



Ward: All

Open Space Standards for new Developments and off site contribution Calculator

Report by the Director for the Economy

1.0 Summary

1.1 To assess current provision and identify specific needs (in terms of quality and quantity) in order to accommodate the demands arising from future development growth, Adur & Worthing Councils commissioned a Joint Sport, Leisure and Open Space Study (2019) which comprises of three components:

- [Open Space Study](#)
- [Playing Pitch Strategy](#)
- [Indoor / Built Sports Facility Needs Assessment Report](#)

1.2 This report focuses upon the open space component and to consider adopting the recommended open space standards (minimum provision) for different open space typologies in Adur and Worthing. All reports are key evidence to support the emerging Worthing Local Plan and review of the Adur Local Plan and are available to view on the website:

[\(www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/planning-policy/worthing/worthing-background-studies-and-info/biodiversity-environment/\)](http://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/planning-policy/worthing/worthing-background-studies-and-info/biodiversity-environment/)

1.3 A calculator tool (attached at appendix I) has been provided to assess open space needs arising from development proposals and to assist calculating the extent of off site contributions where it is not possible to provide as part of the development. The report explains how this calculator works, and how it will be used as part of the planning process.

1.4 At the same time the Council commissioned an Activity Strategy with the purpose of providing a blueprint for raising levels of physical activity particularly for those inactive within our communities. The Strategy seeks to

maximise the benefits that physical activity can add to health and wellbeing, individual development, nature, community cohesion, education and the local economy. It is intended to report this Strategy and the Sport, Leisure and Open Space Study to a forthcoming Joint Strategic Committee to establish how best to take forward the various recommendations to secure enhanced provision and active lifestyles for the local communities.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 High quality open spaces and opportunities for informal and formal sport and recreation make a valuable contribution to the health and well-being of communities and are also important for climate change resilience, wildlife and biodiversity. Easy, safe and improved access for all residents and visitors to high quality open and natural space is therefore important.

Policy Context

National Policy

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the importance of supporting healthy communities as part of the social dimension of sustainable development (see paragraph 8b). Section 8 of the NPPF gives more detailed consideration to the role of open space, sport and recreation provision.
- 2.3 Paragraph 92 a) sets out the need to plan positively for provision and use of community facilities (including sports venues and open space) and to guard against their unnecessary loss. Paragraph 96 highlights the importance that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF gives more specific consideration to access to and retention of open space, recreation and sports facilities as well as setting out the framework for the exceptional circumstances when such provisions may be lost.
- 2.4 The National Planning Practice Guidance includes a section on open space, sports and recreation facilities. This recognises the variety of forms of open space, from formal sports pitches to country parks. The multiple benefits of open spaces are recognised, including in terms of health, ecology, landscape character and the setting of built development. It is set out that it is for local planning authorities to assess the need for open space and regard should be had to the duty to cooperate where open spaces serve a wider area.

Local Planning Policy Context

2.5 Adur & Worthing Councils previously commissioned a Joint Open Space Study in 2014. The standards identified in this study informed Policy 32: Open Space, Recreation and Leisure of the adopted Adur Local Plan (2017). In recognition of the legal requirement that Local Plans have to be reviewed every 5 years from the date of adoption, Adur District Council will be commencing a review later this year. In order to comply with paragraph 96 of the NPPF (see paragraph 2.3 of this report), it was considered necessary to commission a new up-to-date assessment to inform the review of the Adur Local Plan. Furthermore, Worthing Borough Council is progressing a new Local Plan and therefore it was a timely opportunity to undertake a joint assessment.

Open Space Standards

2.6 The Open Space Study sets minimum provision standards for different open space typologies in Adur and Worthing. It must be noted that these standards only cover those parts of Adur and Worthing that lie outside of the South Downs National Park; and that these are the areas covered by our Local Plans. In terms of quantity and access, the local standards are as follows (all quantities are hectares per 1,000 population):

Table 1: Summary of open space quantity and access standards

Typology	Quantity standards for existing provision and new provision (ha/1000 population)	Access standard
Allotments	0.20	720 metres or 15 minutes' walk-time
Amenity Green Space (sites >0.15 ha)	0.60	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk-time
Park and Recreation Grounds (public and private combined)	0.80	720 metres or 15 minutes' walk-time
Play Space (Children)	0.06	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk-time
Play Space (Youth)	0.06	720 metres or 15 minutes' walk-time

