

Planning Policy Review

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and replaces the majority of planning policy guidance notes comprising Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS); this includes *PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation*. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions and guides policy development in Local Plans.

Guidance contained in the PPSs and PPGs are no longer relevant. Development must now be considered in relation to policies detailed in the NPPF. The following paragraphs in the NPPF are relevant to this Open Spaces, Sport and Recreational Facilities Audit and Assessment.

Promoting Healthy Communities

Paragraph 70 of the NPPF advises that planning policies should plan positively, including for the provision and use of shared spaces to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

The NPPF sets out the importance of the planning system in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities with local planning authorities creating a shared vision with communities. Paragraph 73 states that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities and planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.

It goes on to say that 'assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sport and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision are required. The Open Space, Sports and Recreation Audit and Assessments conform to the principles set out in this paragraph.

Paragraph 74 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken showing the land to be surplus to requirements; the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provisions; or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision. The NPPF defines open space as any land or water of public value which offers important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity (Annex 2, p.54).

The following paragraphs are also relevant to this Open Space, Sports and Recreation Audit and Assessment.

Paragraph 76 states that local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify green areas of particular importance to them that may warrant special protection through designation as 'Local Green Spaces'. Land with this designation will be

protected from development other than in exceptional circumstances. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

Delivering sustainable development

Paragraph 18 states that the government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity and to meet the challenges of global competition and a low carbon future. Paragraph 21 notes that investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations and that policies should seek to recognise and address potential barriers to investment.

In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should:

- Set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which encourages sustainable economic growth;
- Set criteria or identify strategic sites for local and inward investment to match the strategy and meet anticipated needs;
- Support existing business sectors and identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area;
- Plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries;
- Identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement; and
- Facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit.

Supporting a prosperous rural economy

Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development (paragraph 28, page 9). To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

Promoting sustainable transport

Paragraph 30 of the NPPF states that encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.

It also states that planning policies should aim for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.

Requiring good design

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people. It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes (paragraphs 56 and 57).

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

The planning system has a role to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Valued landscapes and ecosystems should be protected, with development prevented from adversely affecting soil, air or water, or from causing noise pollution and land instability. Effective use of land by re-using previously developed land should be encouraged and impacts on biodiversity minimised. (Paragraph 109, 111)

Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should also be made between the hierarchy of international, national and local designated sites and so that protection gives appropriate weighting to their importance and contribution that they make to wider ecological networks. Local planning authorities should set out a strategic approach to their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure. (Paragraph 113, 114)

Conservation of landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) should be given great weight. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations. To minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should:

- Plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries;
- Identify and map components of the existing ecological networks;
- Promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan;
- Aim to prevent harm to geological conservation interests; and
- Where Nature Improvement Areas are identified in Local Plans, consider specifying the types of development that may be appropriate in these Areas. (Paragraph 115)

The NPPF states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

- If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or compensated for then planning permission should be refused;
- Proposed development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) should not be permitted;

- Development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted;
- Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged;
- Planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats and the loss of veteran trees unless the need for the development in that location clearly outweighs the loss; and
- The following wildlife sites should be given the same protection as European sites:
 - Potential Special Protection Areas (SPA) and possible Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);
 - Listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
 - Sites identified as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites, SPAs, SACs or Ramsar sites.

Sport England has produced a summary document, *The Planning Policy Framework- Planning for Sport* which highlights areas of the NPPF which relate to sport development and the implementation of Sport England's Strategy 2012-2017.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

On 6th March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched Planning Practice Guidance as a web-based resource and replaced many of the previous Planning Policy Guidance documents. It provides a more simple way for documents to be found and it can link easily between the NPPF and relevant guidance. The guidance will be updated when it is appropriate.

