



Outdoor Playing Space Provision



Supplementary Planning Guidance



Supplementary Planning Guidance
Approved by Council
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1. INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1. The Eastbourne Borough Plan will guide the development of the town to 2006. Among its objectives is the goal of ensuring that leisure and recreation facilities meet local needs, and to conserve and protect open spaces, which make a contribution to Eastbourne's townscape. Policies developed from these aims require open space to be provided along with new housing development to ensure future needs are met, and the replacement of significant areas of open space if any are used for development. These policies recognise that provision need not always be made on the development site, and contributions can be collected together from several small developments to make a larger scale open space provision elsewhere in the Borough.
- 1.2. This document gives information on how payments will be sought. It expands on policies in the Conservation and Townscape, and Leisure, chapters in the Borough Plan. It should therefore be considered as supplementary planning guidance and is an important addition to the Borough Plan.

Definitions

- 1.3. The National Playing Field Association (NPFA) defines outdoor playing space as "space which is available for sport, active recreation or childrens play, which is of a suitable size and nature for its intended purpose, and safely accessible and available to the general public". This is not the same as open space, although it is an important component of it. This definition excludes, for example, verges, woodlands, commons and ornamental parks. Even public gardens are excluded except for explicit sport and play areas laid out within them. These areas do constitute some of the Primary and Secondary Open Spaces identified in the Borough Plan as having significance to Eastbourne's townscape but they do not lie within the remit of this supplementary planning guidance. Indoor sports and leisure centres are also excluded.
- 1.4. The NPFA also excludes from the definition of playing space water used for recreation, except where it forms a play feature of an outdoor play area, such as a paddling pool. This could include watercourses and ditches running through a play area, but would not include shallow pools or channels forming part of ornamental gardens, where children would not be expected to play. Under this definition, the marina areas of Sovereign Harbour would also not be included, as these are commercial areas for boats and children would not be encouraged to play there. It is considered that any proposed water space within the housing areas at Sovereign Harbour should also be excluded; water recreation must be regarded as additional to, but not a substitute for, the landbased sports pitches and play areas required as a minimum standard.
- 1.5. Similarly, much of the open space around housing developments is too small or too close to windows to be formally identified as playing space, although it contributes to the general amenity of the development. Private gardens can contribute as private play areas but are also not included as part of open playing space standard, because they are not available to the general public. They cannot substitute for publicly available play space, because there is evidence that even children who have access to larger gardens and transport, still play outdoors close to home.

Consultation

- 1.6. This document is not a formal part of the Borough Plan, and therefore will not, like the Borough Plan, become "adopted" (approved for use by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport & The Regions). It is an informal policy document offering detailed advice on the policies in the Borough Plan. Nevertheless it has been approved by the Council, which will normally make its decisions in accordance with the requirements of this document.
- 1.7. The Council published a draft for consultation, to give housebuilders and bodies concerned with open space the opportunity to comment on 'its contents. The comments received were taken into account when producing this final version.

The Future

- 1.8. The Open Space Commuted Payments Scheme will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that the scheme is effective.

Eastbourne Rugby Club

2. POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1. Government guidance published in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17, Sport and Recreation, stresses that sport and recreation are important components of civilised life, and it is the Government's policy to promote the development of sport and recreation in the widest sense. Paragraph 20 suggests it may be appropriate for local authorities to enter into planning obligations to secure the provision of public open space; and this can include the provision of onsite and off-site recreational facilities related to the development; a contribution to nearby provision in the case of small developments; or alternative provision when recreational land or space is lost. Local plan policies should give a clear indication of the types of development for which agreement of this kind may be appropriate.
- 2.2. The deposit draft of the East Sussex Structure Plan (1996) supports proposals for new sports facilities (policy LT 1 1) and resists the loss of existing facilities (policy LT 13).
- 2.3. The Eastbourne Borough Plan has the following policies in Chapter 5, Conservation and Townscape, relating to open space:

POLICY CT5: PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF PRIMARY OPEN SPACE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

POLICY CT6: PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF SECONDARY OPEN SPACE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. EXCEPTIONALLY, HOWEVER, WHERE PERMISSION IS GRANTED FOR A DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF OPEN SPACE, COMPENSATORY PROVISION OR A CONTRIBUTION TO OTHER OFF-SITE PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE WILL BE SOUGHT.

