



FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL



Supplementary Planning Document for Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

October 2011

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FOREST HEATH SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT FOR OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

New development often creates a need for additional or improved open space without which there could be a detrimental effect on local amenity and the quality of the environment. Planning obligations are the mechanism by which measures are secured to enhance the quality of both the development and the wider environment. This SPD will help to ensure that development makes a positive contribution to sustainable development, providing benefits to the community as a whole.

A planning obligation is a legally binding agreement entered into between a Local Authority and a developer. It requires the developer to carry out certain works, or to provide, or contribute towards the provision of measures to mitigate the negative impacts of their development and to ensure that it makes a positive contribution to the communities within which it is situated.

Obligations will be negotiated with the aim of reducing the negative impacts of development on local communities, achieving sustainable development and enabling improvements to local open space, sport and recreation facilities. In this context, planning obligations should be seen not only as a means of mitigating the impact of a development, but also as a mechanism for achieving positive planning by ensuring that development complements and enhances the social, environmental and economic requirements of its neighboring communities. The Council believes that it is important that the views of local communities and their aspirations are given a high level of priority when considering planning obligations

The provision of open space and facilities for sport and recreation helps underpin people's quality of life. Forest Heath District Council (the Council) regards such provision as important to residents' health and well-being, and to the achievement of sustainable communities. Where new development occurs it is important that sufficient sport, recreation and open space provision is made to make proposals acceptable in land use planning terms.

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the Council's approach to the provision of open space, sport and recreation in conjunction with new housing development. This guidance details how the Council will implement Forest Heath Local Plan (1995) Policies 10.2, 10.3 and 10.5, Core Strategy Policy CS13 and National Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002).

This guidance has been prepared to give developers and the public up-to-date information on developer contributions that are reasonably related in scale and kind to development proposal. It has been prepared, and will be operated, in accordance with national planning guidance and regional planning policy. The scales of

contributions, and other relevant matters, will be updated regularly.

Once adopted, this SPD will be taken into account as a material planning consideration in determining planning applications. The Secretary of State will also accord substantial weight to supplementary planning documents that are consistent with development plan policy when making planning decisions.

1.1 Purpose of the SPD

This SPD sets out the District Council's approach when considering planning applications:

- For new residential development, which is likely to generate demand for access, to and use of open space and recreation facilities.
- For development on open space in Forest Heath, whether it is in public or private ownership.

This SPD is intended to help support the planning of existing and new opportunities by:

- Providing guidance to developers on the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities or contributions in lieu of such provision as appropriate.
- Setting out a consistent and transparent process to be followed in assessing applications for development on open space in Forest Heath.

It is intended that this document will supplement the policies outlined in the Forest Heath Local Plan, 1995, Core Strategy Policy CS13 and PPG17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002).

The SPD contains the following guidance:

- Relationship of the SPD to other studies.
- A definition of the typology of open space, sport and recreation facilities in Forest Heath.
- Existing policy related to open space.
- An outline of the Forest Heath standards for open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- Costs for providing new or upgrading open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- Thresholds for contribution.
- Procedure for calculating developer contributions for new provision.
- Worked example of contributions required from new provision.
- Procedure for assessing the potential loss of open space.

1.2 Relationship to other studies

The SPD has been informed by a number of key studies:

- Forest Heath Playing Pitch Strategy (2002).
- Forest Heath Play Strategy (2007).
- Forest Heath PPG17 study (2007).
- Forest Heath Green Space Strategy (2009).
- Forest Heath Built Facilities Study (2009).

Forest Heath Playing Pitch Strategy

The playing pitch strategy makes recommendations with regards to the need for outdoor sports space provision within the District. It makes recommendations regarding the quantity standards required for outdoor sports space (which is taken into account in the PPG17 study). It should also be used to determine which types of outdoor sports provision are required in each part of the District e.g. football, rugby or tennis.

Forest Heath Play Strategy

The play strategy details options and recommendations for the future provision of play facilities within the District, and should be used to inform decisions related to improving and providing new play facilities.

Forest Heath PPG17 study

This SPD has been developed in parallel with the PPG17 study of open space within the Forest Heath District. The PPG17 study and accompanying supporting evidence will be adopted by the District Council and is designed primarily as a management tool / evidence base to inform the future provision of open space within the District. The study contains information relating to the assessments of green space undertaken by the Council as required by central government planning guidance¹. The study will enable strategic decisions to be made regarding the quality, accessibility and quantity of publicly available open space, taking into account the existing levels of quality and the amount required to cater for the current and projected population of Forest Heath.

Forest Heath Green Space Strategy

The green space strategy provides a delivery mechanism for achieving the Forest Heath standards for open space and considers options available to the council to fund the proposals in terms of new and improved provision.

¹ Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation

Forest Heath Built Facilities Study

The Built Facilities Study identifies where gaps in the quantity and quality of sports facility provision exist currently and projected forward, linked to proposed new housing development across the District. It identifies where sports hubs should be supported and developed within the north, central and south sub-areas of the District, and where the potential impact of the Suffolk School Organisation Review and the Building Schools for the Future programme present both issues and opportunities for facility provision for community recreation and sport. It considers a clear evidence base for local standards of provision taking account of geographical and accessibility constraints.

1.3 Consultation on this SPD

In line with Government requirements, this draft SPD is subject to public consultation:

- A draft SPD will be available for consultation in February/March 2011.
- Comments received will be given due consideration by the District Council.
- A justified response to each comment received will be provided by the District Council, and the draft SPD will be amended as appropriate.
- The final SPD is timetabled for adoption in June 2011.

1.4 Sustainability Appraisal

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that SPD's are subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. This process is intended to improve plan making through the better integration of sustainability objectives into plan preparation.