The relevant section is 'Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space' which is broken down into the sub-categories below:

Open space, sports and recreation facilities

The Planning Practice Guidance states that open space should be taken into account in planning for new development as well as considering proposals that may affect existing open space. Open space can be present in many forms and can provide health and recreational benefits to people who are living and working nearby. The guidance also states that open space can have an ecological value and contribute to green infrastructure; is an important part of the landscape and setting of built development; and an important component in the achievement of sustainable development. Local Planning Authorities must assess the need for open space and opportunities for new provision.

Sport England produced 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities: How to Undertake and Apply Needs Assessments for Sport' in 2013 this is referred to in the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities PPG. This guidance enables local authorities to meet the requirements of the NPPF, in particular paragraph 73, "Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative of qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area."

Local green space designation

Planning Practice Guidance sets out Local Green Space designation as a “way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities”. Land is designated as Local Green Space in Local or Neighbourhood Plans. The green space area will need to meet the following criteria set out in the NPPF however whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion. The NPPF states that the Local Space designation should only be used:

- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particularly local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

Design Council (CABE)

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) was the UK Government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space between 1999 and 2011. CABE merged with the Design Council in 2011 and continues to offer expert advice on the built environment.

Set up as a specialist unit of CABE in 2003, CABE Space helped public, private and voluntary organisations to understand the benefits of well-planned, designed, managed and maintained public space.

CABE Space publications continue to be made available through the Design Council including:

Open space strategies: Best practice guidance (2009)

CABE Space, together with the Mayor of London, updated earlier CABE Space guidance *Green space strategies: a good practice guide (2004)* and combined it with an update of the guidance for London *Mayor's guide to preparing open space strategies: best practice guidance of the London Plan (2004)*.

Open space standards provide an easy-to use, transparent foundation for the negotiation of planning agreements, providing planning authorities with a robust method for assessing the type, amount, location and quality of provision needed in an area.

Quantity, quality and accessibility standards need to be set for each typology of open space.

The best way to set out standards is:

- Quantity standards: area of open space per thousand population;
- Quality standards: a description of the required design and management standards, including inclusive design standards. This also provides an aspiration for existing spaces where improvements are needed and a requirement for new ones, provided by developers. The audit data should be considered in spatial terms; for example is there any evidence of vandalism in a particular neighbourhood or are the poorest quality parts grouped or dispersed across the area?; and

- Accessibility standards: a distance threshold (for example, 400 metres) that takes into account any physical barriers to movement and the location of entrances to open space.

The *Green Flag Award* criteria provide the basis for a quality standard for green spaces and can be adapted to suit other open spaces. Sport England provides quality standards for sports facilities, including access for disabled people, and Play England has information on what makes a quality play space.

Natural England is promoting the *Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt)* (this is reviewed in detail below).

The Woodland Trust has developed the *Woodland Access Standard (WAST)*, which complements ANGSt. It recommends that everyone should have access to woodland of at least 2 hectares within 500 metres of their home, and of at least 20 hectares within 4 kilometres.

Sport England

Sport England takes a focussed and planned approach to the provision of facilities and opportunities to play sport, providing strategic information regarding sport in England and the Government's sporting objectives. Sport England aims to ensure positive planning for sport, enabling the right facilities to be provided in the right places, based on robust and up-to-date assessments of need for all levels of sport and all sectors of the community.

These principles are based on helping local authorities to prepare robust and up to date assessments to meet the requirements of Paragraph 73 of the NPPF, provide a clear approach that is applicable to a wide-range of indoor and outdoor facilities, ensure a tailored approach to the assessment and providing an approach for formal sport and recreation not including general open space.

Sport England must be consulted on development proposals affecting any sports facilities (playing fields, sports pitches) at any time if a sports facility is identified in a development plan.

The following publications relate to sports provision and the national sporting objectives:

A Sporting Habit for Life: Sport England Strategy (2013-2017)

The aim of this Strategy is to increase the number of people taking on and keeping a sporting habit for life, to create more opportunities for young people, to nurture and develop talent, to provide the right facilities in the right places, to support local authorities and to unlock local funding and ensure opportunities for communities.

Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: An Approach to Developing and Delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy (2013)

This document provides a recommended approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy and replaces Sport England's *'Towards a Level Playing Field: A Guide to the Production of Playing Pitch Strategies' (2003)*. There are five recommended stages: preparing and tailoring the approach, gathering information and views on the supply of and demand for provision, assessing the supply and demand information and views, developing the strategy and delivering the strategy and keeping it robust and up-to-date.

Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities: How to Undertake and Apply Needs Assessments for Sports (2013)

This guide provides the recommended approach for undertaking an assessment of need for indoor and outdoor sports facilities. It is intended that the guide will assist local authorities with meeting the requirements of the NPPF. The guidance splits the assessment process into three stages: preparing and tailoring the response, gathering information and bringing the information together. The results of the assessment are then applied to deliver key priorities.

National Children's Bureau (NCB)

The National Children's Bureau is the leading charity which aims to improve the lives of children and young people, especially the most vulnerable. Play England is part of the NCB children's charity.

Between October 2002 and April 2003, a review of children's play was undertaken. The review considered the needs and aspirations, and play of children between the ages of 0 to 16 years.

The report noted the following four principles for successful projects:

- They are centred on children and young people – the most successful play spaces focus on a neighbourhood rather than trying to cater for a whole town;
- They have an attractive location with high quality play opportunities;
- They fit in well with local circumstances; and
- They give both children and young people and parents a sense of security.

The report promotes the use of school facilities out of hours as these provide additional play opportunities and space for young people. Young people were questioned as to the type of facility they would like to see, it was concluded young people appreciate both sites where supervising adults are present, and sites where supervising adults are absent.

Suggested play facilities include:

- Adventure playgrounds;
- Play centres;
- Youth cafes;
- Bike tracks;
- Skateparks; and
- Informal shelter and youth shelters.

The report considers the appropriate size of provision for young people and children, consultation questioned the benefits of providing a small number of large-scale sites in comparison to a larger number of smaller local sites. Results indicate young people prefer a large number of smaller facilities which are close to their home to meet friends on an informal basis.

Play England

Play England is an organisation whose primary vision is for England to be a country where all children and young people can fully enjoy their right to play. The organisation is a founding member of the Wild Network, collaboration between organisations to reverse the trend of children losing touch with the natural world.

Play England's vision is for England to be a country where everybody can fully enjoy their right to play throughout their childhood and teenage years, as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 31 and the Charter for Children's Play.

To achieve this, Play England aims to ensure that:

- All children and young people have the freedom - time, space, permission and opportunity - to play throughout their childhood and teenage years;
- All residential neighbourhoods are child friendly places where children and young people can regularly play outside; and
- Everyone is aware of the importance of play - outdoors and indoors - as part of children and young people's daily lives.

'Promoting Healthy Cities' Publication (Oct 2014) Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)

The RTPI have published a document tackling the role of planning in creating healthy cities. The report calls for the UK to develop a more integrated strategies for healthy place making, gather greater intelligence on the social and economic determinants of health and reform and strengthen institutions to ensure integration of health policies and involve professions and communities in the decision making process.

The paper states that planning from development management and infrastructure to the location of health and community services can play a crucial role in creating environments that enhance people's health and wellbeing.

The Parks Alliance

The Parks Alliance is a membership organisation for the UK's greenspace organisations and stakeholders seeking to build a secure future for parks and green spaces. They work to:

- Promote the issues and developments to enable parks and open spaces and the people who use them to thrive; and
- Understand and share best practice in the management and care of parks and open spaces within the sector and more widely.

