

CHAPTER 12

Open Land in Settlements

12.0 Introduction

- 12.1 Within the built up areas there exists a range of open spaces of significant amenity and recreational value. These 'urban greenspaces' have a variety of functions and uses and are of various sizes. Collectively they make an important contribution to the quality of urban life by helping to break up the otherwise heavily built up urban areas, introducing 'breathing space' in the urban form and green areas for people to see and enjoy, and creating wildlife habitats. Their retention helps to prevent 'town cramming'. In addition many of these greenspaces are used for either formal sport or for more passive forms of recreation which are important for exercise and contribute to a healthy lifestyle.
- 12.2 These greenspaces often come under pressure for development, particularly for housing and employment developments. The Government in its Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 on Sport and Recreation attaches great importance to the protection of such greenspaces, recognising that once built on they are likely to be lost to the community forever. The Council wishes to retain and wherever possible enhance a network of both large and small urban greenspaces for the benefit of the community.
- 12.3 However the distribution of green space in the urban areas is not even. Deficiencies exist, both in parts of the inner urban area, which are particularly densely built up, and in some of the suburban areas. The Council aims to remedy those deficiencies whenever resources and circumstances permit and ensure that new areas of deficiency are not created. To achieve this, policies to protect existing and facilitate the provision of new open space, are set out below. In particular, policies to protect existing and facilitate the provision of new recreation open space and playing fields are proposed with the objective of meeting the National Playing Fields Association 6 acre (2.4 ha) per 1000 population minimum standard of provision.
- 12.4 To complement the approach in this plan, the Council has produced other strategies, which underpin the importance of greenspace within the urban areas. In particular, the Council's nature conservation strategy, *Nature and People*, recognises the significance of a greenspace network, not only their ecological value as wildlife corridors, but also to encourage greater public access to nature conservation areas. In addition a Woodland Strategy for the District was produced by the Council in 1991 (currently being updated), which acknowledges the value of trees in the urban setting. In conjunction with this strategy, the Council is working in partnership with the Forestry Commission, NUFU (National Urban Forestry Unit), Yorkshire Forward, White Rose Forest and Forest of Bradford to enhance the urban tree cover of the District, especially on brownfield and derelict sites and along transport corridors as a contribution to the urban greenspace network.

Urban Green space

- 12.5 The urban greenspaces identified on the Proposal Maps represent the most significant greenspaces in terms of size or prominence within the urban areas. Many of them have remained open for historic reasons. They provide a green framework for the regeneration of the urbanised parts of the District and are often large enough to bring the character of the countryside into the town. There is potential for their wildlife and ecological value to be enhanced. The level of public access is not a criteria for defining and designating a Urban Greenspace. However, like the countryside, they all have a minimum level of access through public rights of way.

Policy OS1

WITHIN URBAN GREENSPACES DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAPS DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT:

- (1) RETAINS THEIR OPEN AND GREEN CHARACTER AND**
- (2) MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER AND AMENITY OF SUCH AREAS.**

DEVELOPERS AND LANDOWNERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PREPARE MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT AND UPKEEP OF THE URBAN GREEN SPACE, AS PART OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH ARE ACCEPTABLE UNDER THE POLICY.

- 12.6 Appropriate uses within these areas may include urban woodlands, cemeteries, horticulture, and outdoor sports and recreation where the proposals retain the open and green character of the area. Development adjacent to Urban Greenspaces will be expected to contribute to maintaining their green character, particularly through a high standard of landscaping. The Council is particularly concerned to prevent, through Policy OS1, the piecemeal 'nibbling' away of these areas by the construction of individual new buildings. However, the Council recognises that there are some existing uses within or on the edges of Urban Greenspaces, especially schools and other institutions, which will have development needs. It is not the Council's intention to prejudice the interests of the owners of such properties in carrying out reasonable development associated with the existing use by the application of OS1.
- 12.7 The Council will encourage developers and landowners to manage the areas of urban greenspace so as to contribute, as appropriate to the regeneration, restoration, enhancement, maintenance or active conservation of the green space.
- 12.8 Where Urban Greenspaces contain Recreation Open Space, Playing Fields or Allotments as set out below, policies OS2, OS3 and OS6 respectively will also apply to the appropriate area. However, in assessing development proposals the requirements of OS1 will take precedence.

