

6 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Planning Policy

Introduction

- 6.1 This section examines the considerations that Uttlesford District Council will take into account in finalising open space, sport and recreation policies in the Local Development Framework.

Vision

- 6.2 The vision for open space, sport and recreation in Uttlesford is ***'to provide, safeguard and develop a network of safe, accessible and attractive open spaces, sports facilities and pitches that are valued, well managed and maintained and enhance the quality of life, sense of well-being, health and learning opportunities of all sections of the community'***.

General policy considerations

- 6.3 Introduction: In support of the vision, a number of general policies have been developed in consultation with local people and taking account of the specific physical, demographic and strategic context of Uttlesford district, and these are in turn reflected in the assessment of open space, sport and recreation provision in the strategy.
- 6.4 Locally derived standards of provision: Planning Policy Guidance 17 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation' (PPG17) states that 'the Government believes that open space, sport and recreation standards are best set locally. Local authorities should use the information gained from their assessments of needs and opportunities to set robust local standards. These should form the basis for redressing quantitative and qualitative deficiencies through the planning process.' The standards of provision proposed in the open space, sport and recreation strategy are therefore based upon a detailed assessment of local needs. In most cases this has involved:
- a) Benchmarking levels of provision in Uttlesford against those of our geographical neighbouring authorities and also against a range of demographically comparable areas.
 - b) Consulting with users to seek their views on the current adequacy of provision.
 - c) Setting a district wide standard based upon the above evidence base.
- 6.5 Minimum standards of provision: The standards of provision for open space, sport and recreation should be regarded as the minimum levels required to meet existing needs. This means that it will be appropriate to:
- a) Seek higher levels of provision in appropriate circumstances where opportunities permit it.
 - b) Regularly review and amend the standards as needs like increased rates of physical activity evolve over time.
- 6.6 Existing and new developments: In some of the urban parts of the district, opportunities for meeting identified deficiencies in open spaces are limited by the absence of opportunities in such built-up areas. Similarly, in some rural areas where most land is in private ownership, securing public access to open spaces may not be possible. However, the opportunities presented by new residential developments may offer the flexibility to achieve enhanced levels of greenspace provision, recognising that the current standards represent an assessment of the minimum amounts that are needed.
- 6.7 Quality of provision: Quality criteria were set in consultation with local communities, to define the condition to which each type of green space, sports facility and playing pitch in the district should aspire. The quality of each site was assessed in relation to a set of objective criteria relating to wider norms and over time all identified qualitative deficiencies will be addressed progressively as resources and opportunities allow.
- 6.8 Provision relating to new developments: The following principles will apply:
- a) All new dwellings should contribute towards the provision of open space, sport and recreation. For smaller developments where on-site provision is not achievable, a financial

contribution will be sought from developers towards the improvement of provision elsewhere, where appropriate schemes can be identified within the defined catchment.

- b) The precise nature, composition and size of provision in new developments will be determined in relation to the overall size of the development and with reference to the minimum standards of provision.
- c) Financial contributions will relate to the size of each dwelling and their anticipated occupancy rates.

6.9 Community involvement: In determining the precise nature of new and improved greenspace in each locality, Uttlesford District Council will:

- a) Consult with those with a specific interest in the use of the greenspace (such as young people with play provision), to ensure that wherever possible the new provision meets their needs.
- b) Involve town and parish councils in confirming local needs and the optimum way of meeting them, both in terms of additional provision and its ongoing management.

Open space policy considerations

6.10 'Surplus' provision: In some instances the application of standards produces an apparent 'surplus' of open space provision. However, this should not be interpreted as signifying that the 'surplus' could be disposed of because:

- a) The standards against which the 'surplus' was assessed are the minimum that are required to meet current local needs. Local concentrations of existing demand and future increases in greenspace usage will both inflate the amount of provision needed to levels well above the minimum stipulation.
- b) An apparent 'surplus' in one form of open space will often compensate for shortfalls in other types of provision locally.
- c) Some of the larger areas of open space serve wider than local needs, with usage catchments well beyond the immediate boundaries of the parish or ward in which they are located. In such cases, it is clearly inappropriate to assess the adequacy of provision solely in relation to the size of the local population.

