

Supplementary Planning
Guidance Note

Recreational Public Open Space



Denbighshire County Council
Strategic Planning and Housing

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denbighshire
County Council



Contents

1.	Glossary of terms	3
2.	Document status and stages in preparation	4
3.	Background	4
4.	Planning Policy	5
4.1	Planning Policy Wales	5
4.2	Technical Advice Note 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space (2009)	6
4.3	Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 - 2021	6
5.	Current Provision and Needs	8
5.1	Current Open Space Assessment	8
5.2	Definitions of Open Space	8
5.3	Typologies of Open Space	9
5.4	Thresholds of Open Space	11
6.	Mitigation of Development	13
7.	Management of Development	15
8.	Delivery Trigger	15
9.	Guidance on the Design and Layout of new Open Space	16
9.1	Introduction	16
9.2	Open Space Design Principles	16
9.3	Amenity Green Spaces	18
9.4	Provision for Children and Young People	23
9.5	The 10 principles for designing successful play spaces	24
9.6	Outdoor Sports Facilities	28
9.7	Green Corridors and Active Travel Networks	33
9.8	Accessible Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace	34
10.	Contacts	35

1. Glossary of Terms

ATP	Artificial Turf Pitch
DCC	Denbighshire County Council
Environmental Play	Provision for meeting children’s need for play with natural elements.
FIT	Fields In Trust
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
LDP	Local Development Plan
LEAP	Local Equipped Area for Play
MUGA	Multi-use Games Area (an enclosed areas using synthetic grass or hard surface for informal play or sports)
NSALG	National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
NSNG	Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PPW	Planning Policy Wales
PROW	Public Right Of Way
RPOSAA	Recreational Public Open Space Audit and Assessment
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
TAN 16	Technical Advice Note 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space
Wheeled Play	Provision for the County's BMX, mountain bikes, skateboarding, scooter and in-line skate community
WG	Welsh Government

2. Document status and stages in preparation

2.1 This document is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) notes amplifying Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (LDP) policies in a format which aims to guide the process, design and quality of new development. The Council’s SPG notes are not part of the adopted LDP.

2.1.1 The Welsh Government (WG) has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent Local Planning Authority (LPA) document adoption, SPGs can be treated as a material planning consideration when LPAs, Planning Inspectors and the WG determine planning applications and appeals.

2.1.2 The purpose of this document is to provide detailed guidance and advice to assist members of the public and the Council, prospective applicants and Officers in discussions prior to the submission of and, consequently, in the determination of future planning applications. It was formally adopted by Denbighshire County Council’s Planning Committee on 15th March 2017.

2.1.3 This document was produced in line with planning policy and guidance laid out Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space.

3. Background

3.1 Public open space such as sports facilities, parks and gardens or areas of amenity greenspace are recognised as being important to the quality of people’s lives and to the achievement of sustainable communities. They contribute to the general well-being of the community in respect of providing for sport and recreation, encouraging physical activity and the associated health benefits that come with this. These areas encourage enjoyment of the natural environment whilst contributing to biodiversity, the conservation of nature and landscape, air quality and the protection of groundwater.

3.1.1 Planning policy both local and national seeks to protect and enhance the quantitative and qualitative provision of open space to meet the needs of current and future generations. This can be achieved by safeguarding and enhancing current provision and creating additional provision where demand/need is identified. Open space provisions for new developments will be of an appropriate amount and type and in the most suitable location to meet the needs of the local community.

4. Planning Policy

4.1 Planning Policy Wales

4.1.1 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, November 2016) [PPW] sets out national policy for Wales aiming at sound economic development, the conservation of natural assets and the quality of life of individuals and communities. It provides the policy framework for the effective preparation of local development plans.

4.1.2 PPW emphasises that Welsh Local Planning Authorities (WLPAs) are under the statutory duty to adhere to the sustainable development principles established by the 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015'. Chapter 4 sets out the principal policy framework for design principles that underpin sustainable development in aiming at addressing the three major challenges of spatial planning: demographic change, climate change, and spatial disparities in economic activities and wealth. The principal characteristics of good design are:

- *Inclusion*: people are placed at the heart of the design process, diversity and difference is acknowledged, a choice is offered where a single design solution cannot accommodate all uses, provides for flexibility in use;
- *Promotion of efficient use of resources including land*: seeks to maximise energy efficiencies, minimises the use of non-renewable resources and the generation of waste and pollution;
- *Tackling and addressing climate change*: reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and effective adaptation to the consequences of climate change;
- *Offering a high quality environment*: including open green space in places where higher density development takes place; and

- *Consideration of landscape impact:* positive contributions to environmental protection and improvement, protection of water resources and air quality.

