

D11 MEETING RECREATIONAL NEEDS

OBJECTIVES

- D11/a To provide adequate sports facilities;**
- D11/b To ensure adequate public open space for play and informal leisure;**
- D11/c To create a town park to serve as a focus for the town's outdoor activities;**
- D11/d To provide opportunities to access and enjoy the surrounding countryside.**

URBAN RECREATION

POLICY NS/21 Public Open Space and Sports Provision

Formal Sports Provision

- a) A Strategy for Formal Sports Provision must be prepared, for the approval of the Local Planning Authority. It will provide a full assessment of the formal indoor and outdoor sports facilities required to meet the needs of the new community. It will include an audit of existing facilities in the Cambridge Sub Region and the impact of Northstowe on those facilities.**
- b) The requirements of the strategy will be funded in full by the development.**
- c) The following is an indicative (but not exclusive) list of facilities to be explored by the Strategy:**
 - (i) 25 m indoor swimming pool;**
 - (ii) 8 court sports hall;**
 - (iii) Fitness suite;**
 - (iv) Squash courts;**
 - (v) Floodlit artificial turf pitches for hockey and football;**
 - (vi) Multi use games areas for training and five-a-side football;**
 - (vii) Tennis courts;**
 - (viii) Outdoor bowls green;**
 - (ix) Indoor Bowls Facility;**
 - (x) Athletics track;**
 - (xi) Grass pitches and ancillary for a range of sports and age groups;**
 - (xii) Golf facilities.**

Location of Sports Facilities

- d) The main public indoor sports facility will be based at the secondary school. This will be a dual use facility used by both school and community. Grass pitches required to meet the needs of the secondary and primary schools will not count towards the provision of the required public open space.**
- e) Large outdoor sports areas offering a combination of grass pitches, and ancillary changing and storage facilities, and social facilities will be provided. Such areas must not be of such a scale as to be detrimental to character and amenity of the town. One such area will be located adjacent to the secondary school.**
- f) Additionally, outdoor facilities including an athletics track, tennis courts and floodlit artificial turf pitches will be required to be located near to the secondary school for dual use, either located within the school grounds, or at the outdoor sports area adjacent.**

Accessibility to Outdoor Sport Pitch Provision

- g) All homes in Northstowe will be within 1,000m of Outdoor Sport provision. Formal sports facilities attracting large numbers of visitors must be located close to the high quality public transport route through the town.**

Location of Children's Play Areas and Youth Facilities

- h) A Play Strategy will be required for Northstowe which will include a mixture of formal and informal provision.**
 - (i) No home will be more than 60m from a Local Area for Play (LAP).**
 - (ii) No home will be more than 240m from a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP).**
 - (iii) No home should be more than 600m from a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) or Space for Imaginative Play (SIP).**

Town Park

- i) A town park of at least 3 ha will be developed within or adjoining the town centre. It will be connected to the adjoining green ways and residential areas by high quality footpaths and cyclelinks. It will include some appropriate Outdoor Sports provision, such as tennis courts and bowling greens, and appropriate ancillary**

facilities. As a town centre facility this will not contribute to public open space standards, with the exception of any Outdoor Sports provision.

Green Corridors

- j) As well as landscaping and biodiversity value (Policies NSx and NSx), the Green Corridors will also perform a recreational function for both informal recreation and children's play. Public access will include provision for walking, cycling and horse riding.**

Water Features

- k) The surface water drainage network for Northstowe will be based on a Fen-edge landscape and offer an aesthetic and visual benefit to the town as well as a recreation facility.**

Phasing of the Delivery of Open Space

- l) Recreational facilities and landscaping will be delivered early within the development.**

D11.1 Northstowe's residents should be able to find that their sport, leisure and recreational needs are met locally so that they can lead a healthy lifestyle and enjoy a high quality of life and leisure time. Whilst some higher order and commercial leisure activities can only be met in Cambridge as the sub-regional centre, every opportunity should be taken to allow people from Northstowe and the surrounding villages to meet as many their needs without having to travel further afield.

Public Open Space and Sports Provision

D11.2 A high standard of public open space provision will be required in Northstowe consistent with its role as a town of significant size. Policy SF/13 in the Core Strategy / Development Control Policies DPD sets a minimum standard for outdoor play space and informal open space in the District. This standard will apply to Northstowe. The standard comprises:

Outdoor Sport – 1.6 hectares per 1000 people;
Children's Playspace – 0.8 hectares per 1000 people;
Informal Open Space – 0.4 hectares per 1000 people.

Strategy for Formal Sports Provision

D11.3 A Strategy for Formal Sport will enable comprehensive planning of facilities at Northstowe, taking account of the needs of the Cambridge Sub Region. The Strategy will be completed in partnership with Cambridgeshire Horizons along with other partner organisations and professional bodies such as Sport England and the Governing Bodies of Sport. It must also include an assessment of local and national sporting trends.