6.11 Multi-functionality: The form of assessment advocated by PPG17 requires open spaces to be categorised in relation to their primary function only. The advantage of this is that there is no 'double counting' of sites, but the disadvantage is that the multi-function nature of many sites is downplayed. As an example, an area designated as a playing pitch may be used for its primary function for only 1.5 hours per week and as amenity greenspace for the remainder of the time, but the latter function will not be included in the formal assessment.

Sports facility policy considerations

6.12 Facilities Planning Model: Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) comprises a useful preliminary basis for assessing the adequacy of sports hall, swimming pool and synthetic turf pitch provision but its raw outputs provide only a partial picture of local need. For this reason, the FPM outputs have been used to inform the development of local minimum standards of provision for sports halls, swimming pools and synthetic turf pitches, but other factors have also been considered as part of the evidence base.

Playing pitch policy considerations

6.13 The Playing Pitch Model: Sport England's Playing Pitch Model (PPM) comprises a useful preliminary basis for assessing the adequacy of pitch provision, but its raw outputs provide only a partial picture of local need. For this reason, the PPM outputs have been used to inform the production of local minimum standards of provision for each type of pitch, which incorporate other factors such as displaced and latent demand.

- 6.14 Pitch space allocations: In addition to the dimensions of the playing surface as stipulated by the governing bodies of the pitch sports, together with the recommended safety 'run-off' areas, the area stipulated for new pitches in the district will normally allow for the direction of each pitch to be rotated or moved laterally, to change the areas of highest wear each season.
- 6.15 'Surplus' provision: In some instances the application of standards produces an apparent 'surplus' of pitches. However, this should not be interpreted as signifying that the 'surplus' could be disposed of because:
- The standards against which the 'surplus' was assessed are the minimum that are required to meet current local needs. Local concentrations of existing demand and future increases in sports participation rates will both inflate the number of pitches needed to levels well above the minimum stipulation.
 - The minimum standards of provision are based in part on demand for pitches during the peak period. A number of teams play on their local pitch at times other than in the peak period. Were their pitch to be regarded as surplus because it does not cater for demand at the peak period, they would have to travel elsewhere to play. This would be likely to deter recreational level participants, for whom involvement on a local basis is one of the prime motivations to play.

Developer contributions

- 6.16 Introduction: Developer Contributions (or Section 106 Agreements) involve the provision of capital and revenue funds by housing developers, as a contribution to the facilities and services that the inhabitants of new residential developments will need. The introduction of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) under the Local Development Framework system for planning will provide local authorities with a basis for formalising such arrangements. This section sets out the basis on which developer contributions can be calculated for open spaces, sports facilities and playing pitch provision.
- 6.17 The introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for Uttlesford may have an impact on the use of Developer Contributions/Section 106 Agreements in relation to open space, sport and recreation. The CIL is intended to fund new infrastructure required to support the development of an area and should not be used to remedy pre-existing deficiencies in infrastructure provision²⁰. Local authorities will be required to produce a schedule of infrastructure projects or types that would be funded, wholly or in part, by the levy. If the authority sets out that it intends to fund a type of infrastructure via the levy it will not be able to seek Developer Contributions towards that type of infrastructure. Once a CIL has been adopted, or post 6 April 2014 if a CIL has not been adopted, the maximum number of developments from which contributions can be pooled will be limited to five. It may therefore be advisable to include future strategic open space, sport and recreation provision within the CIL charging schedule whilst leaving smaller scale open spaces and facilities to be funded through Section 106 Agreements at the site specific level.
- 6.18 Principles: Policies for open space, sport and recreation should be developed with the following principles in mind:
- Policies and planning standards should be comprehensive, but also flexible and simple to understand. Guidance should be clear and unambiguous, to provide practical solutions to meet all circumstances.
 - There should be clarity about the costs that developers will be required to meet, including the planning and design, installation and longer-term maintenance of facilities.
 - The basis on which on-site and off-site contributions will be determined should be clearly stated, with thresholds set to reflect the planning standards for facilities.
- 6.19 Open space costings: There is not a specific body or guidance document that provides a methodology for calculating developer contributions relating to open space provision.