4.1.3 PPW Tourism, Sports and Recreation offers Local Planning Authorities the following advice and policy guidance.

4.1.4 Sport and recreation contribute to our quality of life. The Welsh Government supports the development of sport and recreation, and the wide range of leisure pursuits which encourage physical activity. These activities are important for the well-being of children and adults and for the social and economic life of Wales.

4.1.5 ‘Climbing Higher’ (July 2006) sets out the Welsh Government’s long term strategy for an active, healthy and inclusive Wales where sport and physical activity are used to enhance the quality of life nationally and in local communities.

4.2 **Technical Advice Note 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space**

4.2.1 Planning Guidance (Wales) Technical Advice Note 16: Sport and Recreation 2009 [TAN 16] provides more detailed guidance on planning for sports and recreation uses and appropriate levels of provision. It recommends a minimum standard for outdoor playing space of 2.4 hectares (6 acres) per 1,000 population. This is in accordance with the guidelines set by FIT (Fields in Trust).

4.3 **Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 - 2021**

4.3.1 The Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 has been produced in accordance with planning legislation and national policy, and was adopted by the Council in June 2013.

- 4.3.2 LDP Objective no.8 aims to seek to protect existing open space and ensure that new developments make an adequate contribution to public open space provision. ‘Open space’ has been defined in TAN 16, Annex A as ‘all open space of public value, including land, and water areas like rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs and disused dock basins which offer opportunities for sport, recreation and tourism’
- 4.3.3 The LDP contains policies relating to the protection of existing open space and for the provision of open space in new developments. The most relevant policies are Policy BSC 11 – Recreation and Open Space and Policy BSC 12 – Community facilities.
- 4.3.4 Developers will be required to provide appropriate landscaping within new developments in addition to recreational open space.
- 4.3.5 The County Standard, set out in BSC11 has been developed in line with Technical Advice Note 16 – Sport, Recreation and Open Space (2009) which recommends that where there is no comprehensive Open Space Assessment available that it may be appropriate to use the Fields In Trust ‘benchmark’ standards. Policy BSC 11 specifies that the county minimum standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population will be applied to all development sites. Further guidance on how this standard will be applied is contained within following sections.

Links

Planning Policy Wales (English version):

<http://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/ppw/?lang=en>

Technical Advice Notes (English version):

<http://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/tans/?lang=en>

Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (English version):

<http://www.denbighldp.co.uk/english/default.htm>

5. Current Provision and Needs

5.1 Current Open Space Assessment

5.1.1 The Council is currently undertaking a full assessment of open space provision and needs across the County to assess the quantity, quality and accessibility of existing open space. Once completed, the results of this work will inform the review of the County standards.

5.1.2 Denbighshire County Council promotes a barrier-free environment and Access for All within the community, including disabled people under the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The needs of all sectors of the community should be considered in the provision of all types of recreational public open space.

5.2 Definitions of Open Space

5.2.1 Open space is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground. However, open space should be taken to mean 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 also act as a visual amenity and may have conservation and biodiversity importance.

5.2.2 The National Playing Field Association (NPFA, now Fields in Trust-FIT) defines playing space as, "Space which is available for sport, active recreation or children's play, which is of suitable size and nature for its intended purpose and safely accessible and available to the general public." FIT does not regard 'outdoor playing space' to be the same as public open space, rather it is space that is safely accessible and available to the general public, and of a suitable size and nature, for sport, active recreation or children's play. Accordingly it is a significant component, but not the only form, of open space' (FIT, 2008). This definition will be used when assessing whether suitable outdoor play space has been provided.

5.2.3 Open space is an essential element of a modern everyday life and it is widely recognised that the provision of high quality ‘public realm’ facilities such as parks and gardens, civic spaces and informal greenspaces are not only highly valued by residents of an area, they can assist in the promotion of an area as an attractive place to live, increasing property values and improving local environmental quality.

5.2.4 FIT (2016) states that ‘in promoting healthy communities, access to high quality open spaces can make an important contribution to health and wellbeing. Such open spaces should not be built on unless any loss is appropriately replaced or outweighed by new provision.’

5.2.5 Open space also plays an important role in meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding through integrating Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and other Green infrastructure benefits and functions and providing opportunities for conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

5.3 Typologies of Open Space

TAN 16 provides guidance on the different types of open space.