A sustainability appraisal has been prepared to accompany the supplementary planning document and is also subject of this consultation.

1.5 Housing need in Forest Heath

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), 2008 lays out the importance of high quality green spaces and green space networks to the development of sustainable urban communities. In Forest Heath, provision is made for 370 dwellings per annum and associated infrastructure over the plan period 2001 -2031. Population projections anticipate an additional 16,000 people living in the District by this date. Such growth will result in additional pressures being placed on the local stock of open space, sport and recreation facilities.

1.6 Defining open space, sport and recreation facilities

This section defines the range of facilities that are covered by this SPD.

1.6.1 Open Spaces

Parks, Gardens and Recreation Grounds

These are generally multi-functional spaces which take on many forms, and may embrace a wide range of functions, including:

- Informal recreation and outdoor sport.
- Play space of many kinds (including for sport and children's play).
- Providing attractive walks to work.
- Offering landscape and amenity features.
- Areas of formal planting.
- Providing areas for 'events'.
- Providing habitats for wildlife.

Outdoor Sport Space

These include seasonal and fixed sports spaces that are openly accessible to the public. Facilities include sports pitches, including cricket, football and rugby. Also includes fixed sports spaces such as tennis courts, artificial turf pitches and bowling greens. Very often these facilities are located within Parks or Recreation Grounds, and as such, many of the facilities, especially sports pitches are multi-functional. That is they can be used for sport one day, and for the rest of the week function as a space to walk and play. Those facilities that are managed privately or by schools/colleges etc would be included if they are subject to a public access agreement with the local authority.

Informal Open Space

The category is considered to include those spaces open to free and spontaneous use by the public, but neither laid out nor managed for a specific function such as a park, public playing field or recreation ground; nor managed as a natural or semi-natural habitat.

Children and Young People's provision

The includes equipped children's space (for pre-teens), and provision for teenagers. The former comprises equipped areas of play that cater for the needs of children up to and around 12 years. The latter comprises informal recreation opportunities for, broadly, the 13 to 16/17 age group, and which might include facilities like skateboard parks, basketball courts and 'free access' Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs).

Natural Greenspace

This includes a variety of natural spaces including meadows, river floodplain, woodland and copse all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and wildlife value, but which are also open to public use and enjoyment. Some natural

green-spaces have a nature conservation designation in recognition of their biodiversity interest and these include Sites of Special Scientific Interest, (SSSI), Special Protection Areas, (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation, (SAC), Local Nature Reserves, (LNR) and County Wildlife Sites, (CWS). A project level Habitats Regulation Assessment, (HRA), will be required for any development that could have an adverse impact on the SPA qualifying features for Stone Curlew, Woodlark and Nightjar. Where it cannot be proven that development will not be not harmful then the development will not be allowed, in line with Policy CS2 of the adopted Core Strategy DPD.

Allotments

Allotments provide areas for people to grow their own produce and plants. It is important to be clear about what is meant by the term 'Allotment'. The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 obliged local authorities to provide sufficient allotments and to let them to persons living in their areas where they considered there was a demand for allotments. The Allotment Act of 1922 defines the term 'allotment garden' as:

“an allotment not exceeding 40 poles in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family”

(n.b. 40 Poles equals 1,210 square yards or 1,012 square metres. A Pole can also be known as a Rod or Perch.)

1.6.2 Built recreational facilities

Built facilities are described below and include all facilities that are managed by the local authority. Those facilities that are managed privately or by schools/colleges etc would be included if they are subject to a public access agreement with the local authority.

Sports halls with community access

A sports hall providing for team indoor sports (basketball, netball, volleyball, 5-a-side football) will be some 32m x 18m (hall activity area), able to accommodate four badminton courts with safe run-off areas. A hall of this size with a multi-purpose floor will frequently be divided by curtains to enable mixed activity use and sometimes cricket nets. Smaller halls are less flexible commensurate with size.

A four badminton court size hall may be provided within the town's leisure centre (eg Brandon Leisure Centre) and is now frequently provided on secondary school sites in preference to the former school gymnasias (eg Newmarket Leisure Centre and the Dome at the Mildenhall College of Technology).

A Sports Hall may be used for team sports and clubs, martial arts, community activities and classes, large meetings, often as a polling station, again by all sections of the community within the town or sub-area that it serves.

Larger communities may require an eight badminton court equivalent sized sports hall for greater flexibility of use which may include sports competitions, exhibitions and shows for example. It could be a specialist regional facility for a particular sport, such as martial arts or badminton, subject to the specifications of the hall.

Fitness Gyms (all provision)

Fitness gyms are traditionally provided within local sports and leisure centres, provided by the local authority, sometimes within education establishments linked to a sports hall where the community is encouraged to use the facility which also provides an income for the school, or within the private sector (fitness clubs and hotels).

They are usually operated on a membership basis and combine gym equipment for aerobic or resistance supervised activity, free weights and exercise classes. In the private sector, hotel gyms are usually to attract other money making activity such as business conferences but they also open up to the community, as do fitness club chains, on a membership basis. Local authority and school gyms will usually offer a 'pay and play' option for community use.

Where provided by the public sector, fitness gyms are more likely to operate GP Referral schemes and special equipment for disabled people, while all provide programmes linked to improved health through exercise. Gyms may provide between 20 and 90 pieces of equipment, or 'stations', subject to location and demand.

