

Public Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation **(Provision and Maintenance)** **Infrastructure Position Statement Topic Paper**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This paper considers the provision and maintenance of Public Open Space (POS) associated with new development, including informal recreational open space (IROS), outdoor sport facilities, provision for Children & Young People, allotments and natural and semi-natural open space (NSN). It excludes the provision of indoor sports facilities and strategic scale green infrastructure and nature recovery.

- **Informal Recreational Open Space (IROS):** Includes parks/public gardens, amenity green space and green corridors – these provide for informal recreation and access.
- **Outdoor Sports Facilities:** Includes all outdoor sports facilities whether naturally or artificially surfaced e.g. playing pitches, bowling greens and tennis courts. Including full sized Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs).
- **Provision for Children Young People:** All equipped children’s play areas, including provision for young people (skate parks, shelters etc)
- **Allotments:** An area of allotment plots used for the purpose of producing fruit, vegetables or flowers for personal use.
- **Natural & Semi-Natural green space (NSN):** Areas of green space where the primary purpose is one of wildlife and biodiversity conservation and value.

1.2 Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDs) is not considered usable POS for purpose of meeting policy requirements (see below), so is treated as additional to these requirements.

2.0 Policy Framework

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 98 states that *“Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.”* The South Gloucestershire Core Strategy (adopted Dec 2013) - policy CS24 (appendix 1), requires a range of public open space, sport and recreation facilities to be provided to support new developments and create sustainable communities (see above) in accordance with the NPPF.

2.2 Core Strategy policy CS24's provision standards were established through the South Gloucestershire Council Open Space Audit 2010. The Audit established these standards by using:

- An analysis of existing national, local standards and practices.
- The results of a comprehensive consultation process with stakeholders and local householders.
- Benchmarking of comparable standards used by other local authorities.
- The results of the mapping and audit of existing provision.

2.3 The mapping of existing provision is updated on a quarterly basis and is used to provide an up-to-date assessment to establish whether existing provision in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility is adequate to meet the needs of future residents from new residential development.

2.4 CS24 is applied to major development of 10 or more dwellings. Where the evidence has established a shortfall in the quantity, quality and/or accessibility of existing provision in the surrounding locality, the Council requires a range of public open space, sport and recreation facilities to be provided in accordance with the appropriate local standards set out in CS24. *Note, Table 1 below provides a summary of the quantity provision standards set out in the Core Strategy.*

Table 1. CS24 – Appendix 5 – Green Infrastructure, sport and recreation standards

Category of Open Space	Requirement - Minimum figures, hectares/1,000 population	Accessibility Standard
Informal recreational open space	1.4	12.5min walk / 600m
Natural and Semi-Natural green space	1.5	15 min walk / 720m
Outdoor Sports facilities	1.6	20 min walk / 1000m to playing pitches 22 min drive time to synthetic pitches, athletics track and golf courses
Provision for Children and Young People	0.25 (this may be located within the informal recreational open space)	10 min walk / 480m to children's play space 15 min walk / 720m to Young people's provision

Allotments	0.2	15 min walk / 720m
Total:	4.7 (On the basis that provision for children and young people can be located within the informal recreational open space).	

2.5 Core Strategy policy CS24 requires provision to be delivered on site unless it is demonstrated that partial or full off-site provision or enhancement creates a more acceptable solution.

2.6 Where provision with the minimum policy standards is not provided on site, the £amounts requested towards the provision and/or enhancement of off-site open space and future maintenance are calculated directly in accordance with the policy requirement to mitigate the effect of the proposed development on existing open space.

2.7 Average costs are set out below in tables 2 and 3. A full breakdown of costs can be provided on request. All costs are 2023/2024 figures and are subject to indexation using the Updating Percentages published by the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) for the Schedule of Rates for Grounds Maintenance 1987. Inflationary uplifts are applied annually after the April index figure is published.