5.3.1 Table 1 Typologies of Open Space as outlined in TAN 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space

Ref. No.	Typology	TAN 16 Typology
i.	Public parks and gardens	including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens;
ii.	natural and semi-natural greenspaces	including woodland, urban forestry, scrub,
iii.	green corridors	Including river and canal banks, footpaths, cycle ways, bridleways, disused railway land and rights of way; these may link different areas within and between urban areas. They may also form part of a network which links urban areas, or links them to the surrounding countryside.

iv.	outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces, publicly or privately	Including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks, school and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas. A sports pitch is currently defined as a playing field, larger than 0.4 hectares in size that has been marked for team games in the last five years.
v.	amenity greenspace (most commonly, but not exclusively in housing areas	including informal recreation spaces (private or open to the public), roadside verges, greenspaces in and around housing and other premises e.g. hospitals, schools and colleges, industrial and business premises, domestic gardens and grounds, and village greens;
vi.	provision for children and young people	including play areas, areas for wheeled play, including skateboarding, outdoor kick about areas, and other less formal areas (e.g. 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters);
vii.	allotments, community gardens, and city (urban)	a statutory allotment is defined as having an area not exceeding 40 poles (1,000sq metres);
viii.	cemeteries and churchyards;	
ix.	accessible areas of countryside in the urban fringe	which directly adjoin or are connected to an urban area;
x.	civic spaces	Including civic and market squares, promenades and other predominantly hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians. These spaces may include planted areas and trees;
xi.	water	including open air tidal and freshwater

5.4 Thresholds for Provision

5.4.1 LDP Policy BSC11 requires developments to contribute to open space provision. New residential development can place additional demands on existing open space and we will therefore require open space to be provided on site or contributions made to improve existing local facilities. New residential development could take the form of new build, subdivision of existing residential development, or a change to residential use as a result of conversion.

5.4.2 Policy BSC11 sets out the Council’s standard for open space provision, which reflects the Fields in Trust ‘benchmark’ standards, see table 2. The Council is currently undertaking a comprehensive open space assessment for the County and the County Standard will be reviewed following completion of the assessment.

5.4.3 Table 2 Fields in Trust ‘benchmark’ standards, as applied in LDP Policy BSC 11

Type of Open Space	Standard
Outdoor Sport including Playing Pitches	1.6 Hectares/1,000 Population
Children’s Equipped Playspace	0.25 Hectares/1,000 Population
Children’s Informal Space	0.55 Hectares/1,000 Population
Overall	2.4 Hectares/1,000 Population

5.4.4 According to FIT, Outdoor Sport Facilities (including playing pitches) can include pitch sports including association football, rugby union, rugby league, hockey, lacrosse, cricket and American football. Other outdoor sports includes courts and greens comprising of natural or artificial surfaces, including tennis courts, bowling greens, athletics tracks and other outdoor sports areas.

5.4.5 Children’s equipped playspace is defined as designated areas for children and young people containing a range of facilities and an environment that has been designed to provide focused opportunities for outdoor play comprising casual or informal playing space within housing areas. Most of these sites are defined as Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs). Children’s informal space has been defined as informal recreation spaces, communal green spaces in and around housing, and village greens which are suitable for play. This can also be used describe the term ‘Amenity greenspace’, however not all Amenity greenspace is suitable for play.

5.4.6 The minimum standard for open space provision is therefore 24 m² per person. The expected occupancy of dwellings is estimated based on the current average household size of 2.3 persons in Denbighshire to provide the requirement per dwelling set out below.

5.4.7 Table 3 Requirements for open space provision

Type of open space	Requirement per dwelling
Outdoor sport, including playing pitches	36.8m ²
Children’s equipped playspace	5.75m ²
Children’s informal space	12.65m ²

5.4.8 Where the number and type of dwellings are unknown (for example, outline applications), the requirement for open space will be reserved through a planning condition or legal agreement to enable the matter to be resolved when a detailed application is made.

5.4.9 Policy BSC 11 advises that open space should always be provided on site unless it is impractical to do so. The Council's preference is for open space to be provided on site but acknowledge that there are circumstances where this would not be practical due to the site area. In line with this on site provision of outdoor sport provision will only be required on developments of 200 or more dwellings. On site provision of children’s playing space will only be required on developments of 30 or more dwellings. Where provision is not made on site, a commuted sum in lieu of on site provision will be required. These are purely indicative thresholds and on site provision for sites of less than 30 will be considered on their merits.

5.4.10 Table 4 Requirements for open space provision

Type of open space	Threshold for on-site provision	Threshold for financial contributions
Outdoor sport, including playing pitches	200 or more dwellings	1- 200 dwellings
Children’s equipped playspace	30 or more dwellings	1 – 30 dwellings
Children’s informal space	30 or more dwellings	1 – 30 dwellings

5.5 Developments comprising of sheltered, extra care, elderly housing and other specialist forms of development where children will not be resident will not be expected to provide children’s playspace, however, alternative open space should be provided on site for residents. This could include gardens, sitting areas, etc. Developers should also take advantage of the ability of open space to meet several demands in one place, and should be encouraged to use good design to make the most cost-effective use of the non-built parts of their new development sites.