²⁰ Community Infrastructure Levy: An Overview, CLG, May 2011

Consequently costings provided for open space typologies are based on figures provided in other similar studies and from the experience of The Landscape Partnership. The mix and type of dwellings used for the calculations is explained below as part of the Sport England Six-stage approach for calculating developer contributions relating to sports facilities.

- 6.20 The costs of provision of each type of open space are set out below, with sources for each costing indicated where appropriate. For the purposes of the calculation, it has been assumed that all additional facilities will be provided as new, although the options for provision include several lower cost possibilities.

<i>Type of open space</i>	<i>Approximate cost (£)</i>	<i>Unit of measurement</i>
Parks and Gardens	1,750,000 ²¹	Per park
Natural and semi-natural green space	37,000 ²²	Per ha
Amenity green space	40,000 ²³	Per ha
Provision for children and young people		
NEAP	100,000 ²⁴	Per facility
LEAP	50,000	
LAP	12,000	
Skate park/BMX track	120,000	
Allotments	40,000 ²⁵	Per ha

- 6.21 Inflation: Assuming an average increase in prices of 2% per annum in the 15 year period to 2026, the average cost of each type of facility provision across the whole period (based upon the mid point in 2018) will be as follows:

<i>Type of open space</i>	<i>Approximate cost (£)</i>	<i>Approximate cost per 1000 population based on proposed quantity standard (£)</i>
Parks and Gardens	1,960,000	n/a – provision to be sought where appropriate only and likely to relate to large developments
Natural and semi-natural green space	41,440	290,080
Amenity green space	44,800	44,800
Provision for children and young people		
NEAP – assume 1.5 per 1000 popn	112,000	168,000
LEAP – assume 4 per 1000 popn	56,000	224,000
LAP – assume 20 per 1000 popn	13,440	268,800
Skate park/BMX track – assume 0.2 per 1000 popn	134,400	26,880
Total	315,840	687,680
Allotments	44,800	11,400

- 6.22 Divide costs into dwellings: This is final stage involves dividing the costs by the relevant number and type of dwellings, to arrive at an appropriate contribution. Based upon the assumed numbers of the additional population attributable to each type of property, calculated as per paragraph 6.23 f) below, the costs can be apportioned as follows:

²¹ East London Green Grid Parks and Open Spaces: Budget Cost Estimates – cost of local park

²² East London Green Grid Parks and Open Spaces: Budget Cost Estimates – average costs of ecology park, green links, nature reserves and woodland belts with 2% inflation per annum applied.

²³ East London Green Grid Parks and Open Spaces: Budget Cost Estimates – average costs of District open space and green links, with reference to Central Bedfordshire Planning Obligations SPD Background Paper

²⁴ East London Green Grid Parks and Open Spaces: Budget Cost Estimates – with 2% inflation per annum applied, with 2% inflation per annum applied and experience of The Landscape Partnership

²⁵ Eastbourne Borough Council Allotment Provision discussion by Cabinet, December 2010 and Hambleton District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation SPD – derivation of costs

One bedroom	1	0.001	n/a	290	45	688	11
Two bedrooms	2	0.002	n/a	580	90	1376	22
Three bedrooms	3	0.003	n/a	870	135	2064	33
Four bedrooms	4	0.004	n/a	1160	180	2752	44
Five bedrooms	5	0.005	n/a	1450	225	3440	55
Multiple occupancy	53	0.053	n/a	15370	2385	36434	583

6.23 A Six-Stage process: Sport England advocates a six-stage process for calculating developer contributions relating to sports facilities. Based on this approach and the combination of known and projected figures, the following is a worked example of the developer contributions that might be attracted for sports facilities and playing pitches in Uttlesford:

- Identify the timeframe for the DPD:** This corresponds with the timeframe for the LDF, which covers the period up to 2028.
- Establish the number of dwellings to be committed:** Based upon the 2008-based sub-national population projections (ONS, 2011) which show a projected increase in the district's population to 89,600 by 2028, a population increase of 12,800 will be accommodated in 4,665 new dwellings in Uttlesford in this period.
- Agree what type of dwellings should contribute to sports and pitch facilities:** In line with local planning policy, contributions will be invited for all residential properties, proportionate to the number of occupants.
- Calculate the number and mix of dwellings of each type likely to be provided within the DPD timeframe:** The precise location and size of housing has yet to be determined, but the following projections are based upon assumed future patterns of provision locally.

