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| New Housing and the Provision of Recreation Facilities Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) |
| Draft December 2019 |

Document Control

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This document requires the following approvals.

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| Carol Wardle | Cabinet Member for Planning, Development and Housing |  |  |
| Paul Moore | Head of Planning |  |  |

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# Introduction

Access to quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation are key elements in promoting sustainable communities, and we would expect new development to include, or have safe and convenient access to, high quality, well designed informal open space including children’s play facilities, as well as a range of sporting facilities.

This Supplementary Planning Document revises and updates the Council’s ‘Provision of Recreational Open Space in New Housing’ Supplementary Planning Document, which was adopted in March 2008.

## Summary

New housing developments of more than 10 dwellings will normally be expected to:

* Either provide an area of informal open space on site (usually those developments of more than 100 bedrooms) or make a financial contribution (by means of a Section 106 Agreement) to the provision or improvement of off-site informal open space (see Chapter 2);
* Either make a financial contribution (by means of a Section 106 Agreement) towards the improvement of nearby children’s play facilities or provide them on site, depending on the circumstances (see Chapter 3);
* Make a financial contribution (by means of a Section 106 Agreement) towards the provision / improvement of sports facilities (see Chapter 4).

## Policy Context

This Supplementary Planning Document supports and expands upon policies set out in the Council’s Local Plan, in particular the following policies:

*Core Strategy Policy G6 – Enhancing Green Infrastructure*

This policy aims to sustain and enhance a green network in the borough and provide a high quality environment, protecting and improving green spaces and water bodies. Priorities are to improve opportunities for recreation in urban areas and the countryside, improve opportunities for healthy lifestyles, and managing and responding to environmental risks such as flooding and the impacts of climate change.

**Local urban open spaces** will be protected, improved and created, and the focus will be on improvements to the quality of accessible greenspace close to where people live and work (prioritising those areas with the greatest deficiency or need e.g. poor health or lack of private gardens), securing tree planting and other urban greening in new areas of public open space in town centres and housing growth areas, protecting allotments and supporting local food growing, enhancing flood risk management and protecting and improving urban wildlife value and natural areas.

**Urban areas and new development** where the focus will be on incorporating green infrastructure into new development, sustainable urban drainage, increasing the number of street trees,greening housing areas and main roads, developing new green spaces, and incorporating green roofs and walls in new development.

The policy expects new residential development to provide or contribute financially towards recreational open space, including maintenance, in accordance with the standards set out in the Provision of Recreational Open Space in New Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (which are replicated in this document, which updates the Provision of Recreational Open Space in New Housing SPD).

*Core Strategy Policy C8 – Improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities*

We will support and promote the provision of better community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities, and ensure that development and wider regeneration schemes contribute, through land assembly and financial contributions, to new or improved facilities where development will increase demand and there is a recognised deficiency.

*Core Strategy Policy DM2 – Delivering planning contributions and infrastructure*

As well as reflecting local planning policies, this document also has regards to the provisions set out in national planning guidance, in particular the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

*National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)*

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. 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. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreation provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.

## Developments to which this document will apply

This document will apply to all residential developments of more than 10 dwellings, regardless of location, including conversions of existing buildings to residential use and where areas of housing are demolished and replaced by new dwellings. The Council will apply the provisions of this document on the basis of an estimated population for each development, which will equate to the number of bedrooms in the development (1 person assumed per bedroom); if it is unclear from plans whether a room constitutes a bedroom or not, it will be at the Council’s discretion to make a determination on the matter.

It would usually be expected that developers will pay any required financial contributions or sign a Section 106 legal agreement prior to planning permission for the development being issued (in the case of Section 106 agreements, the developer also paying the Council’s legal costs). When a Section 106 agreement is entered into, this will usually require that the money should be paid prior to the commencement of the development. In situations where there are delayed payments, the amount required may be higher than if it had been paid without delay.

Where outline planning applications are made which do not specify the number of bedrooms, a planning obligation should be entered into which specifies that the developer must make contributions in accordance with the above details which will be calculated once the number of bedrooms is known.

It is possible on occasion that monies received may be pooled in order to provide particular facilities or improvements.