Swimming pools with community access

The standard size swimming pool promoted by the Amateur Swimming Association is a 25m x 4 lane (8.8m width) or 6-lane (12.5m width) pool, the latter offering greater opportunity and flexibility for club development, training and galas, exercise swimming and lessons and includes spectating facilities. A separate shallow Learner Pool may be provided specifically aimed at teaching people to swim. A swimming pool is sometimes provided by a local authority for community access (eg in Mildenhall) and sometimes located within a school facility (eg Newmarket Leisure Centre). In addition to swimming, activities such as sub-aqua, water-polo and diving (diving pool) might take place if sufficient space, depth and time can be provided.

The National Curriculum requires compulsory teaching of swimming to Key Stage 3 in primary schools.

Synthetic turf pitches all provision

These have become increasingly popular in recent years with the suggested standard being 1 for every 25,000 population. The synthetic turf is traditionally sand-filled to accommodate in the main football training and hockey training and matches - the sport of hockey and most leagues and competitions now play on synthetic turf - but technology also allows water-based pitches (for top level hockey) and 3rd generation (3G) rubber crumb filled pitches for football use only. These are extremely popular and well used by community clubs and schools. They are frequently located within school grounds or adjacent to a local sports centre where management arrangements are in place. They are usually floodlit within permitted lux levels to optimize their use throughout the year.

Half size or smaller synthetic turf pitches (sometimes called Multi-Use Games Areas) are also used for other outdoor games (tennis, netball, basketball). These provide local community access within a managed environment for recreational activities.

Indoor Bowls

Indoor bowls centres come into their own between September and March outside the traditional outdoor bowls season. They provide between two and seven rinks, again subject to location and demand. Very popular amongst the older age-group, they are increasingly attracting younger people to the sport.

The larger centres tend to be sub-regional with a membership level which might exceed 500 coming from many outdoor bowls clubs. They may include social facilities more widely used by the community. Smaller centres are more local in nature. All attract community use and generally reserve rink time for 'pay and play' access by the local community. Indoor rinks are sometimes provided as a separate hall within the leisure centre of large town.

2.0 POLICY BACKGROUND

2.1 Planning Policy Guidance 17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)

Government guidance in PPG 17 *Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)* encourages local planning authorities to develop local standards for sport, recreation and open space provision. PPG 17 states that:

‘...Local authorities should ensure that provision is made for local sports and recreation facilities (either through an increase in the number of facilities or through improvements to existing facilities) where planning permission is granted for new development (especially housing). Planning obligations should be used, where appropriate, to seek increased provision of open spaces and local sports and recreation facilities, and the enhancement of existing facilities’ (para. 23 of PPG 17).

PPG17 also states:

‘...Planning obligations should be used as a means to remedy local deficiencies in the quality and quantity of open space, sport and recreation provision. Local authorities will be justified in seeking planning obligations where the quantity or quality of provision is inadequate or under threat, or where new development increases local needs’ (para 33 of PPG 17)

2.2 Local Policy

Local Plan (1995)

The existing Local Plan was published in 1995. In September 2007 the Council ‘saved’ a number of policies from the 1995 plan which remain up to date and applicable to planning decisions.

Specific policies related to open space provision are:

POLICY 10.2

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE TO MEET THE STANDARDS SET BY THE NATIONAL PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION. WHERE THERE IS A NEED FOR PLAYING FIELDS, THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL NORMALLY GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THEIR PROVISION, PROVIDING THERE ARE NO OVERRIDING DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS ON AGRICULTURAL LAND, RESIDENTIAL AMENITY AND CONSERVATION INTERESTS.

POLICY 10.3 OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE WILL BE PROVIDED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STANDARDS OF THE NATIONAL PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION. IN SOME CASES, PROVISION WILL BE MADE FOR A WIDER AREA THAN JUST THE DEVELOPMENT SITE.

POLICY 10.5 PROPOSALS WHICH INVOLVE THE LOSS OF AN EXISTING OR PROPOSED PUBLIC OR PRIVATE OPEN SPACE OR RECREATIONAL FACILITY, IDENTIFIED ON THE INSET MAPS AS AN IMPORTANT AMENITY AREA, WILL BE JUDGED AGAINST THE OVERALL NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY, THE IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT ON THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT, ADOPTED STANDARDS OF PROVISION, THE AVAILABILITY OF FACILITIES ELSEWHERE, AND ARRANGEMENTS TO PROVIDE SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE PROVISION.

The current standards set by the National Playing Fields Association² refer to the “Six Acre Standard” which recommends that a minimum of 2.4 hectares (6.0 acres) of open space per 1,000 population should be available. The NPFA guidance further recommends that this should be comprised of 1.6 - 1.8 hectares for youth and adult sport and 0.6 - 0.8 hectares of Children’s Outdoor Play Space. Of this, 0.2 - 0.3 hectares should be equipped play space, and 0.4 - 0.5 for casual or informal play.

Core strategy Adopted May 2010

The Forest Heath Core Strategy was adopted in May 2010. A specific policy is applicable:

Policy CS13:

The release of land for development will be dependant on there being sufficient capacity in the existing local infrastructure to meet the additional requirements arising from new development. Suitable arrangements will be put in place to improve infrastructure, services and community facilities, where necessary, to mitigate the impact of development.

New development will be required to demonstrate that it will not harm the District’s ability to improve the educational attainment, the accessibility to services, jobs, health and community safety, the biodiversity and well-being of Forest Heath communities.

The main areas to be addresses will be...

g) Provide the Open Space, Sport and Recreation need throughout the District in accordance with Forest Heath PPG17 Audit, Built Facilities Study and Green Space Strategy.

² The NPFA was replaced by ‘Fields in Trust’ (FIT) in 2005. FIT have developed new standards for open space, however, to date these have yet to be adopted, and the existing NPFA standards are still in place. As and when the new standards are adopted this SPD will need updating.

