

Play Space In Residential Development

Supplementary Planning Guidance

**Adopted 22nd April 2003
Updated 9th February 2004**

Cheltenham Borough Council

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

PLAY SPACE IN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This guidance relates to policy RC 102 and RC 102A in the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review Revised Deposit Draft (2004). These policies relate to the provision of play space in association with residential development. Policy RC 102A sets out the requirements for amenity space. This provision is a separate requirement to play space and forms separate supplementary planning guidance, *'Amenity Space in Residential Development'*.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Play space provides opportunities for children to play, learn and interact with other children in a safe environment. The distribution of such spaces through the Borough and accessibility is therefore important in providing opportunities for play and promoting health and well being within the community.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

Government policy

- 3.1. Government policy is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 - Sport, Open Space and Recreation (2002). PPG17 sets out the importance of recreation facilities and open space in contributing to the delivery of an urban renaissance and a better quality of life. Paragraph 33 refers to the use of planning obligations in addressing deficiencies in the quantity and quality of open spaces.

Regional Planning Guidance for the South West

- 3.2. Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) outlines the importance of recreation in maintaining and enhancing quality of life. Policy TCS2 reflects this:

“Local authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies and proposals should identify and protect recreational open spaces and playing fields”.

Structure Plan

- 3.3. The Structure Plan for Gloucestershire (1999) recognises the importance of open spaces, both in providing opportunities for recreation and enhancing the quality of the built environment. Policy RE.2 states:

“A high standard of open space provision in new residential development will be required. Existing playing fields and recreational areas will be maintained”.

Cheltenham Borough Local Plan

- 3.4. Policy RC 102, Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review Revised Deposit Draft states:

“Provision should be made in residential development for play space in accordance with the local standard of 2.65 hectares (6.5 acres) per 1,000 population”.

- 3.5. Policy RC 102 applies to new developments, redevelopments, conversions and extensions where development would bring forward a net gain in housing units. Houses in multiple occupation will be treated as a single unit with the equivalent number of rooms.

- 3.6. Policy RC 102A states:
“Residential development will only be permitted where it provides an appropriate amount of amenity space.”

4. EXCEPTIONS

- 4.1. All new residential development will be expected to provide for the appropriate level of children’s play space that are necessary and reasonable to meet the needs of its residents. Exceptions to the requirements of RC 102 will be made where:
- housing is provided specifically for the elderly permitted under policy HS 79,
 - housing forms residential and care homes permitted under policy HS 79,
 - development is in the form of an extension, granny annexe, or replacement dwelling where there is no net gain,
 - housing is in the form of temporary accommodation, such as mobile homes, or
 - affordable housing schemes.
- 4.2. For one bedroom flats, bedsits, and accommodation restricted to occupation by students, only the requirements for youth and adult play space will apply.

5. PLAY SPACE STANDARD

- 5.1. The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) sets minimum standards for the provision of play space. These standards have been adapted by the Borough Council, based on an assessment of playing pitch provision and demand within Cheltenham. To reflect the local needs of Cheltenham, the Borough Council requires a minimum standard of 2.65 hectares (6.5 acres). This standard comprises the following elements, within the ranges specified:
- (a) Youth And Adult Outdoor Playing Space: 1.85 - 1.96 hectares (4.5 - 4.8 acres) per 1,000 population. Within this requirement 1.2 hectares is made specifically for the provision of playing pitches. The remaining requirement may be made up of facilities such as skateboarding, tennis courts and basketball courts.
- (b) Children’s Outdoor Playing Space: 0.6 - 0.8 hectares (1.5 - 2 acres)
- (i) outdoor equipped playgrounds for children of whatever age;
 - (ii) other designated play facilities for children which offer specific opportunity for outdoor play, such as adventure playgrounds;
 - (iii) casual or informal playing space within housing areas.
- 5.2. Cheltenham’s play space standards are expressed as a minimum requirement. Where material circumstances indicate otherwise this requirement may be increased to reflect specific local need and shortfall of play space. Play space standards for residential sites will be assessed against:
- Playing Pitch Assessment– prepared on behalf of the Council by consultants Knight, Kavanagh and Page. The assessment provides a strategy and action plan for the provision of good quality; accessible outdoor sports facilities appropriate to meet the needs of the community.
 - Audit of Children’s Play Space – prepared by Cheltenham Borough Council. The audit assesses sites, facilities provided, catchment population and capacity (see appendix 1 and plan 1).

6. TYPES OF PLAY SPACE

- 6.1. The NPFA provides guidelines for different types of children's play space. These standards should be applied to identify the optimum location and design of play spaces. Details of the different types of play space are set out table 1, below.

