

# **Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance: Open Space**

**Requirements for Integrating Open Spaces within New Residential Developments**

## Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1. Defining 'Open Space'	6
1.2. Open Space Typology	7
<b>2. Delivering Open Space</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1. Carmarthenshire's Open Space Standards	9
2.2. Public Open Space Assessment	10
2.3. LDP Policy	11
<b>3. Developer Contributions</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1. Integrated Provisions	14
3.2. Calculating the Open Space Requirement	15
3.3. Maintenance & Management	16
3.4. Commuted Sums	17
3.5. Planning Process	18
<b>4. Design Criteria</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1. Play Space	25
4.2. Outdoor Sports	33
4.3. Accessible Greenspace	40
4.4. Community Growing Space	44
4.5. Maintenance Plans	48
<b>5. Useful Contacts</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>50</b>
Appendix A: Glossary	50
Appendix B: Identifying Open Space Requirements	53
Appendix C: Determining Electoral Wards & Household Occupancy	54

## **Abbreviations**

- GBI** Green & Blue Infrastructure
- LDP** Local Development Plan
- LEDS** Landscape and Ecological Design Scheme
- LEMP** Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
- NGBs** National Governing Bodies
- PAC** Pre-Application Consultation
- POSA** Public Open Space Assessment
- SAB** Sustainable Drainage Approval Body
- SPG** Supplementary Planning Guidance
- SuDS** Sustainable Drainage Systems
- TAN** Technical Advice Note

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.0.1. The present Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has been prepared to accompany *PSD8: Provision of New Open Space* as contained within *Carmarthenshire's Local Development Plan (LDP) 2018-2033*. It is one of a series of SPG notes which help to collectively inform the process, design, and quality of sustainable development within the County.
- 1.0.2. This guidance will be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and should, therefore, be referred to by those intending to submit a planning application.
- 1.0.3. The purpose of this document is to provide applicants with:
- Open Space Standards which prospective development must adhere to;
  - The types of open space and quantity required in context to local needs;
  - The requirement of future provisions in terms of situation, design, and size; and
  - The type of contributions expected and how these are calculated.
- 1.0.4. This document was developed in line with [Planning Policy Wales](#) Edition 11 and [TAN16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space](#). A non-exhaustive summary of background policy and local strategic context in relation to open space can be found within *Carmarthenshire's Public Open Space Assessment (POSA)*.
- 1.0.5. A glossary of terminology can be found in Appendix A.

### **Consultation**

- 1.0.6. The present SPG will be subject to a consultation exercise conducted in a manner consistent with that set out within the Delivery Agreement for the LDP. Those changes agreed in responses to the comments received will then be incorporated and subsequently adopted by Council.

## 1.1. Defining Open Space

- 1.1.1. Contributing to the landscape and public realm of Carmarthenshire, open spaces are vital for health, well-being, and recreation. They provide a place for play and physical activity, often in the presence of nature, and can promote environmental conservation as inherent parts of Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI). By providing a place for social and human-nature interaction, these areas can further develop a person's sense of *cynefin*<sup>1</sup> whilst embedding placemaking principles within sustainable design.
- 1.1.2. There is a wide variety of open spaces, each often with a distinct function. While there is no universal definition of open space in respect of classification, size, or description, [TAN16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space](#) provides a full list of open space typologies and provides the following definition:
- 1.1.3. *“Open space is defined in the [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground. For the purposes of this guidance, open space should be regarded as all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport, recreation and tourism, and can also act as a visual amenity and may have conservation and biodiversity importance.”*
- 1.1.4. The present SPG considers open space closely in line with the above. Nevertheless, to ensure that those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage have the same opportunity as those who are not, open spaces must explicitly also be permanently accessible without financial restriction for members of the public to access (on-foot) and enjoy the primary purpose of the site from which the recreation/amenity benefit is provided.

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<sup>1</sup> “Cynefin” is a Welsh word meaning ‘the place where we feel we belong, where the people and landscape around us are familiar, and the sights and sounds are reassuringly recognisable.’

## 1.2. Open Space Typology

1.2.1. Well-designed open spaces are integral to the flow and overall feel of a development, alongside the wider built environment. When coupled with effective design solutions and sympathetic management, all functional open spaces can contribute towards the health and wellbeing of residents, visitors, and workers, whilst safeguarding the GBI network for future generations. Therefore, sustainable development is often integrated with a variety of open space types to ensure that a range of needs, abilities, and interests are duly met. Those typologies stated within *TAN16* have been consolidated below in recognition of the multifunctional benefits which many of these open space provide. Each category is defined below, with specific design criteria later outlined in Chapter 4.

### Play Space

1.2.2. Play Spaces are areas designated specifically for providing play opportunities for children and young people. They may comprise of playground equipment, wheeled sport facilities, and natural features such as trees, logs, water, and sand, and also contain other amenities such as hangout shelters, seating, and bins. To promote inclusive play where all children and young people have equal access to quality local play provision, the following Play Spaces have been developed in line with the guidance set out in [Wales: A Play Friendly Country](#) (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Types of Play Spaces defined in the context of Carmarthenshire.

Type	Definition
Doorstep Play Space	A small, landscaped space with engaging play features and where young children can play within view of known adults.
Local Play Space	A medium-sized, landscaped space with play features that can be accessed safely by children independently and with friends, without an accompany adult.
Neighbourhood Play Space	A larger, varied natural space with secluded and open areas which contain a wide range of play features. Flexibility for physical recreational activities for children of all ages, and young people.

## **Outdoor Sports**

- 1.2.3. Outdoor Sports includes playing fields, pitches, and courts, and are often supported by associated facilities such as changing pavilions, areas of semi-natural features (e.g., boundary hedgerows, green corridors), and provision for bicycle racks and parking. Alternative forms of informal outdoor sports provision such as outdoor gyms, fitness trails, and trail mountain bike track are also considered within this category. Collectively, these spaces directly support [Welsh Government's 'Climbing Higher'](#) ambitions for increasing participation in sport and physical activity.