Accessible Natural Green Space	1.0 (for new provision only)	960 metres or 20 minutes' walk-time and ANGst Standards for accessible natural green space above 20ha
Total for new provision	2.72 ha / 1000	

2.7 It should be noted that a key issue for the area is limited land available for new development, given the South Downs National Park to the north, and the English Channel to the south. Therefore, it will be a challenge to achieve these standards everywhere, and the enhancement of existing facilities (including improving access to facilities) will be key to meeting unmet demand.

Current supply against the standards

2.8 The tables below show the existing supply of open space for each typology at the study area, local authority, and ward levels. The supply is calculated using the population figures (ONS mid-year 2017 estimates) for each of the geographies and the quantity of open space compared to what the requirements for open space are against the recommended standards. Positive figures show where the study area / local authority area / wards meet the quantity standard for the open space typology, and negative figures (red text) show where there is a shortfall in supply against the quantity standard.

2.9 Although these figures highlight where there are shortfalls in supply against the quantity standards and therefore where new provision should be sought, new provision may not be achievable (unless, for example, through new development). These figures can help inform decisions about the form of new open spaces and improvements to existing open spaces, rather than it being imperative that every ward must achieve a '+' number.

Table 2: Open space supply at the study area level (Adur District and Worthing Borough) against the quantity standards

Typology	Existing (ha)	Existing (ha / 1000)	Required Provision (ha)	Standard / Required Provision (ha / 1000)	Supply (ha)	Supply (ha / 1000)
Allotments	31.21	0.18	34.67	0.2	-3.46	-0.02
Amenity Greenspace (>0.15ha)	88.22	0.51	104.01	0.6	-15.79	-0.09
Parks & Recreation Ground	138.99	0.8	138.68	0.8	0.31	0.00
Play (Child)	5.36	0.03	10.4	0.06	-5.04	-0.03
Play (Youth)	1.13	0.01	10.4	0.06	-9.27	-0.05

Table 3: Open space supply at the Worthing Borough level against the quantity standards

Typology	Existing (ha)	Existing (ha/1000)	Required Provision (ha)	Standard/ Required Provision (ha/1000)	Supply (ha)	Supply (ha/1000)
Allotments	15.89	0.14	21.93	0.2	-6.04	-0.06
Amenity Greenspace (>0.15ha)	43.95	0.4	65.78	0.6	-21.83	-0.20
Parks and Recreation Grounds	90.05	0.82	87.71	0.8	2.34	0.02
Play (Child)	2.91	0.03	6.58	0.06	-3.67	-0.03
Play (Youth)	0.51	0	6.58	0.06	-6.07	-0.06

Table 4: Open space supply (ha) at Ward level against the quantity standards

Ward	Allotments	Amenity Greenspace	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Play (Child)	Play (Youth)
Worthing	-6.04	-21.83	2.34	-3.67	-6.07
Broadwater	-1.26	-5.34	-6.25	-0.35	-0.54
Castle	-1.57	-2.44	-1.11	-0.29	-0.51
Central	-2.18	-5.33	4.05	-0.25	-0.52
Durrington	-1.16	-3.1	-0.54	-0.16	-0.31
Gaisford	-1.96	-5.88	-3.36	-0.47	-0.59
Goring	-1.62	11.34	1.02	-0.44	-0.49
Heene	-1.67	-4.76	-6.69	-0.5	-0.5
Marine	-1.29	-3.91	-4.3	-0.3	-0.48
Northbrook	1.38	15.26	8.74	0.6	-0.21
Offington	-1.26	-2.73	7.01	-0.44	-0.47
Salvington	-1.79	-5.03	2.18	-0.35	-0.48
Selden	3.49	-4.7	6.99	-0.37	-0.51
Tarring	4.86	-5.22	-5.4	-0.36	-0.47

- 2.10 Table 4 shows that open space provision varies across wards and typologies, with some meeting the standards and some falling below e.g. for youth play space there are shortfalls in provision in every Ward within the Study Area. This will be an important consideration when determining the need for on-site open space as part of new development.
- 2.11 It is important that the supply figures are not considered in isolation, as the access and quality results are equally important. Just because a typology is in sufficient supply, this does not mean it is 'surplus' to requirements, as the access and quantity standards also need to be considered alongside the quantity requirements. There may also be other factors such as a sites nature conservation, historic or cultural value, or its contribution to the Green Infrastructure network which mean it should be protected.

