

West Wiltshire District Council

Cabinet

28 July 2004

Open Space Supplementary Planning Guidance

1. Purpose

To approve the document "Open Space Provision in New Housing Developments: A Guide" as supplementary planning guidance.

2. Background

On 7 April 2004 Cabinet approved a draft document entitled "Open Space Provision in New Housing Developments: A Guide" for development control and for the purposes of public consultation.

A period of public consultation was held between 16th April 2004 and 28th May 2004. Responses were received from 10 organisations.

3. Key Issues arising from public consultation

Set out in Appendix 1 is a schedule of all comments received during the period of public consultation. The schedule includes a summary of the contents of the comments and a recommended Council response to each comment, including recommended changes to the SPG where appropriate.

Generally, the consultees welcome the open space guidance and its intention to add clarity to the policies in the District Plan 1st Alteration. Some of the main issues arising from consultation are highlighted below.

Future provision should be based upon local need not national standards

The District Plan Inspector recommended that the Plan, with its national NPFA derived standards, should be adopted in order that continuity and consistency are maintained and that new local policies and standards should be developed in the future, having regard to the results of a PPG17 compliant recreation needs assessment. The Council has commissioned a recreation needs assessment, but in the interim, until new policies can be progressed, this SPG provides guidance to developers on the basis of existing adopted policies.

More guidance is required on the provision of informal amenity open space in new housing developments.

The Council has adopted planning policies for the provision of casual/informal play space within new housing developments and for the provision, generally, of landscaping to allow new developments to blend into the surrounding area. It is agreed that the open space guidance should include additional references to landscaping and Appendix 3 should be expanded to include specifications for hard & soft landscape works (Appendix 3 attached). The Recreation Needs Assessment will investigate whether the Council should adopt future standards for the provision of amenity open space in the next review of open space planning policies.

Small flats do not generate a need for equipped and casual playspace.

The National Playing Field Association document "The Six Acre Standard" states "It should not be assumed that children will never be housed in single person accommodation because there is considerable evidence that, in reality, parents often do bring children up in such accommodation." This SPG reflects this approach, although the calculation of open space takes account of the lower occupancy rates for smaller dwellings.

20 years is an unreasonably long maintenance period.

Circular 1/97 states that commuted maintenance sums can be secured by a local planning authority for the provision of recreational facilities of benefit to a development rather than to the wider public. Payments should be time limited and not be required in perpetuity. This SPG complies with this Circular and limits that period to 20 years. The Council believes that 20 years represents a reasonable period of time.

Financial Implications

The guidance has been drawn up to provide a clear framework for the future provision and maintenance of open space which will include securing financial contributions from developers either for off site provision or for future maintenance. The levels of contributions have been set to reflect the true cost of these facilities and these figures will be updated on an annual basis to ensure that contributions stay in line with actual costs.

Legal Implications

The guidance has been drawn up to provide a clear framework for the future provision and maintenance of open space including procedures for securing open space provision through Section 106 legal agreements.

Environmental Implications

The guidance is intended to contribute towards the Council's corporate objective of facilitating access to recreation, in particular, through the development and renewal of facilities. Provided that planning applications are determined having regard to the contents of the guidance, the document will have a positive impact on the local environment by helping to create quality open spaces for local communities.

Human Rights Implications.

The Human Rights implications recommended in this report have been considered and are acceptable and the checklist has been addressed.

4. Options

Cabinet has approved the production of SPG to explain and clarify the ways in which planning policies contained within the District Plan 1st Alteration will be implemented. At this stage, Cabinet can choose to amend the document as appropriate and adopt the document as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

5. Key Decisions

Statement of reason for key decision	To be taken into account in the consideration of planning applications supplementary planning guidance should be subject to adoption by the District Council.
Options considered and rejected	To rely on the general planning policy to deliver open space in West Wiltshire.
Date of Implementation (not less than 5 days after date of decision)	4 August 2004

6. List of Background Papers

File Ref: Recreation

File Location: Planning Policy and Conservation Section

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (i) approves the recommended responses of this Council to each of the comments received, as set out in appendix 1;
- (ii) adopts the document entitled Open Space Provision in New Housing Developments: A Guide, amended as recommended, as supplementary planning guidance to the adopted District Plan 1st Alteration.

Plain English Guidance Given

Cllr Christopher Newbury
Portfolio Holder Planning

Mark Russell
Planning Policy Manager

15 July 2004

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Responses received to consultation