



October 2005

# LDF

WIGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

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## Open Space in new housing

Supplementary Planning Document



Planning and Regeneration Department



Environmental Services Department

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WIGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## Provision of Open Space in new housing developments, adoptions and financial contributions from developers Supplementary Planning Document

October 2005



Environmental Services Department



**To assist people with particular needs this SPD can be made available on request in larger print, braille and in a number of alternative languages.**

## **Arabic**

"بالإمكان توفير هذه المعلومات في اللغة العربية."

## **Cantonese**

這些資料可提供中文譯本。

## **Farsi**

این اطلاعات به زبان فارسی هم میتواند در دسترس شما قرار گیرد.

## **French**

Disponible en francais sur  
demande

## **Gujurati**

આ માહિતી ગુજરાતીમાં મળી શકે છે.

## **Urdu**

یہ معلومات اُردو میں بھی دستیاب ہو سکتی ہیں۔



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## Adoption and Sustainability Appraisal

Wigan Council adopted the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Provision of Open Space in new housing developments, adoptions and financial contributions from developers on the 31st October 2005.

A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the SPD was conducted to discover how it might influence the sustainability assessment made in 2003 of the relevant Unitary Development Plan policies and proposals. The conclusion was that the SPD was found to have no negative sustainability impact. A copy of the SA is available on request, and the impact of the SPD will be monitored in the future.

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## Introduction

We attach great importance to the provision, design and layout of good quality open spaces and children's play facilities within and close to new housing developments. This document is intended to advise developers and their agents on our adopted standard for open space provision in new housing developments, as set out in Wigan's Unitary Development Plan. It provides further advice on when on-site or off-site provision is appropriate and on the scale of charges which will be levied for both the provision and maintenance of open space and off-site play equipment required as part of the development.

This guidance supplements and relates to the following specific Unitary Development Plan Policies:

**RIE    Open Space in New Housing Developments**

To make sure that appropriate provision for open space is made in new development.

**GIB    Planning Obligations**

To enhance the quality of development and offset the loss of, or adverse impact on any amenity open space, place of historic or architectural interest or site of nature conservation importance.

Separate Supplementary Planning Documents are available on Landscape Design Submissions and Residential Design.

## Scope of the guidance

**Policy RIE of the Wigan Unitary Development Plan sets out the standard for open space provision in new housing developments. The policy is set out below:**

**RIE    Open Space in New Housing Developments**

In considering new residential development (including the conversion of buildings to residential use) the council will require that:

- a** Where a scheme consists of between 1 and 99 dwellings, developers make a financial contribution to the capital and commuted maintenance costs of off-site amenity open space and play space provision commensurate with the number of units in the scheme, in lieu of on-site provision, unless otherwise agreed or required by the council;
- b** Where a scheme exceeds 99 dwellings, developers provide a total amount of public open space equivalent to a minimum of 25m<sup>2</sup> per dwelling and a financial contribution in lieu of play equipment provision and to cover commuted maintenance costs. Alternatively, the council will seek obligations from developers to secure the maintenance of public open space in the development, unless otherwise agreed or required by the council.



All proposals for new housing developments are required to either contribute to the provision of amenity open space and play provision within the proposed site or make a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision. Examples of how these calculations will be made are given in Appendix 1.

## Housing schemes of under 100 dwellings

New housing developments present opportunities to create better living environments that are inviting, attractive, sustainable, well-maintained and which can be enjoyed by all sections of the community, including children, older people and people with disabilities. On small housing sites, it is often difficult to create amenity open spaces and play spaces of a suitable type and size to meet the needs of the community, without being detrimental to the amenity of residents in nearby properties. Quality open spaces can provide valuable formal and informal recreational opportunities for the local community. On small sites it is not always possible to allocate spaces large enough or in a suitable location on site without creating a nuisance for nearby residents. Play facilities provide a focal point for children of all ages and ideally need to be integrated as part of the amenity open space, at the edge of the development or at some reasonable distance from any properties likely to be affected by its location.

In such circumstances, the developer will need to make a financial contribution to the capital and commuted maintenance costs of off-site amenity open space and play provision. A financial contribution not only avoids the problems associated with disturbance, anti-social behaviour and general nuisance to residents on small housing

sites but also allows us to adopt a more strategic approach for the provision of amenity open space and play facilities.