Location of Formal Sport

D11.4 Cambridgeshire has a well developed network of community colleges and village colleges which provide “Dual Use” sports facilities for both school and community use. This works well in South Cambridgeshire where the existing policy is to base its main indoor sports centres and swimming pools at secondary schools managed under a service level agreement with the school. This offers a good value approach and ensures that all people have access to good quality, local sports facilities. It also encourages greater after school sport for young people and gives priority to community use in the evenings and weekends.

D11.5 The service level agreements include all indoor sports facilities plus outdoor tennis courts and multi-use games areas. They do not include grass pitches as this leads to over use of school pitches and regular access cannot always be guaranteed by the schools. Grass pitches located close by can, however, offer some joint usage.

D11.6 Dual Use Sports Facilities also work well in neighbouring local authority areas where they are located in more urban environments including Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire.

D11.7 The location of outdoor pitches in a cluster and supported by appropriate ancillary facilities, adjacent to the secondary school, will allow for flexibility of use by the school and community. Any group of pitches must not be of such a scale that it is detrimental to the design of the town. It is therefore likely that an area of more than eight pitches will not be suitable. Grass pitches at the secondary and primary schools will not be included as part of the community provision however artificial turf pitches and courts that are subject to a Dual Use Agreement can be counted as both community provision.

Accessibility to Outdoor Sport Pitch Provision

D11.8 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 Paragraph 7 states that local standards should include consideration of accessibility. Whilst in the majority of South Cambridgeshire villages provision of formal sport pitches is at a single location, for a settlement the size of Northstowe this could make access to

formal sports facilities difficult. A minimum accessibility standard for formal sport is required. 1000m is the equivalent of 10 - 15 minute walking time.

Location of Children's Play Areas

D11.9 A Play Strategy will be produced for Northstowe which will include a mixture of formal and informal provision. Formal provision will include:

- LAPs - Local Areas for Play;
- LEAPs - Local Equipped Areas for Play;
- NEAPs - Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play; and
- SIPs - Spaces for Imaginative Play.

D11.10 The total land space required will be based on the Council's proposed standard for inclusion in the Core Strategy of 0.8 hectares per 1000 population of which up to 50% will be in the form of LAPs LEAPs, NEAPs and SIPs. However the distribution of play spaces is also important if they are to properly serve local needs.

D11.11 LAPs will not be formally equipped but will provide soft and hard landscaping to provide a natural meeting place and play space for children and adults. The National Playing Fields Association recommends that no home should be more than 60m from a LAP.

D11.12 LEAPs offer formal equipment for children up to 8 years. They should incorporate at least 8 pieces of equipment including a minimum of 3 pieces suitable for toddlers. The National Playing Fields Association recommends that no home should be will be more than 240m from a LEAP. LEAPs should be located close to local centres and en route between primary school and residential areas.

D11.13 NEAPs will cater for unaccompanied 8 – 14 year olds and will include equipped play areas and youth sports facilities including informal multi-use areas and provision for a range of wheeled sport areas. SIPs are more natural areas using local features. The National Playing Fields Association recommends that no home should be more than 600m from a NEAP or SIP.

Town Park

D11.14 A formal town park will be provided in the town centre where the highest densities will be developed and which will be a focus for activity. This will be a town centre use, serving a wider function than meeting the needs of the residential development, therefore a town park does not fit into the definition of types of openspace required in policy SF/13 of the Core Strategy DPD.

D11.15 It will ensure that those living in, working in and visiting these areas have easy access to high quality open space and to act as a peaceful/vibrant area

close to the centre of activities. It will also offer the opportunity to provide an outdoor venue for entertainment such as concerts and fetes close to the heart of the town thus contributing to its community development. To fulfil this function it is important that it is one continuous space rather than a series of interlinking green areas around the town centre which would not provide the same focus, attraction and opportunities for community events as a single larger high quality park.

Green Corridors

D11.16 The landscape strategy being developed for Northstowe includes a series of Green Corridors connecting the surrounding countryside with the town and penetrating into and through the urban fabric. These Green Corridors have potential for recreational use and are likely to range in width from approximately 15m to achieve cycleways, footpaths, verges, planting and water/drainage features to around 100m of informal open space, recreation and children's play areas. There may be potential for the wider areas of the corridor to accommodate some formal sports provision without detracting from the overall landscape role.

Water Features

D11.17 To meet the objective of water forming an integral part of the design of the town, advantage should be taken of the need for substantial surface water drainage and incorporate this as an amenity. The layout of this water based amenity will take a number of different forms ranging from a linear canal type feature based on the Fens landscape, to a number of small lakes or one large lake that provides the opportunity for water based recreation and non motorised water sports.

D11.18 A linear water formation forming part of the surface water attenuation measures for Northstowe will be located adjoining the Guided Busway which could take the form of a water park providing a recreation and amenity feature and which could link with other open areas. This will offer the greater overall community benefit to the new population of Northstowe.