## **Accessible Greenspace**

Accessible Greenspaces are areas of predominately natural character which are dedicated for public amenity, recreation, and environmental conservation. Characterised by vegetation, geology, and water, they include landscape-scales resources such as country parks and common land, alongside smaller dispersed areas throughout the built environment such as street trees, village greens, and parks. Collectively, these resources facilitate the human-nature connection and help create the mosaic of habitats seen within Carmarthenshire.

## **Community Growing Spaces**

- 1.2.4. Community growing spaces such as orchards, allotments, and community gardens provide opportunities for active recreation and social interaction, alongside growing fruit and vegetables. Both the encompassing activities and consumption of such produce can promote physical and mental well-being. In some cases, this land may also be used for husbandry (e.g., bee keeping), and could also hold classes aimed at educating the community on a range of self-sufficiency principles. Associated infrastructure includes access to services (e.g., water and electric), potting-up sheds, and other structures such as a multifunctional room and educational signage. These spaces have the unique opportunity to help alleviate issues such as the food security by increasing local food production, the obesity epidemic by promoting healthier eating, and climate change by reducing food miles.

## 2. Delivering Open Space

2.0.1. The following chapter evidences the pragmatic approach which has been undertaken to safeguard and enhance open space provision, in accordance with local needs. Standards were first devised in reference to the local challenges faced by Carmarthenshire’s communities. These were then tested in a POSA to indicate areas of sufficiency, helping to shape LDP policies which underpin the requirement to protect and deliver open space. Lastly, this SPG sets out the responsibilities placed on applicants to ensure that prospective development proposals are in keeping with the adopted standards.

### 2.1. Carmarthenshire’s Open Space Standards

2.1.1. Collectively, these locally developed standards ensure the capacity of existing open space provisions continues to provide communities with the opportunity for play, exercise, leisure, and connecting outdoors (Table 2). While guided by recommendations made by Play Wales, Fields in Trust, and Natural Resources Wales, each standard helps address the distinct challenges faced in Carmarthenshire by contributing towards several key strategic priorities made by Council. In practice, they enable the identification of open space sufficiency and, ultimately, set the minimum requirement for which future development must provide.

**Table 2.** Carmarthenshire’s Open Space Standards

Open Space Category	Quantity Standard		Accessibility Standard
	Per 1000 People (ha)	Per Person (m2)	
Play Space	0.8	8	Doorstep: 1½-minute walk (100m) Local: 5-minute walk (400m) Neighbourhood: 12½-minute walk (1,000m)
Outdoor Sports	1.6	16	Playing Fields: 15-minute walk (1,200m)
Accessible Greenspace	0.25	2.5	Wherever possible
Community Growing Space	0.2	2	-

## **2.2. Public Open Space Assessment**

- 2.2.1. A POSA has been undertaken across the entire unitary area to audit existing provisions and, in part, support the evidence base of the LDP. As a high-level assessment it acknowledges that the level of open space provision is dynamic and is likely to fluctuate over time. For instance, additional spaces could be provided, potentially leading to a sufficiency within the vicinity (in accordance with each of the standards), or retired spaces may become inaccessible (leading to the deficiency). Therefore, the results of the POSA are considered to provide an indicative reflection of provision and discretion is given to any subsequent work which may be used to inform the assessment of planning applications. It is expected this will be mitigated through annual revisions.
- 2.2.2. In summary, settlements<sup>2</sup> were assessed against the quantity benchmark whereas accessibility was assessed using network analysis to provide a service area from each open space resource (i.e., the route a sat nav might take) in alignment with the walking distance identified within the standards (Table 2). Additional accessibility was undertaken to inform each of the allocations within the LDP (subject to change).
- 2.2.3. Please refer to the *Open Space Calculator* which provides an indicative overview of the open space provision within Carmarthenshire (based upon the latest version of the POSA).

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<sup>2</sup> Tier 1, 2, and 3 as contained with the LDP settlement framework.

## **2.3. LDP Policy**

- 2.3.1. The LDP has been designed to prevent any further deficits which presently existing across the County. The policies which embed this have been extracted below, however they should not be considered in isolation.

### **PSD7: Protection of Open Space**

Provision will be made to protect and wherever possible enhance accessibility to open space. Proposals which result in the loss of existing open space will only be permitted where:

- a. It is demonstrated that there is provision of at least equivalent value available within the settlement, or appropriately accessible location; and,
- b. It would not cause or exacerbate a deficiency of open space; or,
- c. The re-development of a small part of the site would allow for the retention and improvement of the majority of the facility; or,
- d. A satisfactory financial contribution towards compensatory provision is provided as an acceptable alternative facility.

- 2.3.2. *PSD7: Protection of Open Space* seeks to protect all areas identified as open space by the Council. This policy encompasses all open spaces outlined during the audit contained within the POSA despite the delineation made between publicly accessible and limited access spaces.

- 2.3.3. To comply with *PSD7*, any development proposals on land which is, in part, or wholly, identified within the audit must demonstrate that the criteria has been satisfied.

### **PSD8: Provision of New Open Space**

All new residential developments of five or more homes will be required to contribute towards open space in accordance with the Council's open space standards. In the event that the standards cannot be met on site, or where there is sufficient existing provision already available to service the development, then a commuted sum will be sought where appropriate.

- 2.3.4. *PSD8: Provision of New Open Space* seeks to ensure that any further applicable development will be required to make an appropriate contribution to meet the needs of the new residents and ensure that existing shortfalls are not exacerbated. The approach in which these policies will be implemented is summarised in Appendix B.