LOCAL STRATEGIC POLICY

The Local Plan

The Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough (PBW) is being prepared to help guide the future planning decisions in the area. It will sit alongside The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) which is also under review. Both documents will cover the borough for the period 2011 to 2031. The JCS will set out strategic policies for the area. The Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough will add local detail to these strategic policies, but will not need to repeat policies contained within the JCS or those within the National Planning Policy Framework. The aim is to adopt the JCS by December 2015 and the PBW by January 2017. Together these documents will both form the 'Local Plan' for the borough, which will be the basis for making decisions about planning applications. It is helpful to think of these two documents as 'Part 1' (the JCS) and 'Part 2' (the PBW) – both of which make up the entire Local Plan.

The PBW will replace the Town Centre Area Action Plan (adopted 2009), the saved policies from The Borough of Wellingborough Local Plan (1999 and 2004), and the Site Specific Proposals Development Plan Document (which reached preferred options stage in 2010).

These documents were prepared before the NPPF was issued by Government and they need to be updated.

Town planning operates in a plan-led system. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that decisions should be '...made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'. The NPPF emphasises in paragraph 12 that 'proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise' (NPPF, DCLG, March 2012).

Part 1 of the Local Plan: North Northamptonshire Emerging Joint Core Strategy

The following policies are taken from the Draft Pre-Submission Plan Section A – C published on the 3rd November 2014.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 1: When considering development proposals the Local Planning Authority will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. To be regarded as “sustainable” within the context of North Northamptonshire. Development should contribute to delivering the Plan Vision and Outcomes through compliance with the relevant policies of the plan.

The Delivery of Green Infrastructure

This policy builds on the previous approach to Green Infrastructure and identifies the key Sub-Regional and Local Corridors. The policy now makes reference to Natural England access standards to open space (ANGst).

Policy 19: The special mixed urban and rural character of North Northamptonshire will be maintained and enhanced through its green infrastructure assets. This will be achieved by safeguarding identified Green Infrastructure corridors by not permitting development that compromises their integrity, using developer contributions to facilitate improvements to their quality and robustness and investing in enhancement and restoration where opportunities exist.

This policy also aims to seek a net gain in Green infrastructure through the establishment of a network of multi-functional green spaces, providing appropriate habitat conservation and protecting and enhancing existing natural, historic, cultural and sports and recreational assets.

The Nene and Ise Valley

Policy 20: The Nene and Ise Valleys will be prioritised for investment in green infrastructure to strengthen biodiversity and landscape character, support a prosperous rural economy, provide leisure and recreational opportunities and support the revitalisation of towns and their surrounding countryside.

This will be achieved by developing the potential of the riverside towns like Wellingborough to support tourism and job creation, improving strategic recreation trails along the length of the Nene Valley and protecting and enhancing existing visitor attractions and facilities and supporting new Green Infrastructure attractions.

Well-connected towns, villages and neighbourhoods

This policy places greater emphasis on local and neighbourhood connectivity and highlights the importance of green infrastructure in enhancing connectivity.

Policy 15: Connectivity will be strengthened within and around settlements through an emphasis on improving local integration by ensuring well-connected street networks and low design speeds for residential roads to allow cycling on street and pedestrian priority and extending the existing Green Infrastructure networks in new development and to link existing open spaces either within new Green Infrastructure or with “Green Streets”.

Settlement Roles

Distinctive and separate settlements will be maintained in North Northamptonshire. Part 2 Local Plans can identify areas of particular sensitivity to coalescence that should be protected strategically using measures such as strategic gaps to maintain separate identities of settlements.

North Northamptonshire Urban structure study (2013)

This study looks at how the framework of streets and open spaces in the town affects the way that people can move around to access local facilities and the countryside. It sets out design principles based on improving connectivity, which will need to be considered alongside other planning considerations on a site by site basis.

One of the main principles involved ensuring routes to the rural edge can link up with the other green infrastructure (GI) routes, footpaths and cycle ways within the wider settlement. Local green infrastructure corridors have been recognised for their value as a means of creating connections and routes for people and wildlife.

For Wellingborough, it is recommended that connections to the surrounding villages are enhanced to support access to the town centre which can be done through the creation and enhancement of local GI corridors.