Recreation Open Space

- 12.9 An important part of the green space network are the open spaces used for recreation purposes. The value of such recreation open space is recognised by the Government in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17, which states that opportunities for recreation should, wherever possible, be available to everyone.
- 12.10 The Council recognises the importance of sport and recreation and the contribution these make to healthy lifestyles through opportunities for exercise. It has prepared 'A Strategy for Sport and Recreation', which provides a framework for the Council and its partners, as to the communities needs and how they can work together to meet them. More detailed strategic plans for specific development areas, such as, Playing pitches and other strategies such as 'Fair Play' the playground strategy, support this. The policies below seek to support the objectives of these strategies, through the protection of existing recreation open space and playing fields and the provision of new facilities.
- 12.11 Land falling within what the Council considers to be recreation open space include the range of sites listed in PPG17, that is, land used for informal recreation such as parks and recreation grounds, including equipped children's playgrounds, as well as playing fields formally laid out for team sports. However, it is important to note that the policy also applies to what may be described as casual or informal open spaces/amenity areas situated around and between developments, such as on a housing estate, which are regularly used by people, particularly children and the elderly for recreation. Areas such as these often provide valuable facilities for informal play in a secure environment close to where children live, but they also provide an important local amenity for the adult population. This reflects the advice in PPG17, which stresses the importance of people, having access to open space close to where they live. This kind of recreational land is also referred to as "casual or informal play space within housing areas" in the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) 'Six Acre standard (1992).
- 12.12 Those areas above 0.4ha falling under this policy are identified clearly on the Proposals Maps but there are many sites under 0.4ha which are not mapped but which fall within the categories outlined above, particularly the informal recreation areas. Identifying such small sites will inevitably be a matter of judgement according to the particular circumstances.
- 12.13 Recreation land is particularly vulnerable to development pressure and has over time suffered loss and degradation. However, as people's leisure time continues to increase, demand for both formal and informal recreation open space remains high. The Government recognises this and in PPG17 attaches great importance to the retention of recreation and amenity open space.

- 12.14 The Government, in PPG17, does not prescribe national standards for recreational provision and says it is for local authorities to identify deficiencies in public open space and recreation provision and to justify the amount and location of new provision against other competing pressures for the use of land. Although the Council has not developed its own minimum standards for recreation open space, recent studies in the urban areas of Bradford, Shipley and Keighley have shown that overall provision falls below 'The Six Acre Standard' set by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA). The NPFA's 'Outdoor Playing Space' category is broadly the same as the Council's 'Recreation Open Space' as defined in Policies OS2 to OS4. In the absence of locally derived minimum standards, the Government, in PPG17, recognise and endorse the NPFA standards as a useful guide to the minimum provision of recreation open space.
- 12.15 As the District has a growing population with increasing numbers of children, particularly in the urban areas, the Council believes the standards set by the NPFA are an appropriate level of provision to work towards. Therefore, a main objective for the policies on recreation open space is to seek to achieve, as a minimum, the following provision, based upon 'The Six Acre Standard', for open space in the District:
- 0.8 ha of recreation open space, including children's play space and informal space, per 1000 population.
- 1.6 ha of playing fields per 1000 population.
- 12.16 The policies to achieve this objective are set out below. They are concerned with the protection of existing recreation open space and playing fields, measures to remedy deficiencies, and measures to ensure new housing development has adequate recreation open space.

The Protection of Existing and New Recreation Open Space

- 12.17 The Proposals Maps identify the areas of recreation open space over 0.4 hectares throughout the District, which are to be protected by the Policy OS2. This ranges from the informal green space used as a 'kick about' area to the large Victorian parks.