- 2.4. In Chapter 10, Leisure, there are policies for the retention of playing fields, and provision of new open space, with particular specifications for playing fields and children's play space.

POLICY LE1: THE COUNCIL WILL MAINTAIN THE PROVISION OF PLAYING FIELDS AT A MINIMUM OF 1.21 HA (3.0 ACRES) PER 1,000 POPULATION.

POLICY LE2: THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF 15 OR MORE DWELLINGS TO CONTAIN OPEN SPACE IN ORDER TO MEET THE NEEDS GENERATED BY THE NEW DEVELOPMENT, AT A LEVEL WHICH WOULD SATISFY THE STANDARDS (SET OUT IN THIS DOCUMENT), TOGETHER WITH A COMMUTED SUM FOR FUTURE MAINTENANCE. IF SUCH PROVISION IS NOT FEASIBLE, THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE COST OF PROVIDING OR UPGRADING SUCH FACILITIES ELSEWHERE IN THE VICINITY.

POLICY LE3: PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF PLAYING FIELDS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. EXCEPTIONALLY, WHERE PERMISSION IS GRANTED FOR A DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF PLAYING FIELDS, COMPENSATORY PROVISION OR A CONTRIBUTION TO OTHER OFF-SITE PROVISION OF PLAYING FIELDS OR INTENSIVE USE FACILITIES WILL BE SOUGHT.

- 2.5. The policies have been available for use in development control since October 1993. In the case of an outline planning application, the open space requirements must be secured at the same time as the grant of the outline consent. These policies cannot Justify refusal or contributions at reserved matters stage.
- 2.6. There are no standards identified in the Borough Plan at present for a total "open space of all kinds" provision, but this may be developed in later reviews.

Hampden Park Play Area

3. THE EASTBOURNE STANDARD

- 3.1. Eastbourne Borough Council's standard is made up from part of the National Playing Fields Association's minimum standard for outdoor playing space requirements and part of the Sports Council's standards. These are both based on acreage per thousand population, So the number of people per dwelling type is the third factor in the calculation.

The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) Standard:

- 3.2. The full NPFA minimum standard for outdoor playing space is 2.43 hectares per 1000 population. This is commonly referred to as the "Six Acre Standard" (NPFA "The Six Acre Standard - Minimum Standards for Outdoor Play Space. 1992), It is comprised of.
- a. Youth and Adult Use: Pitches, greens, courts and other facilities such as athletics tracks, putting greens and training areas in the ownership of local government; similar facilities within the educational, voluntary, private, industrial and commercial sectors which are available for public use. This amounts to 1.6 - 1.8 ha (4 - 4.5 acres) per 1000 population.
 - b. Children's Use: The NPFA recommend that the amount of playing space for children is 0.6 - 0.8 ha (1.5 - 2 acres) per 1,000 population and advise that provision should be made through equipped childrens' playgrounds. They specify a range of provision based on walking time from a child's house, and suggest that a local equipped area for play (LEAP) should be provided for all developments in excess of 50 dwellings. The categories of recommended play area are set out on Table A.

Kings Drive Playing Field

TABLE A: NPFA CATEGORIES OF PLAY AREA

Facility	Walking Time	Walking Distance	Straight Line Distance	Minimum Size		Nearest House Property Boundary	Character
Local Area for Play	1 min	100m	60m	100m ²	400m ² 0.04ha	5m from activity zone	small, low-key games area. (may include "demonstrative play features")
Local Equipped Area for Play	5 min	400m	240m	400m ²	3600m ² 0.36ha	20m from activity zone	About 5 types of equipment and small games area
Neighbour Equipped Area for Play	15 min	1000m	600m	1000m ²	8500m ² 0.85 ha	30m from activity zone	about 8 types of equipment. Kickabout and cycle play opportunities

3.3. A buffer zone is that area surrounding the activity zone (the area specifically dedicated for children to use for play). It is designated to discourage children from using it for actual play purposes, and is provided solely to protect adjacent neighbourhoods from potential disturbance through the existence of the play facility. The area of the buffer zone is therefore additional to the standard for the actual play area and is required provision.