North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan (May 2014)

This document summarises many of the Green Infrastructure (GI) projects planned and underway in North Northamptonshire. These projects will provide a wide variety of benefits, meet a range of policy objectives, and improve the overall GI network. The plan identifies the need for significant investment to provide a net gain in GI and improve existing provision in line with local and national policy.

The plan reiterates that GI is addressed in Policy 5 of the Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) (North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy) where a range of policies and initiatives from the local to national level are relevant to GI, including:

- Access to Natural Greenspace Standards;
- Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area;
- Upper Nene Valley Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site; and
- Northamptonshire Arc – A Naturally Resilient Northamptonshire.

The access to Natural Green space standards highlighted that there are currently no accessible 500ha sites in North Northamptonshire, reflecting a key green space deficit in the area. The plan also identifies areas which have no access to significant accessible natural green space.

The Delivery Plan has been written to help implement Policy 5, with project details provided to help inform discussions with developers. The Plan relates specifically to development contributions through the Community Infrastructure Levy or S106.

Interim Housing Statement on Housing Requirements in North Northamptonshire (January 2014)

This interim housing statement sets out the Joint Committees preferred approach to meeting housing requirements in North Northamptonshire. It is split into two parts; Part A explains the background to previous housing targets to provide an up to date and objective assessment of the need for housing in the period 2011-21; and Part B identifies specific deliverable sites which can provide five years' worth of housing against the requirements identified in Part A.

The Joint Committee reviewed the most up-to-date evidence base for housing requirements in line with national policy and guidance. They have concluded that the housing need in the North Northamptonshire Housing Market Area is for 18,300 additional dwellings between 2011 and 2021; of which 4,500 are to be located within Wellingborough.

Assessing the Housing Requirements of North Northamptonshire Final Report for NNJPU (December 2013)

The aim of this report is to provide the North Northamptonshire authorities with a clear basis on which to decide their objectively assessed needs for housing in the light of the latest official population and household projections.

The key conclusions are:

- Population projections for North Northamptonshire suggest that the population of the area will grow by 20% between 2011 and 2031; and
- Household projections suggest an increase in 21.5% from 2011 to 2031.

Cultural Investment Framework for North Northamptonshire (October 2014)

This document concentrates on cultural infrastructure, for example provision of arts, entertainment museums and libraries, required to support development in North Northamptonshire identified in the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) review. It updates the previous Cultural Investment Plan (CIP) published in February 2010.

This document focuses on the physical infrastructure and programmes that will help to deliver sustainable places through the Joint Core Strategy and forms part of an evidence base for policies and proposals in Local and Neighbourhood Plans and their supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plans.

The previous study included a set of proposed investment opportunities and ways forward for culture in North Northamptonshire. This document rationalises the list into the following four categories:

1. Policy led investment;

2. Specific identified infrastructure;
3. Removed items; and
4. Delivered items.

The key conclusion is to sub divide projects to identify the most appropriate delivery mechanisms to ensure that culture can be considered across the planning spectrum and by a variety of different organisations within the public and private sectors.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Borough of Wellingborough Local Plan (1999-2004): Local Plan Saved Policies (2007)

The policies in the above plan are gradually being replaced by those in the Local Development Framework. There are numerous 'Saved Policies' that continue to be used by the Borough Council in the determination of planning applications. The 'Saved Policies' relevant to the Wellingborough Open Space study are listed below:

The Open Countryside

Policy G6: Development in the open countryside will not be granted planning permission unless it can accommodate other than in the countryside, involves a limited number of buildings, includes landscape screening and involves a use which is principally to serve the town.

Provision of New Recreational Open Space

Policy L7: Planning permission for residential development involving ten or more dwellings will not be granted unless adequate provision for new recreational open space, to include playing pitches, informal amenity space and children's play space, is intended.