Future Need for Open Space

- 2.12 The figures for open space requirements are for indicative purposes - the calculations are based on all open space being provided on site (which will not be the reality in some cases, as consideration of the individual development size and proximity to existing open spaces needs to be taken into account).

	A	B	C	D
	Assumed Household Size	Housing Numbers (2018-2036)	Predicted Population Increase (A*B)	Open space requirements against quantity standards (C* quantity standards – See Table 6.6).
Adur	2.27	3,130	7,105	Allotments: 1.42 ha Amenity Greenspace: 4.26 ha Parks & Recreation: 5.68 ha Play (Child): 0.43 ha Play (Youth): 0.43 ha Accessible Natural Greenspace: 7.10 ha
Worthing	2.17	3,764	8,168	Allotments: 1.63 ha Amenity Greenspace: 4.90 ha Parks & Recreation: 6.53 ha Play (Child): 0.49 ha Play (Youth): 0.49 ha Accessible Natural Greenspace: 8.17 ha
Overall Study Area			15,273	Allotments: 3.05 ha Amenity Greenspace: 9.16 ha Parks & Recreation: 12.22 ha Play (Child): 0.92 ha Play (Youth): 0.92 ha Accessible Natural Greenspace: 15.27 ha

Table 5: Open space requirements resulting from housing allocations

Developer Contributions

- 2.13 Schemes of ten plus dwellings will be required to provide on-site open space in accordance with the standards (using the calculator tool). The exceptions to this approach will be where the site or development is not of sufficient size in itself to make the appropriate provision feasible, or where it is preferable to seek contributions to provide or improve open space off-site within the ward or nearby ward to which the development is located. The potential to make off-site provision will be considered on a case by case basis.
- 2.14 Where a development is unable to provide sufficient on-site provision of open space to mitigate the impact of that development, contributions towards the provision or improvement of offsite open space are set out in the Open Space Study and calculated using the capital cost of provision using the assumption of an average household size of 2.2 persons/household.

2.15 A cost calculator has been provided to the Councils (in the form of an excel spreadsheet) so that the on and off-site requirements for open space can be calculated for different sized developments. It provides an example of how costs might be calculated, but site circumstances will also need to be taken into account e.g. topography.

The cost calculator is based on the following assumptions:

- Average household size (2.2 persons/household).
- The open space quantity standards (see Table 6.6 - Open Space report)
- The cost of open space per m² (see Table 8.2, page 97 - Open Space report)
- Thresholds for on-site provision (see Table 8.5, page 101 - Open Space report)

2.16 The cost calculator factors in the number of bedrooms per dwelling. Where the number of bedrooms are not known, the total number of units can be inputted. The same charges apply to both provision of new facilities and the upgrading/improvement of existing facilities (where related to new development), which will normally include at least a net increase in new provision. The Open Space study report provides a screenshot of the cost calculator and a worked example of how to use the cost calculator - see page 98 of the Study.

2.17 If it is not feasible to deliver open space on site due to exceptional circumstances e.g. viability or land availability, then the potential to make off site provision will be considered on a case by case basis. The assessment of on site provision and whether it is appropriate to seek off site contributions would be undertaken by the Parks Manager in consultation with Development Management Officers.

2.18 It is recognised that there are limited resources within the Parks team to provide this level of assistance during the consideration of planning applications and this has been raised as an issue corporately to resolve to ensure that developments provide the appropriate level of open space provision. Historically both Councils have missed opportunities to secure development contributions to enhance open space provision and sports facilities and your Officers are keen to avoid this happening in the future.