2.8 **Capital Cost of Provision:** Average capital costs for the provision of the different types of open space are shown in Table 2 below; these exclude the cost of any land purchase that may be required:

Table 2. Average capital costs per square metre

Type of open space	Outdoor Sports facilities	Provision for Children and Young People	Natural and Semi Natural Green Space	Informal Recreation Open Space	Allotments
Average capital cost per square metre	£68.2070	£228.5462	£19.0059	£34.2972	£12.5078

2.9 Capital costs are based on a range of industry costs for the provision of open space facilities, and the maintenance costs are routinely tested through APSE (Association for Public Sector Excellence). They are therefore considered reasonable and fully justified to ensure standards of the appropriate national bodies are met e.g. Sport England, national sporting governing bodies, Fields in Trust, National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners and material relating to the Green Flag quality award scheme.

2.10 The costs reflect the type of spaces and facilities that the Council would expect to see delivered and are based on examples from other new developments, which have taken place within South Gloucestershire.

2.11 Maintenance Cost:

Where additional open space has been provided or existing provision enhanced to cater for the increased demand arising from development, the developer will be required to pay a contribution towards fifteen years of future maintenance. The average costs of maintaining the different types of open space provision are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Average maintenance costs per square metre

Type of open space	Outdoor Sports facilities	Provision for Children and Young People	Natural and Semi Natural Green Space	Informal Recreation Open Space	Allotments
Average Maintenance Cost per square metre for 15 years	£20.6440	£240.3181	£31.5289	£60.4549	£15.9484

2.12 The use of average maintenance costs based on typical landscapes has limitations; as such they need to be adjusted to take account of more unique designs and features. Upon this basis the figures set out can only be used as a guide. These figures do not include specialist features such as surface water infrastructure, toilets, teen shelters, bandstands and other features which can be included in conjunction with open space provision. The maintenance cost of such features/provision will need to be assessed separately.

2.13 The costs are not intended to influence the type of design that may be achieved on any given location; they must be developed to reflect site specific consideration and informed through the planning process. The design assessment for Public Open Space provision needs to be made on a site-by-site basis and in accordance with the adopted standards and national policy requirements.

2.14 **On-site open space maintenance:** Core Strategy policy CS24 also seeks appropriate arrangements are put in place to secure the satisfactory future maintenance of any open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities (for sport, recreation and play) that are provided in conjunction with new development. Where these are provided on site the Council may be willing to negotiate their adoption and future maintenance providing that the developer meets the cost associated with future maintenance and

all fees associated with land transfers. If the applicant proposes private management of POS and surface water infrastructure the Council includes provisions in s106 legal agreements that seek to ensure suitable in-perpetuity arrangements for operation, management and maintenance of all the public open spaces, ancillary open space and surface water infrastructure (SWI within POS that is not adoptable by a statutory undertaker). The Council has no statutory responsibility nor legal basis to insist on either approach.

- 2.15 The Council charges a fee (£74.86 per 100sq.m. plus £720.87 core service fee) to inspect the open spaces to ensure their compliance with the approved plans prior to transfer to a private management entity or other body. The on-site inspection fee is the 2023/2024 figure. The fee is subject to annual inflationary uplifts (uplifted annually after the April index figure is published).

3.0 **Delivery**

3.1 The Council is responsible for over 11,000 areas of green space, POS is though managed by a range of organisations, and in respect of new development increasingly by private management entities/management companies. Management companies can also range in their set-up and operation model, from very simple private entities funded purely by resident charges to complex stewardship models with social enterprise or charitable status and funded by a range of sources including resident charges, endowment funds and income from assets.

Table 4: Management models for different types of POS

Type of open space	Examples of ownership with on-going responsibility for management & maintenance
Informal recreational open space	South Gloucestershire Council Town & Parish Councils Private management entities/companies
Natural and Semi-Natural green space	South Gloucestershire Council Town & Parish Councils Private management entities/companies
Outdoor Sports facilities	South Gloucestershire Council (only at Page Park) Town & Parish Councils Private management entities/companies Schools Sports Clubs
Provision for Children and Young People	South Gloucestershire Council Town & Parish Councils Private management entities/companies
Allotments	South Gloucestershire Council Town & Parish Councils Private management entities/companies

