

Open Space, Formal Education & Recreation and Local Green Spaces Policy

Reasoned Justification

North Norfolk has a diverse range of open spaces¹ which perform a range of functions and make a significant contribution to the character of the District. Access to these areas is also valuable in terms of making an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities and can provide a range of benefits including for biodiversity, mitigating flood risk, carbon storage, food production and for visual amenity. It is therefore important that these spaces are protected whilst allowing improvements to their recreational and / or environmental value.

The NPPF at paragraph 96 states that policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should then be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is required. The NPPF at paragraph 97 places strong emphasis on protecting existing open spaces and sports and recreational facilities.

NNDC is committed to ensuring that there is a wide range of high quality open spaces, outdoor sport and recreation facilities across the District and will seek to reduce identified deficiencies and protect and enhance the quality of, and access to, existing open space, outdoor sport and recreation facilities, whether designated or un-designated.

Provision of new Open Space

The policy approach is based on the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space as identified within the 2019 Open Space Assessment. This study identified a requirement for 72.39 hectares of open space over the plan period (to 2036) in order to meet the proposed housing requirements (See [Appendix X](#)). This is broken down into 4.36ha per 1,000 population and is further broken down in the following typologies of open space:

- Play Space (children): 0.10ha per 1,000 population
- Play Space (youth): 0.06ha
- Parks and Recreation: 1.10ha
- Natural Greenspace: 1.5ha
- Amenity Greenspace: 1ha
- Allotments: 0.6ha

This is to be met through both on-site and off-site contributions on the following site sizes:

Type of Provision	11-19 dwellings	20-49 dwellings	50-99 dwellings	100 – 199 dwellings	200+ dwellings
Allotments	Off-site	Off-site	Off-site	On-site	On-site
Amenity Green Space	On-site	On-site	On-site	On-site	On-site
Parks and Recreation Grounds	Off-site	Off-site	Off-site	Off-site	On-site
Play Space (children)	On-site* ²	On-site	On-site	On-site	On-site

¹ All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity' (NPPF, 2018, PP. 69).

² For children's play space, the minimum size required for new equipped provision is 0.01ha (100sq m). At smaller scheme sizes, consideration should be given to the design of amenity green space to provide 'playable' space and making use of natural play solutions, rather than equipped provision always being required.

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Play Space (Youth)	Off-site	Off-site	Off-site	Off-site	On-site
Accessible Natural Green Space	Off-site	Off-site	Off-site	On-site	On-site

Table X

As new housing development will create an additional need for open space, sports and recreation facilities, there is a requirement for new qualifying developments to provide or contribute towards open space, sports and recreation facilities. In the first instance, new facilities should be provided on-site. However, whether provision is on-site, off-site or both will depend on the size of the proposed development. Consideration will also be given to the existing provision within the local area both in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. Open space provision or improvement will be secured through planning conditions and/or section 106 planning obligations.

As part of the North Norfolk Open Space Assessment (2019), an open space calculator has been created to calculate the quantum of on-site open space that is to be provided based on the number of bedrooms proposed by the new development. The detail of the quantum of open space requirement that form the basis of how the Council will calculate open space contributions is set out in **Appendix X**.

Any specific local open space requirements will be set out within individual site allocation policies (or associated development briefs). Neighbourhood development plans may also outline open space requirements in line with local evidence and the North Norfolk Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2019).

Use of SuDS

Innovative use of new drainage schemes / Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) within Amenity Green Space is promoted where it can be demonstrated that this does not undermine the functionality of the amenity green space. Open space / Green Infrastructure and SuDs which all contribute and incorporate biodiversity enhancements should be considered from the outset and be an integral part of the design process.

Local Green Space (LGS)

Local Green Space is a national designation, as referenced in the NPPF, which aims to protect green areas which hold a demonstrable and particular importance to local communities. LGS can be designated through local and neighbourhood plans and can be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Proposals on Local Green Space should not be approved except for in very special circumstances. This is in line with paragraph 101 of the NPPF which sets out that policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts and Section 13 of the NPPF 'Protecting Green Belt Land'.

Purpose: To protect, enhance and provide open space, outdoor sport and recreation and to protect Local Green Space.

Policy ENV7

~~Open Space & Local Green Space~~

Open Space, Formal Education & Recreation and Local Green Spaces

Provision of New Open Space

North Norfolk District Council will support the creation of new and enhanced open space, outdoor sport and recreation facilities by:

- Requiring **all** new qualifying residential developments (see **Appendix X**) of 11 or more dwellings with a combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000 square metres (gross internal area) ~~to shall~~ provide (**on-site**) or contribute towards (**off-site**) **all forms of** open space, outdoor sport and recreation facilities in line with the standards set out in **Appendix X and Table X and relevant Site Allocations policies**;
- Requiring ~~any provided~~ **all new** open space, outdoor sport and recreation facilities must be suitable, useable, well located, accessible, and designed with appropriate management arrangements in place **having regard to the North Norfolk Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2019) and the quality standards set out in Appendix X.**
- ~~Ensuring provisions are in place to maintain open space areas in the future~~

Specific Site Allocation policies may require an increased quantum of open space within the policy wording to reflect site specific issues and /or to address local shortfalls in open space provision.

