements and accessible directly from pedestrian routes.
- Sited on land of natural topography or on land capable of being landscaped for the type of play experiences intended.
- Designed in accordance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- Designed so that any high climbing structures are as far as possible from nearby dwellings and any potential visual intrusion is minimised.
- Integrated, as far as possible, with other open spaces and areas of amenity planting to provide separation from nearby dwellings and contribute to a network of green corridors.
- Multi-functional where feasible whilst ensuring the primary FIT category is maintained.
- Visible from nearby dwellings or well used pedestrian routes.
- Accessible by footpaths with a firm surface.
- Surfaced in a manner fitting to the intensity of use.
- Provided with seating for accompanying adults, carers and siblings.
- Designed to provide a stimulating and challenging play experience that may include equipment and other features providing opportunities for balancing, rocking, climbing, overhead activity, sliding, swinging, jumping, crawling, rotating, imaginative play, social play, play with natural materials such as sand and water, ball games, wheeled areas or other activities.

## APPENDIX 2 - Children’s Play Space Main Characteristics – general guidance

	LAP	LEAP	NEAP
<b>Age Group</b>	Primarily children up to 6 years	Children beginning to go out and play independently	Primarily older children of relative independence
<b>Walking Time</b>	Within 1 minute of home	Within 5 minutes of home	Within 15 minutes of home
<b>Location</b>	Beside well used pedestrian route	Beside well used pedestrian route	Beside well used pedestrian route
<b>Characteristics</b>	Reasonably flat, well drained grass or hard surface	Reasonably flat, well drained grass or hard surface with impact absorbing surfaces beneath equipment	Reasonably flat, well drained grass and hard surface with impact absorbing surfaces beneath equipment
<b>Activity Zone</b>	Minimum 100 sq m	Minimum 400 sq m	Minimum 1000 sq m
<b>Equipment</b>	Features that may allow to claim space as theirs	Minimum of 6 stimulating and challenging play experiences	Minimum of 9 stimulating and challenging play experiences
<b>Buffer</b>	5 metres minimum to separate activity zone and forward most part of nearest dwelling	10 metres minimum to separate activity zone and forward most part of nearest dwelling 20 metres between activity zone and habitable room façade of dwelling	30 metres minimum to separate activity zone and boundary of nearest property containing a dwelling Greater distance may be need for purpose built skate park facilities

<b>Planting</b>	Varied to provide a mix of scent, colour and texture	Varied to provide a mix of scent, colour and texture	Varied to provide a mix of scent, colour and texture
<b>Fencing</b>	600mm guard rail, low fence or planting to indicate perimeter	Boundaries should be recognisable. Perimeter fences may be inappropriate but some fencing could be necessary. If used, a height of 1 metre with two outward opening gates	Boundaries should be recognisable. Perimeter fences may be inappropriate but some fencing could be necessary. If used, a height of 1 metre with two outward opening gates
<b>Seating</b>	1 seat/bench and litter bin	Provision for accompanying adults and siblings	Provision for accompanying adults and siblings
<b>Litter Bins</b>	N/A	One or more	One or more
<b>Notice</b>	<p>Sign indicating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area is for children's play</li> <li>• Dogs are not welcome</li> </ul>	<p>Sign indicating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area is for children's play</li> <li>• Dogs are not welcome</li> <li>• Name and telephone of facility operator</li> <li>• Location of nearest telephone</li> </ul>	<p>Sign indicating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area is for children's play</li> <li>• Dogs are not welcome</li> <li>• Name and telephone of facility operator</li> <li>• Location of nearest telephone</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 3 – FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS COST GUIDANCE

Indicative Fixed Play Equipment Installation & Maintenance Costs 2015

LAP Sample Requirements	Installation Costs
Anchored Litter Bins x 2	£458
Fire retardant benches x 2 on concrete base	£1,080
Tarmacadam surface	£5,200
Rubber safety surfacing	£22,500
Metal fencing 1.2m bow topped	£3,800
Tarmacadam 1.5m width path	£975
Self-closing gates x 2	£1,904
Signage inclusive of fixings and posts	£265
Grass 100m2	£1,000
Tree/Shrub	£2,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£39,182</b>

LAP Maintenance Requirements	25 year Costs
Rotary grass cutting	£7,500
Tree/Shrub	£5,000
Furniture	£5,000
Empty litter bins	£15,000
Replace vandalised equipment	£5,000
Annual safety inspection	£3,750
Annual risk assessment	£1,000
Re-painting equipment	£5,000
Overlay footpath	£3,000
Replace safety surface	£900
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£51,150</b>