**SPG: Open Space - Draft for Reporting**

2.3.5. Other policies pertinent to the delivery of sustainable development and ensuring placemaking in context to open space provision are further outlined below:

- *SP12: Placemaking and Sustainable Places* and *PSD1: Effective Design Solutions: Sustainability and Placemaking* provides the overarching framework for quality design in development, conservation, and enhancement proposals within the County. It states that consideration of open space provision should be an integral component of design from the outset. The *Placemaking and Sustainable Places SPG* elaborates upon this.
- *PSD3: Green and Blue Infrastructure Network* outlines the requirements of development proposal to consider GBI. Both the Open Space and GBI Network are intrinsically connected and demonstrating adherence to one is expected to meet the other.
- *PSD5: Development and the Circular Economy* sets out the need for proposals to demonstrate how waste will be mitigated. Open Spaces can provide an opportunity for waste utilisation.
- *PSD11: Noise Pollution* and *PSD12: Light and Air Pollution* prevents the adverse effects from associated pollution. Open Spaces (particularly greenspace) can act as an effective sound/air quality buffer.
- *SP14: Maintaining and Enhancing the Natural Environment* seeks to ensure that nature is enhanced and not adversely affected by development proposals. Reference is made to the *Biodiversity SPG* clarifying *NE2: Biodiversity*. The requirement for proposals to meet net benefits for biodiversity may be delivered together with Open Space. Onward management must be sympathetic to biodiversity conservation.
- *CCH4: Water Quality and Protection of Water Resources* seeks to protect water quality and enhance aquatic ecology. Such provisions can also provide opportunities for meeting open space requirements as part of an inclusive design approach. The same is true for wider flood mitigation measures required by *CCH5: Flood Risk Management and Avoidance*.
- *INF1: Planning Obligations* sets the mechanism in which developer contributions will be secured and is further evidenced within the *Planning Obligations SPG*.

### **3. Developer Contributions**

- 3.0.1. In accordance with *PSD8*, developer contributions will be required for all new residential developments accommodating 5 or more dwellings where there is a quantitative deficiency in one or more of the identified open space categories. Additionally, such proposals will also be required to meet the minimum accessibility standards to ensure that existing or proposed new open space provisions are accessible to the eventual occupants. This applies to all proposals which result in self-contained units of accommodation, including conversions from non-residential use to residential, and/or the subdivision of an existing residential property which will lead to a net increase of 5 units or above the existing number of properties.
- 3.0.2. In those instances which lead to a potential loss of existing open space (whether representing an actual reduction in provision quantity and/or accessibility for existing residents), all proposals irrespective of development type may need to deliver reparative contributions in line with *PSD7*, in addition to the standards and design criteria contained within the present SPG.
- 3.0.3. Where the Council identifies that an applicant has purposefully sub-divided sites to undermine the requirements outlined above, the overall residential unit provision will be calculated, and any open space contributions will be sought accordingly. This also applies to those planning applications which are staggered over a given period.
- 3.0.4. In this context, the delivery of open space resources shall be achieved via one, or an appropriate and agreed mix, of the following mechanisms:
- Integrated Provision
  - Commuted Sum

NB: A Commuted Sum will only be accepted in certain instances.

### **3.1. Integrated Provisions**

- 3.1.1. Integrated provisions are those delivered as part of the development for the primary benefit of the eventual residents. Early discussions during the pre-application stage are vital to ensure that suitable provision is made in a planned manner and that open space forms an integral design component of the development. The Council favours proposals which embed integrated provisions to facilitate the creation of sustainable communities, ensure effective placemaking, and the delivery of wider LDP policy and well-being objectives.
- 3.1.2. Each proposal will need to demonstrate that residents' needs are adequately provided for (in accordance with Carmarthenshire's Open Space Standards).
- 3.1.3. Consideration may be given to improving accessibility. For instance, where an existing provision could potentially service the proposed development although it goes beyond the appropriate accessibility standard and there is a demonstrable quantity sufficiency within that electoral ward.
- 3.1.4. In proposals for major development and/or sites where phased development will occur, the extent, location, design functions, and intended multifunctionality of open space must be outlined within the site brief and detailed within any accompanying design statement. This information should clearly set out how these are expected to make a positive contribution to the communities and landscape of Carmarthenshire, particularly in terms of the public realm.
- 3.1.5. Provisions must be accessible on completion, with phasing being delivered in line with open space provision requirements. However, if the scale of the proposal development requires large scale open spaces which are intended to be shared by the whole development, a specific programme for provision must be submitted and approved as part of the planning application.

## **3.2. Calculating the Open Space Requirement**

- 3.2.1. Please see the accompanying *Open Space Calculator* (this will be developed as part of the progression of this SPG towards public consultation).
- 3.2.2. The contribution sought is tailored to meet the additional demand arisen from the proposed development in line with Carmarthenshire's Open Space Standards, as proportionate to the number of proposed dwellings. It will not be applied to alleviate any existing open space shortage unless created/exacerbated by the proposed development. In instances where there is a sufficiency in both quantity and accessibility, a contribution may be sought to improve the condition and/or extent of nearby existing provisions, if a demonstrable need is evidenced.
- 3.2.3. In summary, the *Open Space Requirement* varies on development scale, location, and existing transport infrastructure. It is calculated on the proposed number of dwellings, the *Open Space Demand* created by the prospective *Household Occupancy*, the accessibility of the site in relation to existing provisions, and the capacity and existing local open space to service additional needs.
- 3.2.4. Once the *Open Space Requirement* is known, an applicant can begin effectively integrating it within the overall design and landscape of the proposal, in accordance with the design criteria set out for each open space type (see Chapter 4). Nevertheless, while the *Open Space Requirement* represents the minimum amount for which applicants must seek to provide, and developers are encouraged to go beyond this to maximise community benefits and promote placemaking principles and sustainable design.
- 3.2.5. Proposals will be expected to justify their adherence to the standards, and, therefore, it is advised that supplementary information should evidence how the requirement was determined.
- 3.2.6. A reduced requirement may be accepted for proposals of assisted living developments (not including care homes) made under *HOM6: Specialist Housing*, and proposals for ancillary residential accommodation in the form of an annexe, made under *HOM9: Ancillary Residential Development*. Along with other exceptional circumstances, these will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### **3.3. Management & Maintenance**