There is a presumption that open space, outdoor sport and recreation facilities will be provided within the development site, where required, except where ~~robust~~ evidence indicates that a more holistic approach to open space is required or where on-site provision is not suitable. In these circumstances financial contributions will be considered to support the creation or enhancement of off-site provision. *(note link to Rams policy to be added when available)*

Where appropriate, developer contributions for the future management and maintenance of open space, outdoor sport and recreation facilities will be sought.

Provision of new, and enhancements to existing Recreation Open Space

The provision of new playing fields and the improvement of existing playing fields will be supported where there is identified and unmet demand in accordance with the North Norfolk Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2019)

Protection of Education and Recreation Open Space

Development on Formal Education & Recreation facilities (*designated and undesignated*) will not be acceptable unless:

- Development comprises of appropriate development which enhances the functional use of the site for outdoor sport, or
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity, quality and local accessibility in a suitable location and made available for use prior to the loss of the area of open space to be built upon; or
- It can be demonstrated (through a local assessment³) that the sport and recreation facility is surplus to requirements within the settlement and that any proposed loss would not result in

³ That demonstrates an adequate supply of sport and recreation facilities locally with regard to the quantity, quality and accessibility as measured against currently adopted standards.

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a current or likely shortfall during the plan period (taking into account alternative forms of open space, sport and recreation where deficiencies are identified within the latest Open Spaces, Sports and Recreation Strategy); or

- there are no significant detrimental impacts to the amenity or biodiversity value of the sport and recreation facility

Protection of Visually important Open Space

Development on visual important open spaces including those designated as Open Land Areas and Local Green Space on the policies maps will not usually be supported.

Protection of Local Green Space

Planning Permission on Local Green Space will not be permitted except in very special circumstances.

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APPENDIX (to Local Plan)

Appendix X: Applicability

The requirement for open space should apply to all new residential development (under class C3 and C4 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) including:

- All new full planning applications;
- All new outline planning applications;
- Applications for reserved matters, where numbers have not been specified at outline consent stage;
- Renewals of outline consents;
- Areas which are subject to development briefs;
- Permissions in principle applications and subsequent Technical Details Consent applications;
- Conversion of existing buildings to residential use;
- Subdivision of existing dwellings resulting in additional residential units;
- Sheltered and retirement housing (non-institutional)*

*C3 Older People's Accommodation will not be required to make on-site or off-site provision for Children's Play Space (Youth or Child), but will be expected to accord with all other on-site/off-site contributions. Notwithstanding this the Parks and Recreation contribution may best be used toward an amenity benefit for the elderly population e.g. bowls greens, increased amenity space or could be re-directed to a community facility such as libraries or town/village halls.

Development proposals proposed that are within the following Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) categories are likely to be exempt from the requirements, although any recreational open space requirements for these types of developments could be negotiated separately:

- C1 Hotels- Hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided (excludes hostels);
- C2 Residential Institutions category - Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres; and
- C2A Secure Residential Institution - Use for a provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as a military barracks.

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Appendix X updated appendix to LP re open space requirements

Open Space Type	Quantity Standards (per 1,000 Population)	Area Required (over plan period to 2036)	Accessibility Standard	Quality Standard
Play Space (Children)	4.36 ha per 1,000 population including: 0.10ha per 1,000 population	72.39 ha over plan period 1.66 ha	All residents within the District should have access to a playing pitch within 800m of home. Reference should also be made to Figure 9 of the North Norfolk Open Space Assessment 2019.	It is expected that the design of play would take a landscape design approach (designed to fit its surroundings and enhance the local environment), incorporating play into the overall landscape masterplan for new development, and could include natural play e.g. grassy mounds, planting, logs, and boulders can all help to make a more attractive and playable setting for equipment, and planting can also help attract birds and other wildlife to literally bring the play space alive. In densely populated urban areas with little or no natural or green space, this more natural approach can help 'soften' an urban landscape.
Play Space (Youth)	0.06ha per 1,000 population	1ha	All residents within the District should have access to a playing pitch within 1.2km of home. Reference should also be made to Figure 10 of the North Norfolk Open Space Assessment 2019.	The challenge for play providers is to create play spaces which will attract children, capture their imagination and give them scope to play in new, more exciting, and more creative ways e.g. moving away from fencing play areas (where it is safe to do so), so that the equipment is integrated with its setting, making it feel more inviting to explore