2.3 Planning Policy Statement 12 Local Development Frameworks

The Government's Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (PPS12) explains the role of Supplementary Planning Documents (previously Supplementary Planning Guidance).

The following principles apply to an SPD:

- It must be consistent with national and regional planning policies as well as the policies set out in the development plan documents contained in the local development framework.
- It must be clearly cross-referenced to the relevant development plan document policy which it supplements (or, before a relevant development plan document has been adopted, a 'saved' policy).
- It must be reviewed on a regular basis alongside reviews of the development plan document policies to which it relates.
- The process by which it has been prepared must be made clear and a statement of conformity with the statement of community involvement must be published with it.

SPD's may contain policies which expand or supplement the policies in development plan documents. However, policies which should be included in a development plan document and subjected to proper independent scrutiny in accordance with the statutory procedures should not be set out in SPD's.

2.4 Sport England

Sport England have produced "Spatial Planning for Sport and Active Recreation - Sport and Recreation in Supplementary Planning Documents" (*Spring 2009*). This SPD follows the advice and guidance contained within this publication.

2.5 Section 106

Planning obligations are completed under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Circular 1/97 *Planning Obligations* gives guidance on the interpretation of the powers conferred by the Act. Planning obligations are agreements that can be negotiated to provide on and off-site community facilities related to a development or, in the case of smaller developments, can provide a contribution to nearby provision (paras. B2 and B13). Planning obligations may also be used to provide a capital sum for future maintenance. Circular 1/97 has now been superseded by Circular 05/2005, which clarifies the basis on which obligations should be assessed for their acceptability in policy terms, and gives further guidance on the process of securing obligations. In accordance with the current Circular, the Council will only seek to secure the provision or upgrading of sport, recreation and open space facilities which are necessary; relevant to planning; directly related to the proposed

development; fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development, and reasonable in all other respects. It is important to note that the term 'necessary' extends well beyond what is physically needed to make the development economically viable, and includes a range of off-site impacts resulting from development.

3.0 OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITY STANDARDS

The Forest Heath standards have been developed through the PPG17 study and built facilities study, following an extensive local needs analysis of facilities within the District in accordance with PPG17. Local standards have three key elements: Quantity, Access and Quality, which are summarised in the tables below.

3.1 Open Space Standards

Table 1: Summary of open space standards: Quantity and Access

Open Space Typology	Quantity Standard	Access Standard
Parks, Gardens and Recreation Grounds	0.5 ha/1000	480 metres (10 minutes straight line walk time)
Outdoor Sports Space	1.0 ha/1000	480 metres (10 minutes straight line walk time)
Children & Young people's Space	0.30 ha/1000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior Provision - 450m (just under 10 minutes straightline walk time) • Youth Provision - 800 m (15 minutes straightline walk time)
Informal Open Space	0.5 ha/1000	480 metres (10 minutes straight line walk time)
Natural Greenspace	1.0 ha/1000	960 metres (20 minutes straight line walk time)
Allotments	0.3 ha/1000	480m (10 minutes straight line walk time)

3.2 Built Facility Standards

Table 2 Summary of built facility standards

Sports Facility	Proposed standard per 1,000 pop	Proposed facility per no. population	M ² per person	Access Standard
Sports halls	40m ² (.07 of a 4 court hall)	1 sports hall per 15,000	0.04	1,500 m walk or up to 5k drive
Swimming pools	11.5m ² (0.05 of a 25m x 4 lane pool)	1 equiv. per 20,500	0.012	1,500m walk or up to 5k drive
Fitness Gyms	4 stations (16m ²)	1 station per 325	0.016	1,000m walk or up to 5k drive
Synthetic turf pitches	240m ² (0.04 of a full size pitch)	1 per 25,000	0.24	1,500m walk or up to 10k drive
Indoor Bowls	0.05 rink	1 x 6 rink centre equiv. per 50,000		1,000m walk or up to 5km drive
Community hall	150 m ²	subject to population spread	0.15	1,000m walk or less than 3k drive

Table 3, below shows approximate times and distances people will walk or drive to the type of facility indicated. We have not included cycling times/distances which relate in the main to young people making local short journeys to community facilities.

Table 3: Built Facility Access Standards

Facility	Walking	Driving catchment
Sports halls	20 minutes	15 minutes
Swimming pools	20 minutes	15 - 20 minutes
Fitness Gyms	10 minutes	10 - 15 minutes
STPs	20 mins.	20 - 30 minutes
Indoor Bowls	15-20 mins.	15 - 20 minutes
Indoor tennis	20 minutes	15 - 20 minutes
Community Halls	20 minutes	10 - 15 minutes

The above walking and driving times for Forest Heath translate approximately, subject to precise local conditions, as:

- 20 minute walking time represents 1,500 metres distance
- 10-15 minute walking time represents 1,000 metres distance
- 15 minute drive time represents 5 km catchment distance

- 10 minute drive time represents 3 km catchment distance.

3.3 Quality standards

The standards also include a 'qualitative' element which responds to the audit of open space carried out within the PPG17 study and the quality standards within the built facilities study.

The studies makes recommendations with regards to the priorities for improving existing open space and built facilities, and outlines good practice in relation to the quality of new provision. This advice will be passed on to developers in the pre-application discussions for a proposed development.

As a result of the studies, the Council will seek on site provision, or capital contributions to off-site provision or upgrading, in accordance with the local standards.

4.0 THE COST OF PROVIDING FACILITIES

In order to calculate developer contributions for facilities, a methodology has been adopted which calculates how much it would cost the Local Authority to provide them. These costs have been calculated using the following sources of evidence:

- experience of real capital projects;
- industry unit costs provided in SPON'S³;
- benchmarking against other Local Authorities costs for providing facilities.