- 3.3.1. Where an integrated provision is provided there will also be a need to address its future maintenance. It is the Council's preference for a developer-initiated management plan to deliver the future maintenance of integrated provisions. Forming part of the planning application, a management plan will need to identify who will be responsible for managing and funding the maintenance of the open space (e.g., a sufficiently resourced management company) and demonstrate what arrangements will be delivered throughout the lifetime of the proposed development.
- 3.3.2. Where developers make a financial contribution *in lieu* of integrated provision, a commuted sum for future maintenance costs will also be sought. This sum may be further subject to a cumulative present value factor to ensure provisions are adequately funded.
- 3.3.3. Estimates can be obtained from the accompanying *Open Space Calculator*.
- 3.3.4. Whilst specific considerations for each type of open space is provided throughout Chapter 4, further guidance on the scope of maintenance plans is set out in Section 4.5.

### **3.4. Commuted Sums**

- 3.4.1. To encourage thoughtful design, placemaking, and ascertain the vision for ‘*One Carmarthenshire*’, all residential proposals are expected to meet their open space requirement through delivering integrated provisions. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council consider a Commuted Sum.
- 3.4.2. During the pre-application stage, an applicant must provide justifications as to why provisions cannot be integrated into the proposal (e.g., the shape and/or layout of the site). If the Council deems it is inappropriate and/or impractical for an applicant to meet the necessary *Open Space Requirement*, only then will a Commuted Sum be acceptable.
- 3.4.3. A Section 106 Agreement may be arranged to secure financial contributions which will be used to improve existing open spaces, deliver new provisions, and/or support their ongoing maintenance.
- 3.4.4. Any subsequent provision delivered through commuted sums will be situated near the contributing development site or within the same settlement, and ideally in accordance with the Accessibility Standards. This is to comply with the relevant statutory tests<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, the Council may pool contributions within the same locality to ensure open space needs can be met more effectively.

#### **How are Commuted Sums calculated?**

- 3.4.5. Where an applicant proposes to integrate all open space requirements and will be responsible for future maintenance, there would be no need to calculate costs associated with open space contributions. However, the process which will be undertaken by the Council to determine a Commuted Sum is detailed within the *Planning Obligations SPG*. This document further details instances where a S106 Agreement may be sought for securing improvements to the quality and/or extend of existing provisions. Estimates can be obtained from the accompanying *Open Space Calculator*.

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<sup>3</sup>Any planning obligations in the agreement are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

## **3.5. Planning Process**

- 3.5.1. This section provides an overview of the planning application process in relation to delivering open space.

### **Pre-Application Consultation**

- 3.5.2. Proposals for major development are required to submit a [Pre-Application Consultation \(PAC\)](#) Report. When undertaking this, community engagement can help shape the design process and determine any local demand for specific features and/or types of open spaces. Nevertheless, where the likely future residents cannot be consulted in advance, any local aspirations should be balanced with the demand arising from the new development (and design criteria set out within this SPG).

### **Pre-Application Discussions**

- 3.5.3. The present SPG provides an overview of typically open space requirements however, it should also be recognised that every circumstance and potential development site is unique. Applicants are, therefore, encouraged to utilise our [Pre-Application Service](#)<sup>4</sup> to discuss the relevant development plan policies against which the development proposal will be assessed, the open space requirements that the proposal will generate, any other material planning considerations and site-specific considerations including the scope and amount of any Section 106 contributions.
- 3.5.4. To promote better placemaking, early consultation may also be sought from the [Sustainable Drainage Approval Body \(SAB\)](#) to discuss the requirement for SuDS and how these may provide amenity and biodiversity benefits; in addition to other vested parties such as [Chwaraeon Cymru \(Sport Wales\)](#) and [Chwarae Cymru \(Play Wales\)](#) to provide specialist advice related to the respective open space disciplines.

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<sup>4</sup> Fees apply. Note that this service is separate from that of the SAB which charges an additional for using its pre-application service.

## **Planning Application Stage**

3.5.5. Planning Applications should submit the required information set out within the *Placemaking SPG*. Information related to open space as submitted for planning consent should include:

- i. **Summary of any pre-application service, PAC**, and community-led design input;
- ii. **Extent, location, gradient, and function of open spaces** in line with the typologies outlined (as set out within the Landscape and Ecological Design Scheme (LEDS), see *Landscape Character SPG*);
- iii. **Specifications of materials used**, and how the Design Criteria (Chapter 4) and any British Standards have been adhered to;
- iv. **Design of boundary fencing, service roads, and facility structures** (e.g., changing rooms, outdoor canopies, landmark features) if utilised;
- v. **Details of all new planting schemes** (i.e., size, species, density, location) and differentiate between any existing vegetation;
- vi. **How SuDS have been integrated** (i.e., designs should distinguish between permanent water retention ponds, planted wetlands, and various detention scenarios for the open space – indicating water conveyance flow directions and exceedance flow paths);
- vii. **Illustrate connections to** existing and/or proposed **GBI infrastructure, active travel routes, permissible paths**, and other key social/community infrastructure;
- viii. **Cross sections** of exemplar open space provisions (preferably rendered);
- ix. **Timescales** for delivery in relation to the development and details of any phasing;
- x. Proposed **Maintenance Plan(s)** (in accordance with Section 4.5).

3.5.6. In exceptional cases where adoption has been previously agreed with the Council, applicants must further supply a landscape architectural drawing which outlines the areas to be adopted and/or managed, technical construction drawings of any created features, and timescales for the submission of other supporting documentation as supplied by the manufacturers and/or any required inspectors' reports.