Requirements to a minimum standard of 0.35* hectares per 50 dwellings* are as follows: (* based on the National Playing Fields Association 6 acre standard and assuming a household size of 2.58 persons)

Youth/Adult use: covering both public and private sector including publically accessible school facilities – 0.22 hectares/50 dwellings

Note (not included in the policy): this is equivalent to 1.7 hectares per 1000 population.

Children's use: outdoor equipped playgrounds, adventure playgrounds, informal play space – 0.09 hectares/50

Note (not included in the policy): this is equivalent to 0.7 hectares per 1000 population.

Informal use – 0.04 hectares/50 dwellings

Note (not included in the policy): this is equivalent to 0.3 hectares per 1000 population.

Total – 0.35 hectares/50 dwellings

Note (not included in the policy): this is equivalent to 2.7 hectares per 1000 population.

Provided that:

- a) No development site shall have a resultant recreational space of less than 0.04 hectares;
- b) No dwelling is located more than 250 metres from an area of open space; and
- c) On development sites of less than 50 dwellings the developer will make pro-rata commuted sum payments in lieu of open space provision for youth and adult use.

Housing

Policy H4: Planning permission will not be granted for residential development in either the open countryside or the restraint villages.

New Community Facilities

Policy L2: Proposals for small-scale built community facilities will be granted planning permission in Wellingborough town where they are designed primarily to meet the needs of residents in the immediate locality.

Important Amenity Areas

Policy L5: Planning permission will not be granted for proposals which would result in the loss of an important amenity area. Exceptions may be permitted.

Sites of Nature Conservation Value

Policy G18: Planning Permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect a Site of Nature Conservation Value except where there is no suitable alternative site for the development and the proposal includes satisfactory mitigation to reduce impact.

Environmentally Important Open Space

Policy G19: Planning permission will not be granted for development which will result in the loss of areas designated as Environmentally Important Open Space (EIOS). NB: This policy has been replaced by Policy WTC17 within the town centre as defined on the Wellingborough Town Centre Area Action Plan Proposals Map.

LOCAL PLANNING PROCEDURES - EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE LOCAL PLAN

The following documents relate to the Borough of Wellingborough and form part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan:

Wellingborough Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) (2009)

The Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough (PBW) is currently being prepared to help guide future planning decisions in the area and will replace the Town Centre Area Action Plan. The PBW together with the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) will form the 'Local Plan'.

The Wellingborough Town Centre Area Action Plan is currently being updated and is under a full review as it was adopted before the NPPF was published and deemed out of date.

Planning for Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation (PMP, 2005)

This document is the previous open space study carried out on behalf of Wellingborough Council and provides the current provision standards for the area and an evidence base for these standards.

This document is still applicable as it hasn't been superseded, however many of the documents used within this study are now out of date or are no longer relevant following the production of the NPPF. The study was carried out in accordance with PPG17 and its Companion Guide which have now been replaced by the NPPF.

Sports Facilities Strategy – Provision of built facilities for sports and recreation in the Borough (Nortoft, 2008)

This strategy document provides the future need for built facilities for sport and recreation, taking into our account anticipated growth in population and demand for new facilities. The document reviewed existing sport and leisure provision in order to prioritise future investment.

It still provides a current evidence base for future demand for facilities.

Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (February 2013)

This document assesses the amount of accessible natural green space in the Nene Valley, in line with the current Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGst).

New accessible green space will be created through a variety of means, primarily the large Sustainable Urban Extension (SUEs) planned throughout Northamptonshire. Together these new accessible areas will link existing catchments, create provision in areas currently lacking, and expand catchment of existing sites.

Site Specific Proposals Development Plan Document (SSP DPD) Preferred Options Background Report, Environmentally Important Open Space (EIOS) (2010)

Whilst this document has limited planning policy status because it did not progress beyond Preferred Options this document provides the background material on sites assessed and designated as Environmentally Important Open Space (EIOS). The purpose of the EIOS designation was to ensure that sites identified as important for their visual or physical character and structure would be protected from development over the plan period (until 2021).

