



Recreational Contributions for small sites

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

FOR

**THE PROVISION OF OUTDOOR
RECREATION FACILITIES AND
OPEN SPACE –HS32 (was adopted as HS16)
(SITES UNDER 1.5 HECTARES)**

ADOPTED SEPT 2002

Revised prices April 2011



BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPG)

PROVISION OF OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACE

FOREWORD

Supplementary Planning Guidance documents are produced by Babergh to explain in more detail the aims and objectives of the Local Plan policies and how they will be applied and implemented in practice. Their purpose is to assist those preparing applications and the Council in determining such applications.

In this case, this Supplementary Planning Guidance is published principally to:-

- Define the mechanism by which new housing developments within the District make appropriate provision for outdoor playing space, required as a direct result of meeting the needs of that development;
- Establish a comprehensive long-term framework for the development of outdoor playing space provision throughout the district;
- Highlight the importance of outdoor playing space to the well-being of individuals, and the district as a whole.

N.B This SPG relates to developments of less than 1.5 ha. For larger developments, in excess of 1.5 ha, a different policy applies which is set out in this document for information

At a glance information.

Charges per dwelling dependent upon the number of bedrooms.

Prices effective from 1 April 2011 – 31 March 2012

| Bedrooms in dwelling | | | | |
|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5+ |
| £619 | £1,238 | £2,171 | £3,096 | £3,715 |

(Up to date rates can be obtained from the Horticultural and Countryside Manager.)

Inclusions and exceptions to the above charges.

Application of the Playing Space Standard

Developments likely to be subject to playing space requirement.

- *All new dwellings built on previously undeveloped sites.*
- *Dwelling gains resulting from redevelopment.*
- *Conversions, or part conversions, creating additional independent residential units with separate facilities.*
- *Permanent permissions for mobile homes.*

Developments that are not likely to be subject to the playing space requirement or elements thereof.

- *Replacement dwellings (on a one for one basis)*
- *Extensions and annexes within the curtilage of a main property for dependent relatives.*
- *Very sheltered housing schemes, nursing homes, controlled hostel accommodation.*
- *Bedsit accommodation with shared facilities.*
- *Temporary permissions for mobile homes.*
- *Rural Exception Sites (affordable housing in villages where speculative housing would not be allowed) – Policy HS06*

1 INTRODUCTION

“Sport and recreation are important components of civilised life. Participation can help improve the individual’s health and sense of well-being....”

Extract from para.2 PPG17 Sport and Recreation

- 1.1 The District Council aims to ensure an adequate provision of play facilities to satisfy the needs of local communities.
- 1.2 The preparation of “Suffolk’s Environment ... towards sustainable development,” indicates that Babergh Council’s recreation and open space provision falls well short of national standards and does not fair well overall with other districts in Suffolk. An audit is being undertaken to identify existing provision in the district which will determine the under/over provision.
- 1.3 The Council’s cultural strategy states the authority will use the National Playing Fields Association standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population as the minimum guideline for provision of outdoor recreation facilities and open spaces. This is commonly known as "The Six Acre Standard". The Babergh Local Plan draft Alteration No. 2 provides the Council's current adopted policy to secure open space where the site area exceeds 1.5 hectares or could accommodate a certain number of dwellings. This policy is set out below:-

HS15 Proposals for residential development on a site of 1.5 hectares and above are required to provide 10% of the gross site area as public open space. This must include providing play equipment, which has been agreed in advance with the Local Planning Authority. The nature of the public open space will be expected to be:

- Usable open space in terms of its location, size and shape, with no single area being less than 0.15 hectares;
- Planned for in a positive way, that integrates the open space in the development it serves;
- Landscaped in a way that provides for visual amenity, biodiversity gain as well as areas of shade;
- Designed with the safety and the security of children in mind, including traffic calming of the access to the open space where this involves crossing a road; and
- A range of different types of open space play areas on the larger sites, to cater for different users in line with the National Playing Fields Association standards.