### **Granted Applications**

- 3.5.7. Full planning permissions will contain an associated planning condition for delivering integrated open space provisions and/or the need to enter into a S106 agreement with the Council. A S106 agreement will set out the requirement for providing open space provision and the planning conditions by which the provisions will be delivered (i.e. either integrated and/or commuted sum, and the future maintenance thereof). All S106 agreements will be tied with the land so future successors in title will also be bound by this.
- 3.5.8. Where an application for outline planning permission is granted, the permission will stipulate whether the developer open space contribution will be integrated as part of the development and/or met through a commuted sum. Any changes to the number of residential units in a subsequent planning application may result in the level of open space contribution changing.
- 3.5.9. The timescales for provision delivery will be agreed with the Council and are expected to form part of the Legal Agreement. Planning conditions may also be attached to ensure open space requirements are achieved, particularly where outline consent is sought. Enforcement action will be taken if specified planning conditions are not met.

### **Renewal of Planning Consent**

- 3.5.10. Any applications for the renewal of a planning consent (or new applications submitted on sites which previously had planning approval) will be assessed in line with the adopted LDP. Therefore, this could mean that a contribution towards open space may now be required even where no contribution was previously needed. This is reflective of the consistent changes to the open space network and/or policy changes since the original application.

## 4. Design Criteria

- 4.0.1. Quality design can help create developments that are attractive, safe, and vibrant for both residents and visitors. To promote placemaking and holistic sustainability the design of open spaces should reflect several key factors such as reducing incidences of crime, favouring active travel choices, and increasing biodiversity, and must also ensure long-term cost effectiveness by thoughtfully considering future maintenance work. Integrated provisions help to maximise such benefits.
- 4.0.2. This Chapter seeks to provide applicants with general principles in respect of the design, layout, and future management of open space provision. The subsequent sections cover design criteria for each open space type – firstly outlining those principles which are applicable to all provisions, and then providing specifications for each distinct open space solution within each category. All proposals that deliver open space will be assessed against these criteria.
- 4.0.3. Consideration must also be given to the *Placemaking and Sustainable Design SPG* which encompasses the overarching design principles for all proposals.
- 4.0.4. In recognition of the various unique challenges which development sites can propose, the Council will assess alternative design solutions if put forward by the applicant on a case-by-case basis. Alternative proposals must be in keeping with the key principles for each open space category, and informed by design criteria set out by widely recognised and trusted stakeholders<sup>5</sup>.
- 4.0.5. Any subsequent provision delivered through a Commuted Sum will also be expected to meet this design criteria. Regardless of how the developer contribution is made, provisions are expected to be of comparable extent and quality.

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<sup>5</sup> Criteria set out with this Chapter has been compiled from nationally accepted design specifications, with input from relevant local authority staff, resources made by other local authorities, and was publicly consulted upon.

## **General Considerations**

- 4.0.6. The proposal should demonstrate, where relevant, how the design:
- i. Creates an open space network which reflects the recreational activities that will benefit the wellbeing of future residents;
  - ii. Ensures that the open space network is an intentional and integral component of the residential layout;
  - iii. Connects to, expands upon, and/or complements the existing open space, active travel, and GBI network;
  - iv. Locates provision on suitable land in accessible, safe, and obvious locations that maximises their enjoyment and usage;
  - v. Maximises access for a range of needs and abilities; and
  - vi. Seeks to integrate multifunctionality so that residents have more awareness of the sustainable design aspects of which underpins the built environment.
- 4.0.7. Any investment in open space should seek to maximise the social, economic, and environmental return. In an effort to secure property values, develop a stronger sense of community, increase utility, design out crime, and foster local stewardship of future maintenance, designs should also:
- i. Explicitly evidence how the design criteria has been adhered to;
  - ii. Be appropriate to the management and maintenance resource available;
  - iii. Locate open spaces in areas which are most visible to residents (i.e., positioning property fronts to directly face areas of open space);
  - iv. Use subtle prompts such as tree planting, dwelling situation, and street layout, to draw focus naturally into open spaces; and
  - v. Place benches, bins, and other amenities close to service routes and ensure they are visible by other open space users or nearby properties.
- 4.0.8. Applicants are encouraged to consult with the public, community groups, and local Councillors to find out what the community wants in terms of design and layout. Early stakeholder engagement is likely to increase open space utility final and strengthen community relations.
- 4.0.9. Specific reference is given to other SPG notes, where appropriate, to holistically consider other requirements placed by requisite LDP policies.

## **Embedding Multifunctionality**

- 4.0.10. For an open space to be properly integrated it must have a functional purpose beyond providing surface level amenity. For instance, whilst collectively helping to meet the wellbeing needs of residents, Play Spaces facilitate juvenile development; Outdoor Sports promotes exercise, development, and healthy aging; Accessible Greenspace can help mitigate climate change and enables people to interact with nature close to where they live ; and Community Growing Spaces encourage community cohesion and healthier lifestyles. This also presents applicants with an opportunity to combine open space requirements within other design features such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), net benefit for biodiversity, sustainable modes of travel (including pedestrian routes, active travel), and community facilities.
- 4.0.11. All public realm landscape areas in new developments must be designed to deliver amenity, recreation, and environmental benefits to enable contribution towards meeting any open space requirement. Proposals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to consider the contributions made towards integrated provisions, alongside the inherent opportunities and challenges the prospective development site poses. Nevertheless, areas which do not count towards the minimum requirement include:
- i. Private gardens;
  - ii. Isolated areas which have no clear amenity/recreational function (e.g., grassed road verges and unrelated service strips);
  - iii. SuDS which are not integrated with the wider public open space (i.e., only Nature-based SuDS features which are accessible and/or provide complementary amenity to surrounding open space provisions can contribute - Subject to SAB approval);
  - iv. Areas of street planting without consideration to the design criteria and sympathetic management set out within this Chapter (i.e., only thoughtfully planted functional areas which are integrated with other open spaces and/or complement publicly accessible routes (i.e., pedestrian paths and cycleways) may contribute); and
  - v. Provisions exclusively dedicated to community facilities such as schools, or organisations such as sports clubs (unless accompanied by agreement permitting public access in perpetuity). Whilst leniency may be provided in instances where overriding benefits and sufficient community collaboration has been demonstrated, in most cases dual use provisions will not contribute towards the requirement.

