1. WHAT IS THE OPEN SPACE COMMUTED SUM PAYMENT SCHEME?

The Open Space Commuted Sum Scheme has been established following adoption of the Denbighshire Unitary Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance Note No. 4 ‘Open Space Requirements in New Developments’. These documents require that where developments of 10 or more residential units are proposed that recreational outdoor open space shall be provided on site in accordance with the adopted standard of 3.2 Hectares (8 acres) per 1000 population. Where it is not feasible or appropriate to provide the required open space on site then the Council may accept the payment of a commuted sum and make the required provision and maintenance on another site. However there is a clear preference for on-site provision. Commuted sum payments can be made via either a voluntary payment by the applicant, or a legally binding Section 106 Agreement.

Open space falls into 2 broad categories:
- Community Recreational Open Space (CROS) i.e. formal pitches, parks etc
- Children’s Play Space i.e. equipped and informal play areas within housing developments.

Funding is calculated separately for each type of open space and funds collected accordingly.

A more detailed definition of open space and the types of facilities that would be considered eligible for funding is set out below.

Where commuted sums have been collected these are held in accounts based on town and community council areas. Funds collected must be spent within the same town or community council area as the development which generated the additional demand for recreational space. In exceptional circumstances i.e. for the provision of a new major sports facility then funds from adjacent town or community council areas may be pooled to provide this type of facility which serves a larger catchment area.

2. WHO CAN APPLY FOR FUNDING?

- Town and Community Councils
- Community and Voluntary Groups/Organisations.
- Public/Private Partnerships
- Denbighshire County Council
3. **WHAT TYPE OF PROJECTS WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING?**

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

- improvements to make the site/facility more accessible;
- works to intensify use of the facility (i.e. all weather surfacing);
- drainage or surface works to extend the usage of the facility;
- fencing and lighting works to make the facility safer;
- provision of changing facilities to increase use;
- car parking, or other essential services again to increase and extend use;

Payments can be made for the purchase of land for new or extensions to existing provision

**NB** Funds will not be used for:

- The normal maintenance of existing open space.
- To provide indoor sports facilities
- Professional clubs

4. **HOW WILL APPLICATIONS BE ASSESSED?**

Demonstration of community and local resident support for the project will also be a determining factor.

**Assessment Criteria**

Note – Schemes do not have to meet all the following criteria – but the more criteria they meet the more favourably it will be considered

- 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
- Part of an overall Strategy to improve community recreational open space
- Has been identified as a priority scheme with the Denbighshire county-wide Open Space Audit and any agreed Action Plan that results
- Meets an acknowledged need or shortfall in the locality- either by providing a new facility or extends an existing one. In this respect the NPFA or similar agreed standards will be used
- Substantially increases usage or extends the period of use
- Extends or widens the current use to provide additional uses
- Provides or extends all-year use
- Provides use for all ages, sexes, sports and sections of the local community- increases social inclusion / accessibility for disabled persons
- Provides Value For Money- an expensive facility with limited use or appeal will not score well
- Levers in substantial additional money
• Good example of public/private sector partnership to the overall benefit of the local community
• Commands substantial support from and will be well used by the local community
• Preferably available to the public at large and wherever possible to be free or nominal charge

Applications will be ranked and funds made available as early as possible.

Applications will be considered in consultation with officers of the County Council, the local Members, and the relevant town or community council.

Decision:
• No decision will be taken without first consulting fully with the local community, and local Members.
• There is no right of appeal in this case although representations can be made to the Council before the money is allocated.

Following in principle approval applicants, when applying for detailed approval, should supply a minimum of 3 competitive quotes from suitable suppliers/contractors to ensure that value for money is being achieved. All applications should include a detailed breakdown of the project costs including future maintenance arrangements and a scaled site plan illustrating the proposal. Details of other sources of funding should also be identified. Where planning permission or any other statutory consents are required, these must be in place prior to any detailed submission for funding.

Letters of support from the local community and residents groups should also be submitted where available in support of the application.

Completion of schemes
Awards of funding will be time-limited. Schemes must be completed with 24 months of detailed approval. Otherwise the award will lapse and applicants will need to re-apply. Satisfactory completion of schemes will be required before payments are made. Payments will normally only be made on full completion to the satisfaction of the Council. Only where the need has been clearly demonstrated will staged payments be made.

5. HOW WILL THE PAYMENTS BE MANAGED?

The financial and administrative management of the fund will be the responsibility of Denbighshire County Council, Planning and Public Protection Services. Funds will be held in a separate interest earning account and will be ring fenced for open space provision.

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 project for audit purposes. Agreed funding for expenditure incurred on eligible activities/costs will be paid direct to the applicant organisation.

**DEFINITIONS**

**DEFINITION OF OPEN SPACE**

“Space that is safely accessible and available to the general public, and of a suitable size and nature, for sport, or active recreation or children’s play.”

**FORMAL SPORTS PROVISION**

- Facilities such as pitches, greens, courts, athletics tracks and miscellaneous sites such as croquet lawns and training areas owned by local authorities.
- Facilities described above within the educational sector and which, as a matter of practice and policy are available for public use.
- Facilities described above which are within the voluntary, private, commercial sectors, and serve the needs for outdoor recreation of their members, or the public.

**INFORMAL PROVISION**

- Casual or informal playing space within parks, allotments.

**CHILDREN’S PROVISION**

- Equipped and informal areas for children’s use.

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1National Playing Fields Association, Six Acre Standard, 2001
DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL STANDARD

The County has adopted the following **minimum** standard for open space of **3.2 ha per 1000 population** (32 square metres per person). This standard is further broken down into:

**Community Recreational Open**  
(e.g. Football pitches, greens, parks)  
2.4 hectares/1000 population  
24 m²/person

1. Formal sports facilities  
   hectares/1000 population  
   1.6 - 1.8

2. Informal space i.e. parks  
   hectares/1000 population  
   0.6 - 0.8

**Children’s Open Space**  
(e.g. Play grounds, informal space in housing areas)  
0.8 hectares/1000 population  
8 m²/person

**AREAS EXCLUDED FROM DEFINITION**

- Outdoor sports facilities which are not as a matter of policy or practice available for public use i.e. professional sports stadium (i.e. Rhyl football ground)
- HM forces facilities
- Verges, woodlands, commons, the seashore, nature conservation areas, ornamental gardens & formal parks except defined areas for sports, games, practice and play.
- All golf facilities
- Water used for recreation except where it forms an interactive feature of an outdoor play area.
- Indoor sports facilities/halls
- Commercial entertainment complexes (i.e. holiday camps)
- Car parks for non-recreational use.