3.4. The NPFA maintain that the recommended levels of provision are Justified, and should be regarded as the very basic level of provision, which should be exceeded wherever possible. They recommend:

- a. All planning authorities should adopt the standard in statutory development and local plans and non-statutory policy documents.
- b. The minimum standard for children's use should be met at all times and in all circumstances.
- c. The minimum standard for youth and adult use should be met for all new developments.
- d. Where for reasons of land scarcity the minimum standard for youth and adult use cannot be met in any given plan period, the planning authority should adopt the standard as a target, setting an intermediary standard for achievement in that period.
- e. Appropriate policies should be adopted to safeguard the existing recreational land bank for outdoor playing fields and play spaces.

The Sports Council Standard:

- 3.5. A minimum of 1.21 hectares (3 acres) per 1000 persons for organised competitive team games playing pitches, which excludes athletics, tennis and bowls. This is from its publication "Sport in the Community - The Next Ten Years" (1982).

Population:

- 3.6. To calculate the population of a given housing development the Council will use the size and number of dwellings in the scheme using the occupancy rates set out below.

Occupancy of dwellings:

1 bedroom dwellings	1 person
2 bedroom dwellings	2 persons
3 bedroom dwellings	3 persons
4 or more bedroom dwellings	4 persons

It is considered more appropriate to base the potential occupancy of each dwelling on the number of bedrooms rather than on an average household size. The problem with applying a single occupancy rate to all types of housing is that it fails to distinguish between the sizes of dwellings so that, for example, the open space requirements for a development of 50 one-bedroom flats would equal that of a development for 50 five-bedroom houses. For Eastbourne, with its high proportion of elderly people it is assumed that many one-bedroom dwellings will only be occupied by one person but that as dwellings increase in size, so will occupancy.

- 3.7. Eastbourne's standard for Outdoor Playspace is:

A total of 4.5 - 5.0 acres to be provided for each 1000 people in the Borough, (and pro rata for lesser numbers) made up of the following:

(1) Sports fields/pitches for youth and adult use 1.21 ha (3 acres)per 1000 people based on the Sports Council recommended standard.

(2) Children's playspace 0.6 - 0.8 ha (1.5 - 2 acres)per 1000 people based on the NPFA recommended standard,

Appendix 1 sets out the open space requirement for Eastbourne based upon this standard.

4. PROVIDING THE OUTDOOR PLAYSPACE

- 4.1. It is accepted that new housing developments would not normally provide sports fields and pitches as part of the site. Therefore sports fields and pitches are likely to be the subject of commuted payments and provided off-site. However for a number of reasons children's playspace should normally be provided within the housing development, although commuted sums can be used for some or all aspects of this provision, including for playground maintenance.
- 4.2. While children's play space needs to be close to homes, other sports facilities have a wider catchment area. Commuted sums may therefore be used to provide playing fields anywhere within the Borough boundary, although attempts will be made to achieve new playing fields as close as possible to the development, especially where there is an acknowledged lack of playing space in that vicinity.

Kingsmere Play Area

5. DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR PLAY FACILITIES

- 5.1. Using the Eastbourne Standard the following guidelines will be applicable to the on-site provision of facilities for children's play. These guidelines seek provision of children's playspace towards the upper - end of the NPFA standard (0.8 hectares per thousand population) as provision in the Borough is significantly below the level that would be anticipated for a town of its size. In 199 1 there was (excluding buffer zones) less than 5.0 hectares of children's playgrounds against a NPFA target of 16-25 hectares (also excluding allowance for buffer zones). (see Appendix 1).