If open space and play equipment are to be adopted by the District Council, the developer must provide for their future maintenance. The District Council will seek to secure a Planning Obligation to make suitable financial provision for its subsequent maintenance.

- 1.3 The District Council recognises that having only a policy similar to this (HS15) has, over the years, resulted in increased cumulative pressure of use, from new infill housing developments that have not contributed to improvement or provision of any additional open space. New open space has only been secured on the larger housing sites.

- 1.4 The problems of pressure of use and a growing imbalance with the level of open space provision, together with an increasing population, need to be addressed. The Council has, therefore, adopted a new policy (HS16) that requires a financial contribution from all residential planning permissions granted, where it is not practical to incorporate an area of public open space on either the site itself, or nearby. This approach ensures that all residential developments contribute to providing for either new and/or improved public open space. This will also ensure that there is no deterioration in the overall quantity or quality of provision, which would otherwise have to be paid for through an increase in local taxation.
- 1.5 Consequently, within the Babergh Local Plan Draft Alteration No.2 the following policy was adopted in July 2001. At the time this policy was adopted the Council agreed to produce Supplementary Planning Guidance to help developers understand the intention or level of contribution needed.

HS16 Proposals for all new residential development, ranging from a single dwelling up to the development of a 1.5 hectare site, will be required to provide open space and play equipment in proportion to the number of dwellings to be built. In considering this, the criteria in HS15 above will be applied. Developers will be given the choice to either:

- Contribute financially to secure public open space with play equipment on a nearby alternative site, or enhance and improve the nearest existing provision provided by the District Council; or
- Provide 10% of the gross site area as public open space with play equipment, if an opportunity exists to combine with an established adjacent area of public open space and if this has been agreed in advance with the Local Planning Authority. If direct provision is possible, the open space will be assessed against the criteria listed in policy HS15.

If a developer cannot provide open space and play equipment or facilities on an alternative site, a financial contribution will be required, in line with the prevailing charges set by the District Council, which are based on the number of bedrooms per house.

If open space and play equipment are to be adopted by the District Council, it will seek a Planning Obligation to make suitable financial provision for its subsequent maintenance.

- 1.6 This Supplementary Planning Guidance is intended to explain the implementation of the new policy and its associated mechanisms, including the new open space funding system.

2 THE NATIONAL PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION STANDARD

- 2.1 A summary of the NPFA standard as at 2001 is attached to this document – Appendix 1. Changes and updates to the standard will automatically be applied to this policy.

3 ESTABLISHING RECREATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 Babergh has adopted the National Playing Fields Association minimum standard of 2.4ha per 1,000 population. Any new housing developments throughout the district will be expected to provide playing space *to at least the District Council's minimum standard.*

- 3.2 To be equitable and effective this standard needs to apply to all new residential developments of one or more dwellings.
- 3.3 In recognition of its essentially rural demography the Council has taken a pragmatic approach towards interpreting open space standards. A simple, fair and equitable approach has been established whereby a cost has been determined by the number of bed spaces per property.

COSTS

- Charges will be as follows:- April 2002 – March 2003
 - £465 for a 1 bedroomed dwelling
 - £930 for a 2 bedroomed dwelling
 - £1,630 for a 3 bedroomed dwelling
 - £2,325 for a 4 bedroomed dwelling
 - £2,790 for a 5 + bedroomed dwelling
- The charges will be increased each April based on the February RPI.
- An explanation of how these calculations are arrived at is attached as Appendix 2 to this Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- In any future proposed development, when assessing the likely occupancy rates the District Council will include all rooms or spares within dwellings that are capable of being used as bedrooms, once allowance has been made for the normal amount of living accommodation.
- Where an application is received in outline, and the proposed size of the development in terms of numbers and/or type of dwelling is not known the calculation of the potential population is not possible. In such cases the playing space requirements will be reserved through a planning obligation, so that it can be resolved when a detailed application is made, and the "population" of the development can be determined.