The sum will be proportionate to the number of dwellings in the scheme, as indicated in the scale of charges set out in Appendix 1. The requirement for a financial contribution will be applied to a single new dwelling. This includes barn conversions, flat conversions and the conversion of any non-residential buildings to residential use. In addition, financial contributions will be required for retirement housing and blocks of flats in their own grounds.

## Exemptions to financial contributions

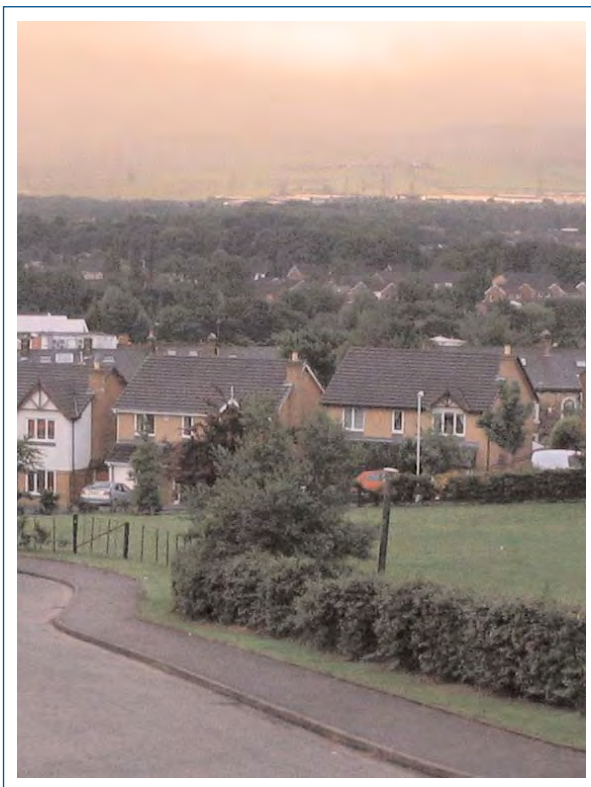
We will consider making exemptions to financial contributions for play provision for particular types of housing development including:

- Care homes
- Nursing homes



## Housing schemes of 100 dwellings or more

In larger housing schemes developers will be expected to provide public open space at the rate of 25m<sup>2</sup> per dwelling. We will seek a financial contribution towards the cost of play equipment that we will provide, either on or off-site, at our discretion. We will also seek a financial contribution towards the commuted maintenance costs of the play equipment and the amenity open space. Where developers intend to retain ownership of amenity open space, they will need to satisfy the council that they have put in place an acceptable alternative means of ensuring future maintenance.



provision can only be achieved where design integration occurs and the open space elements of the scheme are not merely considered as an afterthought to the overall layout of the development site. Large nearby open spaces are preferable to a number of smaller spaces distributed across any housing development.

If it is not practical to accommodate suitable play provision because of a site's difficult shape, landform or natural topography, we will consider a more appropriate off-site location, close to the development and within the local township boundary. Our review of open space in Wigan, as recommended by PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, will influence the decisions on the requirements for open space and play provision within the borough's townships.

On larger sites, developers should consider the integration of amenity open space and play provision, located with good visibility and access, yet far enough from houses to minimise disturbance to residents. A satisfactory relationship between housing, amenity open space and play



## Financial contributions

Where appropriate, financial contributions will be agreed and the timing of payment stipulated under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act. Financial contributions are to be made to the Development Control Section of the Environmental Services Department and this is normally before any work starts.

## How will financial contributions be spent on off-site provision?

Where possible off-site provision will be provided local to the development and be accessible from it. However, whilst it is not always possible or desirable to provide open space adjacent to, or in the immediate vicinity of new housing, it should be provided within the local township, so that a wider catchment can be served. We have identified ten township areas covering the whole of the borough. These townships are natural local communities with a sense of identity and are, to some extent, functionally self-contained. They form natural and convenient catchment areas for open space. A township forum serves each township.

So, in order to satisfy the need to provide sustainable and usable open spaces that are strategically located and accessible to all sections of the community, contributions will be ring-fenced for spending within the townships. This will ensure greater flexibility in provision, particularly play, and allow for a more considered use of contributions.

In certain circumstances, it may be considered more cost-effective to pool contributions from several developments to improve a local park or larger open space. This is more likely in the case of smaller developments of less than 100 dwellings.

On larger sites, any financial contribution for play will be used either on or off-site, at our discretion.

