



Help us Shape the Future

Supplementary Planning Document Open Space, Sport and Recreation Future Provision

Adopted July 2008

هذه الوثيقة متاحة باللغة العربية عند الطلب.
Arabic

এই ডকুমেন্ট অনুরোধে বাংলায় পাওয়া যায়।
Bengali

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।
Punjabi

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز اردو میں بھی مل سکتی ہے۔
Urdu

本文件可以應要求，製作成中文(繁體字)版本。
Chinese

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Vale of White Horse District Council Planning Service
Abbey House
Abingdon
OX14 3JE

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Telephone: 01235 520202
Email: valefuture@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

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Adopted Supplementary Planning Document

Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Future Provision

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Introduction

The Scope and Purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

1.0 The Vale of White Horse District Council welcomes well designed, sustainable developments that accord with its adopted planning policies and will enhance the District as a place to live, work and visit. Networks of high quality, accessible open space, sport and recreation facilities are critical if this aim is to be met. The purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document is to provide guidance to those preparing planning applications for one or more houses as to what the Council will be seeking to mitigate the impact of their development on open space, sport and recreation facilities.

1.1 This SPD is in three sections:-

- The first deals with assessing the impacts of proposed residential developments in terms of open space, sport and recreation provision.
- The second explains how the Council intends to use planning conditions relating to open space, sport and recreation provision.
- The final section sets out the circumstances in which the Council will require developers to enter into a planning agreement or unilateral undertaking relating to open space, sport and recreation provision.

Status of this SPD

1.2 This SPD does not stand alone but should be read in conjunction with the Vale of White Horse Adopted Local Plan 2011 and the Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation provision Strategy. A background document to the Open Space, Sport and Recreation provision Strategy sets out the results of the Council's assessment of provision throughout the District undertaken in 2006-07, in accordance with the requirements set out in Government Planning Policy Guidance (PPG17) Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation. However, neither the Strategy nor its related Background Document are part of the Council's Local Development Framework.

1.3 The main policies in the Adopted Development Plan relevant to open space, sport and recreation provision are:

- Structure Plan Policy G3, *Infrastructure and Service Provision*, which states that proposals will not be permitted unless the relevant planning authority is satisfied that the necessary infrastructure is available or will be provided.
- Local Plan Policies L1 and L4, which seek to protect existing outdoor play space and allotments but allow development of them for other uses where this will not exacerbate or create a local deficiency.
- Local Plan Policy L2, which protects all urban open space defined on the proposals map.

- Local Plan Policy L7, which protects local leisure facilities unless there is no longer a need for the facility or an alternative provision of equal or better quality is made available.
 - Local Plan Policy H23, which requires new housing developments of over 15 dwellings or 0.5 ha to provide 15% public open space and requires suitable arrangements for future management and maintenance of the open space to be in place.
 - Local Plan Policies H15 and H7, which set out a list of spaces and facilities to be provided in association with the proposed major developments at Didcot and Grove.
 - Local Plan Policy DC8, which aims to ensure an adequate and timely supply of social and physical infrastructure to meet the needs of the occupiers or users of new development.
- 1.4 The Council's forthcoming Local Development Framework will set out that the Council intends to seek planning obligations for all developments of one or more dwellings and not only 15 or more as set out in current Local Plan Policy H23.
- 1.5 An SPD does not have the same status as the Council's Adopted Local Plan or the Local Development Framework currently being prepared. However it will be taken into account as a material consideration by the Council, a Planning Inspector or the Secretary of State when determining planning applications and appeals.
- 1.6 This SPD reflects the policy advice given in paragraphs 25 and 26 of Annex B to Circular 5/2005 Planning Obligations. This requires planning authorities to set out their policy for the use of planning agreements in their Local Development Framework, complemented by an SPD setting out more details of how the authority will assess the level of contributions it will require through planning agreements.
- 1.7 This SPD was adopted by the District Council at its meeting of the full Council held on 16th July 2008. The Council will monitor its effectiveness and review its content at regular intervals to ensure that it remains relevant and compliant with Government advice on the use of planning conditions and obligations and any future reviews of the Council's adopted Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy.

Terminology

- 1.8 For the sake of clarity and consistency, in this SPD:
- Developers' **contributions** (or, more simply, contributions) are capital payments which the Council will use to fund the provision or enhancement of open space, sport and recreation provision designed to mitigate the impact of proposed developments.
 - Commuted management, maintenance and establishment sums (or, more simply, **commuted sums**) are payments to the Council which it will use to fund a stream

of revenue payments over a number of years in order to maintain or establish new or enhanced spaces or facilities provided by developers which the Council has agreed to adopt and maintain.

- **Establishment sums** are similar to commuted sums but designed to fund the establishment of spaces or facilities until such time as they become established or are fit for use. For example, some shrubs or trees in most planting schemes die within the first 2–3 years and have to be replaced and some sports facilities, such as bowling greens or cricket wickets, have to be maintained for 1–2 years before they can be used.

The Council's Vision

- 1.9 The Council's vision for open space, sport and recreation facilities is set out in its draft strategy and is:

“The Vale's towns and villages will have a sustainable network of high quality open spaces and indoor and outdoor sports facilities that everyone will see as being of fundamental importance to their quality of life and want to use”.

- 1.10 In more detail through the Local Plan and this SPD the Council's aims in relation to open space, sport and recreation are:–

- To support the implementation of the Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation provision Strategy
- To promote the speedy, transparent and consistent application of the Council's provision standards to proposed developments
- To ensure that any new or enhanced provision funded by developers is large enough to be fit for purpose, appropriately sited, well designed, practical to maintain and sustainable
- To minimise the time needed to negotiate planning agreements with developers by setting out how the Council will calculate and use developers' contributions
- To facilitate and enable desirable developments for which the Council might otherwise have to refuse planning permission as a result of their impact on local infrastructure.

Typology of Provision

- 1.11 This SPD relates to the following forms of provision:

Multi Functional Greenspaces (MFGS)

Amenity greenspaces

Natural greenspaces

Parks and gardens

Other Public Spaces

Civic spaces

Green corridors within urban areas (excluding rights of way, which are a County Council responsibility)

Activity Spaces

Allotments

Formal play

Multi-sport courts

Youth facilities (this relates to physical infrastructure for informal use by young people, such as skateboard areas and shelters, and does not include County Council Youth Service provision)

Outdoor Sports Facilities

Artificial turf pitches

Bowling greens

Grass cricket, football and rugby pitches

Tennis courts

Indoor Sports Facilities

Indoor sports halls and swimming pools

Large Scale and Cross-boundary Developments

- 1.12 For large scale developments the District Council will normally prepare a planning brief or expect developers to submit a design brief and/or masterplan to ensure developments are well designed, based on clear and consistent sustainable principles. This requirement is particularly important in relation to proposals that cross the local authority boundary, such as at Didcot. In such cases, the masterplan may suggest an alternative approach that will deliver the Council's vision but does not apply the Council's adopted provision standards in all respects. Once the Council has approved the design brief or masterplan, it will expect development proposals to conform to the principles and standards set out in it and therefore may not require individual developments to conform to all of its adopted provision standards. However, the Council will reserve the right to require developers to meet its adopted standards if particular proposals do not conform satisfactorily to the approved design brief or masterplan.

Assessing the Impact of Proposed Developments

Introduction

2.0 Appendix A sets out the Council's provision standards for open spaces, sport and recreation provision. These standards have been arrived at following an audit of open space, sport and recreation carried out by consultants in 2006–7. The Council will use these standards to assess the impact of any housing development proposed within the District on open space, sport and recreation provisions. This section of the SPD summarises the scope of the standards and explains how the Council will apply them.

Pre-application Discussions

2.1 The Council encourages developers to engage in pre-application discussions with Council Officers in relation to any development proposal that is likely to have an impact in terms of:

- Increasing the local need for or use of open space, sport and recreation provision; or
- The quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, sport and recreation provision within the District; or
- The potential loss of any open space or sport or recreation facility.

2.2 In the course of pre-application discussions, Council Officers will be able to provide advice on the Council's likely requirements for on-site provision, compensatory off-site provision or the enhancement of existing provision. However, while the Council will always endeavour to ensure that any such advice is the best possible at the time of the discussions, it will always reserve the right to amend its requirements in the light of the circumstances of a submitted planning application. The main reasons for this are:

- The applicant may change the details of the development proposal
- Other applications or developments in the vicinity of the proposed site may have an impact on the Council's and community's requirements in relation to any specific development.

Standards of Provision

2.3 PPG17, *Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation*, makes clear that deficiencies in provision can be both qualitative and quantitative. *Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17* also stresses the importance of

accessibility because provision that is inaccessible to potential users is irrelevant to them, no matter how large or how high quality.

