

Appendix O

OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Appendix outlines the Council's open space requirements for new residential development in accordance with Policy R/OS8. The standards for the outdoor play provision, which includes sports pitches, other outdoor sports and children's play areas are based on the National Playing Fields Association's (NPFA) 'Six Acre Standard – Minimum Standards for Outdoor Play Space' (2001). The Council's requirement for informal open space within a new development is also included within this Appendix.
- 1.2 This Appendix sets out the specific open space requirements for different dwelling sizes and identifies those circumstances where a developer contribution will normally be required in lieu of on-site provision. The Borough Council requires developers to comply with this guidance and any supplementary planning document published by the Borough Council.
- 1.4 Applicants should recognise that the Borough Council's Open Space Requirement is regarded as a **minimum** standard and developers are encouraged to realise opportunities for making additional provision where circumstances allow.

2.0 Open Space Standard

- 2.1 The Borough Council's open space requirements are divided into the following categories:

Table 1: Outdoor playing space requirements

Type of play space	Requirement (per 1000 people)
Sports Pitches	1.2 Ha
Other Sports Facilities	0.4 Ha
Children's Playing Space	0.8 Ha
Informal Open Space	0.4 Ha
Total	2.8 Ha

- 2.2 In order to ensure that the provision required for a development is directly related to that proposal, it is necessary to take into account local factors such as average household sizes and the Borough Council's policies and standards for the provision of publicly managed open space.

3.0 Local Factors & Assumptions

- 3.1 The provision of outdoor playing space is required on the basis that a net additional dwelling could add to the local population and therefore add to the demand for playing and other recreational facilities. In order to determine this additional population, the following average household sizes have been used for the Local Plan area:

Table 2: Average Number of Persons per Dwelling

Size of dwelling	Average number of persons per dwelling
1 Bed Dwelling	1.13
2 Bed Dwelling	1.62
3+ Bed Dwelling	2.48

Source: Small Area Population Forecast for 2004, HCC, (2001 Census Base)

4.0 Calculating the Open Space Requirement

- 4.1 Table 3 below indicates the open space requirement for each size of dwelling house. The total open space requirement for a development is calculated by multiplying the number of dwellings on the site by the relevant minimum standard for each category of open space. Where a development includes a mix of dwelling sizes, then the totals for each dwelling type should be added together to give the total requirement.

Table 3: Open Space Provision Standards and Requirements

Category of Playing Space	Minimum Practical Size (sq.m)	Open Space Requirement (in sq.m) (per dwelling)		
		1 bedroom dwelling	2 Bedroom dwelling	3+ bedroom dwelling
Sports Pitches	8200	13.6	19.4	29.8
Other Sports	Not applicable	4.5	6.5	9.9
Children's Playing Space	400*	9.0	13.0	19.8
Informal Open Space	400	4.5	6.5	9.9
Total	-	31.6	45.4	69.4

Sources: The Playing Space Standard, NPFA, 2001 and Small Area Population Forecast for 2004, HCC, (2001 Census based)

*Includes buffer zone

- 4.2 Where the total requirement for a housing site exceeds the minimum practical size outlined in Table 3 above, the developer will normally be expected to provide that particular type of open space on-site. There may be instances where off-site provision is more appropriate. Such circumstances are detailed below within the requirements for each category of open space.
- 4.3 It is considered that to provide less than these minimum standards would be impractical and of little benefit to the prospective residents. In such instances the developer will be required to make a contribution in lieu of on-site provision for sports pitches and children's play space. The provision of 'Other Sports Facilities' will not normally be required on-site, instead a developer contribution will be required. No off-site provision is normally required for informal open space. In certain circumstances developers may agree to fund improvements to enhance the quality of informal open space such as parks and recreation grounds within the local vicinity, instead of providing the full informal open space.
- 4.4 For **retirement and elderly persons' dwellings** there is no requirement for the provision of sports pitches nor children's play space. However there is a requirement to provide the same level of informal open space. There is also a reduced requirement for other sports, which represents 50% of the provision outlined in Table 3 (i.e. 2.25 sq.m. for a one bedroom dwelling; 3.25 sq.m. for a two bedroom dwelling; and 4.95 sq.m. for a three or more bedroom dwelling).