Maintenance Contributions

- 2.19 Where new open space is provided, the developer would be expected to provide the open space and either maintain the open space through a management company, or if the site is to be adopted by either Adur or Worthing then maintenance fees secured by a commuted sum of at least 20 years will be included in the Section 106 legal agreement.
- 2.20 Ideally open space should be adopted by the Councils rather than left to management companies. There are numerous examples of problems with maintenance of open space when left to private management companies and members of the public will still expect to resolve issues in the future or presume that private land is maintained by the relevant local authority.
- 2.21 Whilst, the Council cannot insist on the adoption of these areas, the national volume house builders have now accepted that adoption by the local authority is more appropriate in the long term. In Worthing the second phase of the West Durrington development is to offer all open space to the Council which reflects the different approach now taken by developers. In the event that the open space is adopted by the Council a commuted sum would be required as indicated earlier.
- 2.22 It is important that in designing new play areas consideration is given to meet the needs of all users including the disabled and looking at more imaginative designs for play areas particularly in urban areas. In securing a commuted sum a replacement cost for play equipment can also be secured.

3.0 Open Space Standards

- 3.1 It is proposed that the recommended open space standards are adopted to address the identified need for open space provision as informed by the up-to-date open space study. Failure to adopt the recommended standards would result in future development not securing open space provision that meets identified needs.

4.0 Legal

- 4.1 S1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation.

4.2 The legal tests for when you can use a s106 agreement are set out in regulation 122 and 123 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 as amended. The tests are that the contributions should be:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- directly related to the development; and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 There are longer term cost implications of taking on additional areas of open space and play equipment. The commuted sum period can assist in the medium term but there would need to be additional resources secured within the Parks team to deal with additional maintenance requirements and additional costs beyond the initial 20 year period. Additional s106 contributions can help to fund enhancements of existing provision.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 **That the Committee note the recommended open space standards, and forward any comments to the Executive Member for Regeneration to consider prior to formally adopting the standards.**

6.2 **That the cost calculator attached at Appendix I be agreed and adopted for use in calculating needs arising from development proposals; and that the calculator be published on the Councils' website.**

Local Government Act 1972

Background Papers:

Adur and Worthing Open Space Study (2019)

Adopted Core Strategy 2011

Emerging Worthing Local Plan 2021

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Schedule of Other Matters

1.0 Council Priority

1.1 2.4.6 Live Well - Active People and Places- Leisure & Activity Strategy:

a) Develop and Implement an Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Strategy building on the outcomes of the consultancy report due by end 2010 and result from our facilities condition survey

Action a) of 2.4.6 has been addressed via the completion and publication of the Joint Sport, Leisure and Open Space Study (2019). The Open Space report forms one part of this element. The open space report also feeds into the emerging Activities Strategy which is an identified priority in the Platforms for Our Places: Going Further 2020 - 2022:

b) Launch and implement our community led Activities Strategy

2.0 Specific Action Plans

2.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

3.0 Sustainability Issues

3.1 Open space and GI protection, provision and enhancement will play an important part in helping to tackle the climate crisis, with well designed, connected and multifunctional open space providing important functions such as surface water management/flood alleviation, reducing air pollution, reducing heat stress and providing wildlife habitat.

3.2 Adur and Worthing Councils will be approaching the management of their open space to provide multifunctional spaces in order to maximise ecosystem services, adapt to climate change and contribute to the Councils' becoming zero carbon by 2030.

4.0 Equality Issues

4.1 The Open Space Report feeds into the emerging Activities Strategy which seeks to encourage inactive people to become physically active which in turn facilitates thriving and connected communities.

5.0 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

5.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

6.0 Human Rights Issues

6.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

7.0 Reputation

7.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

8.0 Consultations

8.1 The Joint Sport, Leisure and Open Space study has been informed by the Community and Stakeholder Report (2019) where a consultation engagement exercise was conducted at the start of the study to ascertain local stakeholder views about the quality and quantity of existing sport, leisure and open space facilities in Adur and Worthing.

8.2 The preparation of the Joint Sport Leisure and Open Space study has been supported by an internal working group of colleagues from Planning Policy, Parks and Communities.

9.0 Risk Assessment

9.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

10.0 Health & Safety Issues

10.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

11.0 Procurement Strategy

11.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

12.0 Partnership Working

12.1 The Joint Open Space Study was commissioned by Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council to ensure a consistent approach in undertaking evidence to inform the preparation of Local Plans.