2.4 Accordingly, and in compliance with PPG17, the Council has developed three types of provision standards for open space, sport and recreation: the standards are set out in appendix A and include:-

- **Quantity standards**, which set out the amount of different forms of provision required per person across the District. The Council will use these standards to assess the amount of provision likely to be needed by the residents of new housing developments and therefore the amount it may require developers either to provide or fund.
- **Quality standards**, which set out the basic characteristics required of new provision. Whenever it requires developers to provide new spaces or facilities, and in all instances where developers offer spaces or facilities to the Council for adoption, the Council will impose a condition requiring them to comply with these standards. The Council will be aiming to bring all existing open spaces and sport and recreation facilities up to these standards. Where existing spaces or facilities, required to meet community needs, do not accord with these standards the Council will consider there to be a qualitative deficiency in provision.
- **Accessibility standards** (or distance thresholds), which set out the walking, cycling and driving times and distances that the Council regards as acceptable to potential users of spaces or facilities. The Council will use these standards to assess the extent to which existing provision may be relevant to the residents of proposed new housing developments. For practical reasons, the Council has adopted accessibility standards based on standard walking, cycling and driving speeds.

2.5 In accordance with PPG17, the Council will require developers:

- To provide or fund additional provision where there are identified quantitative deficiencies in provision within the appropriate distance thresholds of a proposed development, or where the development will result in quantitative deficiencies
- To contribute to the enhancement of existing provision when there is an identified qualitative deficiency in provision within the appropriate distance thresholds of a proposed development and one effect of the development will be to increase the demand pressures on these spaces or facilities.

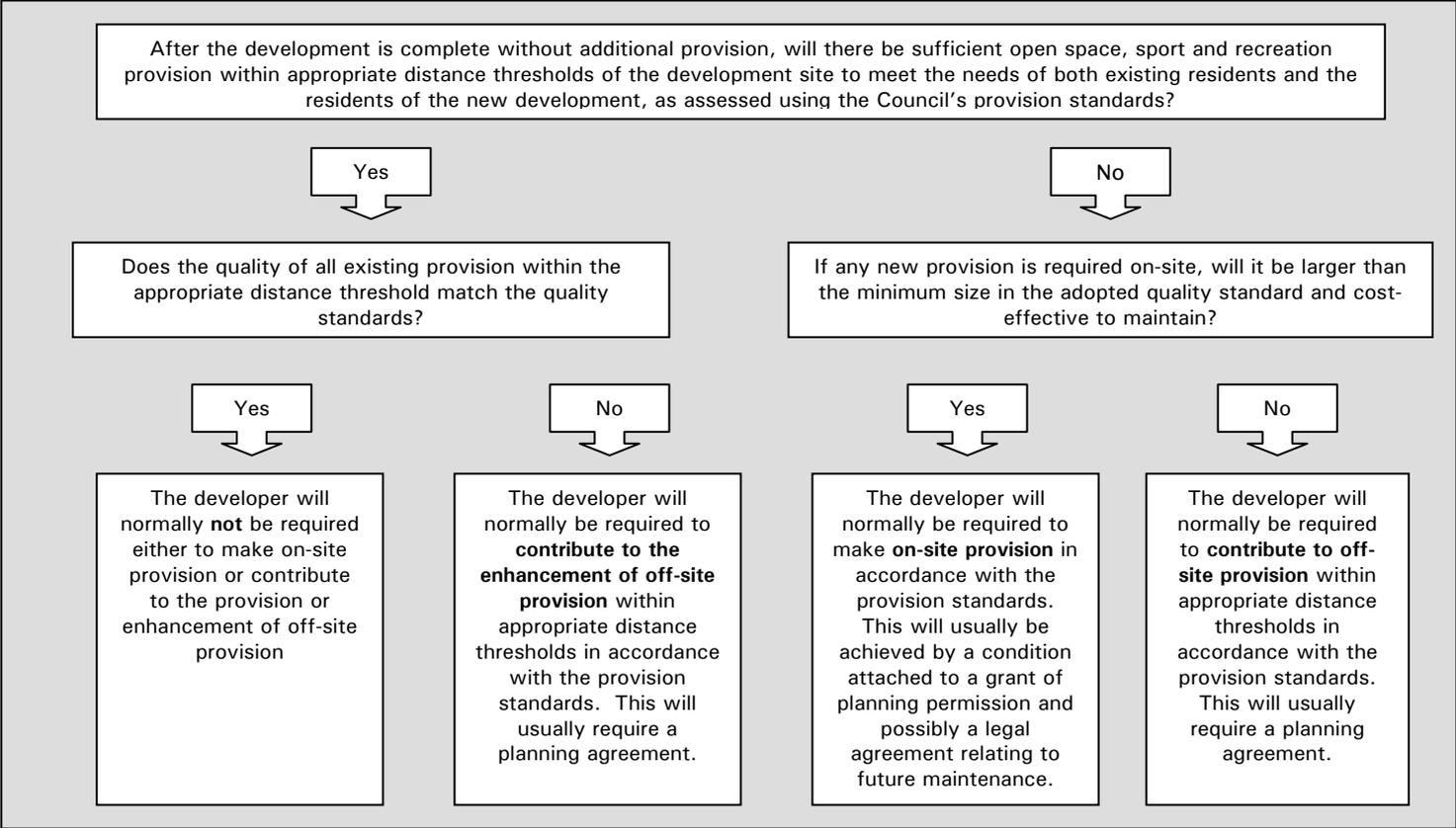
2.6 The Council will use its quantity standards to determine the scale of contributions required towards new off-site provision or the enhancement of existing off-site provision. For example, if a particular development proposal requires X sq m of a specific form of provision, based on the net increase in the on-site population times the appropriate quantity standard, the Council will require developers to contribute to the creation or enhancement of X sq of that form of provision. The Council will determine which of these alternatives it prefers by taking account of the context

within which the development is set, the amount and nature of provision in the vicinity of the development site and any other material considerations.

Application of Provision Standards

- 2.7 The diagram overleaf, based on *Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17 (ODPM, 2002)*, sets out how the Council will use its provision standards to decide whether there will be a need to mitigate the impact of a proposed development and, if so, the most appropriate approach to adopt.

Flow Chart for Development Control Purposes



2.8 To forecast the likely impact of developments the Council will assess the amount of each of the various forms of provision that will be required to meet the needs of residents generated by the proposed development, within the context of the area in which the site is set.

2.9 The starting point for the assessment will be the calculation of the on-site population. For this purpose the Council will use the following occupancy rates:

- Dwellings with 1 bedroom 1.32 Occupants
- Dwellings with 2 bedrooms 1.95 Occupants
- Dwellings with 3 bedrooms 2.61 Occupants
- Dwellings with 4 bedrooms 3.33 Occupants
- Dwellings of unknown size 2.30 Occupants

Note: these figures derive from a survey of new residential developments in Oxfordshire undertaken by the Demographic and Social Statistics Adviser in the County Council's Strategic Policy and Economic Development Unit during 2005. The County Council intends to review the figures from time to time and the District Council will then amend the above occupancy levels as appropriate.

2.10 If the proposed development site includes existing temporary or permanent dwellings that have been occupied within one year before the date of receipt of the planning application, the Council will use the anticipated net change in the number of residents. For example, if a proposed development consists of twelve 1 bedroom

flats on the site of a 4 bedroom house which will be demolished the Council will assess the net change in the on-site population as follows:

- 12 dwellings @ 1.32 people = 15.84 people
- Less
- 1 dwelling @ 3.33 people = -3.33 people
- Net increase 12.51 people

Development Thresholds

2.11 Where there is an identified qualitative or quantitative deficiency in provision, the Council will seek contributions from any developments resulting in a net increase of one or more dwellings.

Types of Housing Development

2.12 The residents of different types of dwellings are likely to have different needs in terms of open space, sport and recreation provision. For example, sheltered housing will not increase the local demand for football pitches but will very often require on-site amenity space for the use of residents even if there is existing provision nearby. The table overleaf sets out the forms of provision the Council considers will be required for different types of residential development. This means that it will not always be appropriate for the Council to require developers to make or fund new or enhanced provision for all those facilities for which it has a provision standard.

Types of residential development to which the provision standards will apply.

Type of development	Multi-functional greenspaces	Other public spaces		Activity Spaces				Outdoor Sports Facilities				Indoor Sports Facilities	
		Civic spaces	Green corridors	Allotments	Formal play provision	Multi courts	Teenage areas	Artificial Turf Pitches	Bowling Green	Grass Pitches	Tennis courts		
Open market dwellings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	All open market dwellings will generate demand for access to all forms of provision
Affordable housing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	All affordable housing will generate demand for access to all forms of provision
Accommodation for active elderly people	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓	“Active elderly residents” are able to live independent lives without personal assistance. They are unlikely to have live-in children but may take part in some sports activities such as tennis and bowls.
Special housing for less active elderly people	✓	✓	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Residents of special housing requiring at least some degree of personal care will not take part in active pursuits but should increase the demand for parks and similar open spaces.
Hostels and special needs housing	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	Residents with special needs may require access to sports facilities but will certainly be able to benefit from parks and other amenity open spaces.
One for one replacement dwellings	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	A replacement dwelling will only have a marginal impact on the need of community facilities.
Extensions to dwellings	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Extensions are likely at most to have only a marginal impact on the need for community infrastructure.