4 HOW CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE USED

- 4.1 This Council requires any contributions made under this policy to provide/improve existing open space and recreation as close to the location in which the money has been raised as is possible, and which is practical and consistent with the hierarchy of recreational need. As a guide this Council will require that the recreational needs of the smaller children, namely Local Areas for Play (LAP) , Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAP) should be located within 100, 240 and 600 metres respectively, within towns where possible, or all should be located within the parish except NEAPs which can be within an adjacent rural parish or as near to the new development as is practical. For Sports Outdoor Play Space (SOPS) which is applicable to teenagers and adults and includes facilities such as cricket, football pitches and tennis courts, it is accepted that this age group would be expected to travel further afield to access facilities. The term "local" in this context is defined as either a 10 mile or 20 minute public transport travel time. The full specification of open space and recreation provision together with guideline distances on how far the facility should be from the new development is provided in Appendix 1. There are certain exceptions where contributions will not be required and these are listed in paragraph 5.6 below.

- 4.2 The Council is in the process of preparing an audit of existing provision to identify current shortfalls along with future requirements up to the year 2011 to meet national standards in the local context.
- 4.3 Sites will be identified through the audit and outline briefs prepared to meet the current shortfalls and future requirements as the district area develops. A programme of works, with a priority status, will be scheduled in consultation with local communities to identify shortfalls in quality, quantity, and accessibility of existing provision. The Council will determine a separate policy for the provision and future maintenance of facilities.
- 4.4 These works may not ‘mirror’ exactly the various elements contained in the standards adopted for each category of residential housing that has been used to establish the contribution scales, but proposals will aim to meet the standard as far as possible.
- 4.5 The set contribution from the developer will cover all aspects of open space requirements for recreation, sport and play (whether to be ‘on-site’ or ‘off-site and nearby’ or already ‘existing’). It will represent the proportion of cost of required open space requirements that are of direct benefit to the new development.
- 4.6 The Council will require developers, by way of a legal agreement, to provide this sum for open space requirements for recreation, sport and play required for the sole use of the new development and for shared use with existing nearby developments.

5. EXCEPTIONS TO STANDARD

- 5.1 The standards, outlined in Section 3, are to be applied to all additional new residential units, where new build or conversions take place. In assessing the number of new units an allowance will be made for any existing units on the site or any extant planning permissions for residential units. New development includes most specialised types of housing including agricultural dwellings, local needs/affordable housing and also staff accommodation since all will create additional demands for playing space. Exceptions to this approach are rural exception sites (brought forward under Policy HS06) and very sheltered housing sites provided for elderly people.
- 5.2 For conversions, whether or not a new dwelling is being created will be dependent upon the current or last known lawful use. New dwellings, therefore, may be created by the conversion of a building currently or last used as a non-residential unit, for example, an agricultural barn. In addition, they may also be created where a change of use is made from any residential use with shared facilities, such as bed-sit accommodation or a care home, to independent residential units with separate facilities.
- 5.3 Replacement dwellings will not need to make provision, unless additional dwelling units are being created. If additional units are being created then the net gain of units will be expected to meet the recreational requirements.
- 5.4 Extensions to existing dwellings will only need to make provision where separate units of accommodation, with their own facilities, are being created. This applies whether or not the additional unit is tied by condition to the main house, for example, as staff accommodation. Provision will not, however, be required where the additional unit is for a dependant relative, and a specific planning condition or obligation is attached, limiting the occupation of the unit for this purpose.
- 5.5 Permanent permissions for mobile homes will be expected to meet recreational standards

as such proposals are treated in a similar manner as permanent new build within the Babergh Local Plan draft Alteration No. 2.

- 5.6 However, it is accepted by the District Council that there are certain types of development which may not create a demand. For example, the occupants of a very sheltered housing scheme, nursing homes, or certain types of hostel accommodation where the occupancy is controlled, would not be expected to use children's play areas. However, it is worth noting that whilst the open space requirement and play equipment will not apply, there will be a need to provide amenity land/communal space associated with the proposal. Such cases clearly need to be considered individually on their merits but the table below has been included as a general guide.