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				<p>and so people are free to use the space without feeling restricted.</p> <p>Play England are keen to see a range of play spaces in all urban environments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Door-step spaces close to home B. Local play spaces – larger areas within easy walking distance C. Neighbourhood spaces for play – larger spaces within walking distance D. Destination/family sites – accessible by bicycle, public transport and with car parking. <p>Regard should be given to the guidance set out within the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play England’s ‘Design for Play’ • Play England’s ‘Quality Assessment Tool’, and; • KIDS ‘Inclusive Design for Play’ • Inclusive Play ‘Plan inclusive Play Areas’
Parks and Recreation	1.10ha of pitch space per 1,000 population	18.26ha	All residents within the District should have access to a playing pitch within 1km of home. Reference should also be made to Figure 8 of the North Norfolk Open Space Assessment 2019.	National guidance relevant to this typology is provided in the ‘Green Flag’ quality standard for parks which sets out benchmark criteria for quality open spaces. For outdoor sports space, Sport England have produced a wealth of useful documents outlining the quality standards for facilities such as playing pitches, changing rooms, MUGAs and tennis courts plus associated ancillary facilities. The Rugby Football Union have provided guidance on the quality and standard of provision of facilities for rugby, and the England and Wales Cricket Board have provided guidance for cricket facilities. It is recommended that

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				the guidance provided in these documents is adopted by the Councils, and that all new and improved provision seeks to meet these guidelines.
Natural Green Space	1.5ha per 1,000 population	24.91ha	All residents within the District should have access to an allotment garden within 1.6km of home. Reference should also be made to Figure 11-17 of the North Norfolk Open Space Assessment 2019.	<p>The shape and size of space provided should allow for meaningful and safe recreation. Provision might be expected to include (as appropriate) elements of woodland, wetland, heathland and meadow, and could also be made for informal public access through recreation corridors.</p> <p>For larger areas, where car-borne visits might be anticipated, some parking provision will be required. The larger the area the more valuable sites will tend to be in terms of their potential for enhancing local conservation interest and biodiversity. Wherever possible these sites should be linked to help improve their wildlife value and Green Infrastructure functionality as part of a network.</p> <p>Natural Green Space should offer a more natural ambience, and encourage ecological and habitat diversity. In areas where it may be impossible or inappropriate to provide additional natural green space consistent with the standard, other approaches should be pursued which could include (for example):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing the management of marginal space on playing fields and parks to enhance biodiversity. • Encouraging living green roofs as part of new development/ redevelopment. • Encouraging the creation of native mixed species hedgerows. • Additional use of long grass management regimes.

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to watercourses and water bodies. • Innovative use of new drainage schemes / Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). • Use of native trees and plants with biodiversity value in high quality soft landscaping of new developments. <p>The above should in any event be principles to be pursued and encouraged at all times.</p> <p>Protecting, creating, enhancing and retrofitting natural and semi-natural features in our urban environments is a cost-effective and win-win approach to delivering positive outcomes for people and wildlife.</p>
Amenity Green Space	1ha per 1,000 population	16.60ha	All residents within the District should have access to an allotment garden within 800m of home. Reference should also be made to Figure 7 of the North Norfolk Open Space Assessment 2019.	<p>The value of ‘amenity green space’ must be recognised especially within housing areas, where it can provide important local opportunities for play, exercise and visual amenity that are almost immediately accessible.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that in addition to avoiding the proliferation of small amenity spaces, that all amenity green space should be subject to landscape design, ensuring the following quality principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable of supporting informal recreation such as a kickabout, space for dog walking or space to sit and relax;

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include high quality planting of native trees and/or shrubs to create landscape structure and biodiversity value; • Include paths along main desire lines (lit where appropriate); • Be designed to ensure easy maintenance.
Allotments	0.60ha per 1,000 population	9.96	All residents within the District should have access to an allotment garden within 1.2km of home. Reference should also be made to Figure 6 of the North Norfolk Open Space Assessment 2019.	<p>The following recommendations are made to ensure the quality of allotments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-drained soil which is capable of cultivation to a reasonable standard. • A sunny, open aspect preferably on a southern facing slope. • Limited overhang from trees and buildings either bounding or within the site. • Adequate lockable storage facilities, and a good water supply within easy walking distance of individual plots. • Provision for composting facilities. • Secure boundary fencing. • Good access within the site both for pedestrians and vehicles. • Good vehicular access into the site and adequate parking and manoeuvring space. • Disabled access. • Toilets. • Notice boards. <p>Allotment sites should be of adequate quality and support the needs of the local community. Allotment sites which under-perform in terms of their value to the local community should be improved.</p>

Table X: Open Space Standards