Notes:

✓ Provision normally required

X Provision not normally required

Multi-functional greenspace: amenity greenspaces, natural greenspaces and parks and gardens

The Use of Planning Conditions

Introduction

3.0 When the Council grants planning permission for a proposed development it may do so subject to a number of conditions. This section of the SPD therefore provides an overview of the conditions that the Council may impose in relation to open space, sport and recreation provision, together with how it will assess commuted maintenance sums in instances where developers offer on-site provision, or other provision intended primarily for the benefit of the occupants of a proposed development, for adoption by the Council or other appropriate agreed body such as one of the District's town or parish councils. If the Council or another body is to adopt open space, sport or recreation facilities any commuted maintenance payment will be subject to a legal agreement.

The Purpose of Conditions

3.1 The purpose of conditions is to enable development proposals to proceed in cases where they would otherwise be unacceptable. In all cases, the Council will ensure that each condition is:-

- Necessary and therefore the development should not be permitted without the condition
- Relevant to land use planning objectives
- Relevant to the proposed development and justified by its nature or impact on its surroundings
- Clear and enforceable
- Reasonable in all other aspects

Contributions Relating to Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision

3.2 Open space, sport and recreation facilities must be managed and maintained effectively if they are not to deteriorate and have a negative impact on local amenity. Accordingly, in all instances where the Council requires developers to make on-site greenspace, sport or recreation provision, or when they do so voluntarily, it will require them to put in place measures for their management and maintenance in perpetuity. The Council's standard condition for this purpose is:-

"Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a scheme for the future maintenance and layout of the open space areas as shown on the approved drawings shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority. The areas thereafter shall be permanently maintained in accordance with the approved scheme".

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity.

Meeting the Council's Requirements in Relation to Management and Maintenance

3.3 In principle, the Council regards either of the following approaches as acceptable means of satisfying the requirement to secure the ongoing maintenance of open space, sport and recreation facilities:

- The handing over of the spaces or facilities to the District Council or other appropriate agreed body (such as the relevant town or parish council) for adoption, plus an appropriate commuted maintenance sum, on the basis of a legal agreement.
- The incorporation of a clause in the title deeds for the properties in the development:
 - a) Requiring the owners to contribute to the upkeep of the common areas of the development, including any on-site or other open space or sports and recreation provision intended predominantly for their use, and form a residents association to manage, or appoint a factor to manage, the necessary maintenance works to an agreed standard, which shall be not lower than the Council's adopted quality standard.
 - b) Granting the Council "Step-in" rights which will allow it to undertake the maintenance itself in the event that, in its sole judgement, the arrangements made in accordance with sub-paragraph (a) prove ineffective and recover the costs of doing so, including all legal and administrative costs, from the residents or occupants of the development on a suitable fair basis.

Note: this approach is designed to be compatible with paragraph B18 of DCLG Circular 5/2005, Planning Obligations, which indicates that Councils can require developers to make arrangements for the management and maintenance in perpetuity of spaces and facilities intended predominantly for the residents or users of a proposed development

3.4 The Council will be willing to consider other approaches put forward by developers on a case by case basis, but will always require to be satisfied that whatever detailed arrangements the developer may propose will be effective.

3.5 The Council or other agreed appropriate body (such as the relevant town or parish council) may be willing to adopt and subsequently manage and maintain on-site provision made by developers only if:

- The provision meets the appropriate quality standard(s) in all respects at the time of adoption; and
- The developer provides a commuted maintenance sum on or before the date of adoption of the space or facilities to the agency in whom the land is to be vested, sufficient to fund the management and maintenance for a period of 20 years; and
- The developer pays all of the legal costs relating to the transfer of the land or facilities of the body in whom the land is to be vested.

3.6 The Council will publish on its website, and revise annually with effect from 1 April in each year, a statement of the standard commuted maintenance sums it will require

for different forms of provision. It will base them on anticipated annual maintenance costs, using costs provided by its grounds maintenance contractor, including as many of the following as may be appropriate:

- An establishment cost, designed to fund the replacement of any plants or trees which may die within an initial establishment period of 5 years
- All maintenance materials required over 20 years
- An appropriate proportion of equipment costs, taking into account the anticipated lifespan of maintenance equipment
- A 10% on-cost, to cover the management of maintenance operations

3.7 The Council will calculate commuted sums in the form of the net present value (NPV) of the anticipated stream of establishment or maintenance costs over a 20 year period, based on:-

- Current costs provided by its grounds maintenance contractor
- A predicted annual increase for inflation and other costs
- A discount rate of 4%.

Large and Phased Developments – Payment of Commuted Sums

3.8 If the Council or another appropriate agreed body (such as the relevant town or parish council) is to adopt on-site or other spaces or facilities, it is likely that they will be completed and ready for handover and adoption at different times during the construction of large or phased developments. When this will be the case, the Council is willing in principle to allow the payment of commuted sums on a phased basis which matches the points at which it or the other appropriate body adopts the spaces or facilities. However, this will always be conditional upon:

- The spaces or facilities being in a fully adoptable condition in all respects
- Any related commuted sums being index-linked from the date of the grant of planning permission to the date of payment
- The dates or other trigger point at which spaces or facilities are to be adopted being agreed in writing before the start of the development on site.

Indexation

3.9 There are several published cost indices that the Council could use when indexing Contributions or commuted sums. However the indices that the Council will normally use are: for construction works, the Department of Trade & Industry Tender Price Index of Public Sector Non Housing (PUBSEC) smoothed all-in-index: for commuted sums, the index of Retail Price.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

- 3.10 The Council encourages developers to incorporate proposals for sustainable urban drainage schemes in their developments whenever possible and to ensure that the management and maintenance of SUDS features is seen as part of the overall management regime for a site. However, the Council does not adopt any open space designed for drainage purposes as part of a sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS).

Planning Agreements

Introduction

- 4.0 Wherever possible and in accordance with Government advice, the Council will seek to use planning conditions, however there will be many instances where the barriers to granting planning permission cannot be resolved by the use of conditions. In these instances the Council will seek to negotiate a planning agreement with the developers.

The National Justification for Planning Agreements

- 4.1 Government has made it clear in various Planning Policy Guidelines (PPG's) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS's) that the community should not be disadvantaged by new development. Accordingly, it is the Government's view that it is reasonable for planning authorities to expect developers to contribute to the cost of meeting local needs for community facilities and infrastructure which arise from their developments. Development creates a need for additional or enhanced infrastructure, giving rise to a "planning obligation" on the developer to provide or fund whatever measures may be required to mitigate (ie meet) those needs. The legislative basis for this is set out in Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, as substituted by Section 12(l) of the Planning & Compensation Act 1991. This allows for obligations to be discharged either through a planning agreement negotiated between the developer and local authority or a unilateral undertaking, offered by a developer. The difference between them is simple. In a planning agreement, the developer and/or land owner(s) and the relevant local authority, both "covenant" (a legal term which effectively means "undertake" or "promise") to do certain things. For example, the developer might covenant to pay an amount of money (a "contribution") to the local authority, which in turn enters into a "reciprocal covenant" to use that money for the purpose or in the way set out in the agreement. Unilateral undertakings, on the other hand, are effectively one-sided planning agreements: the developer/land owner covenants to do something that will make the development acceptable to the local authority (for example, to pay a contribution of £X to the local authority for it to use to enhance local greenspace), but the local authority does not enter into any reciprocal covenants. In this context, the term "local authority" can have a wide meaning; it frequently includes the District Council, as the local planning authority, and the County Council in several distinct roles, for example as the Highways Authority, the Education Authority and the Library Authority.

The Need for Planning Agreements

- 4.2 Paragraph 33 of PPG17 states that:

"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."

- 4.3 In most instances, the need for a planning agreement will arise because:
- The development will result in additional pressures on existing open spaces, sport and recreation facilities which cannot reasonably be sustained
 - It would not be realistic, or sensible in land use terms, for the Council to require the developer to mitigate these pressures on land in the developer's ownership
- 4.4 In these circumstances, if there is not a commensurate increase or improvement in the amount, quality or capacity of provision, the result will be a "planning loss" to the local community: for example, there will be more demand for local football pitches than can realistically be accommodated. The Council may seek agreements in order:
- To require the developer to fund compensatory provision; or
 - To require the developer to provide a financial contribution which it will use off-site to mitigate the impacts of the development
 - To seek contributions to future maintenance of on-site provision.
- 4.5 This section of the SPD sets out the circumstances under which the Council will be seeking a planning obligation to secure contributions or compensatory provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities. It explains how the Council will assess the possible need for and scale of those contributions and how it will use them. It therefore has two main purposes:
- To provide clarity and transparency for developers so that they are aware of the possible need for a planning agreement and related financial contributions early in the development process
 - To facilitate a consistent approach to the securing of planning agreements and the use of contributions throughout the District.

The Scope of Planning Agreements

- 4.6 The Council may seek a planning agreement relating to the provision of any type of open space or sport and recreation facility for which it has a provision standard. (These standards are set out in Appendix A).

The Nature of Planning Agreements

- 4.7 Planning agreements can take many forms. Circular 05/2005 *Planning Obligations* sets out three main purposes for them:
- To prescribe the nature of a development in order to achieve planning objectives
 - To mitigate the impact of a development
 - To compensate for loss or damage caused by a development
- 4.8 The Council will require planning obligations to mitigate the impact of a development or compensate for provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities which will be damaged or lost as a result of the proposed development.