Phasing of the Delivery of Open Space

D11.19 It will be important for the new residents to have access to both recreational facilities and informal open space to meet their needs at a very early stage. Phasing is particularly relevant to the provision of sports pitches as they need to be established for up to 2 years before they can be used. The early implementation of these areas should therefore be conditions of any planning permission.

Management of Public Open Space

D11.20 With a wide variety of public open space and facilities being planned for Northstowe, it is important that appropriate long-term management arrangements are planned and implemented at an early stage. This includes ensuring that parcels of land are not fragmented and that it is clear which body is responsible for their maintenance and care. This is particularly the case for incidental open space within housing development and roadside verges. Appropriate management systems will be required to ensure high quality, robust and effective maintenance of open space. This is dealt with in the Phasing and Implementation policies.

COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION

POLICY NS/22 Countryside Recreation

Country Parks

- a) **Two country parks will be provided:**
 - (i) **In the green separation between Oakington and Northstowe;**
 - (ii) **West of Station Road, Longstanton.**
- b) **These will be linked to provide both a circular route via the Green Separation and the Water Park and via the Green Corridors through the town and the wider countryside,**
- c) **Only if these areas are demonstrated to be in excess of what is required to meet the needs of Northstowe itself, a proportion of the country park west of Station Road will be funded by means other than developer contributions from Northstowe.**

Access to the Countryside

- d) **A strategy will be developed to link all parts of the town to the wider countryside including the Green Separation between Northstowe and the villages of Longstanton and Oakington through an enhanced network of footpaths and bridleways. Public access within the Conservation Area will need to be carefully managed.**

Golf Provision

- e) **Subject findings of the Strategy for Formal Sport Provision, the existing golf course will be replaced by a suitable alternative that will make available affordable golf for existing users and the new residents of Northstowe.**

Country Parks

D11.21 As a town with a considerable population living at densities which overall are higher than in the existing market towns, it will be important that residents have the opportunity to connect with the surrounding countryside. One advantage of Northstowe being developed in a compact form will be that the countryside is never far away and should be reachable on foot and certainly by bicycle. However, the intensively farmed nature of the countryside around Northstowe means that the opportunities for informal recreation are limited.

D11.22 The County Council, in partnership with the District Councils has undertaken a study of "Strategic Open Space". This is a higher order facility which serves a wider catchment and different purpose than local public open space and which has more than local significance. A standard will be identified for Strategic Open Space, and also the appropriate contribution towards additional Strategic Open Space that should come forward from developments, including Northstowe. This will be detailed in the Planning Obligations DPD.

D11.23 It is generally recognised that Cambridgeshire is deficient in this type of open space. As a major new community, Northstowe will itself create a need for a strategic open space facility and it will be important to ensure that its substantial population has good access to the countryside.

D11.24 Strategic Open Space could consist of recreational parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural green spaces and strategic green corridors. They would be expected to be accessible to significant numbers of people.

D11.25 At Northstowe, this is translated into a need for areas of open access, accessible by foot, cycle and public transport from Northstowe, where people could find the facilities which would enable them to experience informal countryside leisure activities. Such facilities could include a visitors' centre, areas for picnicking, barbeques, kick about areas, kite flying and so on, as well as supporting facilities such as car and cycle parking, toilets, etc. Such areas are normally defined as country parks. If it is intended to meet an existing deficit in this part of the district, it would not be appropriate for the entire burden of a new facility to fall on the developers of Northstowe.

D11.26 The Green Separation between Northstowe and Oakington is a suitable location to form the focus of a small country park. This should include managing an area adjacent to Oakington village for wildlife with less public access in order to maintain its rural village character and protect residential amenity. The development of a small country park in this location would be well related to the southern part of the town and would have the potential to connect with the Water Park and the Green Separation between Northstowe and Longstanton.

D11.27 To the west of Station Road another county park is proposed. It would be well related to the northern part of the town and to Longstanton, particularly the new development at Home Farm on the west side of the village. It would also have the advantage of being accessible to the wider area through the access road to the A14 and proximity to the stops on the Guided Bus route and the Local Bus Loop. Station Road would need to have some form of safe crossing for cyclists and pedestrians.

D11.28 With the location of country parks at both ends of the town, there is potential to connect these facilities by providing links via the Green Separation, Green Corridors and the Water Park to provide a countryside experience encircling Northstowe. Making use of green routes to link countryside open spaces is an effective way of maximising the countryside experience without needing vast areas of dedicated open space.

Access to the Countryside

D11.29 There will also be a need to develop a strategy whereby there would be improved access from Northstowe into the wider countryside through footpaths and cycleways, connecting wherever possible to other areas of Strategic Open Space

Golf

D11.30 The existing Cambridge Golf Course is a low budget 18 hole facility with driving range which will be lost as part of the development. A more detailed assessment will be made of the need to replace this facility to serve the new town and the local area. Sport England advise indicates that a town the size of Northstowe will support a golf course.