Type of property	No. properties	No. residents
One bedroom	1,000	1,000
Two bedrooms	1,500	3,000
Three bedrooms	1,000	3,000
Four bedrooms	750	3,000
Five bedrooms	400	2,000
Multiple occupancy	15	800
TOTAL	4,665	12,800

- Establish the relevant costs of facility development:** The costs of provision of each type of sports facility and pitch are set out below, based on Sport England's published costs for the second quarter of 2011. For the purposes of the calculation, it has been assumed that all additional facilities will be provided as new, although the options for provision include several lower cost possibilities.

Average facility costs: These are estimated as follows:

Type of facility	Land purchase	Site preparation	Design fees	Planning fees	Building costs	Equipment	TOTAL
Sports halls	£100,000	£200,000	£200,000	£50,000	£2.15 million	£50,000	£2.75 million
Swimming pools	£100,000	£200,000	£300,000	£50,000	£5.5 million	£200,000	£6.35 million
Synthetic tracks	£100,000	£200,000	£50,000	£50,000	£665,000	£50,000	£1.115 million
Synthetic pitches	£75,000	£200,000	£20,000	£5,000	£405,000	£20,000	£725,000
Indoor bowls	£100,000	£200,000	£100,000	£50,000	£1.09 million	£10,000	£1.55 million
Outdoor bowls	£50,000	£20,000	£10,000	£2,000	£50,000	£1,000	£133,000
Indoor tennis	£200,000	£200,000	£200,000	£50,000	£1.65 million	£20,000	£2.32 million
Outdoor tennis	£20,000	£5,000	£5,000	£1,000	£33,000	£1,000	£65,000
Squash courts	£20,000	£5,000	£5,000	£1,000	£75,000	-	£106,000
Golf courses	£1 million	£500,000	£250,000	£50,000	£1.5 million	£50,000	£3.35 million
Health and fitness	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£10,000	£500,000	£300,000	£960,000
Village/comm. halls	£20,000	£10,000	£25,000	£5,000	£150,000	£5,000	£215,000
Grass pitches	£75,000	£20,000	£5,000	£5,000	£60,000	£2,000	£167,000

Inflation: Assuming an average increase in prices of 2% per annum in the 15 year period to 2026, the average cost of each type of facility provision across the whole period (based upon the mid point in 2018) will be as follows:

Type of facility	Cost in 2018
Sports halls	£3,222,063
Swimming pools	£7,440,037
Synthetic tracks	£1,306,400
Synthetic pitches	£832,797
Indoor bowls	£1,816,072
Outdoor bowls	£155,830
Indoor tennis	£2,718,250
Outdoor tennis	£76,159
Squash courts	£121,761
Golf courses	£7,440,037
Health and fitness	£1,306,400
Village/comm. halls	£246,967
Grass pitches	£155,830

Extra facilities needed: Identified facility needs, based upon population increases relating to new housing developments, are shown below:

Type of facility	No. extra facilities needed
Sports halls	1
Swimming pools	0.5
Synthetic tracks	0
Synthetic pitches	1
Indoor bowls	1 rink
Outdoor bowls rinks	2
Indoor tennis courts	0
Outdoor tennis courts	6
Squash courts	1 x 9-hole
Golf courses	1
Health and fitness	2
Village/comm. halls	8

Grass pitches	15
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Attributable costs: The total attributable costs are shown below:

<i>f f ili</i>	<i>Cost in 2018</i>	<i>No. extra f ili i</i>	<i>Total costs (£)</i>
Sports halls	£3,222,063	1	£3,222,063
Swimming pools	£7,440,037	0.5	£3,720,019
Synthetic tracks	£1,306,400	0	0
Synthetic pitches	£832,797	1	£832,797
Indoor bowls	£1,816,072	1 rink	£302,679
Outdoor bowls rinks	£155,830	2	£311,660
Indoor tennis courts	£2,718,250	0	0
Outdoor tennis courts	£76,159	6	£456,954
Squash courts	£121,761	1	£121,761
Golf courses	£7,440,037	1 x 9-hole	£3,720,019
Health and fitness	£1,306,400	2	£2,612,800
Village/comm. halls	£246,967	8	£1,975,736
Grass pitches	£155,830	15	£2,337,450

Total attributable cost: The total cost of meeting all facility needs amounts to £19,613,878.