4.9 Circular 5/2005 re-affirms the five policy tests for the reasonableness of a planning agreement. The Council interprets these policy tests as follows:

- **The proposed agreement must be necessary:** the proposed development will increase the need for greenspace or sport and recreation provision in an area where as a result of the development there will be a quantitative deficiency or result in additional demand pressures on existing spaces or provision in an area where there is a qualitative deficiency and therefore necessitates their enhancement
- **The proposed mitigation must be relevant to planning:** the Council will seek contributions only for purposes which relate to the use or development of land
- **The proposed mitigation must be directly related to the proposed development:** it is not necessary, and may be impractical, to attempt to mitigate all of the impacts of a proposed development in the immediate vicinity of the site. However, the additional demands arising from the development must be met within a reasonable distance of it. This “reasonable distance” will vary with the nature of the infrastructure and is set out in the Council’s standards in an Appendix to this SPD. The reasonable distance will be fairly limited for facilities such as play areas for young children but longer for facilities such as artificial turf pitches which serve a significant catchment area. PPG17 recommends the use of distance thresholds and the Council has adopted this approach and will use it to determine how far a proposed mitigation is “directly related” to a development.
- **The proposed mitigation must be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development:** the Council will not ask developers to fund a greater amount of infrastructure than needed to accommodate the additional pressures created by their development
- **The proposed agreement must be reasonable in all other respects:** in broad terms, the key test the Council will apply is whether the requirement for an agreement is so directly related to the regulation of the proposed development that it should not be permitted without it.

4.10 It follows that the Council will not seek contributions to reduce any infrastructure deficiency which existed at the time a development was first proposed to a greater extent than justified by the scale and nature of the proposed development. However it may seek contributions to prevent any such deficiencies becoming more as a direct result of the proposed development.

4.11 Planning permission must never be bought or sold. Accordingly, the Council will not grant permission for an unacceptable development because the developer has offered to provide or fund unnecessary or unrelated benefits through a unilateral undertaking. However the Council will refuse planning permission for an otherwise acceptable development if the developer is unwilling or unable to contribute to infrastructure improvements needed as a result of their development.

The Calculation of Developer Contributions and Commuted Sums

4.12 The Council will use a spreadsheet model to calculate developer contributions and commuted sums. The Model:

- Calculates the likely on-site population of the proposed development and the net increase or decrease in the local population
- Calculates whether the quantity of existing provision within the relevant distance thresholds before and after the proposed development meets the adopted quantity provision standards
- Indicates whether there is a surplus or deficiency of each form of provision before and after the proposed development
- Calculates the amount of on-site provision and commuted maintenance sum needed to meet the needs of the on-site population, whether there is a deficiency after the development, and compares this with the minimum size element of the provision standard
- Calculates the amount of off-site provision and related commuted payment needed to meet the net increase in population arising from the development
- Identifies whether any of the existing provision within the appropriate distance threshold of the proposed development site requires enhancement and, if so, calculates the developer's contribution towards this enhancement, based on the net increase in local population.

4.13 The Model therefore provides clear answers to the questions in the line of thinking above. The Model, includes:

- The amount of each form of on-site provision to be made by the developer, if any
- The required commuted maintenance sums required for on-site provision, if any
- Contributions required to new off-site provision, if any
- Contributions required to enhanced off-site provision, if any

4.14 The Model calculates a "menu" of the possible permutations of these requirements. The Council will then use its judgement to select the most appropriate way of mitigating the impact of a proposed development from this "menu", including the form(s) of provision it may require developers to provide or fund. The Council will make the model available to developers on its website www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk so that it can be used to assess the requirements the Council may have in relation to a proposed development at an early stage in the development process.

Developer Contributions

4.15 When calculating developer contributions, the Council will include all of the costs the Council is likely to incur. These costs will include:

- Land cost, if appropriate
- Construction cost
- Design team fees and expenses

- Essential furniture and/or equipment
- Legal costs, including those incurred in drawing up the agreement
- A 15% on-cost, to cover monitoring, project procurement and management by the Council
- VAT, if irrecoverable

Maintenance Payments

4.16 Circular 05/2005 enables planning authorities to use planning agreements to secure the appropriate long term management and maintenance of spaces or facilities in two sets of circumstances:

- **Where spaces or facilities are provided primarily for the benefit of the residents or users of a development:** the Council will require developers to make arrangements for their effective management and maintenance in perpetuity. This approach complies with paragraph 18 of Annex B to Circular 05/2005.
- **Where spaces or facilities are intended for wider public use:** the Council will seek an establishment payment designed to fund management and maintenance which reflects “the time lag between the provision of the new facility and its inclusion in public sector funding streams, or its ability to recover its own costs”. This approach complies with paragraph 19 of Annex B to Circular 05/2005.

Pooled Contributions

4.17 Most planning obligations relating to greenspace, sport and recreation provision will require developers to provide contributions which the Council will subsequently invest in new or enhanced off-site provision. In order to maximise the impact and benefits of such investment, the Council may pool contributions from two or more developments in the same area, using its accessibility standards as its means of defining “the same area”.

4.18 Across the District many open spaces, sport and recreation facilities are owned and managed by the Town and Parish Councils, and the District Council will collect contributions through the planning process on their behalf or for any other agreed appropriate body.

4.19 The contributions received from a development will not always be sufficient fully to fund the required enhancements of existing spaces or facilities. In these circumstances the District Council will seek to aggregate contributions from other developments in the same area so that the required enhancements are affordable. If this is unlikely to be achievable within an acceptable timescale, the Council will seek to fund the balance of costs from other sources such as grant aid, other external funding, from its own resources or, for sites that it does not own, the site owner.

Large and Phased Developments

- 4.20 Large developments may require several planning applications because they are to be phased or undertaken by more than one developer. In these cases, the Council will seek to ensure that contributions to infrastructure are apportioned as fairly as possible between the various phases and or developers.

Large and Phased Developments – Payment of Contributions

- 4.21 The need for infrastructure provision or enhancements funded by developer contributions arises as developments are built out and the new dwellings occupied. This means that it would be unreasonable to require all contributions to be paid to the Council before commencement of large or phased developments on site. For developments of over 100 dwellings, or where the construction of a development is to be separated into clearly identified phases, the Council will be willing in principle to negotiate arrangements in the planning agreement to allow the payment of contributions in a way that matches the rate at which the need for the infrastructure will arise. It will normally do this by agreeing suitable and clearly identified trigger points, for example before the start of works on site and when 33% and 67% of the dwellings are complete. These percentages are purely illustrative and other triggers may be appropriate in relation to specific developments. The Council may also require the developer to provide a bond to guarantee payment of all phased contributions. This arrangement will comply with paragraph B17 of DCLG Circular 5/20005, *Planning Obligations*.

Indexation

- 4.22 Where contributions are to be phased the Council will require them to be index-linked from the date of the grant of planning permission to the date of payment. There are several published cost indices that the Council could use when indexing contributions. However, it will normally use the Department of Trade and Industry Tender Price Index of Public Sector Non-Housing (PUBSEC) Smoothed All-in Index.

The Viability of Developments

- 4.23 The District Council is well aware that there is potentially a long list of forms of community infrastructure provision towards which it and the County Council will wish to seek contributions. In some instances, there may be a need for the District Council to negotiate with developers to ensure that the contributions requested do not destroy the viability of a desirable proposed development. However, it will be very difficult for the Council to do this in a way that is fair to both the developer and the local community unless developers are open with the Council about the land and construction costs of their developments and the anticipated sales receipts. Accordingly, if a developer believes that the level of contributions sought by the Council will destroy the viability of a proposed development the onus will be on the developer to prove that this is the case. The Council will if necessary employ an independent third party to assess the case. The Council will be happy to give a

written guarantee of confidentiality in relation to information on the viability of proposed developments and to minimise the number of officials who are party to the information. The County Council will give a similar undertaking if it is party to the viability information as a result of having a significant infrastructure requirement that the developer regards as unaffordable.

On-site or Off-site Provision?

- 4.24 Once the need for additional or enhanced infrastructure has been established, the flow chart above will act as a guide as to whether the Council should require on-site or off-site provision. In most instances the need for the best and most sustainable long term use of land will dictate that one or the other is preferable.
- 4.25 The Council is aware that, in some cases there can be more benefits to be gained from enhancing existing off-site provision than in making additional on-site provision, provided that there is not a serious shortfall in the quantity of provision, within the appropriate distance thresholds of the development. In these circumstances development can help to deliver important benefits for existing communities and make proposals more acceptable to them as a result. This will clearly benefit developers as well as local communities. Enhanced off-site provision can also minimise the amount of additional land needed for open space, sport and recreation provision; make better use of existing facilities; make the best use of land; minimise the long term revenue costs associated with community infrastructure and therefore enhance financial sustainability; and help the Council and developers achieve acceptable residential densities.
- 4.26 This said, however, the Council's general presumption will be that:
- New provision required as a result of proposed developments should normally be on-site. However, if the amount of provision justified by the application of the appropriate quantity standard is below the minimum size thresholds set out in the Council's adopted quality standard, its preference will be for a contribution to off-site provision.
 - For off-site provision, where either the enhancement of existing provision or new provision is justified, the Council's preference will normally be the former. This should also result in lower contributions from developers because upgrading or enhancing existing provision will often have lower capital costs than new provision and help to make the best use of land by allowing and supporting higher densities of development.
- 4.27 In cases where the Council requires developers to contribute to the enhancement of existing spaces or facilities rather than make or fund new provision, the need for speedy determination of planning applications will not allow the development of costed design proposals. Accordingly the Council will assess the unit cost of enhancing existing provision as three quarters (75%) of the cost of new provision of the same kind, excluding land cost.