5.0 Sports Pitches

Summary of requirement

Minimum Practical size	8,200 sq. m
Requirement for 1 bed dwelling	13.6sq. m
Requirement for 2 bed dwelling	19.4sq. m
Requirement for 3+ bed dwelling	29.8sq. m

- 5.1 Sports pitches are laid out and maintained principally for organised outdoor games such as football, cricket or rugby. As part of this provision it may be necessary to provide associated facilities such as changing rooms and car parking.
- 5.2 In nearly all cases the sports pitch requirement for a housing site will be **under the minimum practical size**, consequently the developer will be required to make a contribution in-lieu of such provision. The required sum is updated on an annual basis and the current figure is available from Gosport Town Hall. The Council will use such contributions to provide new facilities or improve existing provision in a location that can be used by the new residents.
- 5.3 On very large housing sites, where the total requirement is **over the minimum practical size**, it may be necessary to include sports pitch provision on-site. No new sites of this size have been identified in the Local Plan Review. However, should such a site become available the Council will set out the requirements within a Development Brief. Even in these instances it may still be more appropriate for the developer to provide a sum for the provision of sports pitches off-site within the vicinity. Any on-site provision will need to be co-ordinated by the Borough Council's Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

5.4 Off-site provision will be co-ordinated by the Borough Council. The need for a particular type of sport will be identified through community consultation and incorporated into the Community Strategy for Gosport Action Plan. It will be necessary to ensure that such facilities will not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of local residents. Considerations for new sports pitches will include:

- sufficient space for the particular sport identified;
- good drainage;
- appropriate orientation and gradient;
- changing accommodation and ancillary facilities as appropriate; and
- artificial surfaces and floodlighting where appropriate.

5.5 These requirements will also form the basis of using developer contributions to enhance the quality of existing facilities. Further guidance from organisations such as Sport England and the National Playing Fields Association will be used where applicable.

6.0 Other Outdoor Sports

Summary of requirement

Minimum Practical size	Not applicable
Requirement for 1 bed dwelling	4.5 sq. m
Requirement for 2 bed dwelling	6.5 sq. m
Requirement for 3+ bed dwelling	9.9 sq. m

6.1 For these standards other outdoor sports provision includes tennis courts, bowling greens, athletics facilities and putting greens (not golf courses).

6.2 The provision of ‘Other Sports Facilities’ will not normally be required on-site, instead the provision is allocated strategically by the Borough Council and the developer will be required to make a payment in-lieu of on-site provision. The required sum is updated on an annual basis.

6.3 Off-site provision will be co-ordinated by the Borough Council taking into account the proposals of the Community Strategy for Gosport. Good quality facilities will be required, including appropriate specification of equipment and surfacing that is suited to the anticipated level of use. Consideration will need to be given to orientation, gradients, ancillary facilities and whether floodlighting and other features are appropriate. Guidance produced by Sport England will be used where appropriate.

7.0 Children's Play Areas

Summary of requirement

Minimum Practical size	400 sq. m* (Local Areas for Play) 3600 sq. m* (Local Equipped Areas for Play)
Requirement for 1 bed dwelling	9.0 sq. m
Requirement for 2 bed dwelling	13.0 sq. m
Requirement for 3+ bed dwelling	19.8 sq. m

* includes buffer zone

- 7.1 If the requirement for a site is **under the minimum practical size**, the developer will be required to make a contribution in accordance with the 'Contributions per dwelling' figure contained within the Council's annually published 'Fees and Charges Book'.
- 7.2 If the requirement for a site is **over the minimum practical size**, the developer will be required to provide a play facility on-site. In exceptional instances it may be more satisfactory to provide the play area on other land in the ownership or control of the developer. However, this facility should be within 5 minutes walking time from the dwellings (depending on the type of play facility-see below) and without the need for children to cross a Primary or Distributor road or other likely hazard.

General Considerations

- 7.4 Different types of playing spaces should be provided for different age groups, incorporating equipped play areas and areas for casual play and informal activities. For all new residential developments, the selection of play areas must be an integral part of the design process from the outset. Considerations include:
- the route between the dwellings and the play space is as safe as possible;
 - near-by roads are as safe as possible;
 - the play space has natural surveillance from near-by dwellings and/or road;
 - the site is in an open and welcoming location;
 - the site should be on land suited for the type of play opportunity intended;
 - the site should be sufficiently far from dwellings and include buffer zones to reduce the likelihood of noise and disturbance;
 - the site should be integrated as far as possible with other open spaces and amenity areas;
 - the site should include seats for parents and carers;
 - the site should include play equipment of high quality and must meet current British safety standards;
 - the site should include impact absorbing surfaces beneath and around play equipment;
 - the site requires appropriate boundary treatment; and
 - the site should include an interesting eye catching feature.
- 7.6 A summary of the four main play area requirements is given below. Good practice guides by organisations such as Sport England and the National Playing Fields Association will need to be considered.