A summary of the costs are outlined in the tables below:

4.1 Open space costs

Contributions towards the provision or improvement of open space are calculated using the capital cost of provision. The same charges apply to both provision of new facilities and the upgrading/improvement of existing facilities. This is in line with Paragraph B9 of Circular 05/2005, according to which obligations “should be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind *to the proposed development*”. Contribution per person is therefore taken to be a reasonable measure of that impact, irrespective of whether new provision or improvement of existing facilities is required.

Table 4: Costs for providing open space

Typology	Standard (m ²)	Cost of provision	
		Cost / m ²	Contribution per person
Outdoor Sports Space	10	£21.00	£210.00
Children & Young People's Space	3	£170.00	£510.00
Parks, Gardens & Recreation Grounds	5	£72.00	£360.00
Informal Open Space	5	£15.00	£75.00
Natural Greenspace	10	£15.00	£150.00
Allotments	3	£30.00	£90.00
Total	36m²	£323.00	£1,395

This shows that it costs £1,395 per person to provide open space or upgrade existing open space in order to meet the Forest Heath standard.

³ SPON'S. External works and landscape price book. 2008.

These calculations are to be used to calculate developer contributions, there are however a number of issues which will affect the total financial contribution actually required, these are:

- Whether open space is provided as part of the development. If this is the case a 'credit' will be applied to the value of that open space in line with the figures outlined above.
- The above figures assume that the developer will maintain any new 'on site' provision for a period of ten years. If the developer seeks earlier adoption of the space by the council, a financial contribution for maintenance will be required.

4.2 Built facilities costs

Table 5: Costs for providing built facilities

Type of provision	Standard m2/ person	Cost of provision	
		Cost/m2*	Contribution: cost/person per facility type
Sports Halls	0.04	£2,500	£100
Swimming pools	0.012	£2,500	£30
Fitness Gyms	0.016	£2,500	£40 (all provision)
Synthetic Turf Pitches	0.24	£100	£24 (sand-based)
Indoor Bowls Hall	0.009	£2,000	£18
Community Halls	0.15	£1,800	£270
Total		£11,400	£482

*Approximate costs/m2 based on 3rd Quarter estimates but dependent upon size, specification, materials and location of buildings. The rationale and variables underpinning the scale of total indicative costs includes:

Sports hall - A four badminton court size sports hall suitable for team games including basketball, netball, volleyball, 5-a-side football. The sports hall should be able to be divided for multi-activity use. Ancillary accommodation including reception, changing, first aid, catering, circulation, storage areas. Car park and external landscaping.

Swimming pool - A 6 lane or 4 lane swimming pool facility (which may include a learner pool). Ancillary accommodation including changing village, spectator viewing for galas, reception, first aid, catering, circulation, storage areas. Car park and landscaping.

Synthetic Turf Pitch - Access, floodlighting, fencing, sub-structure. Associated car parking and changing facilities would need to be considered.

Fitness Gyms - Requiring reception, fitness testing, studio, merchandise sales, changing (and steam/sauna) provision. Car parking and landscaping as provided for associated facilities.

Multi-Use Games area - Access, floodlighting, division.

4.3 Maintenance Contributions

Where open space is provided on site, and the developer is looking to the council to adopt the facility, a commuted sum will be payable to maintain that facility for a period of 10 years. The commuted sum is calculated using typical metre squared costs for maintaining different types of open space. Certain types of open space cost more to provide and maintain than others - for example a play area is much more expensive to layout and maintain than an area of amenity grassland.

The costs were drawn from existing contract prices where possible and from SPON'S (External Works and Landscape Price Book). A summary of the costs for providing different types of open space are shown in table 6.

Table 6 Commuted sum costs for maintenance of open space

Typology	Cost/m ²
Outdoor Sports Space	£0.92
Children & Young People's Space	£3.67
Parks & Recreation Grounds	£2.20
Informal Green Space	£0.62
Natural Green Space	£0.42
Allotments	£0.13

5.0 THRESHOLDS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions will be sought for all new development, i.e. there is no overall minimum threshold for numbers of new houses below which obligations will not be sought. In principle all new housing types (with only a few exceptions, e.g. sheltered accommodation, nursing homes and hostels) leading to a net increase in population within a locality will be required to provide new open space and recreation provision in accordance with District Council guidance; or else, offer developer contributions in lieu of provision.