5.5.1 There is on-going demand for allotment plots within the County, particularly in St Asaph, Ruthin, Denbigh, Llangollen, Rhyl and Prestatyn and provision of allotments, community orchards, community growing areas etc. on site or contributions towards providing off site facilities could be considered as part of the contribution to open space requirements.

5.5.2 Where appropriate, non-residential development should also incorporate open space and landscaping to ensure that high quality development is achieved, which contributes to the environment.

6. Mitigation of Development

6.1 Wherever practicable and where residential developments exceed the threshold outlined above, play areas and open space should be provided on site. In certain circumstances provision could be made off-site where it can be demonstrated that this would improve the quality of both the development and the open space provided can better meet the needs of the local area. Proposals should be developed in consultation with local Ward Councillors.

- 6.1.1 It is vitally important that all play areas are well designed and laid out in appropriate locations to ensure that they are well used. Poorly designed and located play areas, often small left over areas on the edges of the development, can create amenity problems for residents or be under used and fall into disrepair and neglect. Sites should make full use of existing features such as public footpaths and trees and ensure wherever possible these are improved and retained on site. Developers are encouraged to provide safe to use open space on site that caters for the needs of different users and age groups. Layout and design features should be drawn up to be as inclusive and accessible for all, providing a pleasant environment for relaxation as well as a safe environment for children's play. Siting to allow for natural surveillance and road safety must be considered as part of the design process. There may be scope to combine open space and landscaping provision with sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS) and habitat creation to enhance biodiversity.
- 6.1.2 Financial contributions are calculated using the estimated number of residents and current costs of providing recreation space.
- 6.1.3 Please use the Council's on-line open space calculator at:
http://www.denbighldp.co.uk/english/spg_new.htm
- 6.1.4 Contributions collected will be used to improve existing recreation facilities, improve access to existing facilities or to provide new facilities within the local area affected by the development. Only those areas affected by the development will receive the benefit of the financial contribution. Where a number of developments are being proposed within close proximity which as a whole will necessitate a need for additional facilities, Denbighshire may combine contributions as necessary to negate the cumulative effect.
- 6.1.5 The Council may require applicants to enter into a financial Bond in order to secure financial contributions or open space required as part of the S106 agreement. Bonds are the Council's preferred form of security and will be used to protect the Council in the event that a landowner defaults against a payment or fails to deliver the open space and /or maintenance required. Further information on the use of Section 106 agreements can be found in the 'Planning Obligations' Supplementary Planning Guidance.

7. Management of Development

7.1 Where open space has been or is to be provided on site, the Council will require developers to make appropriate arrangements for the future maintenance of the open space. Proposals should be discussed with the Council at an early stage. Pre-application discussion with the case officer is welcomed in order to explain open space requirements. We will need to be satisfied that appropriate arrangements have been made for long term maintenance; for example by the establishment of a sufficiently resourced management company, residents association or Community, City or Town Council responsible for their upkeep, prior to approval of the planning application. If the space is to be adopted by a City, Town or Community Council, a commuted sum should also be provided for the maintenance of the facility for an agreed period. In most circumstances this will be for a period of 25 years, however there may be situations where a different maintenance period is required. Proposals should be developed in consultation with local Ward Councillors. The Council will require applicants to enter into a financial bond in order to secure financial contributions required unless suitable security arrangements have been agreed within the legal agreement.

7.2 Please use the Council's on-line open space calculator to calculate the maintenance requirement at:

http://www.denbighldp.co.uk/english/spg_new.htm

8. Delivery Trigger

8.1 The timescales for delivery of the required works will be agreed with the Council and form part of the Legal Agreement or planning conditions. Proposals should be discussed at an early stage to ensure that where necessary, appropriate provision is provided in a planned way and forms an integral part of the design of the development. The timing of contributions will depend on both the nature of the development and type of contribution required. On site open space should normally be provided in a phased manner and always before the completion of the development.

9. Guidance on the Design and Layout of new Open Space

9.1 Introduction

This section sets out guidelines for the design of public space, however they should be treated with flexibility and individual solutions found for each site. The main aim of the design should be to create open space that fulfils its function with efficiency and can be easily maintained.