4.0 **Funding**

4.1 Funding for the provision and maintenance of POS is complex and varied. It typically is derived from a range of sources, including council tax, parish precepts, grants, s106, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), resident charges and income from the use/hire of assets. New POS associated with new development when provided on-site is delivered 'in-kind' (by the developer). If it is not possible to deliver on-site due to site constraints or it would be preferable to improve a nearby open space then a financial contribution is agreed based on the costs in table 2 & 3 above, via a section 106 agreement. Costs associated with the delivery of POS are not usually considered prohibitive, such that they threaten the viability of a scheme. The use of private management entities is a mechanism that enables developers to minimise up front maintenance contributions that would otherwise be required by the Council or other bodies such as Parish & Town Councils, but clearly has implications for new residents in the form of monthly management charges. The Council has no powers to prescribe any particular approach to POS management.

5.0 **Current Assets**

5.1 The total amount of publicly accessible open space (POS) per 1,000 population in South Gloucestershire, according to our records, is shown in table 5 below. It shows the results from the Open Space Audit 2010 (based on South Gloucestershire 2007 population mid-year estimates) and the quantities available in 2022/23 (based on South Gloucestershire 2021 census population). The population estimate for South Gloucestershire from Census 2021 is approx. 290,400 which represents a 10% increase compared to the population recorded in 2011 of 262,800.

Table 5. Publicly accessible open space per 1,000 residents in South Gloucestershire

	Policy CS24 Standard (minimum) per 1,000 residents	Quantity per 1,000 residents (2010 Audit)	Quantity per 1,000 residents (2022/23)
Informal recreational open space	1.4ha	1.36ha	1.46ha
Natural and Semi-natural green space	1.5ha	1.69ha	4.61ha
Outdoor sports facilities	1.6ha	1.19ha	1.22ha
Provision for children and young people	0.25ha	0.059ha	0.066ha
Allotments	0.2ha	0.13ha	0.14ha

5.2 Table 5 shows that:

- **Informal Recreational Open Space**

Provision has increased and is now slightly more than the minimum standard. However, it is not evenly distributed throughout South Gloucestershire.

- **Natural and Semi-natural Green Space**

The 2010 figure was calculated on sites located within the urban analysis areas (East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area, North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area, Yate/Chipping Sodbury and Thornbury, excluding Sodbury Common). The overall provision was 5.71ha per 1,000 population. Although the current supply level across South Gloucestershire is now significantly above the recommended standard, this figure now also includes all N&SN green space within the authority's area (i.e. includes N&SN located in rural areas and Sodbury Common). Like IROS, Natural and Semi-natural greenspace is not evenly distributed across the authority's area. While the level of supply is high in its rural areas, it is significantly lower in urban areas in the district.

- **Outdoor Sports Facilities**

The current quantity of outdoor sport facilities, although improved, is still below the recommended provision standard of 1.6ha per 1000 population. An emerging Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan is based on assessment of existing sport facilities in the district and priorities highlighted by community sport clubs and sport governing bodies. It highlights shortfalls in grass pitches for football, cricket and rugby, a shortfall in 3G pitches for football and rugby training, problems of overmarking and overplay on pitches, poor quality of artificial pitches suitable for hockey, an undersupply of tennis courts in parks and lack of sports lighting on netball courts. It recommends directing S106 contributions to improving existing sites to increase capacity.

- **Provision for children and young people**

Although the position has improved, the current supply of equipped play space is below the recommended standard across the district.

- **Allotments**

The quantity standard for allotments was set higher than the supply recorded in the 2010 Audit. This was in recognition of the high level of interest in allotments and the large waiting list numbers. The level of interest in allotments remains high and there are still waiting lists across the district.

Note: Table 5 presents a district wide analysis. Availability of POS varies across the district. Requirements are therefore based on local accessibility standards (see Table 1). Table 5 only provides a very crude impression of POS availability and does not therefore preclude the need to undertake a detailed analysis of local provision levels in assessment of any new development proposals.

5.3 The annual monitoring statistics in general show a gradually improving position over the last decade, demonstrating that CS24 has been effective in providing different types of POS in scale with new development in the district, as well as securing investment through s106 to enhance existing POS assets and facilities.

