

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

- 10.54 This policy sets out how development should protect and enhance existing open space, sport and recreation facilities and where appropriate, provide additional open space and facilities to meet identified need.

Policy PE10 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

The council will seek to ensure that the borough's network of open space is protected, managed, enhanced, and where appropriate expanded, for formal and informal sport and recreation, and as part of a multi-functional green and blue network.

Protection of open space

Development will need to provide an assessment of the existing open space value of a site. The assessment should be proportionate to the scale of development proposed and the potential impacts on open space, sport and recreation facilities.

Proposals that would involve the development of existing open space will only be permitted where they are in accordance with the criteria set out in national planning policy.

The council's emerging open space assessment will provide information on existing provision across the borough and inform development regarding the quality, quantity and accessibility standards that should be met to ensure that everyone has access to high-quality open space close to where they live. The quantity standard will provide a basis for deciding whether a surplus or deficit exists.

Within existing open spaces, supporting and/or ancillary development which does not have an adverse effect on the environmental and open character, appearance and function of open space will be supported.

Provision of new and enhanced open space, sport and recreation facilities

Major residential development must also:

- a) provide an assessment of the need for new and/or enhanced open space, sport and recreation facilities resulting from the development; and,
- b) contribute to achieving the council's overall standards for open space, sport and recreation, and the management and maintenance of any facilities provided or improved, proportionate to the additional demand expected to be generated.

Proposals should set out how they will help to:

- c) improve the quantity and/or quality of publicly accessible open space, sport and recreation facilities in the local area;
- d) improve and connect the existing network of open space with the walking, cycling and active travel network, wherever possible; and,

- e) address any quantitative, qualitative and accessibility deficiencies revealed through an open space assessment or any related strategic study of open space provision in Rochdale.

Major development of less than 100 bedrooms is unlikely to deliver meaningful on-site open space provision, and the council will therefore require a section 106 contribution to off-site provision, delivered in accordance with needs and priorities identified in the borough's open space assessment. The contributions required per bedroom are set out on the council's website and will be updated in line with inflation.

For development of 100 bedrooms or more, suitable on-site provision will be required unless it is demonstrated that open space needs would be achieved more appropriately through off-site provision, for example, where the development is within easy access of appropriate existing open space, and it is therefore more logical to enhance existing facilities.

Where on-site provision is needed, the proposals should incorporate substantial open space and facilities to support the new homes, including children's equipped play areas and, where appropriate, facilities for older children and teenagers. Open space within new development should be planned and located to deliver maximum public benefit and high-quality place making. Incidental, small areas of urban greening will generally not constitute public open space nor contribute to achieving the standards.

The design and specification of any new or enhanced provision should be agreed with the council and proposals must include suitable arrangements and funding for their ongoing maintenance and to ensure their continued public access.

Open space standards

These standards are derived from the Fields in Trust Guidance for Open Space Provision and Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards and will be updated based on the evidence provided by the council's emerging open space assessment.

Area-wide standards

These are aspirational standards which set headline targets for open space provision across the whole borough:

- f) 3ha per 1,000 population of publicly accessible greenspace;
- g) Formal sports provision in accordance with the Sport England calculator and up to date Playing Pitch Strategy;
- h) As a minimum, everyone to have access to a variety of good quality green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home. This standard has been adopted to prioritise quality and accessibility for all;
- i) Quality standard – publicly accessible greenspace meets identified standards for different types of open space.

Development standards

These standards provide the basis for contributions from new development to borough-wide provision:

Type of open space	Quantity standard (min per 1000 pop'n)	Accessibility standard (maximum distance between dwelling and nearest open space of this type)
Accessible local open space – this includes parks, allotments and amenity greenspace	0.9ha	At least 0.5ha within 200m (based on Natural England's Doorstep Standard)
Natural / semi-natural greenspace – includes Country Parks, woodland and nature reserves	1.8ha	1km (based on NE Neighbourhood Standard)
Provision for children	0.25ha	LAP – 100m; LEAP – 400m NEAP - 1km
Formal outdoor sport and recreation – includes playing pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens and provision for young people e.g. MUGAs	In accordance with the Sport England calculator and the needs assessment and site-specific recommendations within the council's latest Playing Pitch Strategy.	

Reasoned Justification

- 10.55 The requirement for development to provide an assessment of the existing open space value of a site does not apply to householder applications, applications for change of use, listed building consent and advertising. The council will exercise discretion and take a proportionate approach.
- 10.56 As set out in national planning policy, access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of communities, and can deliver wider economic, social and environmental benefits.
- 10.57 The NPPF requires planning policies to 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 recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.
- 10.58 Places for Everyone highlights the importance of ensuring the continued availability of, and easy access to, a high-quality range of sport and recreation facilities, to achieve key objectives such as improving the health of residents and making Greater Manchester a more attractive place to live and visit.
- 10.59 The council's emerging open space assessment will provide up-to-date evidence of the provision of open space across the borough and identify locations for different types of new and/or enhanced open space to meet identified need. It will also provide evidence that the council will use to review and update the standards set out in this policy.
- 10.60 Open space is an important part of the borough's green and blue network, and this policy should also be read alongside the policies for green and blue infrastructure. As green infrastructure, open space also provides a wide range of additional benefits to

society, known as ecosystem services. This includes helping to mitigate and adapt to climate change, reduce flood risk, and improve air and water quality.

- 10.61 Open space refers to a broad range of types of open space which have public value, whether that be for formal or informal sport and recreation, or the provision of visual amenity and contact with nature within an urban landscape. It includes both public and private spaces but excludes private gardens. The table below provides a brief description of the different types of open space.
- 10.62 All open space, regardless of size, typology, accessibility or ownership, contributes to Rochdale's green infrastructure. It provides a wide range of public benefits including physical and mental health and wellbeing, helping to mitigate the impacts of environmental change, supporting nature recovery, and improving the attractiveness of places to live and work. It is therefore important that all open spaces are protected from development.
- 10.63 All identified open space above 0.2ha is identified on the Policies Map. Areas of open space not shown on the Policies Map remain protected by the provisions of this policy and are subject to the application of the exceptions test in national policy.
- 10.64 It is important to note that the standards are based on public open space, defined as sites that are accessible to the public and perform a role in the local community. The total amount of publicly accessible open space is therefore not necessarily the same as the overall amount of open space in the borough.

Open Space Typology	Description
Allotments	Opportunities for people grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
Amenity greenspace	Most commonly but not exclusively found in housing areas. Includes informal recreation green spaces and village greens.
Cemeteries and churchyards	Cemeteries and churchyards.
Civic space	Hard surfaced areas usually located within town or city centres.
Green corridors	Linear natural infrastructure, such as trees and plants, that link up other green and open spaces to form a green urban network.
Parks and formal gardens	Includes urban parks and formal gardens. Parks usually contain a variety of facilities and may have one of more of the other types of open space within them.
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	Includes country parks, nature reserves, publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands, wetlands and wasteland. Does not include open countryside unless a self-contained site.
Formal outdoor sports provision	Usually in the form of pitches or other sports provision, such as football, rugby or cricket pitches as well as tennis courts or bowling greens.
Children's play areas	Areas designed primarily with equipped play facilities for younger children.

Informal outdoor sports (e.g. MUGAs, skate parks, basketball)	Areas designed primarily for teenagers and older children
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