LEAP Sample Requirements	Installation Costs
Multi climber Junior	£9,281
6" 1 bay 2 seat Cradle Swing	£3,590
8" 1 bay 2 seat Flat Swing	£3,879
Roundabout	£6,679
Spring Rocker	£1,654
Spring Rocker	£1,654
See Saw	£3,360
DDA Items	£601
Anchored litter bins x 2	£458
Fire retardant benches x 2	£1,080
Tarmacadam surface	£19,500
Rubber safety surfacing	£10,150
Metal fencing 1.2m bow topped	£7,500
Tarmacadam 1.5m width path	£975
Self-closing gates x 2	£1,569
Safety barriers	£255
Signage	£265
Grass 100m2	£1,000
Tree/Shrub	£2,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£75,450</b>

LEAP Maintenance Requirements	25 year Costs
Rotary Grass Cutting	£15,000
Tree/Shrub	£5,000
Furniture	£5,000
Play Equipment Safety Check	£15,000
Empty Litter Bins Cleansing	£17,500
Replace Vandalised Equipment	£50,000
Annual Safety Inspection	£1,500
Annual Risk Assessment	£1,000
Re-painting Equipment	£7,500
Overlay Footpath	£25,000
Replace Safety Surface	£15,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£157,500</b>

NEAP Sample Requirements	Installation Costs
Multi climber Junior	£9,281
6" 1 bay 2 seat Cradle Swing	£3,590
8" 1 bay 2 seat Flat Swing	£3,879
Roundabout	£6,679
Spring Rocker	£1,654
Spring Rocker	£1,654
See Saw	£3,360
Dynamic Structures	£2,680
Dynamic Structures	£3,940
DDA Items	£601
Anchored litter bins x 2	£458
Fire retardant benches x 2	£1,080
Tarmacadam surface	£19,500
Rubber safety surfacing	£10,150
Metal Fencing 1.2m bow topped	£16,500
Tarmacadam 1.5m width path	£975
Wood bark	£6,000
Self-closing gates x 2	£1,569
Safety barriers	£255
Signage	£265
Grass 100m2	£2,200
Tree/Shrub	£2,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£98,270</b>

NEAP Maintenance Requirements	25 year Costs
Rotary Grass Cutting	£25,000
Tree/Shrub	£7,500
Furniture	£5,000
Play Equipment Safety Check	£17,500
Empty Litter Bins Cleansing	£20,000
Replace Vandalised Equipment	£62,500
Annual Safety Inspection	£1,500
Annual Risk Assessment	£1,000
Re-painting Equipment	£7,500
Overlay Footpath/Tarmac areas	£25,000
Replenish Wood bark	£37,500
Replace Safety Surface	£15,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£225,000</b>

<b>Formal Play Provisions Installation and Maintenance Costs</b>	<b>Indicative Installation Costs</b>	<b>25 Years Costs</b>
<b>Multi Use Games Areas</b>	£75,000	£59,025
<b>40mx18m fenced &amp; floodlit</b>		
<b>Tennis Courts (2) 37mx42m</b>	£117,000	£60,275
<b>Fenced and floodlit</b>		
<b>Football Pitches per pitch</b>	£75,000	£184,125
<b>110mx71m (including run-off)</b>		
<b>Rugby Pitches</b>	£75,000	£184,125
<b>106mx79m (including run-off)</b>		
<b>Cricket 4xturf</b>	£54,000	£154,700
<b>1xArtificial total 6649m2 including outfield</b>		
<b>Out Door Bowls 40mx40m</b>	£750,000	£580,525
<b>Inclusive of Pavilion</b>		
<b>ATP's sand based</b>	£550,000	£209,025
<b>100mx64m fenced and floodlit</b>		
<b>Rebound wall with goals</b>	£10,000	£61,075
<b>10mx10m</b>		
<b>Rebound wall with goals</b>	£10,000	£61,075
<b>10mx10m</b>		
<b>Rebound wall &amp; basket ball</b>	£11,000	£74,600
<b>10mx20m</b>		
<b>BMX Track</b>	£75,000	£140,075
<b>50mx20m fenced &amp; floodlit</b>		
<b>Skate board provision</b>	£120,000	£143,075
<b>50mx20m fenced &amp; floodlit</b>		

<b>Formal Play Provisions Installation and Maintenance Costs</b>	<b>Installation Costs</b>	<b>25 Years Costs</b>
<b>Informal Play Space 5,000m2 graded level seeded and stoned picked inclusive of path and furniture</b>	£45,000	£322,525