Policy OS2

DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED ON LAND SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAPS AS RECREATION OPEN SPACE OR SITES UNDER 0.4 HECTARES USED AS RECREATION OPEN SPACE UNLESS:

- (1) THE LOSS OF RECREATION OPEN SPACE DOES NOT LEAD TO LOCAL DEFICIENCY IN THE AVAILABILITY OF OPEN SPACE: OR**
- (2) THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL PROVIDES FOR EQUIVALENT ALTERNATIVE PROVISION IN TERMS OF SIZE AND QUALITY WHICH IS CLOSE TO EXISTING USERS; AND**
- (3) IT DOES NOT RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF AMENITY.**

- 12.18 This policy will also apply to recreation open spaces created during the lifetime of the Plan and existing recreation open spaces, which are too small to show on the Proposals Maps (i.e. under 0.4 hectares).
- 12.19 Unless or until the Council adopts its own standards for recreation open space, the level of deficiency will be determined with reference to the objective of meeting the NPFA standard and an assessment of how accessible the open space is, for example, whether there are physical barriers such as roads between potential users and the recreation open space. A similar assessment will be made to test the suitability of any alternative provision offered as part of the proposed development. In this context, the Council accepts that, in certain situations, it may be possible for a recreational facility to be reduced in size if the quality of the facilities provided is significantly improved. This flexibility is covered by criterion (ii) of Policy OS2.
- 12.20 Where recreation open space is within Urban Greenspace, policy OS1 will take precedence over the above policy.

The Protection of Playing Fields

- 12.21 There is a strong demand for bookable playing field provision for team sports throughout the District. The Council through its Recreation Division manages 138 winter/summer pitches used by 271 teams on a formalised letting basis. On average there are 10 teams both winter and summer on a waiting list and many teams travel distances of some 3-5 miles to obtain facilities which makes it difficult to maintain links with the team's local community. The Council's draft 'Playing Pitch Strategy' (October 2000) outlines the state of playing fields in the District. It highlights that there is insufficient capacity, either in the public, private or voluntary sector, in terms of quantity and quality to meet existing and future demand. The Council is committed through the Strategy to:
- retain current playing fields both Council and private and voluntary sector;
 - improve the quality of existing facilities;
 - to increase the overall provision of sports pitches to meet the growing demand from newly – formed and expanding teams and clubs in particularly to meet the needs of young people;
 - undertake a outdoor playing pitch facility study for the District.
- 12.22 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 on Sport and Recreation encourages Local Planning Authorities to protect both public and private playing fields to meet the local communities needs. Subsequent Ministerial statements and directions have sought to strengthen this approach. In 1996 Sport England was made a statutory consultee, on planning applications for development affecting existing playing fields, land which has been used as a playing field in the previous 5 years or allocated for use as a playing field in a development plan. The Town and Country Planning (Playing Fields) (England) Direction 1998 relates specifically to playing fields owned by a local authority or used by an educational establishment. It requires that, where a local planning authority proposes to grant planning permission involving the loss of a playing field despite an objection from Sport England, the authority must notify the Secretary of State, who will determine whether the application should be called in for decision.

- 12.23 Policy OS3 sets out to protect existing and proposed playing fields shown on the Proposals Maps and new playing fields created during the lifetime of the Plan.

Policy OS3

DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED ON LAND SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAPS AS PLAYING FIELDS OR OTHERWISE USED AS PLAYING FIELDS, UNLESS:

- (1) THERE IS A DEMONSTRABLE EXCESS OF PLAYING FIELD PROVISION IN THE AREA; OR**
 - (2) THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL PROVIDES FOR ALTERNATIVE PROVISION IN THE FORM OF EQUIVALENT OR BETTER QUALITY AND OF EQUIVALENT OR GREATER QUANTITY OF PLAYING FIELD PROVISION IN A SUITABLE LOCATION, OR IF SUITABLE REPLACEMENT LAND DOES NOT EXIST, THE PLAYING FIELDS CAN BE SATISFACTORILY RE-LOCATED ELSEWHERE WITHIN THE SAME NEIGHBOURHOOD.**
- 12.24 The Council will assess the adequacy of provision with reference to the NPFA minimum recommended standard, the findings of the Districts Playing Field Survey (when completed), and evidence of demand for the facility in question and other facilities which are accessible to users. Where playing fields are within Urban Greenspaces, policy OS1 will take precedence over the above policy. Where playing fields also serve a local community for informal recreation, for example, where they are within parks, policy OS2 will also apply.