9.2 Open Space Design Principles

The provision of open space within new residential development, and enhancement of existing spaces requires co-ordinated planning and design if the full wellbeing benefits for communities – existing and future are to be realised. The following principles collectively provide a way to make resilient planning decisions for open space planning:

- 9.2.1
 - Ensure areas of open space are a planned and integral component of the residential layout;
 - Green space must be located for best affect depending on the range of wellbeing functions and priorities it needs to address - based upon the site, its proposed use, context, wellbeing needs and priorities;
 - The open space assessment and site contextual analysis should help identify wellbeing needs and priorities in the vicinity of the site, including areas in need of protection and enhancement;
 - Proposals should be developed in consultation with local Ward Councillors and community consultation will be necessary where proposals concern existing open space and where new open space is intended to provide a shared resource between new residents of the development and the existing community;

- The range of wellbeing functions that open space can incorporate is diverse and may include –
 - Social spaces for play, access to nature, informal recreation, food growing, dog walking;
 - Accessibility on foot and bicycle both within the site and to wider active travel networks;
 - Working with existing green infrastructure – conserving and enhancing natural elements such as trees, habitats, species connectivity and drainage;
 - Amenity – creating attractive safe places for people, segregation of noisy and quiet site uses, mitigating the impacts of traffic noise and emissions, surface water management to protect from flooding;
- Landscape design techniques are useful to draw the diverse physical components together into a co-ordinated place-based implementable plan. This will help ensure wellbeing functions, sense of place, and the needs of people across different age ranges and abilities are addressed;
- Standard solutions and standard play schemes do not realise wellbeing benefits to the extent that site specific planning and design can.

9.2.2 New open space areas and recreation facilities should be designed to a high standard and applicants should consult with the public through interactive face to face meetings located in their area, in finding out what they want in terms of design and layout. Proposals should be developed in consultation with local Ward Councillors. Participation by local volunteer community groups will increase the chances of local people using the facility and taking pride in it. Enhancing existing facilities is also very important and contributions may be used to deliver improvements.

9.3 Amenity Green Spaces

General Design and Layout

- 9.3.1 Amenity greenspace is an area of green space that is used for informal recreation. Amenity Green Spaces are important features in many areas. They can be maintained grassed areas or areas where they have been left to grow wild and natural in order to conserve the biodiversity of the area, see pictures 1 and 2. They help to define and separate urban areas and promote visual amenity and ecological benefits whilst also improving health and general wellbeing. POSTnote 538 (October 2016) Green Space and Health, demonstrates that there may be health benefits associated with proximity and access to green space for the 82% of the UK's population now living in urban environments. This shows that creation and enhancement of greenspace can improve the mental and physical well-being of vulnerable groups.
- 9.3.2 It is very important that the space is designed in such a way that complements the character of the area and is well integrated into the surrounding environment or neighbourhood. Biodiversity, if present at the site, should be protected and the design be sensitive to its needs. Small areas of Amenity greenspace can also have multiple roles, for example, as grassed infiltration basins and rain gardens which are shallow landscaped depressions and can deal with rainwater and runoff, see picture 3. This green infrastructure should be designed into the overall plan for open space in new developments.

Picture 1 taken from Greengage Environmental (2015), People and Place- The Importance of Outdoor Space



Picture 2: Wildflower planting on Amenity greenspace in Sompting, Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere



Picture 3 Green infrastructure, rain gardens taken from Susdrain



New Sites

9.3.3 With the creation of new spaces, there will be opportunity to enhance their wildlife value, for example by creating wildlife corridors and creating areas of lower levels of management where it can be left more natural. The Amenity Green Space must have more than one access point, however steeply sloping sites could be classed as unusable due to the gradient. The site should be well located within the development, see the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Design. The site needs to be open which allows for visual amenity and safety, reducing the likelihood of crimes occurring. It should be overlooked by residences from the front ideally, and be designed to be fairly central where possible.

9.3.4 Amenity Green Spaces that are next to a water course can provide a storage area for flood water, therefore in such cases the space should be designed with the management of flood risk in mind. The Welsh Government's SUDS standards can be found at the following link and it is recommended to consider these guidelines when designing open space sites in new developments.

Link <http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/151230-suds-standards-en.pdf>

Access

- 9.3.5 Entrances and gates should be at least 1800mm wide to allow for bicycle, wheel chair and pram access. Accessible barriers preventing vehicles from entering should be erected where necessary. The needs of the visually impaired need to be considered including the location of litter bins, lampposts and bollards. Maintenance machinery has to be able to access the site therefore locked gates need to be provided of an appropriate size to the machinery needed. This is formally agreed at the planning application stage. If the site is near a busy road, safe crossings must be provided.

Paths

- 9.3.6 The paths should have a surface width of at least 1800mm and must be level or suitably ramped, even and firm to allow wheelchairs onto the green space. Surface materials could include tarmac, stone, concrete or paving. The paths should be permeable surfaces to support drainage.