Application of the Playing Space Standard

| Developments likely to be subject to playing space requirement. | Developments that are <u>not</u> likely to be subject to the playing space requirement or elements thereof. |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>All new dwellings built on previously undeveloped sites.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Replacement dwellings (on a one for one basis)</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Dwelling gains resulting from redevelopment.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Extensions and annexes within the curtilage of a main property for dependent relatives.</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Conversions, or part conversions, creating additional independent residential units with separate facilities.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Very sheltered housing schemes, nursing homes, controlled hostel accommodation.</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Permanent permissions for mobile homes.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Bedsit accommodation with shared facilities.</i>• <i>Temporary permissions for mobile homes.</i>• <i>Rural Exception Sites (affordable housing in villages where speculative housing would not be allowed) – Policy HS06</i> |

SUMMARY OF THE SIX ACRE STANDARD

1. **STANDARDS - OPEN SPACE FOR RECREATION, SPORT & PLAY**
- 1.1 The Council has adopted as its own standards "the - NPFA Six-Acre Standard".
- 1.2 The National Playing Fields Association is widely acknowledged as the country's leading authority on standards, design, layout, and safety of Sport & Children's Outdoor Playing Space.
- 1.3 The Six-Acre Standard:-
 - ❖ Is consistent with Central Government Planning Policy Guidelines and directly referred to in PPG17 & with Planning Guidance (Wales) Planning Policy.
 - ❖ Take fully into account the legal responsibilities placed on outdoor playing space providers for the safety of those using their playing spaces.
 - ❖ Take fully into account specific mandatory and recommended standards for play equipment.
 - ❖ Take full account of DETR '*Best Value*' criteria including the requirement to consult with local communities.
 - ❖ Take full account of other corporate policies & strategies.
 - ❖ Takes full account of other related national advice.
- 1.4 Standards are expressed by the NPFA Six-Acre Standard as '*acres/hectares per 1,000 population*' they also include '*frequency/distribution*' factors to ensure accessibility.
- 1.5 In practise, '*frequency/distribution*' factors determine the location of provision, whilst '*acres/hectares per 1,000 population*' has an influence on the '*quantity/size*' of provision.
- 1.6 Outdoor Playing Space for Recreation (formal and casual) and Children's Play are categorised into two types.
 - ❖ SPORTS OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE (SOPS)
 - ❖ CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE (COPS)
- 1.7 Outdoor playing space is not the same as open space which also includes verges, woodlands, nature reserves, commons, lakes, reservoirs etc.

2. SPORTS OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE (SOPS)

STANDARDS

SIZE, SITING, FREQUENCY / DISTRIBUTION, & STYLE OF PROVISION

The Council has adopted the National Playing Fields recommended minimum standard as contained in the Six-Acre Standard Section 2: Sports Outdoor Playing Space Standard.

1.6 - 1.8 hectares
(4 - 4.5 acres)
per 1,000 population

Note: 1.2 hectares (3 acres) of this is a specific allocation for sports pitches.

- ❖ Facilities such as pitches, greens, courts, athletic tracks and miscellaneous sites such as croquet lawns and training areas owned by the local authority, whether at county, district or Parish level;
- ❖ Facilities described in i) within the educational sector and which, as a matter of practice and policy, are available for public use;
- ❖ Facilities described in i) which are within the voluntary, private, industrial and commercial sectors, and serve the leisure needs for outdoor recreation of their members, or the public.

The size of provision will be determined by guidance from the appropriate National Governing Body for each style / type of provision.