Bedrooms created in the development	Playspace Provision
Under 50 bedrooms	1 LAP
50 - 99	2 LAPs
100 - 149	3 LAPs
150 - 199	4 LAPs
200 - 249	5 LAPs
250 - 300	6 LAPs
300 - 349	7 LAPs
400 - 449	8 LAPs
450 - 499	1 LEAP
500 - 549	1 LEAP and 1 LAP
550 - 599	1 LEAP and 2 LAPs
600 - 649	1 LEAP and 3 LAPs
additional provision to be calculated from the above figures	

- 5.2. In addition all developments in excess of 50 dwellings will be expected to provide some element of play equipment, and the design of the play areas should take account of the need to accommodate this equipment. One possible design solution may be to combine two or more LAPs to provide a larger area. This additional provision is required to comply in part with the NPFA requirement that there should be a LEAP for every 50 dwellings, although full provision at this level is not considered necessary as the Borough considers bedspaces rather than dwelling units a more reasonable guide to provision.

6. THE COMMUTED PAYMENT SCHEME

- 6.1. Where facilities cannot be provided the Eastbourne Standard needs to be translated into monetary terms. Not all play spaces or playing fields cost the same - individual costs will depend on ground conditions, the level of work needed to bring land up to a defined standard of surface, the level of equipment to be provided, the length of fencing, and other factors. However it is possible to standardise to some extent by defining certain minimum requirements and basing land values on those of agricultural land, since this will normally be the appropriate value for land in use for outdoor play facilities.
- 6.2. The payment needed will vary between the type of open space required, and can be split into the elements of land acquisition, land treatment, purchase of equipment, fencing/boundary treatment, landscaping, and maintenance. Tables B and C below set out the likely indicative costs for providing both playing fields and children's playspaces as at January 1999. These costs are derived from the Council's ground maintenance contract and from appropriate manufacturer's catalogues, and are believed to be a reasonable representation. The costs will be updated on an annual basis on 1 April based on the retail price index.

Seaside Recreation Ground

TABLE B: INDICATIVE COSTS FOR PROVIDING SPORTS FIELDS 1 PITCHES FOR YOUTH AND ADULT USE.

Requirement 1.21 ha (3 acres) per 1000 population.

A) Land purchase costs	variable - as a minimum, agricultural grazing land is approximately £4,000 per hectare
B) Upgrading/levelling/seeding	£50 per hectare approximately for seeding with a sports-use grass, (materials only). Upgrading and levelling costs will be site dependent but are likely to be considerably more than the cost of seeding.
C) Fencing	£30 per metre length of boundary for 3 metre high chain link fence for tennis and basketball, lower for other sports
D) Landscaping	£ 10 per square metre for "soft" landscaping - hedges need a minimum width of 1 metre, but a buffer strip should be 5- 15 metres wide. This figure does not include "hard" landscaping such as part vehicle access for maintenance which would be at additional cost.
E) Changing rooms	£ 110,000 for a pair of home and visitors separate changing and shower facilities, and for officials
F) Car and cycle parking	£ 1,000 per space for car parking, but it will depend on local circumstances. £ 130 per lockable bike rack
G) Off-site highway works	In appropriate circumstances a financial contribution may be required for any necessary highway work.
H) A commuted sum to cover maintenance for a 15 year period, if the developer is conveying land to the Council	£ 10, 118 per pitch, for mowing and white lining, plus £25,848 per changing room for running costs including cleaning and staffing, plus £ 10 per square metre of hedging

6.3. Allowance can be made for artificial turf pitches, each being the equivalent of two natural grass pitches, if the developer wishes to provide these. The Sports Council makes this allowance in assessing pitch provision, but the allowance is no higher than 1:2

6.4. Changing rooms and car parking are considered to be essential features for any area with several pitches, especially for off-site provision, where people would be expected to travel for some distance across town.

TABLE C: INDICATIVE COSTS FOR PROVIDING CHILDREN'S PLAYSPACE.

Requirement 0.6 - 0.8 ha (1.5 - 2 acres) per 1000 population.