Seating, litter bins and lighting

- 9.3.7 Good quality benches with a design sensitive to the needs of persons with disabilities should be well placed around the amenity green space, for example, in quieter areas with expansive views or overlooking ponds and other facilities. Where appropriate picnic tables should be provided. Wheelchair picnic tables should also be available in the same location as all other picnic tables and should be on a hard surface. The amenity green space should be equipped with well-maintained litter-bins and dog-bins, carefully and securely positioned on a lower level so wheelchair users can reach them as well.

9.3.8 Lights help to reduce the fear of crime therefore installation along important community routes is likely to be desirable, but not all footpaths will need illumination. Some rural communities might for example be enjoyed for their night time tranquillity and lighting within public open space would have unnecessary impact. The intensity of the light level needs to meet the necessary requirements of the particular location with attention to the amount of light pollution produced. Down lighting to avoid unnecessary proliferation of lighting could be an option and where possible, lights should be solar powered.

Picture 5 taken from Skanska, Sustainable, low-energy, cost-efficient exterior lighting, Gloucester



Planting

9.3.9 Vegetation can mitigate excess water runoff and increase rainfall capture, as well as attenuate noise and filter air pollution. Trees should be planted to provide protection from the sun. There should be plentiful areas of planting and species diversity kept consistent with the character of the local area. Applicants are encouraged to provide new biodiversity features such as bat boxes, bat bricks and swift houses and also green wildlife corridors that link existing amenity green spaces with new ones.

9.4 Provision for Children and Young People

9.4.1 TAN 16: Sport Recreation and Open Space states: “While formal, equipped play areas provide opportunities, particularly for young children within communities, these are not the only forms of provision which should be offered. Wheeled play areas, ball game areas, ‘playable space’, community woodland, and informal areas for ‘environmental play’ can provide opportunities for children to interact and gain the social, health and well-being benefits which come from the opportunities for active physical play”

9.4.2 Play space is important to the healthy development of children and young people, not just physically but socially and cognitively too. Children should have access to green spaces and also equipped play spaces which encourage imaginative and creative play. There is a common assumption in the design process of what play spaces are supposed to look like, including basic equipment such as slides and swings, fencing and rubber surfaces. However, despite these areas being enjoyed, some children don’t have access to their natural environment and the opportunities for play associated with this, see picture 6. A new approach is needed in the design of play space that follow the 10 principles as outlined by Play Wales (Guidance produced by Play England, 2008).

Picture 6: an excellent example taken from PlaygroundadventureUK of the Princess Diana Memorial Gardens in London



9.5 The 10 principles for designing successful play spaces

9.5.1 Successful play spaces...

1. are 'bespoke'
2. are well located
3. make use of natural elements
4. provide a wide range of play experiences
5. are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children
6. meet community needs
7. allow children of different ages to play together
8. build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
9. are sustainable and appropriately maintained
10. allow for change and evolution.

Legislation

- 9.5.2 Any safety standards are to comply with – EN1176 Playground Equipment and Standard Fencing Standard BS1722. The design needs to take into consideration the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in relation to accessibility to ensure all children regardless of their ability have the chance to interact and play with each other.

Access

- 9.5.3 If boundary fences are to be used, they should ensure safety and prevent dog fouling on the site. Landscaping should allow for natural surveillance across the play space from public areas, roads and footpaths. Entrances and gates should be at least 1800mm wide to allow for wheel chair and pram access. Accessible barriers preventing vehicles from entering should be erected where necessary. The entrance to the play areas will be based on the location of the play area as if next to a road, then the entrance may require a combination of slowing down the exit by the design of the layout or surface materials. A road barrier on the pavement may also be required.

- 9.5.4 The needs of the visually impaired need to be considered including the location of litter bins, lampposts and bollards. Maintenance machinery has to be able to access the site therefore locked gates need to be provided of an appropriate size to the machinery needed. This is formally agreed at the planning application stage. If the site is near a busy road, safe crossings must be provided. Dogs should not be allowed, except guide dogs.

Equipment and surface

- 9.5.5 The play on the site does not necessarily have to be all equipped, as in some instances there is a preference to have natural play features such as mounds, sculptures, different surfacing treatments/levels and sensory planting and surfacing which can still provide play opportunities, see pictures 7, 8 and 9. Consideration should be given to different equipment that can serve all ages from toddlers to older children and teenagers.