Remedying Deficiencies

- 12.25 The Council will when opportunities arise and resources permit add new open space provision in those areas which fall significantly below the NPFA standards through lack of adequate open space for the number of people living in the area or an inability to gain access to provision because of physical barriers eg major roads and/or distance i.e. the nearest provision being more than 400 metres away.
- 12.26 Indeed the UDP contains new allocations for recreation open space. Some have recently been brought into use, whilst others have funding committed and so will be implemented in the lifetime of the Plan. It is intended that these sites will be protected from other forms of development.

Policy OS4

NEW SITES FOR PLAYING FIELDS AND RECREATION OPEN SPACE ARE IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAPS. PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OR USE OF THESE AREAS FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE.

- 12.27 Additional sites may come forward or existing commitments reviewed when the findings of the recreation open space strategy and the outdoor playing pitch facilities study, are available.

- 12.28 Also, within the inner urban areas the Community Priority Areas Policy CF6 gives a high priority to the provision of open space on unallocated sites within the areas. This is in recognition of the importance the community attaches to this provision and the existing high density of development in these areas

Provision of Recreation Open Space and Playing Fields for New Development

- 12.29 New residential development will create additional demands for recreational open space in the form of children's play space and informal open space, as well as for formal open spaces for outdoor sport and recreation in the form of playing fields. It is essential that people have easy access to open space close to where they live to meet their sporting or leisure needs. Therefore, developers will be expected to make appropriate provision for both recreation open space and playing fields to meet the needs generated by the development.

Policy OS5

NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAKE APPROPRIATE PROVISION OF OR EQUIVALENT COMMUTED PAYMENT FOR:

- (1) RECREATION OPEN SPACE, INCLUDING CHILDREN'S PLAY SPACE AND INFORMAL OPEN SPACE, TO A MINIMUM STANDARD OF 20 SQUARE METRES PER DWELLING (INCLUDING A SUITABLY DESIGNED AND EQUIPPED PLAY AREA IN DEVELOPMENTS OF 0.8ha OR 50 OR MORE FAMILY DWELLINGS); AND**
- (2) PLAYING FIELDS, TO A MINIMUM STANDARD OF 40 SQUARE METRES PER DWELLING.**

PROVISION WILL NORMALLY BE LOCATED WITHIN THE SITE, HOWEVER WHERE THIS IS INAPPROPRIATE, OFF SITE PROVISION OR IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING LOCAL PROVISION CAN BE SUITABLE ALTERNATIVES. DEVELOPERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADEQUATE MAINTENANCE OF ANY NEW PROVISION.

- 12.30 The appropriate level of provision is based upon the National Playing Field Association's Minimum standard. In determining the requirement, mitigating factors, such as abnormal site costs, will be taken into account.
- 12.31 The precise form and disposition of provision required will have regard to the particular needs and circumstances of each new development. Consideration will be given in particular to the size of the site; dwelling type; likely residents; and the level of existing local provision.
- 12.32 Any new provision should normally be located within the site, where it should form an intrinsic part of the layout, and should be useable, in terms of it being of an appropriate size, secure, open to natural surveillance While avoiding adverse amenity affects. In the case of smaller developments it may be appropriate to improve the quality of existing recreation open space, which is accessible to the development to deal with additional usage brought about by the development.