# Informal Open Space

*Relevant Core strategy Policy: G6*

Informal open space is outdoor space which is suitable for active, informal recreation by people of all ages, safely accessible and available to the general public. There are many kinds of spaces and areas of different size, location and character that can come under the umbrella of informal open space, such as areas of grass, woodland or water bodies, walking / cycling routes and parks. As well as providing opportunities for informal games and passive recreation, these spaces have general amenity value and make an essential contribution to the quality and character of the urban fabric and improve quality of life, encourage biodiversity and help to tackle the effects of climate change.

The provision of amenity or incidental landscaping not intended for recreation will not count towards any open space requirement.

New residential developments of more than ten dwellings will need to either provide informal open space on site or make a financial contribution towards the provision / improvement of off-site informal open space (including 20-year maintenance costs), if there is insufficient provision of such space in the vicinity of the development of the quality and quantity to meet the increased demand (based on the Council’s standard of 1 hectare per 1000 population) created by the new development. This can be determined by reference to the Council’s Open Space survey and other relevant data and strategies.

*The Open Space Survey*

The Council’s Open Space Survey provides a qualitative and quantitative assessment of informal open space in the borough. It outlines deficiencies on a ward basis and can also be used to assess quality of particular open spaces in the vicinity of a new development. It is available in the form of GIS data and an associated report.

*On-site informal open space*

Residential developments of 100 or more bedrooms will normally be expected to provide an area of informal open space on site, the required area being calculated on the basis of the Council’s standard of 1 hectare per 1000 population, assuming one person per bedroom for the purposes of the calculation. Thus, for example, a development of 800 bedrooms would require 0.8 of a hectare.

If the developer intends to hand over the responsibility for long-term maintenance to the local authority, this is something which should be clearly agreed prior to the approval of the development, and transfer should only take place when the Council is satisfied that all relevant planning conditions have been discharged and the works completed to their satisfaction. The payment of a commuted maintenance sum will be appropriate in these circumstances; normally this should cover the maintenance cost for a period of 20 years, and should be calculated in terms of cost per square metre.

There may be circumstances, for example on tight urban sites where high density development is appropriate in design terms, when the Council and the developer agree that an area smaller than that which would be required in accordance with the Council’s standard is acceptable, with the shortfall compensated for by the payment of a financial contribution to off-site improvement / provision.

The design, layout and location for on-site open space should be agreed with the Council at an early stage in the planning application process, preferably prior to submission of any application. On-site open space should be centrally located and well overlooked, and should conform with the design principles set out in the Council’s Design Guide Supplementary Planning Documents. The provision of informal open space on site may also provide the benefit of preserving a feature of natural interest / biodiversity value on the site, for example a pond or area of woodland.

*Financial contributions for off-site provision / improvement of informal open space*

Developments of more than 10 units but under 100 bedrooms would normally be expected to make a financial contribution towards the provision / improvement of an area of informal recreational open space in the locality which would be of direct benefit to, and easily and safely accessible by foot in 20 minutes or under by, the future residents of the development.

Any financial contribution required would be calculated in accordance with the Council’s standard of 1 hectare of informal open space per 1000 population (i.e. 10 square metres per person), and for the purposes of this we assume one person per bedroom of the development. Thus the contribution required would be:

Current cost of laying out + 20 year maintenance x number of (+ 5%

of 10 square metres of open space bedrooms admin fee)

(Please see the supporting note on the Council’s website in order to calculate likely contributions for a particular development using the most up-to-date costs).

*Allotments*

On large strategic developments we may require the provision of allotments, if appropriate.

# Children’s Play Facilities

*Relevant Core Strategy Policies: C7, C8 and G6*

The Council’s Playground Provision Strategy will be used as the evidence base to inform the following provisions.

*Developments of more than 10 dwellings and less than 400 bedrooms*

If the development is within 500 metres of a local area for play, i.e. a play area designed for both very young children and children who can go out to play independently, and the play area is safely and conveniently accessible to the residents of the new development and does not require investment to meet the needs of the area including the new development, then no contribution will be required. If however it does require investment to meet those needs, then a financial contribution will be calculated as follows (based on the Fields In Trust standard of 0.25 hectares per 1000 population and assuming one person per bedroom of the new development):

Current cost of laying out + 20 year maintenance x number of (+5%

of 2.5 square metres of Local Area for Play bedrooms admin fee)

or equivalent

If there is no existing provision within the specified distance of the development, on-site provision will be required in order to meet the needs of the new development.

