

Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Reasoned Justification

26.1 Well designed, attractive open space is an essential component of a high quality of life. It contributes positively to bio-diversity, health and the character of an area, and can also help to reduce the impacts of extreme temperatures and flash flooding.

26.2 National planning policy emphasises the benefits of recreational open space in terms of sustainable patterns of urban and rural development, strong vibrant communities and the promotion of health and well-being. Open space for recreation and sport can deliver a number of Green Infrastructure objectives.

26.3 There is a wide range in types of open space across South Worcestershire, for example, playing fields, allotments, cemeteries, parks and amenity green space. Some of these e.g. Site of Special Scientific Interest are statutorily protected. Accessible open spaces of strategic importance e.g. the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, are set out both on the Key Diagram and Proposals Map.

Playing fields Malvern



26.4 Policy SWDP 44 applies to all open spaces as identified on the Proposals Map together with numerous incidental open spaces, too small to identify on the Proposals Map but which contribute to the quality and character of areas. These are often valued by local communities and therefore worthy of policy protection. Whilst most open spaces are publicly accessible some are in private ownership although these nonetheless perform valuable functions e.g. contributing to the character of the area and providing a "sense of openness/space".

26.1 SWDP 44: Protecting Open Space for Sport and Recreation

SWDP 44: Protecting Open Space for Sport and Recreation Uses

Open space, sport and recreation uses will be secured through the following measures :

- Protecting existing sites of value;

- Addressing existing deficiencies in provision through qualitative and quantitative enhancement of existing provision, improving access to existing facilities or securing new provision; and
- Ensuring that proposals for new development contribute to open space, sport and recreation provision commensurate to the need generated by the proposals

In determining the nature of new or improved provision the respective local authorities will consult with Town and Parish Councils, together with potential users of the green space wherever possible, to ensure that provision meets local needs.

No development of open spaces will be permitted unless the following exceptional circumstances are satisfied:

- The proposal is for a community/recreational use which does not compromise the essential quality and character of the open space or;
- An assessment of community and technical need clearly demonstrates that the land is surplus to requirements, and
- Alternative open space provision of an equivalent community benefit is secured in a convenient and accessible location within the same parish/town/city.

Links to the Objectives

26.5 The Preferred Option policy for Protecting Sport and Recreation supports the following objectives:

- A better environment for today and tomorrow objectives 1, 2, 4 and 5;
- Improving health and well-being objective 2;
- Communities that are safe and feel safe objectives 1 and 2.

Alternative Options Considered

26.6 **Development Management decisions could be based upon national planning policy.** This would result in an absence of local planning policy to compliment strategies by other agencies/organisations. It would not provide sufficient protection of existing open space to the detriment of people's quality of life.

26.7 Rely on the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network. Although this includes the wider strategic areas, there are many local spaces which have distinctive and important within the local area. They provide recreation space, wildlife habitats and a visual break for local communities. It is important that they are protected and enhanced.

26.2 SWDP 45: Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation Uses in New Development

Reasoned Justification

26.8 New housing developments are essentially new communities and should have the same balance of green and open space as found in existing communities. The provision of open space is an essential aspect of developing mixed and balanced communities.

26.9 Open space, sport and recreation audits have been undertaken for the three authorities under the terms of Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation) and its accompanying guidance. Standards for provision of types of a range of open space have evolved from the audits and these, together with certain standards derived from more recent data sources or studies form the basis for both the protection of existing provision and new provision within new housing developments.

Play facilities at Splash Pad, Gheluvelt Park, Worcester



26.10 The standards for outdoor sports provision are based on the “Sports Facilities Framework” report for South Worcestershire (July 2010). The Accessibility standards are based on Fields in Trust “Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play” 2008.

26.11 With regard to natural/semi natural green space the towns and villages are surrounded by accessible countryside which make up most of the majority of the Green Infrastructure of South Worcestershire. Policies SWDP5 and SWDP43 address the need to safeguard and improve existing Green Infrastructure and enhancement by further provision associated with new development. The policy will assist in informing the appropriate contribution to be made to natural/semi-natural green space.

26.12 In order to provide flexibility and to take account of any changes in open space management regimes over the plan period the make-up of the overall open space requirements associated with a planning application may differ depending upon local needs and circumstances at the time of the submission of the planning application.

26.13 It is recognised that the provision of useable open space on small housing developments (10 or less) is not practical. In these circumstances off-site developer contributions will be required, to be pooled and made available to City, Town and Parish Councils for use in implementing schemes to enhance or improve local open space provision.

SWDP 45: Provision of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Use in New Developments

All housing proposals, including mixed use schemes, will be required to design in or contribute to the provision of open space, sport and recreation, together with secure arrangements for its long term management and maintenance. The amount, type and form of open space will be determined having regard to the nature and size of development proposed and the community needs likely to be generated by it.

In respect of 10 dwellings or more, and at the discretion of the local authority, provision should normally be made on site in accordance with the minimum standards (hectares/1000 persons) of provision set out below. Where this is not possible or appropriate, or the scheme is for less than 10 dwellings, a financial contribution towards suitable new provision or enhancement of existing facilities off site will be required based on the adopted Charging Schedule and secured through a legal agreement.

Table 24 Provision of open space, sport and recreation use in new developments

Typology	Malvern Hills	<i>Worcester (inc. Worcester-related growth adjacent to city)</i>	<i>Wychavon</i>
Parks & Gardens	0.14	0.61	0.42
Amenity Greenspace	1.86	0.5	0.61
Children & Young People	0.04	0.61	0.04
Cemeteries, churchyards	0.41	No Set Standard	No Set Standard

Typology	Malvern Hills	Worcester (inc. Worcester-related growth adjacent to city)	Wychavon
Civic Space	0.03	0.03	0.03
Allotments	0.14	0.4	0.39
Outdoor Sports	1.6	1.3	1.6

On site provision of open space will have regard to the following accessibility standards:

Children's Play Space (walking distances to dwellings):

Local Area for Play (LAP) – within 100m

Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) – within 400m

Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play) (NEAP) – within 1km

Playing Pitches

Within 1.2km of all dwellings

Guidance on the manner in which the standards will be implemented together with details of a scheme for the receipt and implementation of developer contributions will be set out in the Contributions Supplementary Planning Document.

Links to the Objectives

26.14 The Preferred Option policy for Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation use in New Developments supports the following objectives:

- A Better Environment for Tomorrow objectives 3, 4 and 5;
- Improving Health and Well-being objective 2;
- Communities that are Safe and Feel Safe objective 2.

Alternative Options Considered

26.15 **Development Management decisions could be based upon national planning policy.** This would result in an absence of local planning policy to complement strategies by other agencies/organisations. It would not provide sufficient provision of new open space to the detriment of people's quality of life.

26.16 A South Worcestershire Standard. One standard would not reflect the differences between the urban and rural areas, or the character differences between Worcester, the towns and villages.