5.4 Schemes that have delivered new outdoor sport in last 10 years include:

- Shaftesbury Park, Frenchay: completed in 2018 Shaftesbury Park was built to relocate The Dings RFC from their former home ground in Lockleaze, Bristol. Sport facilities include a full-size World Rugby compliant 3G pitch, a full-size grass pitch, a floodlit training pitch, 8 changing rooms, Sports hall, and S&C gym.
- Lockleaze Sport Centre, Lockleaze: completed in 2018. The facilities include a full-size World Rugby compliant 3G pitch and full-sized 4G football pitch both with sports lighting, 4G MUGA and several grass pitches.
- Hillside Gardens University of the West of England (UWE): opened in 2019. Facilities include two FA/FIFA approved 3G pitches with sports lighting, one of which is World Rugby compliant, plus artificial surface warm-up area, grass football pitches and training grids, changing rooms.
- Oaklands, Almondsbury: Home ground to North Bristol RFC, a full-size World Rugby compliant 3G pitch was installed in 2018 and is managed by Gloucestershire RFU
- Winterbourne Academy, Winterbourne: Facilities include a full-size World Rugby compliant 3G pitch which was resurfaced/installed in 2022.
- South Gloucestershire Stroud (WISE), Filton: facilities include a full size 3G rugby pitch installed in 2013.
- Lyde Green: 2 full size grass football pitches, changing pavilion, storage facilities and car parking were completed in 2018 and are run by a community sports club.
- Page Park, Staple Hill: has one senior grass football pitch, two 9v9 grass football pitches, one cricket pitch, floodlit tennis courts with pavilion, a bowling green with a pavilion. The Tennis Pavilion was refurbished, and a new timber toddler / junior play area provided in 2019. The tennis courts are currently subject to an LTA (Lawns Tennis Association) proposal to refurbish and install keypad gated access and pay to play booking system.

5.5 Significant s106 and CIL funding has been invested in projects to create, replace, or enhance outdoor sports facilities. Appendix 2 contains the S106 funding allocated for POS in Wards to outdoor sports projects. Parish & Town Councils also regularly spend their Neighbourhood proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy on POS areas.

5.6 Despite significant new facilities in the district and enhancement of existing facilities, it is clear local deficits still exist and are more evident in some areas compared to others.

5.7 New provision is planned on-site at several mixed-use neighbourhoods in the district and for some sites contributions will also be paid to enhance existing off-site outdoor sport. This provision is to meet needs of these new communities based on the s106 POS calculator and will not necessarily address existing deficits. Outline consents have been

granted for all developments listed below and, in some cases, Reserved Matters (RM) have been granted and sports facilities are operational. The sites are at different stages of planning and delivery; for some the sport facilities to be built are listed and for others a quantity is given and details will be determined through RM applications in due course. It should be noted that where RMs have not yet been granted or where school delivery plans affect planned dual use, outdoor sport provision may change. Table 6 shows the quantity or type of sports facilities that are in S106 agreements for the largest developments in the district.

Table 6: Sports facilities in S106 agreements for the major mixed use developments in the district.

Development / location	Outdoor sport in S106 Agreements
Lyde Green	New secondary school sports facilities are expected to be available for community use outside normal school hours and will include 6 wicket cricket pitch, cricket nets and cricket pavilion, 1 U9/U10 7v7 football pitch, 1x U11/u12 9v9 football pitch, 1x U18 / U17/youth 11v11 football pitch, 400m athletic track, MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) for 3 x netball and tennis courts with lighting, AGP (Artificial Grass Pitches) with lighting (Over 18, U17/18 and youth full pitch football, 2 x 7-aside cross pitch, Rugby U18 and over 18), U7/U8 mini football pitch
Filton airfield	The section 106 agreement and CPNN IDP includes 7.65 of dual use facilities in a new secondary school and 2.04Ha of dual use facilities in primary schools. The distribution of outdoor sport facilities and detail will be determined through Reserved Matters applications. S106 includes Outdoor Sport Facilities off site contributions of £1,534,788. Brabazon Park which will include pétanque and outdoor table tennis. Application P22/02113/O is currently under consideration and proposes an increase from 2675 to 6,500 dwellings. New destination park associated with Arena granted consent in 2022.
Berwick Green / Haw Wood	Outline consent includes primary school playing fields and sporting facilities on-site.
Beaumont Park / Fishpool Hill	Outline consent includes a primary school & playing fields and an off-site contribution towards outdoor sport.
Brooklands / Harry Stoke	Outline consent includes land offsite south of the ring road for sports pitches and a pavilion building and on-site MUGA.
East of Harry Stoke	S106 agreement for land South of the Railway includes 50,354sq.m. of outdoor sports facilities. Approved plans indicate 2 adult grass football pitches, 3 youth grass football pitches, 1 AGP, 1 MUGA, tennis courts and netball courts with a community hub and sport changing facilities. Details will come through reserved matters application. S106 for land North of the Railway includes a MUGA in POS and a contribution of £703,373.89 towards provision and/or enhancement and maintenance of outdoor sports facilities.