*Developments of 400 or more bedrooms*

* + - * 1. If the development is within 1000 metres of a neighbourhood area for play, i.e. a play area which caters for older as well as younger children, and the play area is safely and conveniently accessible to the residents of the new development and does not require investment to meet the needs of the area including the new development, then no contribution will be required. If however it does require investment to meet those needs, then a financial contribution will be calculated as follows (based on the Fields In Trust standard of 0.25 hectares per 1000 population and assuming one person per bedroom of the new development):

Current cost of laying out + 20 year maintenance x number of (+5%

of 2.5 square metres of Local Area for Play bedrooms admin fee)

or equivalent

If there is no existing provision within the specified distance of the development, on-site provision will be required in order to meet the needs of the new development.

If the development is within 1000 metres of a Multi-Use Games area (as defined by Fields In Trust) or equivalent, and the Area to the residents of the new development and does not require investment to meet the needs of the area including the new development, then no contribution will be required. If however it does require investment to meet those needs, then a financial contribution will be calculated as follows (based on the Fields In Trust standard of 0.25 hectares per 1000 population and assuming one person per bedroom of the new development):

Current cost of laying out + 20 year maintenance x number of (+5%

of 2.5 square metres of Local Area for Play bedrooms admin fee)

or equivalent

If there is no existing provision within the specified distance of the development, on-site provision will be required in order to meet the needs of the new development.

*On-site provision*

The design, layout and location of any on-site play facilities must be agreed with the Council (both Planning and Environmental Management Services) at an early stage of the planning application process, preferably prior to submission of any application. They should be in open locations, overlooked by the fronts of houses and safely accessible from all the dwellings on the new development. Play provision for younger children should be located at least 10 metres away from the boundaries of any residential property and at least 20 metres away from the original walls of any dwelling and facilities for older children should be located at least 30 metres away from any property boundaries. Particular regard should be had to the location of seating so that it does not cause a nuisance.

*Exceptions*

Whilst the majority of new housing is not likely to be age-specific, and generally it should be assumed that the future residents could come from all age groups, there may be exceptions to this which could affect the type of facilities required. For example, the residents of sheltered housing are not likely to require access to children’s play facilities, and it would not be necessary to provide these.

# Sports Facilites

*Relevant Core strategy Policies: C8 and G6*

For the purposes of this document, sports facilities are those which are available for public use and clearly laid out for, and frequently used for, sports; examples are football, rugby and cricket pitches, athletic tracks, tennis courts, swimming pools, sports halls, gyms and bowling greens. They can be outdoor or indoor.

The Council’s Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Strategy contain the evidence which can be used to estimate the nature and level of need generated from a new development, and how those needs can be met (i.e. whether existing provision can meet them or if there is a requirement for new / improved provision). This will be used to inform decisions on whether financial contributions will be required from new developments and how and where any contributions will be spent.

Developments of more than 10 dwellings will normally be expected to make a financial contribution towards the provision / improvement of sports facilities, ideally within reasonable walking distance of the development but potentially anywhere in the same Township, particularly the ‘sports hubs’, or possibly elsewhere in the borough, but in all cases the facilities should be easily accessible by public transport. For new facilities any section 106 Agreement should secure any appropriate ancillary facilities, such as changing rooms, which may be necessary.

Any financial contribution required would be calculated in accordance with the Council’s standard of 1.1 hectare of sports provision per 1000 population (i.e. 11 square metres per person), and we assume one person per bedroom of the development. Thus the contribution required would be

Current cost of laying out + 20 year maintenance x number of (+ 5%

of 11 square metres of sports provision bedrooms admin fee)

(Please see the supporting note on the Council’s website in order to calculate likely contributions for a particular development using the most up-to-date costs. This note is reviewed annually).

*On site provision of sports facilities*

There are likely to be some occasions, particularly with major strategic sites, where it would be considered appropriate for developments to provide sports facilities on site. This would be considered on a site by site basis, taking into account the evidence provided by the Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategies.



Rochdale Borough Council

Strategic Planning Team

Number One Riverside

Smith Street

Rochdale OL16 1YH

 rochdale.gov.uk

 01706 924252

 strategic.planning@rochdale.gov.uk