TABLE 1

Criteria	Local Area for Play (LAP) see note 1	Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP)	Neighbourhood Areas for Play (NEAP)
Age group	4 – 6 accompanied	4 – 8 accompanied	8 – 14 unaccompanied
Walking time from home	1 minute 60 metres	5 minutes 250 metres	15 minutes 600 metres
Equipment	Fencing, seating, sign posting, litter bins, 2 items of play equipment, which comply with relevant British standards.	Fencing, seating, sign posting, litter bins; cycle parking, 5 items of play equipment, which comply with relevant British standards. Small games area	Fencing, seating, sign posting, litter bins; cycle parking, 8 items of play equipment, which comply with relevant British standards. Kickabout area, wheeled play opportunities
Site characteristics	Grass and/or hard surface. Reasonably flat and well drained	Grass and/or hard surface. Reasonably flat and well drained	Grass and hard surface
Minimum activity zone	100m ²	400m ²	1000m ²
Buffer zone	The activity zone should be a minimum of 5 metres from the boundaries of adjacent properties	The activity zone should be a minimum of 20 metres from the boundaries of adjacent properties. Buffer zone may include footpaths	The activity zone should be a minimum of 30 metres from the boundaries of adjacent properties. Buffer zone may include footpaths
Restrictions	Type of equipment and design of site should restrict opportunities for play by older children due to potential disturbance to residents	In some developments it may be appropriate for a LAP to be enlarged to a LEAP. In such cases clear separation should be maintained between the two types of play area. The buffer zone between the two may be reduced, or removed, but the perimeter buffer zone will be	In some developments it may be appropriate for a LEAP to be enlarged to a NEAP. In such cases clear separation should be maintained between the two types of play area. The buffer zone between the two may be reduced, or removed, but the perimeter buffer zone will be

		required	required
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Notes 1

In addition to play areas defined by the NPFA, the Borough Council recognises the opportunities for play in areas of open space, which are not formally designated for such use. Small parcels of green space, which are closely integrated into the residential layout, may form amenity space, which is required to be provided in conjunction with residential development. Where such spaces meet the criteria for casual play space, then it will be included in the calculation of children's outdoor space provision.

Note 2

Where casual play space is preferred to a more formal LAP, it should be an open space of a useful size, well related to the houses to which it serves and makes provision for the exclusion of dogs. Developers should carefully consider the suitability of areas of amenity space for the purposes of casual play; some areas may have greater amenity value in a different form.

Youth/Adult Play Space

6.2. Guidelines for on site provision may be obtained from the Council should development sites be large enough to accommodate proper provision.

7. APPLICATION OF THE PLAY SPACE STANDARD

7.1. The play space standard is based on the estimated population that a new development will generate. This population is estimated using the occupancy standards listed in table 2 below. These occupancy standards are used to calculate the threshold figures set out in table 3.

TABLE 2

Dwelling size (No. of rooms)	Occupancy (average)
3	1.4
4	1.7
5/6	2.4
7+	2.9

Note: This information is derived from the 2001 census and may be subject to revision. Number of rooms does not include bathrooms, toilets, halls or landings, or rooms that can only be used for storage, all other rooms for example kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms, utility rooms and studies are included.

7.2. A development scheme population can be calculated using the information listed in table 3. Developments with a projected occupancy that equates to the threshold population for each of the play space types listed should seek to provide that facility on site.

TABLE 3

Type of play space	Minimum size of facility (excluding buffer zone)	Threshold population	m ² per person	m ² /dwelling size (no. rooms)			
				3	4	5/6	7+
1 x Youth/Adult	0.81 ha/ 8,094m ²	470	17.0	24	29	41	49
1 x LAP	100m ²	62	1.6	2	3	4	5
1 x LEAP	400m ²	124	3.2	4	5	8	9
1 x NEAP	1,000m ²	1,000	1.0	1	2	2	3
1 x Casual Play Space			1.0	1	2	2	3

- 7.3. Where the site population of a development scheme falls between the threshold for play areas (e.g. a site population of 90 would generate a requirement for one and a half LAP's), the following approach will be applied:

Calculate the area of the different play areas in excess of the minimum sizes, using the last two columns of table 3. This land should be treated as follows:

- (i) excess identified for youth/adult facilities, NEAP's and LEAP's should be used to increase the size and quality of the proposed play area,
- (ii) excess identified for LAP's should be used to enlarge a proposed area of casual play to provide a defined play area.

- 7.4. In calculating the provision of play space it is important to take into consideration the requirements as set out in table 2, particularly in regard to accessibility. Simply enlarging or up grading a play area will not necessarily increase provision, for example enhancement of a LEAP close to a development site may not necessarily serve the homes to which it is intended, in such cases developers should seek to provide an additional facility.