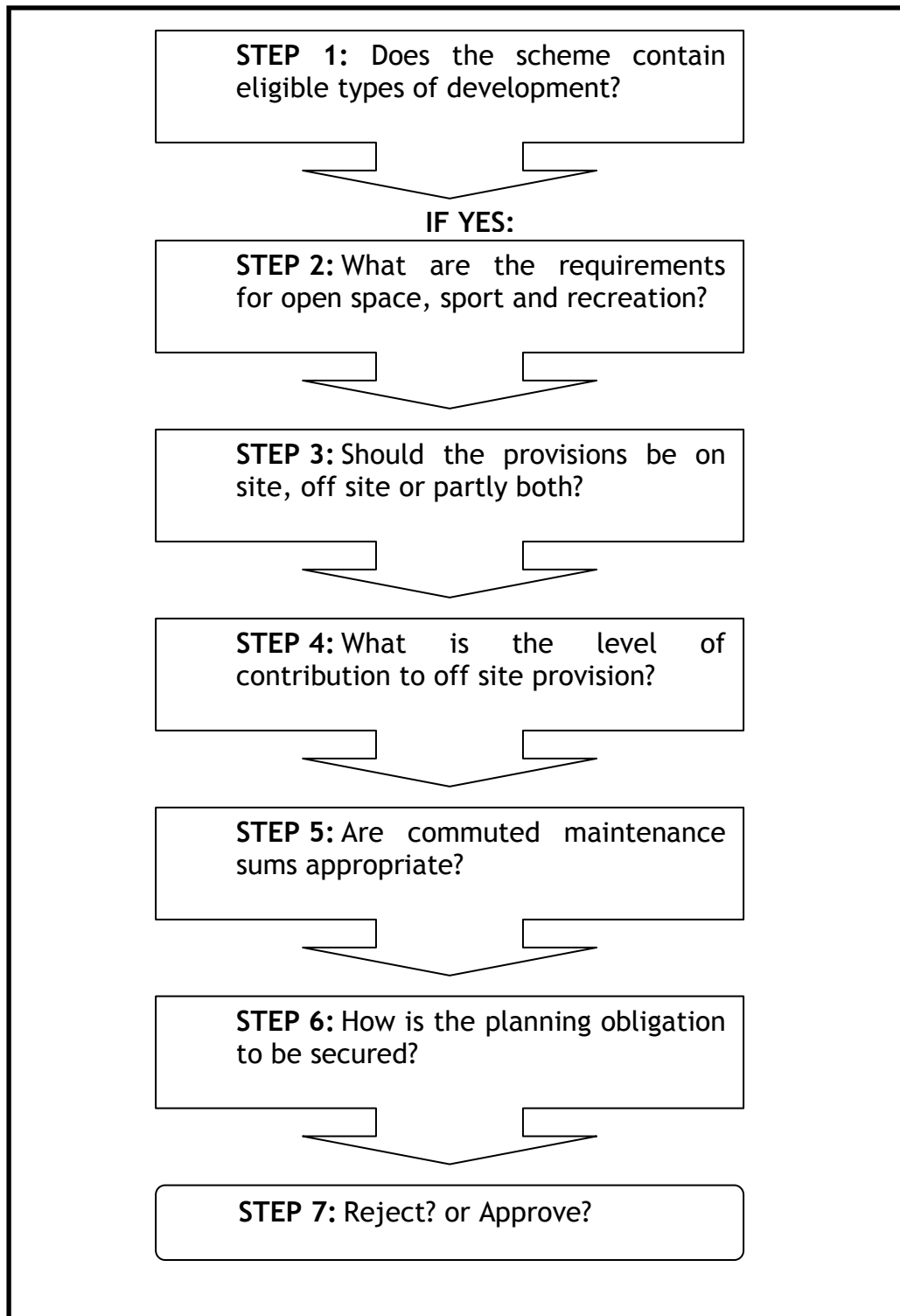
The table below gives figures for the occupancy levels based on the maximum capacity of bed spaces by the size of dwelling. For example a two-bedroom dwelling is assumed to have occupancy of 3 persons, and a three bedroom dwelling 4 persons. For each dwelling, the costs outlined above have been applied.

Table 7: Contributions based on dwelling size

Dwelling Size	Household Size	Open space contribution	Built facilities contribution	Total
1 bed	2	£2,790	£964	£3,754
2 bed	3	£4,185	£1,446	£5,631
3 bed	4	£5,580	£1,928	£7,508
4+ beds	5	£5,810	£2,410	£8,220
Active elderly persons (1 bed)	1	£675	£482	£1,157
Active elderly persons (2 bed)	2	£1,344	£964	£2,308

6.0 APPLYING THE POLICIES

The process for considering planning obligations relating to new housing, is outlined in the following Flow Chart. This includes seven steps by which the scale of any contributions due will be calculated.



Step 1 - Does the scheme contain eligible types of development?

The residents of most types of residential development will generate additional demands for open space, sport and recreation. Table 8 below lists what are eligible types of residential development for the purposes of this SPD.

Affordable housing is likely to create demands for sport, recreation and open space and is therefore included. It would need to be demonstrated by the agent/applicant that the level of the contribution or requirement proposed in conjunction with affordable housing would make the scheme uneconomic for this provision to be waived. This viability test will be required for all such planning applications. The heading 'active elderly' includes provision specifically for the active elderly who have a level of on site services such as a warden, common room or launderette. Occupants of such accommodation may be as young as 55 years and may be able to participate in many activities. Contributions will not be sought from such developments for playing fields or local play

Table 8: eligible types of residential development

Category	Open Market Housing / Flats	Affordable Housing	Housing for the active elderly	Permanent mobile homes
Outdoor Sports Space	✓	✓	×	✓
Children & Young People's Space	✓	✓	×	✓
Parks, Gardens & Recreation Grounds	✓	✓	✓	✓
Informal Open Space	✓	✓	✓	✓
Natural Greenspace	✓	✓	✓	✓
Allotments	✓	✓	✓	✓
Built Facilities	✓	✓	✓	✓

Includes agricultural workers' dwellings. Excludes extensions (for administrative reasons)
Excludes replacement dwellings and nursing houses types.

Step 2 - What are the requirements for Open Space, Sport and Recreation?

Having established the relevance of the development to the categories of open space, sport and recreation provision, then step 2 should be carried out. This involves establishing:

- The number of people estimated to be occupying the development on completion (using table 7); and

- Multiplying this by the level/area of sport, recreation and open space provision required per person (tables 1 and 2).

For example, for a development of 10 no. 3 bedroom houses:

- Number of people = 10 units x 4 people = 40;
- Amount of open space required is 36m² per person = 40 x 36 = 1,440 m²
- This provision may be provided on site or off site depending on the considerations below.

Step 3 - Should provision be on-site, off-site or both?

The required open space, sport and recreation facilities can be provided by on-site provision, and/or by a financial contribution for the provision of new, or the upgrading of existing facilities. Where facilities are to be provided on-site, the Council will expect the developer to provide the land for the facility and either:

- Design and build the provision to the satisfaction of the Council; or
- Make a financial contribution to the Council so that it may arrange for the construction and development of the required facility.