The frequency/distribution of provision should ensure a travelling time criteria of 20 minutes by public transport.

| Travel Time | Travel Distance | Straight Line Distance |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 20 minutes | 10 miles | 6 miles |

The style of provision is best determined locally, however as a guideline:

| | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| Cricket | 1 pitch per 5,000 pop |
| Senior Soccer | 1 pitch per 2,000 pop |
| Junior Soccer | 1 pitch per 4,000 pop |
| Rugby | 1 pitch per 8,000 pop |
| Hockey | 1 pitch per 20,000 pop |
| Tennis | 1 court per 2,000 pop |
| Bowls | 1 green per 8,000 pop |

Experience has shown that, rather than large 10 ha sites, sites of 2.5 to 4 ha are easier to accommodate, less costly to develop and manage, more accessible and provide greater opportunities for community management.

Provision normally takes the form of a cricket pitch sharing its outfield with two winter pitches.

3. CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE (COPS)

STANDARDS

SIZE, SITING, FREQUENCY, DISTRIBUTION, & STYLE OF PROVISION

0.6 - 0.8 hectares
(1.5 – 2.0 acres)
per 1,000 population

The Council has adopted the National Playing Fields Association standard as contained in the Six-Acre Standard Section 3: Outdoor Playing Space Standard for Children. Note this recommendation is a **minimum (*m)** not a target. (April 11 note this is now detailed in the Babergh District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy)

The recommendations call for the provision of different types of play areas for a range of age groups and appropriate for their needs. Most frequent, and therefore closest to home, are small areas for younger children. Less frequent and more likely to be further away are larger areas for older children. All houses should be within the safe prescribed walking time of each type of children's outdoor playing space.

The three categories of play are:

LAP - Local Areas for Play - a small area of unsupervised open space specifically designated for young children for play activities close to where they live.

LEAP - Local Equipped Areas for Play - an unsupervised play area equipped for children of early school age.

NEAP - Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play - an unsupervised site servicing a substantial residential area, equipped mainly for older children but with opportunities for play for younger children.

LAP (Local Areas for Play)

A LAP is a small area of unsupervised open space specifically designated for young children for play activities close to where they live.

Location:-

| Walking Time | Walking Distance | Straight Line Distance |
|--------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 1 minute | 100m | 60m |

Target Users: Mainly for 4 to 6 year olds, although they would attract other children of slightly older and younger age groups & the needs of children with disabilities such as mobility and sensory problems. NOTE: Children over the age of 6 are likely to cause some disturbance to adjacent residents, therefore, the LAP design should discourage such use by limiting the size and opportunity for activities attractive to older children.

Characteristics: Small low key games area preferably with 'demonstrative' play features.

Size: Active Zone -100 square metres(***m**), Total (including Buffer Zone) - 400 square metres (0.4 ha). (***m**)

Nearest House: 5m(*m) from edge of activity zone to ground floor windows of residential properties in full view of the activity zone. Gable end or other exposed house walls should be protected from use for ball games, e.g. a 1m strip of dense planting.

LEAP (Local Equipped Areas for Play)

A LEAP is an unsupervised play area equipped for children of early school age.

Location:-

| Walking Time | Walking Distance | Straight Line Distance |
|--------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 5 minutes | 400m | 240m |

Target Users: Mainly for accompanied children from 4 to 8, with consideration given to supervised children from birth to 4,unaccompanied children slightly older than 8 and children with special needs.

Characteristics: About 5 items of play equipment and a small flat games area.

Size: Active Zone - 400 square metres(*m), Total (including Buffer Zone) - 3,600 square(*m) metres (0.36 ha).

Nearest House: 20m(*m) from edge of Activity Zone to property boundary.

NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play)

A NEAP is an unsupervised site servicing a substantial residential area.

Location:-

| Walking Time | Walking Distance | Straight Line Distance |
|--------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 15 minutes | 1000m | 600m |

Target Users: Mainly for unaccompanied and unsupervised children between 8 and 14, with consideration for slightly younger supervised or accompanied children, older children and those with special needs.

Characteristics: About 8 types of play equipment, Ball Play and wheeled play opportunities, and seating for accompanying adults and for teenagers to use as a meeting place.

