

Open Space Provision/Play Space within New Housing Areas

The following standards deal with the requirements to provide for children's play and areas of amenity open space within new residential schemes, by the developers. This guidance should be read in association with Policy HO24 contained within the Housing Chapter.

NPFA Standards

The most recent NPFA document "Every Child Deserves a Place to Play" sets out the minimum standards for outdoor playing space. This introduced new categories for play provision :

- * *Local Area for Play (LAP)*
- * *Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)*
- * *Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)*

A LAP facility must be at least 100m² in size and should be specifically designated for young children (age 4-6) for play close to where they live. The location should be within one minutes walking time from home. The area should be appropriate for low key games, be flat, well drained with a grass or hard surface. To minimise disturbance to local residents it should include an activity zone and buffer zone, sufficient to minimise audible and visual intrusion.

A LEAP facility should be at least 400m² in size and suitable for children of early school age (4-8), and should be within 5 minutes of home. They should include at least five different types of play equipment and a well drained grass or hard surface playing area. A buffer zone should exist of least 20 metres between the edge of the activity zone and residential property to minimise intrusion.

A NEAP facility should be suitable for children between 8-14 years and should be within 15 minutes of home. They should incorporate a minimum of 8 types of play equipment and be at least 1000m² in size. A buffer zone of at least 30 metres is recommended.

Level of Provision

In the case of developments approved under Policy HO5 of the plan (i.e. small sites of less than 0.4 ha), it may be difficult to accommodate a LAP within the development. However taking into account the local provision, a contribution will normally be required to ensure that adequate play facilities can be provided in the area to serve the needs of residents of the development.

In developments approved under Policies HO3 and HO4 (i.e. larger sites of over 0.4 ha), normally provision of a LAP for every 30 dwellings or thereabouts will be required. With a development of around 60 dwellings, a LEAP will also be required together with a further LAP. For larger developments, increased provision will be required on the same basis. For example in a development of around 120 dwellings, the normal provision would be four LAPs and two LEAPs. Where the site forms part of a much larger area of residential development, the provision of a NEAP will be subject to specific arrangements with the relevant developer(s). In all cases, account will be taken of the local provision in determining exact requirements.

Commuted Payments for Off-Site Provision

In the case of proposals where the requirement for play space cannot appropriately be met on-site, having regard to the size of the development scheme and the acceptable minimum areas for facilities outlined above, the Council's policy is to allow applicants to make a payment in lieu of direct provision.

In calculating commuted sums, the Council will have regard to existing facilities which could serve the development. Where there are existing designated children's play space which satisfy the NPFA's definition of that type of facility, the Council will waive the need to make additional provision. This waiver is subject to the proviso that an existing play space is of a sufficiently high quality and has the capacity to absorb the increased level of use generated by the proposed development.

Where existing facilities are not available which satisfy these requirements, the Council will accept commuted payments, provided these are identifiable and appropriate opportunities for providing new or enhanced play space.

Exceptions

The only exceptions to the requirements are housing development which will not attract residents with children (for example nursing homes and single person flats) and developments which involve one dwelling only, since the requirements would be onerous on people building their own houses. In the case of low cost housing schemes, the requirements may be reduced, providing that alternative arrangements are to be made to ensure that the play needs of children in the development are catered for.

Outline Applications

Where applications are submitted in outline, the Council will normally attach a planning condition to such consents requiring that details submitted under reserved matters make allowances for the appropriate provision of play facilities, in accordance with the above requirements

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Summary of minimum children's playing space standard

It should be emphasised that the deciding factor in locating the facilities is time. When using radii as straight line distances, the design of the estate footpath network and busy crossing points need to be taken into account. For example, a group of houses outside the radial straight line distance may well be within the walking distance because of the provision of a pelican crossing.

Facility	Time	Walking Distance	Straight Line Distance	Minimum Size Activity Zone	Total (Inc. Buffer)	Nearest House Property Boundary	Characteristics
<i>Lap (Local Area for Play)</i>	<i>1 min</i>	<i>100m</i>	<i>60m</i>	<i>100m²</i>	<i>400m² (0.04ha)</i>	<i>5m from activity zone</i>	<i>Small low key games area (may include "demonstrative" play features)</i>
<i>LEAP (Local Equipped area for Play)</i>	<i>5 min</i>	<i>400m</i>	<i>240m</i>	<i>400m²</i>	<i>3,600m² (0.36ha)</i>	<i>20m from activity zone</i>	<i>About 5 types of equipment. Small games area</i>
<i>NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play)</i>	<i>15 min</i>	<i>1,000m</i>	<i>600m</i>	<i>1,000m²</i>	<i>8,500m² (0.85ha)</i>	<i>30m from activity zone</i>	<i>About 8 types of equipment. Kickabout and cycle play opportunities</i>

This table has been reproduced from The National Playing Fields Association publication "The Six Acre Standard – Minimum Standards For Outdoor Playing Space (Every Child Deserves a Place to Play)".