The information contained in this report will be review as part of this Open Spaces Assessment.

Site Specific Proposals Development Plan Document (SSP DPD) Preferred Options Background Report, Important Amenity Areas (IAA) (2010)

This background report provides background material to enable the designation of sites within and outside the town and villages as Important Amenity Areas (IAA). These sites were important for their recreational value.

The information contained in this report will be review as part of this Open Spaces Assessment.

Site Specific Proposals Development Plan Document (SSP DPD) Preferred Options Background Report, Sports Village (2010)

This report provides information on the allocation of a Sports Village as part of the preferred option in the SSP DPD. The purpose of allocating a preferred site for a Sports Village was to provide a site to meet the sports and recreational needs identified for Wellingborough up to 2021 and beyond.

Stage 1 of the project identified the facilities required for the sports village and assessed a range of sites against a set of suitability criteria. The objectives of stage 1 were to identify facilities, a short-list of sites, carry out a detailed assessment on the site and decide on a preferred site to take forward. Stage 2 will include proposals on how the development could be funded, delivered and managed.

This assessment will review the need for this as part of the Local Plan review.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

Neighbourhood planning was introduced as a new power to communities by the Localism Act 2011. Local planning authorities have a legal duty to support the development of Neighbourhood Plans and orders.

The following Neighbourhood Plans are in the process of being created:

- Earls Barton;
- Wollaston;
- Irchester; and
- Ecton.

Earls Barton Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan is at the Submission Draft stage (June 2014). The plan includes policies on Open Space and Developer Contributions.

The **Open Space** policy reads as follows:

Policy EB.OS1: The areas listed below and identified on the proposals plan are designated as Local Green Spaces and will be protected from development due to their particular local significance and community value unless very exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.

- O1 Land surrounding All Saints Church and the Recreation Grounds;
- O2 Playing Fields and recreation land surrounding Earls Infant and Junior Schools;
- O3 Sports and Leisure pitches located around the Grange;
- O4 Earls Barton Cemetery Land;
- O5 Allotment Land adjacent to Earls Barton Cemetery;
- O6 Allotment land to the south of Station Road opposite Thorpe Road;
- O7 Land at the end of Compton Way;
- O8 The Knoll, Land between Corden Crescent and Dowthorpe Hill;
- O9 Land on the corner of Elizabeth Way and Manor Road;
- O10 Land between High Street and Churchill Road; and
- O11 Earls Barton Pocket Park Land South of A45.

The **Developer Contributions** policy reads as follows:

Policy DB.DC1: In Earls Barton, new development will be supported by the timely delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to provide a balanced, more self-sufficient community. Financial contributions will be sought from developers through a combination of S106 Agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions to a level that adequately mitigates any impact on existing infrastructure and contributes towards new local facilities where additional need will be generated. Contributions for local community facilities gained through S106 Agreements or available CIL money will be focused on assisting the delivery of the following projects as a priority;

- A new community hall/indoor sports court;
- A new community hall/indoor sports court;
- A 6 team changing room, small bar/meeting room, parking facilities;
- Enhanced sports pitches and infrastructure;
- Additional car parking provision associated with the village centre or the recreation grounds;
- Environmental improvements towards enhancing open space and minimising the impact to the SPA;
- Allotment provision and open space; and
- Young people's facilities.

Wollaston Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan is at the Draft for Consultation stage (November 2014). The plan includes policies on Local Green Spaces, Protection of Community Facilities (including a Community Woodland) and Developer Contributions.

The **Local Green Space** policy reads as follows:

Policy Env2. Local Green Space: The following areas identified on the Proposals Map are designated as Local Green Space and will be protected from development due to their particular local significance or community value:

- Land off York Rd;
- Allotment land off York Rd;
- Amenity area, Neale Close;
- Wollaston Cemetery, Cobbs Lane;
- Grounds of The Priory, Hickmire;
- Grounds of St Mary's Church, Hickmire;
- Wollaston House parkland, south of Cobbs Lane;
- Congregational Cemetery, Land adjacent to Beacon Hill/north of 96 High St;
- Wollaston Pocket Park, Bell End;
- Wollaston Primary School - land fronting South St;
- Play area, St Mary's Rd;
- Amenity area, The Pyghtles;
- Play area, The Pyghtles;
- Allotment land, south of The Pyghtles/Briarwood Way; and
- Wollaston and Strixton Playing Field, London Rd.