Local Area for Play (LAP)

- 7.7 A LAP is a small area of open space specifically designated and laid out for young children (under 6) to play close to where they live. Such sites should be suitable for children with disabilities. They should be within 1 minute's walking time of the new dwellings (60 metres straight line distance or 100 metres pedestrian route). Such areas need to occupy a reasonably flat site that is well drained with grass or a hard surface and positioned adjacent to a well-used pedestrian pathway. The site should be overlooked from nearby houses.
- 7.8 For larger housing sites it will be necessary to provide more than one LAP in order to ensure that they are local to all dwellings on the site.
- 7.9 The Activity Zone should be a minimum of 100 square metres. LAPs should be appropriate for games such as tag, or play with small toys and should contain eye-catching features. They should include seats for parents or carers and litter bins should be provided. Adequate safety measures should be provided to minimise the risk of road-related accidents. All play equipment and surfacing should meet the relevant safety standards.
- 7.10 The Buffer Zone should be sufficient to minimise audible and visual intrusion to adjacent residents. A minimum distance of 5 metres should exist between the edge of the Activity Zone and the forward-most part of the nearest dwelling that faces a LAP. Gable end and other exposed walls should be protected from use for ball games by, for example, providing a strip of dense planting of 1 metre minimum depth.

Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)

- 7.11 A LEAP is an unsupervised play area equipped for children of early school age (4–8 years) and should cater for children with special needs. LEAPs should be within 5 minutes walking time from all the dwellings (240 metre straight-line distance or 400 metres pedestrian route). Such areas need to be well drained with grass or a hard surface and have an appropriate impact-absorbing surface beneath and around the play equipment. The site should be overlooked from nearby houses or well-used pedestrian routes. Adequate safety measures should be provided to minimise the risk of road-related accidents.
- 7.12 The Activity Zone should be at least 400 square metres. LEAPs should contain at least 5 items of play equipment. There should be unobstructed open space to play games. There should also be seating for accompanying adults and litterbins.
- 7.13 The Buffer Zone, should be a minimum of 10 metres in depth between the edge of the activity zone and the boundary of the nearest property containing a dwelling. Normally, a minimum of 20 metres should be provided between the activity zone and the habitable room façade of the dwelling. Careful consideration needs to be given to the design of the means of enclosure, planting scheme and other physical features on the boundary of the residential property. Attention will also need to be given to the siting of play equipment within the Activity Zone in order to preclude opportunities for overlooking nearby gardens and a consequential loss of privacy for residents. The buffer zone can include landscaping and/or footpaths.
- 7.14 Where a site is large enough to require the provision of a LEAP there will also need to be several LAPs within the developments. LEAPs and LAPs may be provided in the same location, but there should remain a clear separation between the two to allow for the separate functions. Where LEAPs and LAPs are provided at the same site, the buffer zone between the two may be reduced or removed (but the buffer zone on the LAP side should be appropriate for a LEAP).

Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)

- 7.15 A NEAP is a site that is designated and equipped mainly for older children with opportunities for play for younger children too. The minimum practical size of a NEAP is 8,500 square metres. Dwellings should be located within 15 minutes walking distance of a NEAP. Due to the requirements of a NEAP it is unlikely that developers will be required to provide a NEAP on a new residential site. Instead, the Local Authority will use contributions received from developers to provide such facilities on appropriate sites. Where a site is large enough to require a NEAP it will be appropriate for a Development Brief to set out the requirements for an on-site NEAP. Further details about NEAPS are contained within the NPFA's 'The Six Acre Standard'.

Informal Play Areas

- 7.16 It is recognised that children enjoy informal areas of play such as parks, amenity areas, and natural and semi-natural areas. In certain circumstances on-site play provision can use opportunities of existing features to provide areas for adventurous play that could include facilities such as an adventure playground, kick-about areas or dirt mounds for off-road cycling. It is important that care is taken to ensure such spaces are accessible and safe with reasonable natural surveillance from neighbouring properties. It is also important that such facilities do not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of local residents.
- 7.17 The Borough Council will therefore accept that informal play areas can contribute towards the on-site play requirement providing appropriate measures have been taken to make the sites safe and accessible for children. Similarly it is also considered appropriate that developer contributions made in-lieu of on-site provision may also be used to provide new informal areas or enhance existing spaces in the neighbourhood to a standard where children can use for play. Such provision will need to involve the local community to ensure such provision meets identified needs and is of high quality and value.