- f) **Divide costs into dwellings:** This is the final stage and involves dividing the costs by the relevant number and type of dwellings, to arrive at an appropriate contribution. Based upon the percentages of the overall additional population attributable to each type of property the costs can be apportioned as follows:

<i>Type of property</i>	<i>% residents</i>	<i>Apportioned costs</i>	<i>No. dwellings</i>	<i>Cost per dwelling</i>
One bedroom	7.9%	£1,549,963	1,000	£1,549.50
Two bedrooms	23.6%	£4,628,875	1,500	£3,085.92
Three bedrooms	23.6%	£4,628,875	1,000	£4,628.88
Four bedrooms	23.6%	£4,628,875	750	£6,171.83
Five bedrooms	15.8%	£3,098,899	400	£7,747.25
Multiple occupancy	5.5%	£1,078,763	15	£71,917.55

6.24 **On-site/off-site contributions:** To determine whether developer contributions should be spent on facilities on the site of a specific housing development, or allocated to a central fund for off-site development within an appropriate travel time/distance of the development will depend upon a number of factors, including:

- The size of the development (and whether there is physically enough space to accommodate some of the larger types of facility).
- The number and type of dwelling being provided and whether the number of new residents is greater than the per capita standard thresholds for the provision of facilities of each type.

6.25 On the basis of the above, the criteria for on-site or off-site provision of each type of facility in Uttlesford will be as follows:

Type of facility	Threshold for on-site provision	Threshold for off-site provision
Parks and Gardens	Provision to be sought where possible on larger developments	n/a
Natural and semi-natural green space	All developments over 10 dwellings	All developments under 10 dwellings and where onsite provision is not possible
Amenity green space	All development	All developments where onsite provision is not possible
Provision for children and young people	All developments over 10 dwellings	All developments under 10 dwellings and where onsite provision is not possible
Allotments	All developments over 10 dwellings capable of accommodating four standard allotment plots	All developments under 10 dwellings and where onsite provision is not possible
Sports halls	Development accommodates 12,500 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 12,500 people. Provision to be made within 15 minutes driving time of each new development.
Swimming pools	Development accommodates 25,000 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 25,000 people. Provision to be made within 15 minutes driving time of each new development.
Synthetic tracks	No additional provision required.	No additional provision required.
Synthetic pitches	Development accommodates 15,000 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 15,000 people. Provision to be made within 15 minutes driving time of each new development.
Indoor bowls	Development accommodates 12,500 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 12,500 people. Provision to be made within 20 minutes driving time of each new development.
Outdoor bowls	Development accommodates 7,000 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 7,000 people. Provision to be made within 15 minutes driving time of each new development.
Indoor tennis	No additional provision required.	No additional provision required.
Outdoor tennis	Development accommodates 2,200 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 2,200 people. Provision to be made within 15 minutes driving time of each new development.
Squash courts	Development accommodates 12,600 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 12,600 people. Provision to be made within 20 minutes driving time of each new development.
Golf courses	Development accommodates 25,000 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 25,000 people. Provision to be made within 30 minutes driving time of each new development.

<i>Type of facility</i>	<i>Threshold for on-site provision</i>	<i>Threshold for off-site provision</i>
Health and fitness	Development accommodates 7,000 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 7,000 people. Provision to be made within 15 minutes driving time of each new development.
Village/community halls	Development accommodates 1,500 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 1,500 people. Provision to be made within 10 minutes driving time of each new development.
Adult football pitches	No additional provision required.	No additional provision required.
Junior football pitches	Development accommodates 3,450 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 3,450 people. Provision to be made within 15 minutes driving time of each new development.
Mni-soccer pitches	Development accommodates 5,000 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 5,000 people. Provision to be made within 15 minutes driving time of each new development.
Cricket pitches	Development accommodates 2,000 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 2,000 people. Provision to be made within 15 minutes driving time of each new development.
Rugby pitches	Development accommodates 26,000 people on site	Developments collectively accommodate 26,000 people. Provision to be made within 20 minutes driving time of each new development.