8. COMMUTED PAYMENTS FOR OFF SITE PROVISION

- 8.1. The Borough Council acknowledges that in some circumstances on site provision may not be feasible, particularly where development is required to provide for larger play areas. In such cases, the Borough Council will seek to negotiate a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This obligation enables developers to make a contribution towards the provision of suitable off site play space in lieu of direct provision within the development site where there are identifiable and appropriate opportunities for providing new play space (see table 4). This contribution may include up-grading or replacement of existing facilities where this would meet the needs of the development and the interests of the wider community.
- 8.2. In calculating commuted sums, the Council will have regard to existing facilities that could serve the development. Where there exist designated children's play facilities that meet the Council's play space requirements; the Council will not require duplicate provision. This waiver is subject to existing play space being of an appropriate quality and having sufficient capacity to absorb the increased level of use which will be generated by the proposed development.

TABLE 4

LAP	It will not be possible to commute provision of LAPs as they cannot be functionally be located outside of the development.
LEAP/NEAP	Commutated payments will be accepted where there are appropriate and identifiable opportunities for providing new or improved play space.
YOUTH/ADULT	It will be unlikely that youth/adult play space will be provided on site except on the largest developments. In most cases therefore, the Council will negotiate a commuted payment for off site provision. Findings of a playing pitch assessment of Cheltenham (2002) set out that there is currently a deficit of 0.29 hectares per 1,000 population in adult and youth play space provision. All residential development is therefore required to make provision for this type of provision, irrespective of any existing facilities within the locality.

9. SCALE OF COMMUTED SUMS REQUIRED

- 9.1. The amount of contribution sought will based on estimated costs for land, design, layout and equipment calculated as a figure per dwelling type for youth/adult facilities, LEAP's and NEAP's. In cases where a proposed development is sufficiently large enough to provide an element of on site play space provision to the minimum size and design requirements, then these will be discounted from the commuted sums to avoid duplication of provision.
- 9.2. Table 5 sets out the level of commuted sums. This information is correct at the time of publication of this document and will be reviewed annually to take account of increases in costs, and any future changes at national level or in the Council's own policies regarding health and safety inspections. The purpose of table 5 is to provide a baseline for negotiation. The figures allow for an element of on going maintenance where a local facility is enlarged or made more complex.

TABLE 5

Dwelling type/ No. rooms	Average occupancy *	Youth/adult play	NEAP	LEAP	Total**
		£	£	£	£
3	1.4	178	176	845	1,199
4	1.7	216	213	1,026	1,455
5/6	2.4	305	301	1,448	2,054
7+	2.9	368	364	1,750	2,482

*2001 Census

** Figures correct at May 2003

*** Maintenance element of commuted sum is based on 1 monthly technical inspection and 1 annual independent inspection undertaken by the Royal Society for the Protection of Accidents (ROSPA)

- 9.3. To calculate the appropriate amount of commuted sum payment for a particular scheme developers should:
- identify the total population of the proposed site and level of play space required using table 3,
 - identify which of the full range of required play spaces are able to be provided on site,
 - identify level of requirement required off site, and, together with officers of the Council identify whether there are any existing play facilities (see appendix 1 and plan 1) which fulfil the relevant play space requirements

as set out in table 1, and have the capacity to cater for the demand generated by the proposed development.

- 9.4. Where provision for play space cannot be accommodated on site, or at appropriate existing facilities, developers should:
- (iv) establish, together with officers of the Council, whether there are any viable opportunities for alternative facilities to be provided off site in locations which would fulfil the relevant play space requirements as set out in table 1.
 - (v) Calculate the appropriate commuted sum by multiplying the number of dwellings by the sum given in table 5 for the play space types that it has been agreed can be provided off site.
- 9.5. Monies collected via commuted sum payments will be held in a discrete fund. Payments for NEAP's and LEAPs will be spent on the most appropriate facility to the proposed site. Payments for youth/adult provision will be used to fund borough wide projects.

10. DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

- 10.1. The siting of play space should form an integral part of the design process of the housing layout, taking into account the needs and expectations of its users. The following factors will need to be considered:
- **Safety and security:** overlooking of site by adjacent properties and well-used pedestrian routes, fencing, and where appropriate lighting and CCTV. Regard should be given to hazards arising from roads, watercourses, electricity cables, railway lines, and dog fouling. A safety notice should be erected, clearly identifying the location of the nearest telephone, and contact details to which accidents and damage should be reported.
 - **Nuisance:** site should be located and designed so as to minimise disturbance to nearby dwellings, on-site and off-site, by way of noise or play equipment (such as balls or frisbees).
 - **Landscaping:** should be an integral aspect of the design of play areas, providing tree planting for shade, and low maintenance shrub and hedge planting of native species for noise attenuation, and amenity purposes. The planting scheme should have regard to children's safety, including planting of non-poisonous plant varieties and plants free of spikes and thorns. The planting scheme should consider the overall security of the site, allowing unobstructed views into the site and restricting potential hiding places. Opportunities should be sought to protect, enhance and create wildlife habitats, enhancing biodiversity and providing opportunities for education.
 - **Play equipment, signage and furniture:** robust and vandal resistant. Play equipment should comply with British Standards. The choice of play equipment should encourage active and creative play.
 - **Ownership:** play areas should, wherever possible be designed in partnership with members of the community who will use it, including the disabled to help foster community ownership.
 - **Accessibility:** access gates and footpaths designed to allow access by all. Bicycle parking and, where appropriate, car-parking areas.
 - **Routes and movement:** the design of play areas should carefully consider the way in which children will access the site from the wider area, taking into account dangers such as highways and turning areas for vehicles. Sites should be separated from areas of high vehicles movements and accessible directly from pedestrian routes. Where children will be required to cross a

road within a residential development to access a play space, traffic calming measures, such as improved crossing facilities, should be employed to reduce traffic speeds and raise awareness of drivers to the activity of children. Measures may also include a change in the road surface, and/or signage.

11. HOME ZONES

- 11.1. Home zones are residential streets where the priority is favoured towards people rather than vehicles. Home zones do not exclude vehicles, however highways and pavements are designed in such a way so as to slow vehicles to just a little faster than walking pace (approximately 10mph). Controlling vehicle speeds in this way and restricting movements alter the perception of how a street is used. This change allows for a wider range of activities in spaces traditionally reserved for the movement and parking of vehicles. Features, which may be introduced, include areas for children to play, enhanced planting, cycle parking, seating and public art.
- 11.2. The Borough Council will carefully consider development proposals, which include application of the home zone concept, and their contribution to children's play space. Spaces created within home zones which meet the criteria for children's play spaces as set out in table 1 will be included in the calculation of children's outdoor space provision.

12. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Pre-application discussion

- 12.1. The Borough Council strongly encourages pre-application discussions on the location and type of play space provision as part of the overall design process.

Information to accompany planning applications

- 12.2. The Council will expect planning applications to clearly indicate on layout plans the location of children's play space in relation to development. Developers should demonstrate that consideration has been given to providing safe and creative areas of play.

13. INSTALLATION

- 13.1. All equipment, surfaces and other associated items should be installed to the requirements of BS EN 1176 & BS EN 1177. The council will require written evidence in the form of:
- post installation report and risk assessment from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA);
 - certificates of compliance to the standard from equipment manufacturers;
 - guarantees and warranties from manufacturers.

14. ADOPTION

- 14.1. The Council will expect the developer to be responsible for the design, specification, construction and safety certification of play areas as part of the overall development of the site for housing. In some cases the developer will retain responsibility for the completed play area, however, the Council anticipates that developers may wish an alternative body to adopt play areas and take responsibility for maintenance. Such appropriate bodies include the Borough Council, parish councils, or a residents management group.
- 14.2. In all instances the developer should ensure that adequate maintenance and monitoring of equipment is put in place as soon as such facilities are known to be utilised by the general public.

- 14.3. The Borough Council will be willing to adopt a play area under the following circumstances:
- where the play area has been developed in line with the guidance set out in this document; and
 - where accompanied by a commuted maintenance sum that enables the council to maintain the facility to a high standard and in a safe condition over a period of no less than 10 years following adoption.
- 14.4. At the time of publication of this document (May 2003) a ten year commuted maintenance sum for a typical LEAP would be £23,650.

15. FURTHER INFORMATION

Relevant legislation

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Guidance

- PPG 12 Development Plans. DTLR (1999)
- PPG Note 17, Sport, Open Space and Recreation. DTLR (2002)
- Circular 1/97: Planning Obligations. Department of the Environment (1997)
- NPFA Six Acre Standard (2001)
- Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review Revised Deposit Draft, Cheltenham Borough Council (2004)
- Playing Pitch Assessment: Cheltenham Borough. Knight Kavanagh and Page (2002)
- Audit of Children's Play Space. CBC (2002)
- Planning and Designing Home Zones, Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2001)

Useful Websites

- www.cheltenham.gov.uk
- www.npfa.co.uk
- www.planning.odpm.gov.uk
- www.jrf.org.uk
- www.homezonenews.org.uk

16. CONTACTS

- 16.1. The following officers of the Borough Council will be able to offer further advice on the issues set out in this guidance:

Parks Development Manager
01242 774731

Development Control Manager
01242 264168

Play Space Assessments &
Calculations
01242 264150

Strategic Land Use Officer
01242 264382