To assist in this process, decisions on how and where contributions are spent will be made in consultation with the local township forum. Such a strategic approach to off-site provision will occasionally result in cross-boundary solutions that will need the consensus of more than one township forum.

The type of play provision will be at the discretion of the Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust's Play Officer, in consultation with the relevant township forum. In general, contributions will be used for:

- the provision or replacement of equipped children's play facilities;
- the provision of new, or improvements to existing formal recreation areas and sports pitches;
- the running of alternative community play schemes;
- the provision of teen meets;
- the creation of activity and adventure play facilities for the over 12s.



Committed sums for maintenance will be held in a separate account to make sure that the equipment and facilities are maintained to a suitable standard.



## Making prospective residents aware of open space and play provision

The location and proximity of amenity open space, play provision and footpaths can result in noise and disturbance problems for residents. Although this type of disturbance can be minimised by careful design, the responsibility is with the developer to ensure that prospective buyers are made aware of the location and extent of the amenity open spaces and play provision on any development site.

## Community safety

The safety of people and the security of property can be enhanced by good design. Landscape Architects and other design professionals should liaise and consult with the Architectural Liaison Unit of the Greater Manchester Police at pre-application stage where there is a perceived risk management issue. The unit can advise on measures to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour through design.

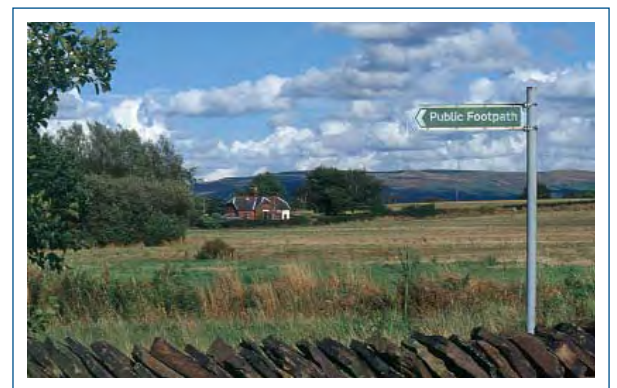
Every design solution must take account of any community safety issues, and avoid creating potential opportunities for crime and vandalism such as areas that are unobserved, poorly lit or under-utilised, which can feel threatening to users and attract anti-social behaviour. All landscape design submissions should demonstrate how community safety and crime prevention measures have been considered.

In addition, consideration should be given in the design and layout of open space to ensure the provision and maintenance of access for emergency vehicles including Police, Ambulances and Fire Appliances.

## Protecting natural features

Trees, woodlands, ponds and watercourses are important natural landscape features that add to the nature conservation value of a site and so, should be incorporated into any amenity open space. Developers will be expected to take every opportunity to retain and enhance features of wildlife and nature conservation importance regardless of the size of the development site. However, only land which makes a positive, practical and useable contribution to the overall amenity open space should be considered. Highway verges, visibility splays, long thin planting beds adjacent to roads, awkwardly shaped pieces of land, and private gardens will not be accepted as counting against the overall open space requirement for a housing development.

In relation to the protection and enhancement of natural features developers are encouraged to make reference to English Nature's current Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) model. These can be viewed and downloaded from the English Nature website ([www.english-nature.org.uk](http://www.english-nature.org.uk)).





## The adoption process and interim landscape maintenance

In planning for on-site open space and play space provision, developers are requested to submit detailed plans with their planning application showing its layout and distribution. Our Supplementary Planning Document: Landscape Design Submissions refers to this requirement in more detail. All areas of open space should be fully set out and landscaped, and any play equipment installed, before a request is made to dedicate the land to us. Where the developer expects us to adopt open space then the proposed dedication boundaries should be clearly identified at the planning application stage.

Before we consider the dedication of the land to us, including play spaces, and following a first inspection, developers will have laid out the site and maintained it to a high standard for a minimum period of 12 months. This includes the maintenance and repair of any fixed play equipment and the replacement of failed planting. Two months before the end of the maintenance period, we will inspect the site again to agree any remedial works. Upon completion of the works, the formal adoption procedure will commence. Until such time as the land is adopted, and any play provision adopted by the Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, then the developer will remain responsible for public liability. In some cases, prior to formal adoption, the Trust will agree to maintain the play space and equipment at a charge to the developer.

