

South Norfolk Council

**GUIDELINES FOR RECREATION
PROVISION IN NEW RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Public Participation Statement (July 2018)



Introduction:

This Public Participation Statement sets out how South Norfolk Council has engaged and consulted with the public on the Recreational Open Space Requirements for Residential Areas Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in accordance with Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

This Statement summarises:

- the comments made during the first public consultation (23rd June 2017 – 4th August 2017);
- how the SPD was subsequently revised;
- the comments made during the second public consultation (4th May 2018 - 5th June 2018),
- the final revisions made to the adoption version of the SPD.

Background and Purpose of the SPD:

Currently open space standards are set out in the 'Recreational Open Space Requirements for Residential Areas' Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) from December 1994. There is a need to update the 1994 SPG document to reflect current adopted Local Plan policy. Policy 1 of the Joint Core Strategy states that areas of open space are important as an integral part of development. Subsequently the Council adopted the Development Management Policies document in October 2015, containing policy DM 3.15 relating to the provision of recreational open space. The supporting text to DM Policy 3.15 refers to the need for regard to be given to the 1994 SPG '*or any subsequent version*' and so, although the 1994 document still carries 'weight' and is used in development management decision-making, it is now very dated. Legal advice recommends updating the document to make it more relevant; an updated document would carry greater planning weight in decision making, and would reflect the high priority that the Government and Council gives to recreation provision in the context of the health and wellbeing agenda.

A Community Assets Strategy for South Norfolk was agreed at Cabinet in January 2017, which sets out how community assets will be managed in the period up to 2021. The Strategy will come into effect fully when the Recreational Open Space Requirements for Residential Areas SPD is adopted. The Community Assets Strategy makes it clear that, following adoption of the SPD, the Council will accept no further transfer of Section 106 infrastructure, other than in exceptional circumstances, meaning that it will no longer routinely take on ownership or maintenance of new recreational open and play areas provided through new developments. Consequently, a new, more detailed SPD is required to reflect this change and give the bodies taking on open space a greater understanding of the costs of future maintenance.

Consultation on the Draft SPD – 2017

Consultation took place between 23rd June 2017 and 4th August 2017. In parallel a screening was undertaken to determine whether the SPD should be subject to SEA.

The main parties consulted were: Town and Parish Councils, developers and agents working in South Norfolk, plus statutory bodies (specific and general consultees), including those required under the SEA regulations, and bodies with a specialist interest in the subject matter (such as Fields in Trust and local sporting and amenity bodies).

The consultation was publicised on the Council's website, with a specific page dedicated to the Open Space SPD. Copies of the SPD with details of the consultation were also displayed in local libraries. Notifications were sent by email, or where this was not possible, by letter.

25 responses were received, from a range of bodies, including a number of town and parish councils, as well as various planning agents and developers. The principle areas of concern were:

- Parish/Town Councils - concerns about the costs and implications of taking on the maintenance of recreation spaces, including the long-term financial liability.
- Parish/Town Councils - worries about some of the practical effects of land passing to a management company for maintenance.
- Comments from developers criticising the scale of the costs required.

A detailed summary of the consultation representation and the proposed actions of the Council in response to these can be found in Appendix (i).

The extent of the changes required, including revision of the requirements to more closely reflect the 2015 Fields in Trust (FiT) recommended standards, meant that the Council considered a second round of consultation on the SPD would be necessary.

Consultation on the second draft SPD – 2018

Consultation took place between 4th May 2018 and 5th June 2018. In parallel a screening was undertaken to determine whether the SPD should be subject to SEA.

The main parties consulted were: Town and Parish Councils, developers and agents working in South Norfolk, plus statutory bodies (specific and general consultees), including those required under the SEA regulations, and bodies with a specialist interest in the subject matter (such as Fields in Trust and local sporting and amenity bodies). Specifically, all those who responded to the first consultation were made directly aware of the second consultation.

The consultation was publicised on the Council's website, both under current consultation and also on the specific page dedicated to the Open Space SPD. Libraries were contacted by letter and asked to display the consultation notification on their noticeboards for the duration of the consultation period. Notifications were sent by email, or where this was not possible, by letter.

15 responses were received, from a range of bodies, including a number of town and parish councils, as well as various planning agents and developers and consultees. Many of the issues raised reiterated comments from the first consultation. In particular: ongoing concerns about the burden on town and parish councils; the role of management companies; and the scale of requirement and ongoing maintenance

costs. A detailed summary of the consultation representation and the proposed actions of the Council in response to these can be found in Appendix (ii).

Several minor revisions have been made, along with one more significant change to the maintenance costs. It is not considered that any further consultation is required following these changes; with regard to the revision to maintenance costs, it is felt that this now accurately reflects the available evidence, and furthermore the changes have been made as a direct result of the queries raised during the May 2018 consultation process.