## **Accessibility**

4.0.12. All open spaces should be equally accessible to people with a wide range of physical and mental abilities, and located where they are of most value to the community. Design considerations should also seek to complement mobility throughout the entire built environment, whilst adhering to the minimum targets set by relevant accessibility standards. Barriers impeding access and preventing open space enjoyment include:

- Physical (e.g. Poorly designed aspects including surfacing, slopes, and steps; Lack of accessible toilet facilities, car parking, cycle racks, or public transport connections);
- Psychological (e.g. Fear over personal safety due to crime; Lack of confidence, motivation, and familiarity); and
- Organisational (e.g., Lack of site information and interpretation thereof; Management issues leading to risks associated with litter, dog fouling, and hazardous paths etc).

4.0.13. In an effort to overcome barriers and secure accessibility, designs should consider:

- i. How provisions can be integrated into the wider open space and active travel network<sup>6</sup>, and public transport;
- ii. The legibility for all users, with clear wayfinding through thoughtful site situation and the use of natural prompts;
- iii. Design solutions which will help increase usage in all weather conditions (e.g., suitable surfacing, shelter, and shade);
- iv. The appropriate selection and provision of seating and frequent resting spots;
- v. Opportunities to integrate community infrastructure such as refuse management points and street furniture (particularly with small-scale open spaces), or smart infrastructure such as digital street communications within urban areas;
- vi. An appropriate amount of cycle parking and, if appropriate, parking spaces (although every effort should be made to promote walking and cycling to the site);
- vii. The proximity to other facilities such as public convenience and cafés to encourage people to spend more time in the open spaces (especially for large-scale open spaces within major developments).

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<sup>6</sup> The approved 15-year plan for our [Active Travel Network Map can be found here](#).

## 4.1. Play Space

- 4.1.1. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed, and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people choose what to do by following their own ideas and interests, how, when, and who they do it with. Play is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals and communities.
- 4.1.2. Outdoor play presents a unique chance to provide many learning and developmental opportunities through different types of play. Children and young people experience a sense of freedom and happiness from being outside and they can be important social places, not just for children and young people, but also for parents, carers, and the wider community. With children and young people experiencing fewer opportunities for outdoor play than previous generations due to increasing levels of traffic, concerns about risk, schoolwork, and negative attitudes towards young people, creating safe outdoors play spaces is ever more important in the contemporary built environment.

### Principles for Play Spaces

- 4.1.3. The following criteria will be expected from all Play Spaces (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Design Principles for all Play Spaces.

New Play Spaces must...	
1	be suitably located and accessible
	<p><b>a</b> Play spaces should be integral to the overall design, and complement the existing play context and wider landscape. Leftover, overshadowed, and/or excessively wet or windy spaces should be made worthy through innovative design.</p> <p><b>b</b> Thoughtful placement should provide an appropriate balance of active and passive surveillance (i.e., Doorstep provisions should be visible from nearby properties and/or other amenity users. While not exclusively isolated, Neighbourhood Play Spaces should incorporate secluded areas</p>

	<p><b>c</b> No hazardous roads, environmental pollution (e.g., noise, air), or other site-specific hazardous (e.g., not be built on contaminated land without adequate remediation).</p> <p><b>d</b> Utilise appropriate buffer zones to minimise the incidence of nuisance.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p>maximise inclusivity</p>
	<p><b>e</b> Play spaces should feel welcoming to all children, and designed to be inclusive of children with disabilities without encouraging segregation.</p>
	<p><b>f</b> The majority of play features should be non-prescriptive to satisfy a range of developmental functions and different abilities.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p>provide appropriate risks</p>
	<p><b>g</b> Risk is an essential, natural, and valuable part of children’s play. All provisions must provide an acceptable level of risk which challenge the physical and mental development of a child and young people (please refer to <a href="#">Play Wales</a>).</p>
	<p><b>h</b> Designers must take a ‘benefit-risk’ approach when making decisions. Meaning they should consider the benefits of allowing a degree of risk and challenge.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p>evolve to the needs of the community</p>
	<p><b>i</b> Flexibility in play value should offer enjoyment to a range of users throughout the week, and evolve to meet the needs of children and young people as they grow.</p>
	<p><b>j</b> The design should reflect our changing climate by protecting children and young people from the risks associated with inclement weather, air quality, and noise (e.g., the inclusion of measures such as tree canopy cover, water foundations, and shading-structures).</p>
<b>5</b>	<p>incorporate biophilic design</p>
	<p><b>k</b> Maximise the use of natural features to stimulate creativity and imagination, and more effectively cater for developmental and sensory needs (e.g., water play areas, sensory gardens, food growing opportunities, den building).</p>
	<p>be sustainably designed</p>

6

I Sufficient consideration must be given to the sustainability (i.e., economic, social, and environmental aspects) and long-term maintenance requirements of the play features utilised throughout their life cycle.

m Play Space should provide long-term enjoyment for present and future generations.

### Types of Play Spaces

4.1.4. Play Spaces are largely devisable by the age range which they are designed to serve. While each type may slightly differ in the varieties of offers, all provisions should be centred on facilitating active recreation, imagination, and socialisation through the medium of play. The types of play spaces include:

- Doorstep Play Spaces;
- Local Play Spaces;
- Neighbourhood Play Spaces;
- Provisions for Young People (e.g., Hang-Out Shelters); and
- Other informal play opportunities particularly aimed at young people and children integrated within other open space provisions.

### Design Brief for Delivering Integrated Play Spaces

#### a) Extent

4.1.5. Table 6 outlines the required minimum size and extent of each type of Play Space.

**Table 6.** Specification for Play Spaces. [Adapted from FIT Standards](#). \* = This area only includes natural play features and dedicated play equipment. \*\* = Figure based on the recommended size of the activity zone against the approximate number of residential units that would require integrated provisions.

