

Bridgend Local Development Plan

2006-2021

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol



Bridgend Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021

Background Paper Eleven
Outdoor Recreational Facilities

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Development Planning
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper provides background to the interpretation of LDP Policy COM 11 and is intended to assist in the preparation of more detailed SPG to support the Policy and its future implementation and delivery.

Policy COM11 Provision of Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Provision, or the equivalent value of a satisfactory standard of outdoor recreation space will be required for all new housing developments.

A satisfactory standard of recreation will be based on:

1. 1.6 hectares per 1,000 population for outdoor sport;
2. 0.8 hectares per 1,000 population for children's playing space;
3. 0.2 hectares per 1,000 population for allotment provision;
4. No person should live more than 300 metres from their nearest area of accessible natural green space.

The above range and type of provision may be provided on or off site. The alternative is to provide equivalent value to the above standards in developer contributions.

These contributions can be used to improve existing provision by:

- (a) making an area more accessible to the community;
- (b) better management for biodiversity and/or for passive enjoyment;
- (c) enhancements through more usable equipment, or better space or ancillary facilities;
- (d) increase in playing capacity;

or a combination of the above.

- 1.2 The objective of Policy COM 11 is to provide for a fair, adequate and appropriate provision of Outdoor Recreation Facilities, generated by new residential development, that can respond flexibly but consistently to the LDP's underlying evidence base which may demonstrate differing needs and particular deficiencies in the type and nature of Outdoor Recreation Facilities across the County Borough.

2. Flexibility in Type of Provision

2.1 For the purposes of Policy COM 11 and Outdoor Recreation Facilities SPG the 'type' of facilities that new residential development is intended to principally provide for relates to: -

1. Land for Outdoor Sport – including sports pitches and associated facilities
2. Land for Children's Playing Space – including land and equipment for children's play (LEAPs / SEAPs / NEAP's) and unequipped areas for children's informal play (LAPs / Kickabout Areas)
3. Allotment sites including community growing areas
4. Accessible natural green space – including amenity areas and natural features within developments.

2.2 In addition to actual new provision of the above types of outdoor recreation facilities 'on site'; - where appropriate, and depending on the local evidence base and particular site circumstances of an individual development site (in terms of any proximity and ease of access to alternative land or alternative existing types of outdoor recreation facilities), Policy COM 11 also provides an opportunity to provide new off-site facilities and / or developer contributions for the improvement of 'off-site' existing facilities within the local area.

2.3 In accordance with Policy COM 11 such 'off-site' provision or improvements can include making an existing outdoor recreation facility more accessible to the community, by for example providing alternative safe routes, footpaths and / or cycle ways to an existing facility; providing contributions to the better management and enhancement of land for biodiversity purposes, (thereby contributing to accessible natural green space within an area), enhancements to existing facilities in the form of more useable and fit for purpose equipment, space enhancements or ancillary facilities and / or an increase in playing capacity, (where for example an existing playing field because of poor drainage or limited changing room facilities cannot be used to it's full capacity – and additional development with the resulting increased usage will exacerbate the problem).

2.4 In this respect Policy COM 11 can be applied most flexibly and thereby better able to respond more appropriately and cost effectively to local needs and recreational demands generated by the development. This will depend on the local evidence in terms of the communities needs and existing facilities. Actual provision or an equivalent off-site contribution will be fairly determined according to a prescribed standard of provision and Policy COM 11, can require developers to provide a combination of facilities and / or improvements that could address a range of identified needs within an area. This can be described as a 'pick and mix' approach to the implementation of Policy COM 11 in terms of the range and type of facilities provided, that responds to an areas specific needs – but at a level that is fair, equitable and justifiable

according to the underlying local evidence of existing provision and generated demand.

3. Consistent Approach – Application of Standards

- 3.1 The flexible implementation of Policy COM 11 is underpinned by a consistent and recognised standard of provision based on the Fields in Trust (FIT) guidance of providing 2.4 hectares of outdoor recreation facilities per 1000 population.
- 3.2 The Council is aware that the provision of additional facilities and / or equivalent contributions that are justified and generated by new developments should be fair and proportionate to the development and should not therefore exceed the benchmark standard of providing 2.4 hectares (or equivalent value). In this respect where evidence and particular site circumstances demonstrate that the provision of allotments and / or natural green space is required in addition to 'outdoor sports facilities' and 'children's playspace', then these elements will not be 'cumulative' to that recommended by the FIT standards of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population. In this respect any provision of these types of outdoor recreation facilities will potentially reduce the standard requirement of outdoor sport and children's playing space by a corresponding amount to a maximum of the 2.4 hectares per 1000 population standard, where evidence justifies this level of maximum provision.
- 3.3 Similarly, if there is considered to be a range of justifiable requirements in terms of a combination of provision of 'on-site' / 'off-site' improvements to existing facilities, an 'on-site' provision will reduce any contributions to 'off-site' improvements, in a balanced way up to the full standard equivalent of 2.4 hectares per 1000 populations.
- 3.4 In addition, the 'on-site' requirement of 10% amenity open space (on development sites prescribed in the SPG) will also reduce any contributions to on-site / off-site improvements and will be discounted from the full standard of 2.4. hectares per 1000 population.
- 3.5 In the case of accessible natural green space, if it is the case that important natural features are present on a particular site and are required to be retained on site for reasons of biodiversity (e.g. SINC's presence of protected species etc.), existing amenity purposes / trees (TPOs etc), wetland / land required for the purpose of flood mitigation) etc. – under other policy requirements of the LDP (separate from the requirements of Policy COM 11) this will not necessarily obviate the need to provide the appropriate facilities 'on site' / or provides 'off-site' contributions. In such circumstances, the standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population may be exceeded on site, although to is recognised such areas could provide a dual function by accommodating the required Outdoor Recreation facilities identified.

4. Planning Obligations and Viability

- 4.1 In terms of the provision of an appropriate level of Outdoor Recreation Facilities this will be facilitated through Legal Agreement / S106 obligations relating to a particular planning application. Such an obligation will be required to satisfy the following tests: -
- It should be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
 - It should be directly unrelated to the development; and
 - It should be fairly and reasonably relate in scale and kind to the development
- 4.2 The Council will ensure that these tests are applied when negotiating Legal / S106 agreements with developers.
- 4.3 The Council is mindful that legal agreements should not be used to alleviate existing problems and / or deficiencies in the network of existing Outdoor Recreation Facilities across the County Borough. They can however be used to avoid a situation whereby increased residential development in the vicinity of a facility and which may not be required to provide on-site provision, could create a problem or exacerbate an unsatisfactory situation. In assessing the requirement for an 'off-site' developer contribution nearby, in this regard, the Council will provide the required evidence of need for the contribution on a case-by-case basis, using relevant information to the local area in particular the Outdoor Sport, Children's Playspace, Allotment Audits and the Accessible Natural Open Space Study, together with other Council plans and strategies relating to outdoor recreation provision including the Council's Allotment Strategy and 'emerging' Green Infrastructure Plan / SPG.
- 4.4 Furthermore, as planning obligations are founded on negotiation between the Council and the developer, although a developer will be expected to fully comply with the provisions of Policy COM 11 and future SPG in the first instance, in exceptional cases and as a starting point for negotiation, where it can be demonstrated that Outdoor Recreation contributions together with other requirements would adversely affect the viability of a development to such an extent that it would be unable to proceed, then this could be considered as a material planning consideration and the provision of outdoor recreation facilities to the identified standard through negotiation could be viewed more flexibly and the implementation of Policy COM 11 and future SPG varied to allow development to proceed. Such issues would be considered on a case by case basis.