The decision on whether facility provision is to be on-site, off-site or both depends on the following considerations:

- The size of the proposed development;
- The existing provision of facilities within the Parish and/or the urban area for the main settlements (Appendix 1);
- Existing access to facilities within the Parish/urban settlement (Appendix 2).

For the most part Forest Heath contributions will be to off site provision, in view of the likely scale of development in the District. Table 8 provides an indicative guide to assess which types of housing generate a need for facilities in the categories listed - developers will have the opportunity to determine precise arrangements within these overall guidelines.

Table 9: Requirement for open space, sport and recreation facilities

Type of Provision	1-9 dwellings	10-49 dwellings	50-199 dwellings	200-599 dwellings	600+ dwellings
Outdoor Sports Space	*	*	*	*	✓
Children & Young People's Space	*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parks, Gardens & Recreation Grounds	*	*	*	✓	✓

Informal Open Space	*	*	✓	✓	✓
Natural Greenspace	*	*	✓	✓	✓
Allotments	*	*	*	*	✓
Built facilities	*	*	*	*	✓

KEY: ✓ on site provision normally sought * off site provision normally required

Step 4 - What is the level of contribution to off site provision?

Where financial contributions are sought for off-site facilities, these are based on the principle of securing or improving existing provision. Tables 4 and 5 provide costs for the provision of the full range of open space, sport and recreation facilities covered by the SPD.

The justification for provision of the facilities is set out in the Councils PPG17 Audit for Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment and the Built Facilities Study. The studies look at current level of provision and look forward to 2031 to assess the demand for future provision. In general terms there is a requirement for increased provision across the District for all aspects of open space, sport and recreation.

There is also a Green Space Strategy for the district which sets out priorities for the provision of open space, and sets out a mechanism for allocating resources, including developer contributions.

For example, for a development of 10 no. 3 bedroom houses:

- Number of people = 10 units x 4 people = 40;
- Contribution per person = £1,395;
- Total contribution = £55,800.

Step 5- What Commuted Maintenance Sums are payable?

Where open space is to be provided on site, the Council would expect the developer to maintain the facility for a period of 12 months following practical completion.

Following this, the Council will adopt the land, providing it meets the expected standard. In line with Circular 05/05, a commuted sum will be payable where the facilities are predominantly for the benefit of the users of the associated development. Where an asset is intended for wider public use, the costs of subsequent maintenance and other recurrent expenditure will be met by the Council.

Where a commuted sum is required, it will be for a period of 10 years and the commuted sum is calculated typical metre squared costs for maintaining different types of open space, (see 4.3 above).

Step 6 - How is the Planning Obligation / Unilateral Agreement to be secured?

The Council will confirm the level of contribution and any other arrangement in a unilateral or Section 106 agreement of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Council will place standard terms of agreements on its web site, as well as examples of completed agreements.

Step 7 - Reject? Or Approve?

Reject: If by this time, a unilateral or section 106 agreement has not been completed, the Council will, after 21 days or when appropriate, refuse the planning application.

Approve: Provided a unilateral or section 106 agreement has been signed and all other material planning considerations are resolved, the planning application will be determined according to normal procedures.

7.0 SPENDING OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions made under the guidelines in this SPD will be placed in ring-fenced accounts managed by the Council. These have been specifically set up for the receipt and expenditure of community facilities and open space contributions for each category in the guidance note. The spending of developer contributions will be guided by the priorities outlined in the Forest Heath Green Space Strategy and the Built Facilities Study, and will include the following:

- Acquisition of land, facilities or equipment for open space, sport and recreation;
- Laying out of land for open space, sport and recreation;
- Where appropriate maintenance of land and facilities for open space, sport and recreation;
- Upgrading of land, facilities and equipment for open space, sport and recreation all within the reasonable catchment of the development in question. Where contributions are made towards the upgrading of facilities, monies will be spent on the first relevant priority scheme for improvement at the point where sufficient monies have been collected to defray the cost.

As detailed in the guiding strategies, spending of contributions will also be subject to local community consultation as required.

If funds remain unspent after 10 years following payment, the monies will be repaid to the applicant, on application to the Council, with any accrued interest.