Play Space Type	Accessibility Standard	Minimum Activity Area*	Minimum Buffer Zone	Residential Units Served**
Doorstep	100m	100m <sup>2</sup>	5m	5

<b>Local</b>	400m	400m <sup>2</sup>	20m	21
<b>Neighbourhood</b>	1,000m	1000m <sup>2</sup>	30m	52

4.1.6. The ‘Buffer Zone’ represents the minimum separation between activity zone and the nearest property boundary. These distances help to reduce the possibility of conflict between local residents and those at play. Minor derogations may be permitted where an effective permanent planting screen ensures that users cannot overlook neighbouring properties.

4.1.7. If a proposed Play Space will be in close proximity to existing residential properties, the applicant should ensure that the residents are informed during the outline design stage.

**b) Play Features**

4.1.8. The location, target age range, and type of Play Space will influence the selection of play features. While all designs are expected to provide both formal play equipment and natural play features, more flexibility is given to Doorstep Play Spaces in that they could only provide natural play with appropriate design considerations. Regard should be had to existing or other proposed Play Spaces to ensure that the overall provision provides a balance between these features. A balanced mix of play features best offers different opportunities and challenges for children and young people with a variety of abilities and interests.

4.1.9. Natural play features lend themselves to providing opportunities for children and young people to interact with their natural surroundings. They allow children and young people to play and explore, be challenged by the natural elements, help stimulate the senses and encourage a greater use of the imagination. They include natural tactile materials (e.g., felled trees, boulders, sand), areas of planting (e.g., trees, shrubs), ground modelling (e.g., mounds to roll down), and other items which facilitate creative play and movement (e.g., partly buried pipe) (Figure 1). This also presents an opportunity to repurpose waste materials produced from the construction process.



**Figure 1.** (left) Collection of logs and stumps at Dyffryn Gardens (Alice Jones), (centre) sawn landscape feature, and (right) ditch and mound system with tunnel (Jane Bain) (CC BY-ND 2.0).

4.1.10. It is important to examine the intended location to identify any existing elements which may provide chances for play (e.g. trees, natural earth formations, slopes). The design and layout of a path through an area can become a play opportunity (e.g., within a grassed area, a mown meandering path can form a maze for smaller children, while trees and bushes with fallen branches/twigs can provide possibilities for den making).

4.1.11. The Council can provide advice on those types of Play Features which have been previously deployed within the County, and have a good track record in terms of play value, durability, and ease of maintenance. Unless intensive management is to be provided by the applicant, items of formal play equipment which are not recommended are:

- Flush fitted roundabouts;
- Swings without anti-wrap bearings;
- Aerial runways; and
- Sawn timber equipment without steel footings.

4.1.12. If a Play Space incorporates any of the above equipment and the site is eventually adopted by the Council, the commuted sums charged will reflect the need for more frequent maintenance and repair.

### **SPG: Open Space - Draft for Reporting**

4.1.13. Sufficient justification and evidence must be provided if designing Play Spaces exclusively using natural play features or formal equipment. Proposals which do not incorporate some elements of natural play will be looked upon less favourably.

4.1.14. Long term maintenance and durability always need to be considered when selecting play features.

#### **c) Accompanying Furniture**

4.1.15. Designated Play Spaces must provide:

- Seating for parents and carers relevant to the size of the provision (Minimum of 1 for Doorstep Play Spaces, 2 or more for Local and Neighbourhood Play Spaces);
- Cycle racks relevant to the size of the provision (particularly for Local and Neighbourhood Play Spaces); and
- Covered refuse bins for both general and recycling (while outside of the play provision, dog waste bins must also be provided within the nearby vicinity to deter contamination). All notification must be either in Welsh and/or bilingual.

4.1.16. Play Spaces which incorporate boundary fencing must also provide:

- At least one sign per provision providing emergency contact details (i.e., name and address, what3words, and number to contact site management and/or maintenance provider), with additional signs at each entrance deterring dogs (i.e., '*Ni Chaniateir Cŵn / No Dogs Permitted*') and smoking ('*Dim Ysmygy / No Smoking*'). All signage must be bilingual with Welsh to be displayed first.

#### **d) Surfacing**

4.1.17. Appropriate surfaces selection can provide different opportunities for play. A comparison of surfacing options has been published by [RoSPA](#).

4.1.18. Surfacing must be installed according to (and within the areas identified) BS EN 1176. It should also be tested by the supplier in accordance with BS7188 and EN1177.

4.1.19. Synthetic surfacing should only be utilised inside the equipment's designated safety zone to prevent issues associated with wear, vandalism, and long-term maintenance. Continuous expanses of specialised surfacing (where it is not required under BS EN

## **SPG: Open Space - Draft for Reporting**

1176) may generate excessive repair costs. Designs containing artificial grass turf are not supported.

- 4.1.20. As recommended in EN 1176, well maintained grass with at least 150mm of sub soil is a suitable surface for falls up to a height of 1500mm (subject to a risk assessment).
- 4.1.21. There is a preference for natural ground cover in order to limit environmental pollution and potential health-related concerns (especially outside of the areas outlined within BS EN 1176). Nevertheless, regard should be had to ensuring accessibility to all users, year-round.
- 4.1.22. Natural Play Features (which are not identified under BS EN 1176) are also required to have suitable surfacing. Low items under 600m may not need protective surfaces, but should still have some impact attenuation quality. Please refer to the guidance by RoSPA on [loose impact attenuating surfaces](#) and [grass as a play area surface](#).