Standard Planning Agreement/Unilateral Undertaking

4.28 In order to aid transparency, reduce legal costs and speed up their preparation, the Council has prepared a standard form of draft planning agreement and unilateral undertaking relating to greenspace, sport and recreation provision. Copies are available from the Council's Offices or can be downloaded from its website www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk. In addition, and in order to help the Council determine planning applications as quickly as possible, it will require draft heads of terms for a planning agreement or unilateral undertaking alongside any planning application for developments of 10 or more dwellings before it will validate the application. This new requirement is specified in the guidance notes relating to the Validation Checklists which are required to accompany the new national standard planning application forms which became statutory on 6th April 2008.

Appendix A: Provision Standards

Introduction

This appendix summarises the accessibility, quantity and quality provision standards the Council requires developers to follow and that it will use when assessing application for planning permission. Its Development Control Model is based primarily on the accessibility and quantity standards set out below.

The quality standards set out below are no less important but the extent to which development proposals conform to them is more a matter of judgement in the light of specific development proposals. However, they set out the Council's requirements as a guide for developers on the quality of provision the Council will expect them either to provide or fund. The Council will take them into account when appraising planning applications that incorporate open space or sport and recreation provision. In this context, quality standards are a **requirement**, although they must obviously be applied in a way which is reasonable given the specific circumstances of a proposed development.

The forms of open space, sport and recreation provision for which the Council has adopted provision standards are:

Multi-functional Greenspaces (MFGS)

- Amenity greenspaces
- Natural greenspaces
- Parks and gardens

Other public spaces

- Green corridors
- Civic spaces

Activity Spaces

- Allotments
- Formal play provision
- Multi-sport courts
- Youth Facilities

Outdoor Sports Facilities

- Artificial turf pitches
- Bowling greens
- Grass cricket, football and rugby pitches
- Tennis Courts

Indoor facilities

- Indoor sports halls and swimming pools

Accessibility Standards/Distance Thresholds

The Council's accessibility standards are expressed as distance thresholds: the maximum time and distance that potential users should have to travel. Different forms of provision can have any combination of walking, cycling and driving thresholds. Where a particular form of provision has more than one type of threshold, the Council will normally apply the most onerous in the urban areas of the District and the least onerous in the rural areas. However, in the urban areas if it is not practicable to have the required provision within the most onerous threshold – for example because the land that would be required is not available – it will apply the next most onerous.

General Requirements

The following requirements for design objectives, design principles, accessibility and management and maintenance are common to all spaces and therefore are set out at the start of the standards rather than repeated for each different form of provision. There are also some additional requirements under the headings for specific types of space which are set out in the appropriate sections below.

Design Objectives

Design quality is fundamental to ensuring that spaces are fit for purpose, attractive to potential users and easy to maintain. All greenspaces should therefore be designed by experienced landscape architects working to the following design objectives:

- **Character:** each space should have its own specific identify which responds to the character of the area in which it is set and makes good use of the existing topography and landscape or built features and habitats
- **Continuity and enclosure:** there should be a clear distinction between public and private spaces
- **Quality of the public realm:** spaces should be attractive, safe, uncluttered and designed in such a way as to be attractive and usable by everyone. There should also be views into and out of spaces, for example to appropriate landmarks.
- **Ease of movement:** it should be easy to get to and move through spaces and individual public spaces should be linked with one another as much as possible and designers should not propose fragmented greenspace provision if it is avoidable. In residential areas, people should generally have priority over vehicles.
- **Legibility and clear routes:** the routes through spaces should be clear, with landmarks or directional signs at appropriate locations
- **Adaptability:** spaces should be able to change over time to meet evolving local needs
- **Diversity:** spaces should offer variety and choice to potential users
- **Sustainability:** the design and management of greenspaces should actively promote environmental sustainability and nature conservation, for example by protecting, restoring or creating new habitats, helping to shelter buildings to minimise the cooling effects of wind, minimising the impact of atmospheric pollution or heavy rainfall and providing shade. As much as possible, greenspaces should be linked to water courses so as to create wildlife corridors (which can include private gardens or other non-public spaces) and attractive walking/cycling routes. Where appropriate, new developments should include sustainable urban drainage.
- **Personal safety:** all spaces must appear safe and therefore not include areas where someone could be trapped or potential attackers could hide. Ideally, spaces in residential areas should be within sight of nearby roads or paths and residents in nearby properties. In addition there must be appropriate safety measures adjacent to areas of water which might

be dangerous (eg notices regarding depths, life buoys) and adequate lighting for paths that may be used at night.

- **Appropriate facilities:** most spaces should have at least seats and appropriately signed litter and “pooper” bins. Bins must be bird, squirrel and rat proof and located at points where they can easily be accessed from the road system.

General Design Principles

- Green spaces should be linked to local pedestrian and cycle path systems wherever possible, including rights of way, bridlepaths and quiet lanes (note: rights of way and other means of access to the countryside are a County Council function and any proposed changes to existing path systems in the countryside must be agreed with it).
- New housing development could follow “home zone” principles in that they should be designed as predominantly pedestrian environments into which vehicles can be admitted. This requires much more than simple traffic calming measures such as sleeping policemen.
- The whole of the outdoor environment should be safe but visually stimulating for both children and adults and offer opportunities for them to play in imaginative ways, both close to home and in any nearby wooded or other greenspaces which can be accessed without crossing a major road. The green network and related play provision must not be allocated to “left-over areas” or parts of sites unsuitable for building but designed in from the start and link to likely pedestrian desire lines.
- Areas in which children are likely to play should be unique and designed to offer a varied, interesting and physically challenging environment, accessible to everyone, which offers opportunities for running, jumping, climbing, balancing, building or creating, social interaction and sitting quietly.
- The design of play provision should derive from and reinforce the character and levels of the site and incorporate any natural features there may be on it such as rock outcrops or water courses. This will also help to encourage and facilitate use by children of all ages.

- Play provision should be designed generally to encourage children to explore their home environment and so incorporate hiding and “secret” places and link to nearby parts of the green network, especially woodland and other natural areas.
- Greenspaces should stimulate the senses of sight, sound, touch and smell and offer opportunities for children to manipulate materials. Accordingly they should incorporate variations in level and a range of materials of different kinds, textures and colours, such as timber, sand, rocks, dead trees and other natural materials and incorporate trees, shrubs and grass.
- Boundary fencing, gates, posts etc should be fit for purpose and well maintained
- Surfaces should be fit for purpose (inclusive of markings) and well maintained
- Management regime to suit particular landscape/habitat type eg differential mowing may be suitable to promote wildlife interests; not less than 1 m close mown edges to paths
- All paths should be kept clear of overhanging branches which cyclists or other users might hit
- All built and other facilities should be in clean, safe and usable condition

Mandatory Requirements

The following requirements are mandatory and not open to negotiation:

All cycle paths must comply with the appropriate Oxfordshire County Council requirements for paths of adoptable standard

Where appropriate all paths must be accessible to people with disabilities

All lighting must minimise upward light spill and light pollution

All street furniture and fixed play equipment must be approved by the Council’s where the facility is to be adopted by the District Council

- All signs must comply with the Council’s guidelines on signage
- Trees and shrubs must be selected and specified to provide year-round colour and interest

Accessibility

Accessibility has two key components: making it easy for potential users to get to spaces and making it easy to use them. Accordingly it is concerned with all potential users and not just those who are disabled in some way.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and PPG17 both promote the design of inclusive public spaces and environments that everyone can use. Since October 2004 service providers have been required to take reasonable steps to ensure that people with disabilities are able to use premises and spaces without unnecessary constraints. There is no clear definition of “reasonable” in this context, but it seems that there is no requirement to make all spaces accessible to people with disabilities all of the time. A useful policy is that greenspaces should be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

In greenspaces, the key requirements are:

- Spaces and publicly accessible buildings or facilities within them should be fully accessible to people with disabilities
- On-site spaces should not generally be on the perimeter of sites but the focus of the development; in residential areas, no dwellings should “turn their back” on adjacent greenspaces.
- Adequate car parking (if required) should be either on site or close to the entrances
- Spaces should be traversed by a network of hard surfaced paths, where appropriate, which will shed water and are suitable for wheelchairs and baby buggies; maximum slope not more than 1:12 and then only for short distances; otherwise not more than 1:24. Paths must also be wide enough for two wheelchairs to pass and broadly follow desire lines to link the entrances to the space with points of interest either within the space or close to it (note: on some sites, such as playing fields and sports pitches, it will be necessary not to compromise the main use of the site). In some locations, it may be necessary to provide tactile clues to alert people with limited vision to trip hazards or changes in level.
- Clear and uncomplicated written information, signage and way-marking, with good colour contrast and

simple lettering in an appropriate point size. Written information should include directions to points of interest or local community facilities (eg schools, shops, sports facilities) with approximate walking times and signs requiring dogs to be kept under control and fouling disposed of to “pooper” bins

- Easy to use latches and gates, if required

Wherever possible, greenspace designers should consult local disabled groups over the design of spaces and facilities.