Size: Active Zone - 1,000 square metres(*m), Total (including Buffer Zone) - 8,500 square metres (0.85 ha) (*m).

Nearest House: 50 m(*m) from edge of Activity Zone to property boundary. (Revised to 50m following production of 'Protocol for dealing with proposed Play Areas etc')

Safety

The Council requires all new Children's Outdoor Playing Spaces, the equipment and ancillary facilities to conform to all aspects of EN 1176 & 1177. Items not covered by either standard or exceptions to the standards must be justified and made explicit.

The Council requires all existing Children's Outdoor Playing Spaces, the equipment and ancillary facilities to be assessed (by an independent RPII Member ~ Register of Playground Inspectors International) against all aspects of EN 1176 & 1177 applying a Risk Assessment to all non compliance findings. Items not covered by either standard or exceptions to the standards must be also be Risk Assessed if the independent RPII Member has any safety concerns. Where the Risk Assessment indicates an '*unacceptable*' risk the Council will take all such measures that are reasonable & practical to minimise the risk of harm / accident to an '*acceptable*' level.

4. FURTHER NOTES: (BALL PLAY, WHEELED PLAY & MEETING PLACE)

The Council notes that observation nation-wide and within its own area provides reliable evidence that children:

- ❖ Will play outdoors & close to home whenever the weather permits.
- ❖ Whether purpose built & safe provision exists or not.
- ❖ That the average time spent at any one 'play' session is half an hour.

Of which:

- ❖ Approx. 5 minutes are spent on 'Play Equipment'
- ❖ Approx. 10 minutes are spent on 'Ball or Wheel Play.
- ❖ Approx. 15 minutes are spent on 'Meeting together' ~ simply socialising.

The above approx. times spent vary dependant on several factors though overall they provide reliable guidance to children's play behaviour:

- ❖ The younger the child the more likely they will be attracted to 'play equipment' and vice versa.
- ❖ That during school holidays & weekend the average 'play' session will be increased.

The Council recognises that the three most popular elements (Ball Play, Wheeled Play, & Meeting Place) are often controversial, considered by some to be prone to antisocial behaviour, a cause of nuisance and disturbance to nearby residents and a 'blot on the landscape'.

Nationally and historically providers of children's outdoor playing space all too often omit one or more of these important facilities. Observation suggests the first to be left out is the 'meeting place', then the 'wheeled play and less often, but all too often, the 'ball play'.

As it is an emotive and controversial issue, it is worth providing a sound rationale and presents the case for these important facilities to be included as an integral part of a NEAP; or where space prevents this, at a nearby alternative space.

EXPLANATION OF CALCULATIONS

An NPFA consultant has established a guide cost to provide the facilities required for each Parish/Town.

In order to ensure a simple, fair & equitable approach these have been averaged out to provide one level of contribution.

Using the ultimate planned population at 2011 for the district as a base, the following calculations have been made:-

- Ultimate planned population at 2011 is 85,000.

- Average population for each of the 76 defined parishes is 1,118
 $(85000 / 76=1118)$

- This equates to 486.27 houses per parish based on 2.3 per persons average occupancy per house.
 $(1118 / 2.3= 486.27)$

- The current average cost to provide minimum standards of recreational provision in a parish is £520,395. This includes an allowances for items such as:-
 - Ball game areas
 - LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs.
 - Local Park
 - Informal open space
 - Landscaping

- This equates to £1,070 per house ($£520,395 / 486.27 =£1,070$) or £465 per bed space (divided by 2.3).

- Charges will be therefore be as follows until 31 March 2003

| | |
|--------|---|
| £465 | = 1 bedroom dwelling (occupied by one person). |
| £930 | = 2 bedroom dwelling (occupied by two people). |
| £1,630 | = 3 bedroom dwelling (occupied by 3.5 persons). |
| £2,325 | = 4 bedroom dwelling . |
| £2,790 | = 5 + bedroom dwelling. |

- The charges will be increased each April based on the February RPI