A) Land purchase costs	Variable - as a minimum, agricultural grazing land is approximately £4,000 per hectare.
B) Upgrading/levelling/seeding	Seeding £30 per hectare (materials only). Upgrading and levelling costs will be site dependent but are likely to be less expensive than for sports fields, because the angle of slope is less crucial, and it is likely to be for smaller areas.
C) Purchase of play equipment	LAP - £9, 920 to £13,010 LEAP - £24, 220 to £26, 761 NEAP - £48,694 to £57,534
D) Installation of play equipment	25% of the cost of equipment.
E) Safety surfacing	£50-60 per square metre - the area will depend on the type of equipment.
F) Fencing	£35-45 per metre length of boundary for 1 metre high galvanised flat-top or bar-top fencing, plus self-closing spring loaded gates at about £300-£400 each.
G) Landscaping	£ 10 per square metre for "soft" landscaping - hedges need a minimum width of 1 metre, but a buffer strip would be 5 - 15 metres wide. This does not include "hard" landscaping such as paths and vehicle access for maintenance which would be at additional cost.
H) Off-site highway works	In appropriate circumstances a financial contribution may be required for any necessary highway work.
I) A commuted sum to cover maintenance for a 15 year period, if the developer is conveying land to the council	£8,256 for maintenance of equipped area, plus £62,185 per hectare for maintenance of hard surfaced areas, plus £971 for grass cutting, plus £ 10 per square metre for maintenance of hedging.

- 6.5. The figures given in these examples are for guidance only - each site from which a commuted sum is expected will need careful consideration. If there is an identified site where the commuted sum will be applied, costs can be calculated in more detail, but this will often not be possible within the timescale of dealing with a planning application.
- 6.6. Commuted payments for playing fields and children's play facilities would be controlled via a Section 106 Agreement. This would normally include a time for payment (usually on commencement of the development), and also the time frame of spending and the purpose, although not necessarily specified to an individual location. The developer would be expected to pay, via the legal agreement, for the legal costs of transferring land to the Council.
- 6.7. The Leisure Services Strategy, of the Tourism, Leisure and Amenities Group of the the Borough Council, will be used to guide commuted sums to provide new outdoor provision of playing fields and play space. Commuted sums will not be used for indoor facilities as these are not a substitute for outdoor provision. This approach is consistent with the view of the NPFA.

APPENDIX 1: FUTURE OPEN SPACE NEEDS

	1991			2001	2006
Population (1)	83,541			92,178	94,800
	Requirement ha.	Exg. provision ha.	Shortfall ha.	Requirement ha.	Requirement ha.
Playing Fields for youth /adult use (2)	101.08	96.4	-4.68	111.54	114.71
Children's Playgrounds (3)	50.12 to 66.83	23.8	- 26.32 to - 43.03	55.31 to 73.74	56.88 to 75 .84

Notes:

(1) 1991 population figure, from the 1991 Census, estimates for 2001 and 2006 , provided by East Sussex County Council (April 1996).

(2) Playing Field Provision at 1.21 ha. per 1000 population, based on the Sports Council's recommendation.

(3) Children's playgrounds at 0.6 - 0.8 ha. per 1000 population, based on the National Playing Field Association's recommended standard.

APPENDIX 2: THE AREAS NEEDED FOR MORE POPULAR SPORTS AND GAMES

Description	Area in hectares	Area in acres
Athletics 6 lane track 8 lane track	1.9 2.0	4.7 5.0
Tennis courts for recreational use 1 court 2 adjacent courts 3 adjacent courts for each further adjacent court	0.06 0.12 0.18 0.05	0.17 0.30 0.44 0.12
Association football	0.82-0.90	2.0-2.22
Hockey	0.62	1.51
Netball	0.05-0.07	0.13-0.16
Rugby Union Mini-rugby and 7-a-side hockey for 2 pitches	1.26 0.50	3.1 1.24
Basketball	0.06	0.15
Lacrosse	0.65	1.60
Bowling greens flat and crown	0.14	0.35
Cricket 1 square with boundary of 46 metres 1.50 3.70		

Note: the areas allow for actual playing surfaces and marginal clearance and side movement, but not for the additional area required for the run of the ball. The areas given are for senior use.

Source: NPFA "The Six Acre Standard: Minimum Standards for Outdoor Playing Space" (1992)