

# **Public Recreational Open Space Commuted Sum Scheme Guidelines October 2022**

# Public Recreational Open Space Commuted Sum Scheme Guidelines

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# **Public Recreational Open Space Commuted Sum Scheme Guidelines**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to applicants seeking funding from the Public Recreational Open Space Commuted Sum Scheme. It sets out the background to the scheme, eligibility criteria and the assessment process

## **Background**

The Local Development Plan (LDP) seeks to protect existing public recreational open space and to ensure that new developments make an adequate contribution to open space in the local area. Standards are set for the amount of public recreational open space that must be provided on development sites and also thresholds for on-site provision. Where on-site provision is not feasible or below the thresholds set out, a commuted sum is payable to ensure that the recreational needs of the residents or users of the new development are met within that local area.

In order to meet the requirements of Welsh Office circular 13/97 Planning Obligations any commuted sums generated must be spent on public recreational open space that is of direct benefit to the residents or users of the development that generated the commuted sum in the first place. All applications will be expected to demonstrate how this requirement is being met.

## **Funding Rounds**

Open space commuted sum payments are collected throughout the year and are held in accounts based on city, town and community council areas. When a reasonable amount of funds has accumulated, the monies available in each area across the county are advertised. This typically happens once a year, in Autumn.

Funds will only be available in city, town and community council areas where developments with open space commuted sum agreements exist, and have met the conditions required for payment to be made prior to available funds being advertised.

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## Who Can Apply for Funding?

Organisations that can apply for funding include:

- a) City, town and community councils
- b) Community and voluntary groups
- c) Charities
- d) Public sector organisations
- e) Amateur sports clubs
- f) Denbighshire County Council

Sports clubs and private membership clubs that do not offer a 'pay and play' option will not be considered eligible to apply for funding.

## Eligible Projects

Funds can be used to lay out new open space or to enhance existing provision, thereby increasing usage.

Valid improvements to existing provision can include:

- a) Upgrades to the range of facilities on offer (including the upgrade of outdated equipment) but not replacement of items that have become unusable due to lack of maintenance improvements to make the site/facility more accessible;
- b) works to intensify use of the facility (i.e. all weather surfacing);
- c) drainage or surface works to extend the usage of the facility;
- d) fencing and lighting works to make the facility safer;
- e) provision of changing facilities to increase use;

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- f) car parking, or other essential services again to increase and extend use.

Funding is only available for outdoor public recreational open space with open access or a 'pay and play' option. Informal outdoor space such as green areas and woodlands are eligible provided the project increases the recreational value of the setting. Formal parks and gardens where people can take exercise are also eligible as are formal sports facilities with open public access.

For more information about the Local Development Plan policies and supplementary planning guidance, please visit the [Local Development Plan](#) pages on the Denbighshire County Council website.

## Application Assessment and Criteria

Applications will be considered in consultation with county council officers and the local Member Area Group. There is no right of appeal in this case, although representations can be made to the Council before the money is allocated.

Applicants will be required to provide evidence of community engagement undertaken, and support from the respective City, Town or Community Council.

## Assessment Criteria

Projects will be assessed against the criteria listed below. It is not expected that a project will meet all criteria listed, however projects meeting a higher proportion of the fund criteria will be favoured.

- a) Located within the town or community council where the new development takes place (if not within the relevant town or community council must be readily accessible to it – especially by foot).
- b) Part of an overall Strategy to improve community recreational open space.

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- c) Meets an acknowledged need or shortfall in the locality, either by providing a new facility or extending an existing one. In this respect the National Playing Fields Association or similar agreed standards will be used.
- d) Substantially increases usage or extends the period of use.
- e) Extends or widens the current use to provide additional uses.
- f) Provides or extends all-year use.
- g) Provides use for all ages, sexes, sports and sections of the local community- increases social inclusion / accessibility for disabled persons.
- h) Provides value for money (an expensive facility with limited use or appeal will not be favourable).
- i) Levers in substantial additional money via match funding.
- j) Good example of public/private sector partnership to the overall benefit of the local community.
- k) Available to the public at large and wherever possible to be free or nominal charge

All projects must be of direct benefit to the residents or users of the development that generated the commuted sum in the first place and must be able to demonstrate local community support.

## **Completion of Schemes**

Funding awards will be time-limited. Projects must be completed within 24 months of approval. Otherwise the award will lapse and applicants will need to re-apply.

Applicants will draw down funding from the Council on presentation of a claim form supported by receipted invoices for agreed eligible expenditure and will be required to ensure that all necessary records are maintained both during and after completion of the

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project for audit purposes. Only where the need has been clearly demonstrated will staged payments be made.

The financial and administrative management of the fund will be the responsibility of Denbighshire County Council, Strategic Planning Team (Business Improvement and Modernisation). Funds will be held in a separate interest earning account and will be ring fenced for open space provision. Agreed funding for expenditure incurred on eligible activities/costs will be paid direct to the applicant organisation.

## **Additional Support**

If further guidance is required in relation to an application please contact the Community Development Team via: [communitydevelopment@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:communitydevelopment@denbighshire.gov.uk)