North Yate	The Outline consent includes school playing fields and changing to be used by the local community and Off-Site Open Spaces contributions of £1,500,271.60 capital and £454,065.40 for maintenance of open spaces including pitches and play. Masterplan indicates grass pitches in primary schools and grass pitches and training area in public open space. Consent P19/11377/RM has been granted for three grass pitches in POS northeast of the first primary school site: 1 x no football mini pitch U9/U10 and 2 x no. football mini pitches U7/U8. Dual use pitches will be designed into first primary school located to the northeast of the Local Centre.
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6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Access to green space is increasingly seen as necessary to sustain active and healthy lifestyles as well as provide climate benefits. CS24 has been effective in ensuring standards have not declined at a district level and indeed some improvement is evident. There remain though district wide and local deficits. The policy will continue to work in conjunction with a revised CS2, new Green Infrastructure Strategy & Biodiversity Net Gain SPDs. The policy will need updating and likely supplementing with further policy and guidance to respond to urban intensification, BNG and stewardship agendas in the coming years. Developers will continue to be required to meet the needs of their new residents. POS should therefore continue to be planned early and as an integral part of new developments.

Appendix 1 – Core Strategy Policy CS24

POLICY CS24 - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION STANDARDS

Green Infrastructure assets are integral to sustainable communities. Where existing Green Infrastructure provision, including informal recreational open space, outdoor sports facilities, playspace, allotments, and natural/semi-natural spaces are inadequate in terms of providing for the quantity, quality and accessibility to meet the projected needs arising from the future occupiers of new development, those occupiers' needs must be met by the new development, together with provision for subsequent management and maintenance.

Provision for Green Infrastructure, outdoor space, sport and recreation facilities will be sought according to the following principles:

1. new developments must comply with all the appropriate local standards of provision in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility
2. provision must be delivered on-site, unless it is demonstrated that partial or full off-site provision or enhancement creates a more acceptable proposal; and
3. the functionality and usability of spaces and facilities must be suitable for their intended purposes.

New developments may also be required to contribute to Green Infrastructure schemes identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the requirements contained within the Design Policy CS1. New Green Infrastructure should be an integral part of new employment areas, and should meet local objectives to be agreed as part of the planning application process. These spaces should adhere to the Green Infrastructure objectives (Policy CS2) and be managed to allow open access to both local workers and residents, unless it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding security issue such that access to local residents should be restricted.

Environments for play are required to be delivered as an integral part of site design within both public and semi-private communal open space areas.

Appendix 2: S106 funding allocated for POS in Wards across the district to outdoor sports projects