8.0 LOSS OF OPEN SPACE

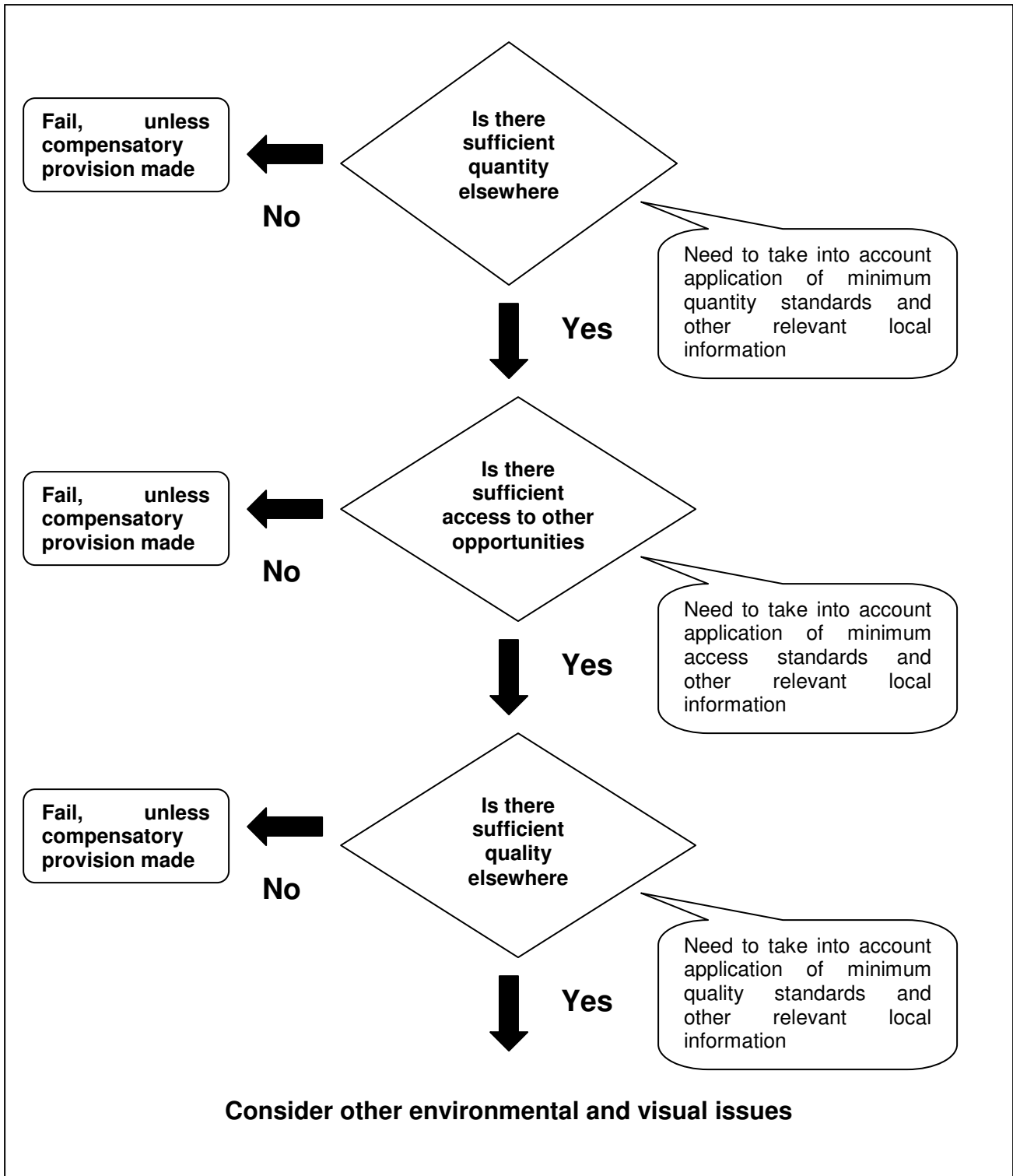
8.1 Process for determining potential loss of open space

The PPG17 study indicates that whilst there is under provision relative to the minimum standards in some parts of the District, there are other areas where provision compares favourably with the standards. However, it is stressed that the standards are for *minimum* levels of provision. Factors to be taken into account before any decision to release open space and recreation facilities to alternative uses can be taken include:

- The de facto use of a given open space - as it may be a locally popular resource;
- Whether future local development/population growth might generate additional demands for open space;
- Whether there is a demonstrable need for some other type of opportunity within the locality that an open space would be well placed to meet;
- Other non-recreational reasons that suggest a space or facility should be retained (which might include ecological and visual reasons); and
- Whether the development value can be utilised to provide a significant upgrade for public use of the remainder of that same open space area, if a partial development is permitted.

These considerations can be summarised in figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Outline decision making process in relation to the sanctioning the (re)development of open space/recreation facilities



A hypothetical example of how this might be applied is as follows. This is related to an area of informal/amenity space.

Q. Is there sufficient quantity?

A. If the minimum quantitative standard for Informal/amenity space is achieved in a defined geographical area, the relative provision of other forms of open space must then be considered. (Informal open space can in principle be converted into other forms of open space where the need arises). If a) provision meets the minimum quantitative standard; b) there is no significant local information suggesting a need to retain the site; and, c) there is not a perceived lack of other forms of open space. The next question can be addressed.

Q. Is there sufficient access to other opportunities?

A. Within the defined geographical area there may be good overall provision of informal space relative to the quantity standard, but is it in the right place and can it be easily reached? Applying the accessibility component of the minimum standards will help to answer this question. If other similar open space cannot be easily reached, the site's disposal for other uses may be unacceptable.

Q. Are other accessible and similar opportunities elsewhere of sufficient quality?

A. If it can be demonstrated that alternative opportunities are sufficient both in quantity and accessibility, there may still exist issues with the quality of these alternative provisions. The quality component of the proposed standards may indicate that certain improvements to alternative opportunities must be made which should be funded and secured before development is sanctioned.

Even if these three tests are passed there may be other reasons for the site to remain as open space. For example, it may genuinely be nice to look through and over, and/or has a natural habitat value. Such considerations are important, but beyond the scope of this report.

9.0 Financial Contributions

All financial contributions contained in planning agreements will be index linked (using the Retail Prices Index - all items) to the date of the Committee, or delegated authority approval. Financial contributions will normally be expected to be paid upon commencement of development (as defined in Section 56 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act). However, in exceptional circumstances the payment can be made at various stages during the development process, for example, upon first occupation. Trigger dates for the payment of financial contributions will be included in the Planning Agreement, as will any time periods by which the contribution is to be spent.

Following receipt by the District Council, financial contributions will be held in interest bearing accounts and will be individually identifiable due to each contribution being allocated a unique finance code. Contributions remaining unspent at the end of a time period specified in the Planning Agreement will be returned to the payee along with any interest accrued.

10.0 Monitoring of Obligations

Monitoring of obligations will be undertaken by the District Council to ensure all obligations entered into are complied with on the part of both the developer and the Council.