Picture 7: An example of a naturalistic play area taken from HiMama



Picture 8 Adventure play taken from Islington Play Association



Picture 9 Examples of sculptures and surfacing for natural play areas



- 9.5.6 There should be a range of equipment types for both younger and older children and should be both functional and imaginative. Swinging items designed for older children should be separated from other equipment by fencing or barriers. There should be an element of risk associated with play as stated by PlayEngland (2008). Therefore, play space should stimulate activities, such as balancing, rocking, climbing, sliding, swinging, and social play. Where required there should also be facilities for pre-school children, such as sand pits and play panels. Water features may also be acceptable. The surfaces beneath and around the play equipment should be level and impact absorbing (eg.wet pour surfacing, rubber tiles) or left natural where possible.
- 9.5.7 Incorporation of the Welsh Language into the equipment and activities provided at play areas is recommended, to stimulate young people's minds and help them retain words and phrases. This would be in line with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Act (1993) in promotion of the Welsh Language.
- 9.5.8 The design of the play space should undergo a thorough risk assessment covering the extent of surfacing, spacing between play structures and the height at which barriers are required. The equipment and surfacing should be designed, manufactured, installed and maintained in full accordance with European Standards BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177.

Planting

- 9.5.9 Where play areas are a small part of provision for children and young people, it is important to consider the biodiversity of the surrounding area. Trees should be planted to provide protection from the sun and there should be plentiful areas of planting to create green wildlife corridors that link the provision for children and young people to nearby amenity green and informal playing spaces.

Seating, litter bins and lighting

- 9.5.10 Good quality benches with a design sensitive to the needs of persons with disabilities should be well placed around the play area. Where appropriate picnic tables should be provided including wheelchair picnic tables. The play space should be equipped with well-maintained litter-bins carefully and securely positioned on a lower level so wheelchair users can reach them as well.

- 9.5.11 Lights help to reduce the fear of crime therefore installation along important community routes is likely to be desirable, but not all footpaths will need illumination. Some rural communities might for example be enjoyed for their night time tranquillity and lighting within public open space would have unnecessary impact. The intensity of the light level needs to meet the necessary requirements of the particular location with attention to the amount of light pollution produced. Down lighting to avoid unnecessary proliferation of lighting could be an option and where possible, lights should be solar powered. See picture 5.

9.6 Outdoor Sports Facilities

- 9.6.1 The Facilities for Future Generations Blueprint for Sport and Active Recreation in Wales (2016) highlights how important it is to create a landscape of appropriate and resilient sport and recreation facilities for today and tomorrow. This could mean a shift away from the call for traditional formal grassed sports pitches, towards more modern facilities such as Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA's), Artificial Turf Pitches (ATP's), fitness trails, outdoor gyms, skate parks, trail mountain bike tracks and indoor facilities such as fitness suites and activity rooms. Developers must work with the local community and local sports clubs to help determine the facilities required and best suited to meet local needs.

- 9.6.2 The Welsh Government's 'Climbing Higher- Next Steps' (2006) prioritises the need to increase the availability of, and access to high quality local green space, waterways and countryside. Therefore it is still important to provide good quality Outdoor Sports Facilities, guidance on this is outlined below. Contributions from developers can go towards the improvements of the quality of existing natural turf pitches but also lessen the demand on these by contributing to other projects in the area that encourage local participation.
- 9.6.3 Whilst the proper provision of sports facilities to the standards set out by Fields In Trust are important, it is also vital to emphasise the need to cater for informal sports such as trail running and mountain biking which are enjoyed by more people than those who participate in organised, team sports.

General Design and Layout

- 9.6.4 Sports pitches
- Well located and designed outdoor sports facilities offer people the opportunity to exercise and improve their general health and well-being. It must have access from more than one point and where biodiversity is present on the site, protection measures and biodiversity enhancements such as boundary planting should be incorporated into the design. Steeply sloping sites and open spaces subject to strong winds are not usable for this function. Sports pitches may also serve as: rainwater infiltration facilities, flood storage areas and conveyance corridors for floods which exceed the capacity of other drainage systems and therefore should be incorporated into their design.
- 9.6.5 Natural surveillance is important and should be considered in the design. Boundary fences, roads and footpaths will allow for this. However the facility should be far enough away from other dwellings or buildings to limit the amount of noise pollution disturbing neighbours. Buffer zones such as a cycleway or footpath will provide a degree of separation.

- 9.6.6 Posts should be in the appropriate place with netting available for use by the local community and sports clubs. Markings must be clear and well maintained to define the pitch. Safe crossings must be provided if the site is near a busy road and a bus stop should be located in the vicinity for the formal sports facilities.
- 9.6.7 Off street car parking including disabled parking must be provided for the formal sports facilities. Parking for a minimum of 3 cycles should also be provided close to the facility.

Surface

- 9.6.8 The surface of any facility appropriate to the type of must be flat without any undulations. Drainage systems to direct excess surface water off the site should be installed.