Ward	S106 funding allocated	Outdoor Sport Projects
Charfield	£687,267 cap / £269,080 rev	MUGA resurfacing St Andrews school Football pitch construction at Wotton CSF Outdoor sport and clubhouse extension at memorial playing field Changing for Charfield junior FC
Charlton and Cribbs	£2,783,515.67 cap / £1,287,731.04 rev	Rugby pitch and clubhouse upgrades Bristol Saracens RFC Changing room and floodlight improvements at Clifton RFC Upgrades to tennis and netball courts at Redmaids High School MUGA construction at Filton Leisure centre Drainage improvements at Aretians RFC Basketball upgrades in Patchway Sport court for older adults in Scott Park, Patchway
Chipping Sodbury & Cotswold Edge	£340,515.53 cap / £199,030.77 rev	Floodlight improvements Chipping Sodbury RFC, Sodbury tennis club Tennis court resurfacing and cricket practice facility at Hawkesbury Upton Football clubhouse improvements, mini tennis area and grounds maintenance equipment at The Ridings
Dodington	£174,275.24 cap / £97,038.89 rev	Installation of running track Kelston Close playing field
Emersons Green	£325,926.99 cap / £108,177.14 rev	Redevelopment of pavilion at King George V playing fields Redevelopment of changing rooms at Blackhorse Rd playing field Drainage improvements at Pomphrey Hill playing fields
Frampton Cotterell	£742,553 cap / £311,434 rev	Tennis court improvements, drainage and new 3G MUGA at Park playing fields MUGA at Tytherington Drainage and ancillary facilities at Coalpit Heath CC
Frenchay & Downend	£327,230 cap / £94,997 rev	Clubhouse extension and new tennis court at Cleeve Hill TC Floodlight improvements at Dings RFC Covered shooting area for Cleve Archers Cricket wicket upgrades at Frenchay CC Tennis and pavilion upgrades at Bromley Heath playing fields Changing/toilet facilities Frenchay Tennis Club
Hanham	£254,556 cap / £140,208 rev	Pavilion improvements at Hanham CC and Hanham Common Install electronic access gate, tennis coaching equipment, maintenance equipment and kitchen/pavilion upgrades at Woodlands TC Floodlight installation, fencing, paths and stands at Greenbank Road playing field for AEK Boco FC
Kingswood	£66,194 cap / £56,833 rev	Pavilion improvements at Southey Park, Kingswood for Bristol Rovers Supporters Junior Football Club Pavilion improvements at Kingswood Bowls Club
Longwell Green	£82,140.22 cap / £54,805.83 rev	Shelter parking racks and drainage improvements at Greenbank Road Playing Field upgrades of the boiler and shower facilities at Longwell Green Community Centre for Longwell Green Sports FC
New Cheltenham	£86,122 cap / £25,667 rev	Improvements to grass pitches at Blackhorse Road Playing Field Pavilion improvements for AFC Mangotsfield
Parkwall and Warmley	£86,021 cap / £77,421 rev	Drainage improvements, changing upgrades and maintenance equipment at Coronation Park
Severn Vale	£46,569 cap / £43,119 rev	Car park improvements North Bristol RFC

		Clubhouse improvements Almondsbury Sports and Recreation Centre
Staple Hill & Mangotsfield	£176,979 cap / £100,209 rev	Enhancement of Page Park Tennis Pavilion Pavilion improvements and grounds maintenance machinery purchase at Soundwell Playing Field for Bristol Rovers Supporters Junior Football Club Pavilion redevelopment King George V playing field
Stoke Gifford	£46,419 cap / £31,102 rev	Cricket nets at Trust Ground Drainage and bowling machine and cricket sight screens Frenchay CC Disabled tennis equipment and electronic access gate Downend & Frenchay tennis club
Thornbury	£249,655 cap / £80,583 rev	Tennis fencing at Munday Playing Fields Tennis court improvements Thornbury TC Changing room extension Thornbury Rugby Club
Woodstock	£98,681 cap / £49,533 rev	Toilet and storage facilities at Tenniscourt Road Playing Field AEK Boco Football Club Pavilion, floodlighting and car park improvements at Deanery Road Playing Field Kingswood RFC
Yate Central	£414,106 cap / £227,85 rev	Pavilion extension of Sunnyside Playing Field Improvements at Yate Outdoor Sports Complex Enhancements at Sunnyside Lane Tennis Courts Irrigation at Yate Bowls club
Yate North	£480,810 cap / £177,655 rev	Improvements at Yate Outdoor Sports Complex Floodlight and changing room improvements Chipping Sodbury RFC, The Ridings, Floodlight improvements Sodbury Tennis Club Grounds maintenance equipment The Ridings Netball/Tennis Court improvements Brinsham Green School Drainage improvements, athletics equipment for disabled athletes at Yate Outdoor Sports Complex