Management and Maintenance

A superbly designed but badly managed or maintained space is probably of less value to a local community than a poorly designed but superbly managed and maintained one. The key management and maintenance requirements are that:

- Area should be kept clean with litter bins emptied regularly and no dangerous litter such as broken glass left unattended
- There should be at most only limited evidence of vandalism or graffiti coupled with rapid and effective removal
- There should be very little or no evidence of dog fouling, with pooper bins” available at various points, plus notices relating to the avoidance of dog fouling. Pooper bins must also be clearly identifiable and separate from litter bins – for example, a different colour and clearly marked.
- There should be no or very little evidence of flytipping and rapid, effective removal of tipped material
- All paths should be kept clear of debris with surfaces in good condition and repaired
- All facilities should be in clean, safe and usable condition
- Lighting should be adequately maintained and working
- Grounds maintenance standards should be consistently high and demonstrate clearly that spaces are well maintained
- Grassed areas to have a low preponderance of broad leaved weeds; they must be cut to an even length and if clippings are left in place after cutting they must be short so as not to have a detrimental impact on the

- appearance of the area
- Horticultural areas and flower/shrub beds weed free and ideally mulched
- Flowering plants dead headed and pruned as necessary
- Woodland areas maintained in accordance with an approved management plan

MFGS: Amenity Greenspace

Definition

- Informal greenspaces in and around housing areas and village greens

Accessibility Standard

Walking 5 minutes/300 m

Quantity Standard

There are no specific quantity standards for amenity greenspace; instead, they are subsumed into general standards for multi-functional greenspace, covering amenity greenspaces, natural greenspaces and parks and gardens, of:

Rural areas of the Vale	6.5 sq m per person
Urban areas of the Vale	13 sq m per person

For the purposes of this standard, the Council defines the urban areas of the Vale as Abingdon, **Cumnor**, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage. It will determine the most appropriate mix of amenity greenspace, natural greenspace and parks and gardens in the context of specific development proposals.

Minimum Size

- 1,000 sq m (0.1 hectare)

General Characteristics

- part of a network of greenspaces within residential or other areas which link to major walking and cycling routes and bus stops
- Located away from sources of potential danger to unaccompanied children such as roads
- Designed to create a sense of place and provide a

- setting for adjoining buildings
- Clear definition between public and semi-private areas for residents and private spaces (eg domestic gardens)
- Views out of or across the space, ideally to local landmarks
- Designed and constructed in such a way as to ensure that the space does not become waterlogged after normal levels of rainfall this may require field drains or field drains plus soil amelioration

Planting and biodiversity

- Good balance of mown grassed areas, in varying widths or sizes (large enough for informal recreation such as kickabouts or mini-soccer where appropriate) and mixed indigenous and ornamental species and ages of trees or shrubs, but with a predominantly open character
- Range of habitat types eg woodland, ponds, grasslands, hedgerows
- Buffer or shelter planting as necessary

Facilities and Features

- Should incorporate informal provision for children and young people (eg spaces for a “kickabout”, quiet places to meet with informal seating and natural play features such as boulders, logs and hollows)
- Adequate litter bins
- May incorporate public art or heritage features (eg statues)
- Seats, in both sunny and shaded areas
- Adequate safety measures adjacent to potentially dangerous areas of water (eg rivers, canals)
- Path lighting where appropriate

MFGS: Natural Greenspace

Definition

- Publicly accessible natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces – including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (eg downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (eg cliffs, quarries and pits)

Accessibility Standard

Walking 15 minutes/900 m

Quantity Standard

There are no specific quantity standards for natural greenspace; instead, they are subsumed into general standards for multi-functional greenspace, covering amenity greenspaces, natural greenspaces and parks and gardens, of:

Rural areas of the Vale	6.5 sq m per person
Urban areas of the Vale	13 sq m per person

For the purposes of this standard, the Council defines the urban areas of the Vale as Abingdon, **Cumnor**, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage. It will determine the most appropriate mix of amenity greenspace, natural greenspace and parks and gardens in the context of specific development proposals.

Minimum Size

- 1,000 sq m (0.1 ha)

General Characteristics

- Naturalistic appearance which incorporates an appropriate range of wildlife habitats

Accessibility

- Entrances or access points and internal paths linked to rights of way, bridlepaths, quiet lanes and cycling routes and water courses to create wildlife corridors and a network of greenspaces

Planting and Biodiversity

- Good mix of native species and habitats, depending on site characteristics
- Wildlife protection areas
- Clearings or gaps in tree crowns to allow light penetration to woodland floor, where appropriate
- Well developed shrub, field and ground layers and wide, species rich edge, where appropriate

- The promotion of nature conservation within or adjacent to Oxfordshire County Council’s Conservation Target Areas

Facilities and Features

- Clear and coherent signage to and throughout the site as appropriate
- Built heritage structures and natural features conserved
- Interpretation of flora and fauna as appropriate
- Litter bins and seats at key points
- Signs requiring dogs to be kept under control and fouling disposed of to “pooper” bins
- Adequate safety measures adjacent to areas of water (will depend on size, depth and current, if any)
- “Way marked” routes, where appropriate

Management and Maintenance

- Managed primarily for wildlife and nature conservation

MFGS: Parks and Gardens

Definition

- Urban and country parks and formal gardens

Accessibility Standard

Walking 15 minutes/900 m

Cycling 15 minutes/2250 m

Driving 15 minutes/5625 m

As parks and gardens should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard, and therefore the standard used in the Council’s Development Control Model, relates to walking. The cycling and driving accessibility standards will apply in the rural areas of the District where it would not be sensible to have a park or garden within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

There are no specific quantity standards for parks and gardens; instead, they are subsumed into general

standards for multi-functional greenspace, covering amenity greenspaces, natural greenspaces and parks and gardens, of:

Rural areas of the Vale	6.5 sq m per person
Urban areas of the Vale	13 sq m per person

For the purposes of this standard, the Council defines the urban areas of the Vale as Abingdon, Cumnor, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage. It will determine the most appropriate mix of amenity greenspace, natural greenspace and parks and gardens in the context of specific development proposals.

Minimum Size

- 5,000 sq m (0.5 hectare)

General Characteristics

- Well defined boundaries or perimeter, preferably enclosed with railings or walls
- A welcoming entrance with well presented information on the park and clear points of interest to draw visitors in
- Range of natural and man-made structures of heritage features such as ponds, statues, buildings and ornamental railings
- Reasonable privacy for the residents of nearby dwellings

Planting and Biodiversity

- Diverse species of both flowering and non-flowering trees, of various ages, including native species; also shrubs and plants providing a range of habitats
- Hedgerows, where present, reasonably dense, thick and bushy so as to provide habitats
- Some areas of dense planting, difficult for people to penetrate and in areas where they will not provide hiding places, but providing habitats for small animals and birds

Facilities and Features

- Facilities and features such as water features, public

- art, bandstands, play facilities, sports facilities and cafes which will attract users (where appropriate)
- Good views into, across and out of the park so that each visitor is providing a form of informal surveillance for other users
- Informative interpretation signs or other material relating to natural features (eg geology, land form); heritage features (eg statues, historic/listed buildings, bandstands); wildlife (eg details of the main birds and animals to be seen in the park); landscaping (eg information on trees and other planting and especially horticulture areas)

Other Public Spaces: Green Corridors

Definition

- Pedestrian and cycling routes through urban areas, including river and canal banks and cycleways, which are separated from motor traffic and link residential areas to town or village centres and community facilities such as schools, play areas, community centres and sports facilities.