Seating, litter bins and lighting

- 9.6.9 All seating must be to a high standard and plentiful whilst being well located in order to prevent the interruption of play. There should be well maintained litter bins positioned securely around the site.
- 9.6.10 The use of floodlighting can extend the hours of use of a facility therefore increasing the opportunity for sport and leisure activities. However, light pollution should be considered with particular attention to the use of down-lighting. Lighting systems should be sensitively designed and installed to minimise the impact of excessive light spillage on nearby properties and land. The use of cut offs and baffles to reduce light spillage and ensuring the light intensity levels that are produced are the minimum necessary to meet the requirements of the particular situation.

Changing facilities

- 9.6.11 For formal facilities over 0.6ha in size, clean and secure changing facilities should be provided. They should include showers and toilets for both males and females and separate facilities for officials. All pavilions should be designed to take into the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

9.7 **Other informal Outdoor sports facilities**

- 9.7.1 It is important to consider the provision of alternative forms of informal outdoor sports facilities to grassed sports fields and pitches. The pictures below are a few examples of the types of facilities that are appearing more frequently now. They may be an opportunity for development contributions to go towards the enhancement of existing sports facilities such as playing fields and sports pitches with the development of a fitness trail or outdoor gym around the outside of it.

Picture 10 an example of an outdoor gym adjacent to a playing field taken from NHS Forest



Picture 11 examples of fitness trails in London, Eclectic Cake



Picture 12 An excellent example of a trail mountain bike track in Treuddyn, Flintshire



9.8 Green Corridors and Active Travel Networks

- 9.8.1 Green Corridors are opportunity led due to the location of a watercourse or footpath for example. However, they are an important facility often providing opportunities for sustainable travel and of importance to the biodiversity of local areas. Although standards have not been set for green corridors it is important that they are provided where the opportunity arises to improve links between open spaces or as routes to local facilities. It is also appropriate to improve the quality of green corridors where possible. Due to this, contributions can be used to improve the quantity and quality of green corridors where the opportunity arises. Green corridors support the Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- 9.8.2 Contributions from developers could be spent on improvements to accessibility of Public Rights Of Way (PROW) should they directly be impacted by a new development, for example the implementation of kissing gates (and with wheelchair access where possible) instead of stiles which allows accessibility to a wider proportion of the population who may not be able to use stiles see picture 13.

Picture 13 an example of kissing gate taken from Peak and Northern Footpaths society



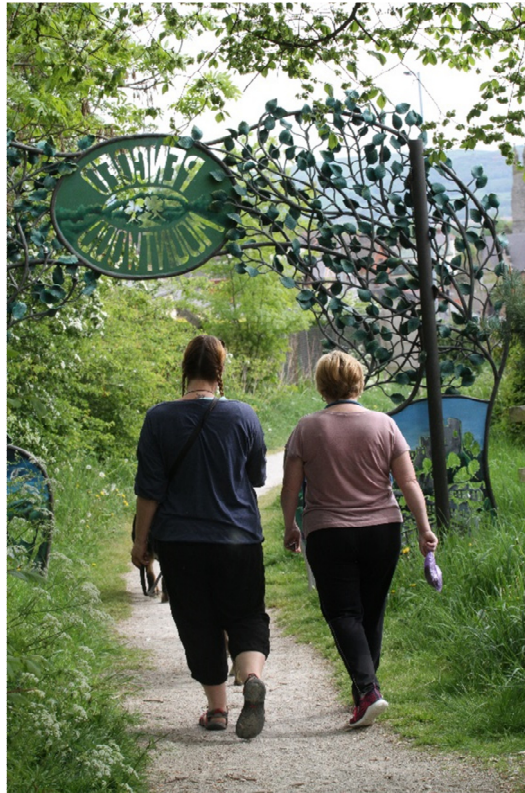
9.9 Accessible Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace

- 9.9.1 According to TAN 16, this type of open space includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrubland, grasslands (eg downlands, commons, and meadows), wetlands, nature reserves and wastelands with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation and bio-diversity within settlement boundaries. Open and accessible natural and semi natural greenspace can improve the safety of areas and reduce the likelihood of crimes occurring. Studies such as that done by Donovan and Prestermon (2010) has shown that the presence of trees is perceived as indicating a more cared for neighbourhood and the presence of street trees was associated with a decreased incidence of crime.
- 9.9.2 Accessible natural green space can deliver a multitude of functions such as rainwater infiltration facilities, flood storage areas and conveyance corridors for floods which exceed the capacity of other drainage systems as well as biodiversity conservation, mental well-being, space for exercise, air pollution interception, riparian zone protection, water pollution interception, visual screening and noise amelioration, see pictures 11 and 12. Where a financial contribution is sought it can be spent on open space projects of direct benefit to residents of the development. This might include improvements to natural and semi natural green space when appropriate.

Picture 11 A woodland park used for recreation, courtesy of NRW.



Picture 12 Mount Wood, Denbigh. Picture provided by DCC Countryside Services



10. Contacts

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