

7.6 THE SELECTION OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION SITES (RL.3)

7.6.1 Policies RL.1 and RL.2 of the Local Plan set out the public open space standard and the process of that provision. The purpose of this policy is to set out the criteria which the Council will use, in discussions with developers, to select appropriate public open space and recreation sites and the nature of that provision. These are judgmental criteria and are not mutually exclusive.

7.6.2 In most cases a balance needs to be set between recreation and amenity. The areas of land allocated/identified for public open space use need to be interesting and with sufficient diversity and quality to fulfil a variety of recreational roles, both formal and informal. Such areas also need to be readily accessible from the surrounding development and clearly defined with good access for maintenance and management purposes. In general a scatter of small areas has less recreational potential than one or two larger areas. Recreation/public open space areas need to be designed for both informal and formal activities - with a balance between them that is appropriate to local needs and circumstances. Recreation/public open space provision needs to be an integral part of any development brief prepared for major housing development (it should not be treated as an after use for the residual land but as a key element determining in part the overall quality of the scheme).

POLICY RL.3 The Council when considering the public open space requirement in connection with a residential development proposal (Local Plan policy RL.1 refers) will seek a 'quality' provision, the acceptability of which will be judged against the following criteria:

- (a) the nature, diversity and attractiveness/condition of the land being offered; and
- (b) its suitability for an appropriate range of recreational activities both formal and informal; and
- (c) the provision is compatible with wildlife conservation and sites of ecological or archaeological importance; and
- (d) the location of different recreational facilities within the public open space area(s) can be accommodated without undue disturbance or harm to the amenity of adjoining residents and landowners.
- (e) the proposed public open space area(s) is easily accessible from adjoining development areas by foot, cycle and public transport where appropriate; and
- (f) the public open space provision is not unduly fragmented into a number of small areas which thereby limits its recreational value and potential. Ideally public open space provision should be grouped into larger 'park areas' where both formal and informal recreation activities can be properly integrated and managed.

7.6.3 The above criteria are not presented as absolute requirements but need to be taken together in assessing the suitability of a particular land area or site for public open space/recreational use. It is normal practice to seek advice from the Council's Culture and Youth and/or Countryside and Environment Services on the nature and suitability of public open space/recreation provision within major development schemes.