Development on land designated as Local Green Space will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where it can be clearly demonstrated that the development will not conflict with the purpose of the designation.

The **Community Facilities** policy reads as follows:

Policy CF1: The protection of community facilities: Proposals that will result in the loss of any building or land currently or last used as a community facility will only be permitted where one of the following criteria is met:

- The facility is relocated, or a better facility is provided, in a building or location of sufficient size, layout and quality to compensate for the loss of the existing facility; or
- There is no reasonable prospect of securing either the continued use of the community facility or an alternative community use of the land or building.

Supporting Action - Assets of Community Value: Wollaston Parish Council will nominate buildings or land for inclusion on the Assets of Community Value register held by the Borough Council, particularly where there are no other facilities in Wollaston which provide adequate, alternative provision of a similar nature. This will provide the Parish Council or other community organisations with an opportunity to bid to acquire the asset on behalf of the local community once it is placed for sale on the open market.

Supporting Action – Community Facilities: The Plan will support the following:

- Proposals to extend the existing London Road sports and recreation ground and ancillary facilities;
- The creation of an area of community woodland in reasonably close proximity to the village of Wollaston;
- Opportunities to extend the community use of facilities at Wollaston School. Particular encouragement will be given to securing the refurbishment and subsequent community use of the gymnasium;
- Qualitative improvements to play areas; and
- The refurbishment of the village hall, including the Oasis.

The **Developer Contributions** policy reads as follows:

Policy DC1. Developer Contributions: Financial contributions towards off-site provision of neighbourhood infrastructure obtained either through the Community Infrastructure Levy or negotiated planning obligations will, as appropriate, be used for the following:

- Expansion of the Wollaston and Strixton Recreation Ground;
- Refurbishment of the village hall and Oasis;
- Improvements to the public realm as proposed in Policy Env1;
- A community woodland; and
- Additional facilities to meet the needs of young people.

Irchester Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan is at Stage 1 Consultation (consultation was undertaken in June 2014). The Stage 1 consultation focused on development areas in Irchester, but included a section on improvements to local facilities in the area.

Out of a choice of 9 facilities, Irchester residents were asked to rank the most important to them. Schools and Health facilities were ranked first and second, closely followed by Sports and Leisure Provision. Ranked least important overall was improvements to Public Green Spaces.

A draft Neighbourhood Plan has not yet been produced for Irchester.

Ecton Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan is at Consultation stage (consultation was undertaken in May 2013). A questionnaire was sent to every residence in the parish, as well as businesses and organisations in Ecton. A draft Neighbourhood Plan has not yet been produced for Ecton.

The consultation included questions relating to Assets of Community Value and Green Space.

The proposed **Assets of Community Value** policy reads as follows:

A Neighbourhood Plan can specify “assets of community value”. If the owner of such an asset decides to dispose of it the local community will be given time to come up with a bid for the asset when it is sold. The community does not have first refusal, it only has the right to bid. This means that the community bid may not be the successful one.

It is proposed that the Neighbourhood Plan will specify:

Proposed Policy 6: The following should be designated as assets of community value:

- The Allotments;
- The Children's' play park;
- The village hall;
- The World's End public house; and
- The Three Horseshoes public house.

The proposed **Green Space** policy reads as follows:

It is proposed that the Neighbourhood Plan will specify:

Proposed Policy 5: The following should be designated as locally important green space:

- The Former Cricket Ground;
- Children's' play park;
- The fields immediately around the village boundary; and
- The allotments.