- 12.33 A development of 50 family dwellings, will accommodate enough children to warrant the provision of an equipped area for play as part of the Recreation open space, based on the NPFA recommended threshold for a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP). A family dwelling is normally considered to be a dwelling with 2 or more bedrooms.
- 12.34 The Council has produced advice contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance on the 'Provision of children's play space within new residential developments' to help developers implement this policy in a way which ensures good quality provision in the right locations.
- 12.35 Most sites will not be of sufficient size to warrant a whole new playing field. The Council, on such sites will require developers to contribute towards playing field provision by contributing an appropriate equivalent sum for funding neighbourhood provision. This may be for improvements to existing playing fields or towards new playing field provision. Additional playing field provision and improvements to existing will reflect the recommendations in the emerging playing field strategy and the findings of the outdoor playing pitch facility study. Supplementary planning guidance will also be prepared to guide new provision and indicate the levels of contribution, which will be appropriate from a proposed development.
- 12.36 Developers should demonstrate that proper provision has been made to safeguard the long term use and maintenance of any open space provision in accordance with the advice contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance on the 'Provision of Children's Play space within new residential developments' and its successor documents. These arrangements are normally be secured through the use of a planning obligation or planning conditions.

Allotments

- 12.37 Allotment gardens provide for a valuable leisure pursuit, particularly for people who have little or no garden space of their own. Whilst demand for allotment plots is generally high, with many Council sites fully tenanted, there are some parts of the District where demand is low particularly where problems of vandalism and trespass exist.
- 12.38 The Council has a policy of providing secure and serviced allotments sites where required, whilst rationalising under-utilised allotment areas. To ensure that future demand for allotments is adequately met and to reflect the Council's overall approach, both public and private allotments of value to the community are protected by the Plan.

Policy OS6

ON LAND ALLOCATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAPS AS ALLOTMENTS OR ON SITES UNDER 0.4 HECTARES USED AS ALLOTMENTS, DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED UNLESS:

- (1) ALTERNATIVE SATISFACTORY PROVISION CAN BE MADE; OR**
- (2) COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE ALLOTMENTS IS NEGLIGIBLE.**

- 12.39 Where the support for an allotment appears to be negligible, the Council will take steps to encourage their use in the local Community before considering alternative uses of the land. Also where the allotment is within a Community Priority Area, the need for it to be used for alternative recreational or amenity open space uses will be considered first before other forms of development are accepted.
- 12.40 Policy OS6 also applies to allotments in settlements outside the urban area.

Village Greenspace

- 12.41 Apart from open countryside, which surrounds and acts as a setting for the villages of the District, there are often pieces of greenspace within the settlements themselves which are of significant amenity and/or recreational value. Those greenspaces of recreational value to the community are identified on the Proposals Maps as Recreation Open Space or Playing Fields and protected through Policies OS2 and OS3 respectively.
- 12.42 There are some other areas of greenspace which have an important local amenity value, contributing to the character and setting of the village. Development of these areas, some of which may be privately owned or include areas of Recreation Open Space, would be harmful to the visual, quality, character and setting of the village. This is particularly so where the land is very prominent within the village or where it possesses good tree cover. Areas such as these, which are greater than 0.4 hectares in size, are identified on the Proposals Maps as 'Village Greenspace' and protected through Policy OS7.

Policy OS7

ON LAND DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAPS AS VILLAGE GREENSPACE, DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED WHERE IT WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF OPEN SPACE WHICH IS IMPORTANT TO THE CHARACTER, VISUAL AMENITY AND LOCAL IDENTITY OF THE SETTLEMENT.

- 12.43 There are also a number of such areas, which are less than 0.4 hectares and hence are not shown on the Proposals Maps. In order to also retain these valuable village open spaces, applications for infill development in the villages will be assessed against Policy OS8.

Policy OS8

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT ON SMALL AREAS OF OPEN LAND IN THE VILLAGES OF

**ADDINGHAM
HAWORTH
BURLEY-IN-WHARFEDALE
OAKWORTH
MENSTON
OXENHOPE
CULLINGWORTH**

**THORNTON
DENHOLME
WILSDEN
EAST MORTON
HARDEN
STEETON AND EASTBURN**

**WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHERE IT WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF
OPEN SPACE WHICH IS IMPORTANT TO THE CHARACTER, VISUAL
AMENITY AND LOCAL IDENTITY OF THE SETTLEMENT.**

- 12.44 Valuable greenspaces in smaller villages "washed" over by Green Belt notation are adequately protected by Policies GB1 and GB3. Therefore Policies OS7 and OS8 do not apply to these villages.