Accessibility Standard

No standard required

Quantity Standard

No standard; green corridors will be created on an opportunistic basis which makes as much use of other forms of greenspace as possible

Minimum Size

- There is no minimum size, but corridors should generally be not less than 500 m (0.5 km) long

General Characteristics

- Clear signposted links to the wider network of cycling and pedestrian routes where appropriate in order to integrate developments with their surroundings and, where possible, public rights of way
- Where possible, extending public rights of way and access to the countryside for informal recreation. (Note: any measures relating to public rights of way

must be agreed with the Countryside Service of Oxfordshire County Council)

- Cycling routes to be at least 3 m wide and constructed to adoptable standard as specified by Oxfordshire County Council
- Other surfaced paths to be at least 2 m wide
- Surface treatments, landscaping and infrastructure items (eg gates, signage, information and lighting) to be appropriate to the use of the paths and character of the local area
- Welcoming and apparently safe with no signs of litter, graffiti or damaged vegetation
- Adequate litter bin and “pooper” bin provision, with bins located at points where they can easily be accessed for emptying from the road system
- Freedom from flooding so that paths are not susceptible to water damage or become icy in winter where possible

Accessibility

- Where possible all paths to be suitable for wheelchair users throughout their length with both visual and tactile clues to alert users to changes in direction
- All routes through developments to be based on historical routes or existing desire lines and use landscape features as much as possible
- Appropriate safety features adjacent to areas of water (eg life buoys, warning notices)
- Appropriate safety measures adjacent to or at crossings of rail lines or busy roads
- Good sightlines along the route so that users can see potential danger well ahead

Planting and Biodiversity

- Good balance and variety of plants and shrubs, including both flowering and non-flowering species to provide year-round colour and interest
- Range of habitat types

Facilities and Features

- Signposting to places of interest or destinations (eg shops, leisure facilities, schools)
- Adequate street lighting where appropriate

**Other Public Spaces:
Civic Spaces**

Definition

- Town centre squares, pedestrian streets and other hard surfaced areas designed primarily for pedestrians

Accessibility Standard

No standard required

Quantity Standard

No standard; civic spaces will result from the design of town centre areas

Minimum Size

- No minimum size

General Characteristics

- Attractive spaces with a mix of hard and soft landscaping, in which pedestrians have priority over vehicles
- Design and detailing appropriate to the local context, with reasonable consistency in the choice of street furniture and signage, but used in such a way as to give each space a unique character with high quality materials appropriate to the local context
- Surrounding buildings front on to the space and contribute to its vitality both during the day and the evening
- Minimum of overhead wires and other intrusive elements

Accessibility

- Readily accessible by public transport from a wide area

Planting and Biodiversity

- Depends on the nature and location of the space but planting should consist primarily of ornamental species and be designed to enhance the space, provide shade and provide a setting for important buildings

Facilities and Features

- Effective street lighting (including the floodlighting of key adjoining civic and other buildings and decorative lighting)
- Informative and easily understood directional and other signs grouped where appropriate but without unnecessary visual “clutter”
- Pavement cafes and similar facilities to add vibrancy in good weather (if appropriate)
- Good mix of retail outlets (if appropriate)
- Active frontages to buildings
- Fountains and public art desirable
- Seats and litter bins

Activity Spaces: Allotments and Community Gardens

Definition

- Both statutory and all other allotment sites.

Accessibility Standard

Walking 10 minutes/600 m

Cycling 10 minutes/1500 m

Driving 10 minutes/3,750 m

As allotments should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard, and therefore the standard used in the Council’s Development Control Model, relates to walking. The cycling and driving accessibility standards will apply in the rural areas of the District where it would not be sensible to have one allotment site within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

3.25 sq m per person

Minimum Size

- 0.2 ha (2,000 sq m)

Note: the traditional size of allotment plots is 10 rods. One rod is 272.25 sq feet so a 10-rod plot has an area of just under 253 sq m. On many allotment sites, however, 10-rod plots have been subdivided to smaller plots. The minimum size of 0.2 ha equates approximately to eight 10-rod or sixteen 5-rod plots.

General Characteristics

- Screen planting to provide some privacy while also allowing views into and out of the site
- Clear separation between adjacent allotments
- Signage at or outside the main site entrance giving details of ownership and how to apply for an allotment; also emergency telephone numbers
- Securely fenced with lockable gates

Planting and Biodiversity

- Good mix of species in planting around and within the site
- Dense, bushy hedgerows (where present)

Facilities and features

- No allotment more than 50 m from a mains water point
- Standard lockable shed for each plot
- Toilet facilities on all sites with 20 or more plots (can be a composting toilet if mains drainage not readily available)
- At least one on-site or on-street parking space to every 4 plots

Management and Maintenance

- All facilities in clean, safe and usable condition

Activity Spaces: Formal Play Provision

Definition

- Soft and hard surfaced areas offering play opportunities for everyone regardless of ability.

Accessibility Standard

Walking 10 minutes/600 m

Quantity Standard

0.4 sq m per person

Minimum size

- 400 sq m

General Characteristics

- Sited minimum of 10 m from the nearest dwelling boundary or 30 m from the nearest door or window of the nearest dwelling, whichever is less, and to include buffer planting to screen site without compromising passive surveillance
- Separated from major vehicle movement and accessible from pedestrian routes and cycle ways
- Surfaced path to access site
- Safety surfacing for all equipment to comply with the relevant standard to EN1177, free from surface water ponding and designed to limit the need for maintenance.
- Safety surfacing around equipment for toddlers to be wet pour or similar approved. Bark, timber chips and tiled finishes will not be acceptable.
- All equipment must comply with the relevant standard to EN1176
- Dog free area fenced minimum 1 m high with minimum of two outward opening self closing pedestrian gates and 1 maintenance gate to enclose areas of grass and surfaced areas sufficient to allow informal play and ball games
- Optimum use of changes in level, textural and colour variety in materials used to stimulate senses

Facilities and Features

- Not less than 5 types of equipment to provide a variety of challenges and experiences designed for a range of ages, at least some of which should be suitable for disabled users
- Seating provision close to equipment in sun and shade
- Litter bins at entrances
- More adventurous play to be sited separately
- Signage stating name and telephone number of agency responsible for maintaining site

Planting and Biodiversity

- Good mix of “child-friendly” (ie not sharp, spiky or poisonous) plant and tree species in the vicinity
- Generous use of planting to enhance amenity, stimulate the senses of sight, sound, touch and smell

- throughout the seasons and include autumnal colour
- Shade to some areas
- Shelter in exposed conditions

Management and Maintenance

- Safety surfacing in good condition
- Play equipment (including natural “equipment” such as fallen trees) in safe and usable condition
- Seats for children or parents/carers in safe and usable condition

Activity Spaces: Multi-sport Courts

Definition

- Hard or synthetic surfaced courts intended for football, basketball, netball and roller/in-line skating; can have either controlled or open access, although the latter is more common

Accessibility Standard

Walking 15 minutes/900 m

Cycling 15 minutes/2250 m

Driving 15 minutes/5625 m

As multi-courts should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard, and therefore the standard used in the Council’s Development Control Model, relates to walking. The cycling and driving accessibility standards will apply in the rural areas of the District where it would not be sensible to have at least one multi-court within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

0.5 sq m per person

Minimum Size

- 36.5 x 18.25 m (court only)

General Characteristics

- Reasonably sheltered from the wind
- A free-draining or impervious surface laid to appropriate falls in order to shed water to soakaways

Planting and Biodiversity

- Amenity planting composed mainly of native species to improve appearance, provide shelter and reduce light pollution (where floodlit), reduce noise transfer and promote biodiversity

Facilities and Features

- Basketball hoops, if present, securely fixed with no sharp edges
- Recessed 5-a-side goals (goals should be recessed for safety reasons)
- Surrounded by a rebound surface 1.2 m high if intended for 5-a-side soccer use (note, however, that this is not desirable if the court is close to dwellings because of the noise generated by balls hitting the rebound surface)
- Ideally enclosed by netting which will prevent balls escaping from the court(s) area
- Ideally floodlit to give at least 75 lux
- Signage indicating ownership and who to inform of any maintenance requirements

Management and Maintenance

- Court surface in good condition
- Line markings, where present, in good condition
- Floodlights, where present, fully operational

Activity Spaces: Youth Facilities

Definition

- Provision for young people and designed to allow them to “hang out” and practise various sports or movement skills such as basketball, inline skating or skateboarding. Most teenage facilities include a mix of skateboard ramps, outdoor basketball hoops, shelters and other more informal areas. Ideally, they should be located close to a multi-court (see above).

Accessibility Standard

Walking 15 minutes/900 m
Cycling 15 minutes/2250 m

As youth facilities should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard, and therefore the standard used in the Council's Development Control Model, relates to walking. The cycling accessibility standard will apply in those rural areas of the District where it would not be sensible to have at least one youth facility within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

0.5 sq m per person

Minimum Size

- 1,000 sq m (0.1 hectare) excluding buffer zone

General Characteristics

- Located close, but not immediately adjacent, to a well used pedestrian route but more than 50 m from the nearest dwelling
- Area of at least 1,000 sq m, with facilities for teenagers (see definition above)
- Surrounded by a buffer zone, possibly with appropriate planting, between the facility and nearest dwellings
- Suitable safety surfacing beneath and around play equipment
- Accessible to children or adults with disabilities
- Effective drainage of all surfaces

Planting and Biodiversity

- Tough, but not prickly landscaping in the immediate vicinity of the area

Facilities and Features

- Mix of facilities such as skateboard/BMX ramps, basketball goals, teenage shelters
- Casual seating
- Low level lighting with both light and dark areas as appropriate
- Adequate provision of litter bins

Management and Maintenance

Outdoor Sports Facilities: Artificial Turf Pitches

- Surfaces and structures in good condition and repaired as necessary
- Free from litter and dangerous materials eg broken glass

Definition

- Artificial turf pitches for football, hockey and rugby/rugby training

Accessibility Standard

Driving 15 minutes/5,625 m

While it will be desirable for many users of ATPs to walk or cycle to them, they serve a wide area and therefore a driving distance threshold is appropriate.