Once the legal process has been completed and all due financial contributions are made then the land will be formally entered on our land register for future maintenance.

Where amenity open space is not to be adopted by us, developers will need to indicate at the planning application stage that they have put in place an acceptable alternative means of ensuring future maintenance. Full details will be required of such arrangements and the developer should inform prospective purchasers.



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Supplementary Planning Document

**Appendices** (Updated April 2010)



Environmental Services Department



# Appendix I

## Calculating the commuted sum

### Housing schemes of under 100 dwellings

For example: a small housing development of 59 dwellings

Financial contribution required	Rate applied (£)	Number of units or dwellings	Capital or commuted sum due (£)	Total financial contribution due (£)
In lieu of on-site open space (combined capital and commuted maintenance)	£509	59	£30,031	£30,031
In lieu of on-site play space (capital)	} £949	59		£55,991
In lieu of on-site play space (commuted maintenance)				

Financial contribution due towards the capital and commuted maintenance costs of off-site amenity open space and play provision, for a small development of 59 dwellings is £86,022

### Housing schemes of 100 dwellings or more

For example: a housing development of 159 dwellings

Total Amenity Open Space required (m <sup>2</sup> )		
Area (m <sup>2</sup> ) required per dwelling or unit	Total number of dwellings or units	Total Amenity Open Space required (m <sup>2</sup> )
25m <sup>2</sup>	159	3,975m <sup>2</sup>
Commuted maintenance costs of amenity open space		
Rate (£) per (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total Amenity Open Space required (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total commuted maintenance costs required (£)
£12.20	3,975m <sup>2</sup>	£48,495

Financial contribution required	Rate applied (£)	Number of units or dwellings	Capital or commuted sum due (£)	Total financial contribution due, including commuted amenity open space maintenance costs (£)
In lieu of on-site play space (capital)	} £949	159		£150,891
In lieu of on-site play space (commuted maintenance)				
Commuted maintenance costs of amenity open space				£48,512



Financial contribution due towards the commuted maintenance costs of on-site amenity open space and in lieu of play equipment provision and commuted maintenance costs, for a development of 159 dwellings is £189,329.

### Note

The above rates apply from the 1 April 2010. They will be subject to an annual review and increased at the current rate of inflation, and to keep pace with industry price increases. New rates will apply from 1 April in subsequent years. All financial contributions include a 5% design and administration fee.

Please contact the Environmental Services Department for the current rates.

## Appendix 2

### Useful contacts

#### Environmental Services Department

The Environmental Services Department will advise on the provision, design and layout of amenity open spaces and the location of on-site children's play areas. It can also advise developers on the Council's adopted standard for open space provision in new housing developments. In addition, advice can be provided on when on-site or off-site provision is appropriate and on the scale of charges, which will be required for both the provision and maintenance of open space and the capital and commuted maintenance costs of off-site play equipment.

To discuss details or issues relating to your planning application, you will need to contact the department's Development Control Section.

You will normally be expected to retain and enhance features of wildlife and nature conservation value, including trees, woodlands, ponds and watercourses, regardless of the size of the development site. The Department's Ecologist and the Trees and Woodlands Officer can be contacted for advice.

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#### Amenity Open Space issues

##### Simon Calderbank

**Telephone:** 01942 404224

**Townships:**

- Standish/Aspull/Shevington
- Wigan North
- Wigan South
- Orell/Billinge/Winstanley

##### Dave Bilney

**Telephone:** 01942 404223

**Townships:**

- Leigh
- Atherton
- Tyldesley/Astley

Simon Calderbank

**Telephone:** 01942 404224

**Townships:** • Hindley/Abram

• Ashton/Bryn

• Golborne/Lowton

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### Trees and Woodlands

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**Andy Smallshaw**

**Telephone:** 01942 404233

**Development Control Support Service**

**Telephone:** 01942 488234

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### Ecology and nature conservation

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**Roz Park**

**Telephone:** 01942 404232

## Leisure and Culture Trust

The Play Officer for the Leisure and Culture Trust can advise you on your financial contribution to the capital and commuted maintenance costs, in lieu of play provision, and how the money will be spent.

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### Play Officer

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**Ms Debbie Freeman**

**Telephone:** 01942 488491

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WIGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

**Martin Kimber**

Director of Environmental Services

Wigan Council, Civic Buildings,

New Market Street, Wigan WN1 1RP



Environmental Services Department