8.0 Requirements for Informal Open Space

Summary of requirement

Minimum Practical size	400 sq.m.
Requirement for 1 bed dwelling	4.5 sq.m
Requirement for 2 bed dwelling	6.5 sq.m
Requirement for 3+ bed dwelling	9.9 sq.m

- 8.1 It is intended that such areas will provide attractive space for passive recreation. Such areas should provide opportunities for exercise and relaxation and provide an area with a sense of identity. These publicly accessible spaces add to the character of a locality by softening the appearance of the built environment and by providing screening to reduce intrusive views. Areas may be designed around existing features such as streams, ponds, woodland and wildlife habitats. Mature vegetation, including trees and hedgerows, should be retained wherever possible. Schemes could introduce local greens, urban squares, community orchards/woodlands, pocket parks or create new wildlife habitats.
- 8.2 If the requirement for a site is under the minimum practical size, the developer will not be required to provide a commuted sum in this instance.
- 8.3 If the requirement for a site is over the minimum practical size, the developer will be required to provide

informal open space on-site. In certain instances it may be more appropriate to provide the open space on other land in the ownership or control of the developer or to provide a contribution to enhance an existing public open space such as a park or natural greenspace in the vicinity. The land should be within 10 minutes walking time from the residential site. In such cases a specific open space should be identified and a relevant contribution negotiated which reflects the likely needs of the residents of the new development. Consultation with existing residents may assist in identifying appropriate provision.

- 8.4 On-site informal open space should be positioned throughout the application site at focal points and along road frontages, adjacent to footpaths and wherever possible close to community facilities. Wherever possible a single high profile location should contain a high proportion of the overall provision with the remainder being evenly distributed. On smaller sites it may be best to provide just one main site.
- 8.5 Features such as highway verges, formal recreation areas and private gardens are not included as part of the requirement. Incidental landscaping which can not be used for recreational purposes does not form part of this provision.
- 8.6 Large areas will be suitable for the planting of medium to large woodland trees of indigenous species. Designs should cover plants, shrubs and paved areas with seating where appropriate. Layouts should be designed to incorporate landscaping to maintain amenity and privacy levels of adjoining properties.
- 8.7 A number of elements should be considered within new informal open spaces including:
- an inviting and welcoming entrance;
 - safety and security measures including opportunities for natural surveillance from near-by properties and roads;
 - good accessibility within the open space including appropriately surfaced paths;
 - wheelchair and pushchair users should have easy and safe access to and within the site;
 - a variety of functions should be included which will assist in attracting a range of age groups;
 - good quality boundary treatment needs to be considered;
 - appropriate park furniture such as seating or picnic benches and bins should be provided;
 - interesting eye catching features to give the site its own identity should be included;
 - appropriate hard and soft landscaping;
 - incorporation of appropriate natural habitats; and
 - inclusion of measures to deter activities that are not appropriate for a particular site.

9.0 The Payment and Use of Developer Contributions

- 9.1 Given the need of using a minimum size of provision for the different categories of outdoor playing space, it is anticipated that within the Local Plan period many developments will not comprise sufficient numbers of dwellings to require on-site provision by the developer. In such cases the Borough Council will normally require the payment of a developer contribution in order to avoid problems resulting from these latent incremental needs and to ensure that Policy R/OS8 of the Local Plan Review is applied fairly and consistently to all proposals resulting in net additional dwellings. This will enable the provision of the necessary outdoor playing space facilities more appropriately as they are required and as the accumulated contributions permit.