Quantity Standard

0.2 sq m per person

Minimum Size

- 1 pitch with changing accommodation and parking

General Characteristics

- As for grass sports pitches (see below)

Accessibility

As for grass sports pitches (see below), plus:

- Hard surfaced path between changing pavilion and entrance(s) to artificial turf pitch(es)

Planting and Biodiversity

As for grass sports pitches, plus:

- No broad leaved trees within 10 m or any pitch perimeter line marking

Facilities and Features

Changing pavilions

- As for grass sports pitches

Pitches, practice areas and other facilities

As for grass sports pitches, plus:

- Artificial surfaces to comply with relevant governing body requirements and BS 7044: Artificial Sports Surfaces
- All artificial turf pitches (and any safety surround areas) to be fully enclosed within lockable chain link, weldmesh or other see-through fence capable of withstanding ball impacts at least 3.0 m high along the sides of the pitch and 5 m high at the ends of the pitch
- Third generation artificial turf pitches for football to comply with the International Artificial Turf Standard published by the Federation Internationale de Football

Management and Maintenance

As for grass sports pitches

Outdoor Sports Facilities: Bowling Greens

Definition

- Lawn bowls green meeting appropriate governing body standards

Accessibility Standard

Walking 15 minutes/900m

Driving 15 minutes/5625 m

As bowling greens should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard, and therefore the standard used in the Council's Development Control Model, relates to walking. The driving accessibility standards will apply in the rural areas of the District where it would not be sensible to have at least one green within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

0.1 sq m per person

Minimum Size

- 6 rinks plus banks and ditches, a pathway at least 2 m wide all round the green and a pavilion. This requires a site of not less than approximately 41 x 47 m, ie approximately 1,900 sq m (0.19 hectare).

General Characteristics

- Green, banks and ditches to meet relevant governing body standards

Accessibility

- Hard surfaced path all round the green

Planting and Biodiversity

- Shelter planting/screening to provide summer time shelter from wind, privacy for bowlers and support biodiversity
- No broad-leaved trees overhanging the green

Facilities and Features

- Greens to have at least six rinks (to allow play along and across the green to even out wear)
- Changing pavilion with at least male and female changing rooms and social area

Management and Maintenance

- Grass sward kept short and clear of weeds

Outdoor Sports Facilities: Grass Sports Pitches

Definition

- Pitches for football (all codes), cricket, hockey, rugby (all codes)

Accessibility Standard

Walking 15 minutes/900 m

Driving 15 minutes/5625 m

As pitches should be within walking distance of most

potential casual users, the primary accessibility standard, and therefore the standard used in the Council's Development Control Model, relates to walking. However, the driving standard will apply in the rural areas of the District where it would not be sensible to have at least one pitch within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

16 sq m per person

Minimum Size

- Two pitches with changing accommodation and parking in Abingdon, Cumnor, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage; one pitch with changing accommodation in all other areas

General Characteristics

- External lighting in car parking areas
- External lighting on pavilions with PIR detectors
- Signs indicating that no dogs must at any time be allowed on the pitches
- Shade trees in car parking areas
- Adequately separated from adjoining residential properties
- Adequate measures in place to control light spill from floodlighting to adjoining properties and related land

Accessibility

- Hard surfaced paths following desire lines from parking areas to changing facilities
- Path system appropriate to the circulation needs of users of the site, with wide, hard surfaces in heavily trafficked areas (for example, at the exit from changing rooms)

Planting and Biodiversity

- Strong structure planting around the perimeter of the site using native species (designed as buffer planting to reduce wind on pitches and noise or light spill as appropriate to the site and adjoining properties or

- roads and also to promote biodiversity)
- Internal structure planting where appropriate
- Amenity or naturalistic landscaping in the vicinity of buildings and car parking

Facilities and Features

Changing pavilions

- Changing rooms (with the number of rooms appropriate to the number of pitches or other facilities on site) consisting of changing spaces, showers and drying area, plus separate changing for match officials where appropriate
- Capable of simultaneous male and female team and/or officials' use, where appropriate
- First aid room (essential only for pitch sports and athletics)
- Space for refreshments with kitchen
- No rooflights in flat roofs on single storey buildings
- Adequate secure maintenance equipment storage
- Lockable security shutters on all pavilion doors and windows
- Passive surveillance from nearby properties

Pitches, practice areas and other facilities

- Pitch orientation generally between 35 degrees west and 20 degrees east of N-S wherever possible
- Playing facilities meeting relevant governing body requirements in terms of length, width, even-ness of surface, boundary distances (cricket) and side clearances or safety margins
- Floodlighting to relevant governing body requirements for the standard of play
- No end to end slope on football, hockey, lacrosse or rugby or other winter season pitches greater than 1:40 (1:80 preferable); no side to side slope greater than 1:40 (1:60 preferable)
- Well drained pitch surfaces
- Winter sports grass pitches to have pipe drains plus sand slits where necessary (note: sand slits to be renewed every 10 years)

Management and Maintenance

- Grass lengths appropriate to sport with full grass cover on grass pitches
- Posts and goals safe and free from rust or sharp edges, with hooks for nets where appropriate
- Line markings straight and easily seen
- Surface repairs carried out quickly and effectively
- Surround netting and entrance gates to artificially surfaced areas in good condition
- Floodlights in full working order
- Information on site ownership and the facilities available at the site entrance
- Contact details for emergencies at any pavilion

Outdoor Sports Facilities: Tennis Courts

Definition

- Tennis courts, usually with a hard or synthetic surface, and with or without floodlighting

Accessibility Standard

Walking 15 minutes/900m

Driving 15 minutes/5625 m

As tennis courts should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard, and therefore the standard used in the Council's Development Control Model, relates to walking. The cycling and driving accessibility standards will apply in the rural areas of the District where it would not be sensible to have at least one court within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

0.8 sq m per person

Minimum size

- 36.5 x 18.25 m (court and safety margins) plus surround

General Characteristics

- Reasonably sheltered from the wind
- A free-draining or impervious surface laid to appropriate falls to shed water to soakaways
- Surrounded by netting which prevents balls escaping

- from the court(s) area
- Oriented within 30 degrees of north–south

Planting and Biodiversity

- Amenity planting composed mainly of native species to improve appearance, provide shelter, reduce noise transfer and promote biodiversity

Facilities and Features

- Posts and tennis nets
- Clearly marked courts with adequate safety surrounds
- Floodlighting (if present) to meet governing body requirements

Management and Maintenance

- Court(s) surface, posts and nets, surround netting and floodlighting (if present) in good condition

Indoor Sports Halls and Swimming Pools

Definition

- Large scale indoor sports facilities operated by the public, commercial or voluntary sectors

Accessibility Standard

Driving 15 minutes/5625 m

While it will be desirable for many users of indoor sports facilities to walk or cycle to them, they serve a wide area and therefore a driving distance threshold is appropriate.

Quantity Standard

Sports halls, other indoor “dry” sports facilities and related ancillary accommodation: 0.08 sq m of building per person

Indoor swimming pools and related ancillary accommodation: 0.06 sq m of pool building per person

Minimum Size

- Sports halls: 4 badminton court hall plus changing
- Pools: 25 m x 4 lanes (8.5 m total width) plus changing

General Characteristics

- External lighting, with movement or passive infra-red (PIR) detectors
- Entrance clearly identifiable from the car park
- No landscaping in which potential attackers could hide

Accessibility

- Accessible by public transport: nearest bus stop within 250 m of entrance/access points
- Adequate parking for the range of facilities available, with a tarmac surface in good repair and at least two designated disabled spaces close to the main entrance
- Cycle parking

Planting and Biodiversity

- Attractive landscaping to the site and building, incorporating native species where possible

Facilities and Features

Internal Support Areas

- Reception desk immediately inside main entrance and clearly visible
- Disabled toilets
- Baby changing facility in male and female changing areas or toilets
- General accessibility for people with disabilities – see separate checklist
- Décor and finishes in good condition
- Clear route from reception to changing and activity areas

Activity Areas

- Meeting appropriate governing body or Sport England standards
- Adequate storage, accessed from activity areas
- Mat storage, where required, physically separate and vented to outside air
- Décor and finishes in good condition

Changing Areas

- Separate male and female changing (although mixed sex villages desirable for pools)
- Adequate locker provision
- Adequate shower and toilet provision
- Décor and finishes in good condition

Management and Maintenance

- Professionally managed

Useful Information

- CABE Space (undated), *A Guide to Producing Park and Green Space Management Plans*
- CABE Space (undated), *Green Flag Award Winners (various years)*
- Children's Play Council (2002), *More than Swings and Roundabouts: Planning for outdoor play*
- DETR/CABE (2000), *By Design - Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice*
- DTLR (2002), *Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Open Spaces* (report on research undertaken by the University of Sheffield for the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce)
- English Nature (1995), *Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities* (Research Report 153)
- English Nature (2002), *Providing Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities*
- Kit Campbell and Geraint John (ed, 1995), *Handbook of Sports and Recreation Building Design*, Volumes 1, 2 and 3
- National Playing Fields Association (2001), *The Six Acre Standard*
- Sport England (various dates), *Lottery Guidance Notes*
- Sport England (various dates), *Planning Bulletins*