- 9.2 Each contribution collected will be in the form of a single total payment. This will then be sub-divided and held in an account specific to the category of play space. As the funds accumulate, the Borough Council will arrange for the provision of facilities identified by the Borough Council in consultation with the local community. The current schemes are outlined in the Council's Open Space Monitoring Report. The list of proposals will be revised over the Plan period to include new schemes and to take account of changing public needs, as well as the completion of schemes. The monitoring will take into account various open space needs surveys.
- 9.3 The Borough Council will seek to ensure that facilities provided in-lieu of on-site provision, particularly children's playing spaces, are related as closely as possible to the location of contributing developments. In order to ensure developer contributions are spent in the local neighbourhood the Borough is divided into seven Local Children's Playing Space Provision Areas (LCPSPA). These areas are fairly equal in size and take into account significant barriers of access to play facilities such as major roads, tidal inlets and MoD establishments. Further details of LCPSPAs are contained within the Borough Council's Open Space Monitoring Reports. Due to the substantial costs involved in the provision of new sports pitches and other sports facilities these will be provided on a broader Borough wide basis rather than on a neighbourhood basis.
- 9.4 The contributions received from developers towards open space provision can be utilised by either:
- i) providing new facilities;
 - ii) upgrading and/or improving existing facilities, so that they can cater for a wider section of the community or be more intensively used.
- 9.5 The developer contribution requirements will be assessed and published annually on the basis of capital costs and commuted establishment sums. They will not include general maintenance for off-site provision. Payment can either be made on completion of the legal agreement or can be payable on commencement of the development. In such cases the sum will be calculated in accordance with the latest published open space contribution sum and interest will be payable on late payments. On larger developments, which are likely to be phased over a period of time, the legal agreement may specify that payments be made at specified trigger dates. The formula for calculation includes the following elements:

A: Calculation of open space requirement for each dwelling size

The standard in Policy R/OS8 is expressed in hectares per 1,000 people. In order to calculate the space per dwelling in square metres it is necessary to carry out the following:

Standard for each type of open space (Policy R/OS8) x 10,000 = standard converted into square metres

Divide by 1000 (to obtain requirement of open space per person)

Multiply by occupancy rate for each type of dwelling (based on information supplied by Hampshire County Council)

= Requirement of open space for each type of dwelling (one bed, two bed or three bed or more)

B: Cost of providing open space facility per square metre

(based on annual assessment by Gosport Borough Council's Leisure and Cultural Services Department for a typical sports pitch, other outdoor sports or play area)

C. Cost of contribution per dwelling

Calculation of requirement for each dwelling size

multiplied by

Cost of providing open space facility per square metre

= Cost of contribution per dwelling.

Repeat calculation for each open space element of the standards and add each element for total contribution for each dwelling.

- 9.6 The payments will not include general maintenance for off-site provision (see Paragraph 10.2 below regarding commuted sums for the maintenance of on-site open spaces).
- 9.7 The Borough Council considers that it is necessary to spend the developer contributions within a reasonable time period to ensure that the facilities are provided in relation to the new development. Consequently the Borough Council will return unspent contributions with interest to the developer if the money has not been used for off-site open space facilities within a reasonable period (normally five years) from the date they were paid. However in certain circumstances the developer may agree that the funds should be retained by the Borough Council in order that a more complicated or larger scale facility is constructed. Such facilities (sports pavilions, Country Park) require other sources of funding and it may be difficult to spend the developer contribution within a five year period.

10.0 Planning Application Procedures

- 10.1 Planning applications relevant to the provisions of Policy R/OS8 of the Local Plan Review should include sufficient information to enable the outdoor playing space requirement to be calculated, i.e. the number and type of dwellings. Where outline planning applications do not include such information, any consent granted will normally be subject to a suitable condition or legal agreement, so that the requirement can be calculated when a detailed planning application is submitted. Amendments made to a planning application that alter the number and/or type of dwellings proposed once consent has been granted will require an appropriate amendment to be made to the outdoor playing space requirement.
- 10.2 **On-site provision:** If the developer proposes to make provision for a children's playspace within the development site, then a condition will be imposed on the planning permission. If the facility is to be adopted by the Borough Council, it will be necessary for the developer to make a commuted sum to the Council for the maintenance of the on-site facilities for a period of 10 years.

- 10.3 **Off-site provision:** If the developer wishes to make open space provision in another appropriate location, it will be necessary for the developer to enter into a legal agreement with the Borough Council (see Section 9 above).
- 10.4 **Appeals:** In the event of an appeal following refusal of a planning application to which Policy R/OS8 of the Local Plan would apply, the Borough Council will seek the imposition of a condition or a legal agreement to ensure that the necessary provision is made if the appeal is allowed. Consequently development allowed on appeal will still be subject to the same requirements as other residential development in the Local Plan area.