### **e) Boundaries**

- 4.1.23. Wherever possible, consider using existing or other proposed landscape features to define Play Spaces such as pedestrian routes, hedgerows, and trees.
- 4.1.24. There is a growing perspective amongst public bodies, play inspectors, and specialist playground designers that fencing is “*unnecessary in many circumstances*”<sup>7</sup>. Traditional enclosures are seen to demarcate play to exclusive areas of public spaces, unnecessarily restricting a child’s freedom of movement and opportunities for play elsewhere within the public landscape. The incorporation of fencing must, therefore, be informed through a risk-benefit judgement process which considers any site-specific factors hazards and those which fencing poses. In general, only when hazards beyond the play space are identified should fencing be incorporated into the design (e.g., hazardous road, deep water).
- 4.1.25. If a fence is required, it should be robust, low-maintenance, and provided additional amenity value. All fully enclosed Play Spaces must be provided with at least two gates

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<sup>7</sup> As discussed by the Play Safety Forum Page 71-73 - [managing-risk-in-play-provision.pdf](#)

### **SPG: Open Space - Draft for Reporting**

to allow for a quick means of escape<sup>8</sup>. These must also be designed and installed in accordance with the latest guidance set out by [RoSPA](#), and both BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177. For visibility, gates should also be a different colour to the surrounding fence.

- 4.1.26. Play Spaces adjacent to hazardous roads may be required to incorporate pedestrian guardrails to adequately highlight the associated dangers.

#### **f) Inspections & Maintenance**

- 4.1.27. The follow considerations are in addition to those outlined in Section 4.5.
- 4.1.28. All sites and associated play equipment should be certified post installation by a Play Inspector. This is to ensure that any equipment has been installed in compliance with manufacturer's installation instructions, and that the Play Space meets the most up-to date and relevant standards. Nevertheless, the safety of play spaces is not exclusive of the initial design and construction of the site.
- 4.1.29. Maintenance operations and annual inspections must be carried out in accordance with BS EN1176 (Part 7), and any further recommendations made by the manufacturer.
- 4.1.30. Evidence of all inspection history will be required, especially a post-installation inspection, if the site is to be adopted.

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<sup>8</sup> "Research suggests that most physical and sexual abuse of children is by other children. RoSPA recommend the provision of a minimum of two gates to reduce risks ... and ensure there is always an escape route" – [Gates and access to play and wheeled sports areas - RoSPA](#)

## 4.2. Outdoor Sports

4.2.1. Sustainable development should provide people with the opportunity to live healthier lives by participating in outdoor recreation. Sports and movement are essential for healthy development and aging, and the planning system has some responsibility to promote such. While it is essential to integrate all open spaces within the early stages of design and master planning, this is particularly important for outdoor sports given the proportionally larger requirement towards this open space type.

### Principles for Integrating Outdoor Sports

4.2.2. There are several considerations for which effective sports provision in new developments must meet (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Design Principles for New Outdoor Sports Provisions.

New Outdoor Sports Provisions must...	
<b>1</b>	be suitably located and accessible
	<b>a</b> Effective situation should help establish a centre for community and social interaction, increase provision utility, and reduce anti-social behaviour through natural surveillance.
	<b>b</b> Sports facilities should be accessible through sustainable means of transport (i.e., walking, cycling, public transport) and the active travel network.
	<b>c</b> To mitigate future maintenance issues, design must evidence the consideration given to a variety of physical prerequisites (e.g., ground conditions – depth of soil, moderately level, drainage; inclement weather – flooding, excess wind).
<b>d</b> Whenever possible, facilities should be co-located to allow a choice of activity and promote their shared management (albeit in accordance with the accessibility standard).	
<b>2</b>	meet the needs of the community
<b>e</b> All proposals should adhere to current best practice and guidance from Sport Wales (and other Sporting organisations) to ensure that they fit for purpose.	

	<p><b>f</b> Effective design solutions must be incorporated to ensure provisions do not unacceptably impact local character and/or conflict with nearby properties.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p>complement the wider open space network</p>
	<p><b>g</b> New provisions should complement any nearby existing sporting facilities to provide a range of ages and athletic abilities.</p> <p><b>h</b> Proper consideration should be given to the broader public realm to better serve a variety of recreation and amenity functions, and further promote inclusivity.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p>offer appropriate facilities and accompanying features</p>
	<p><b>i</b> Provisions should provide all associated facilities which permit the targeted sporting activities (e.g., changing rooms, toilets, equipment storage, lighting, parking, and related social amenities).</p> <p><b>j</b> Integrate natural features to complement the surrounding landscape, create a sense of place, and provide additional amenity benefits (e.g., trees to provide shading).</p>
<b>5</b>	<p>be sustainably designed</p>
	<p><b>k</b> Sufficient consideration must be given to the sustainability (i.e., economic, social, and environmental aspects) and long-term maintenance of the proposed provision throughout its life cycle.</p> <p><b>l</b> Designs should seek to enhance the Carmarthenshire's GBI network whilst providing active recreation for present and future generations.</p>

### Types of Outdoor Sports Provisions

4.2.3. Whilst all proposals must meet the specific accessibility standard for playing fields, major development proposals should consider a combination of sporting provisions to accommodate for a range of abilities and interests, year-round. Outdoor Sports provisions include the following:

### **SPG: Open Space - Draft for Reporting**

- Playing Fields<sup>9</sup>;
- Playing Pitches<sup>10</sup> (e.g., any area which is used for sport including, but not limited to, Football, Rugby, Hockey, Lacrosse, Cricket; Athletics, Tennis, Basketball, Netball, Bowling Greens). These may also be artificial All-Weather Pitches (e.g., 3G, 4G);
- Other Outdoor Sports Facilities including Fitness Equipment and/or Fitness Trails, Multi-Use Games Areas, Kick-About Areas, Pump Tracks, Parkour, and Skateboard Parks.

4.2.4. Applicants may seek to complement existing and/or new Playing Fields (as comprised of at least one Playing Pitch) with Other Outdoor Sports Facilities to best fulfil their open space requirement. Whilst all proposals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, this may be of particular relevance to those smaller developments with a limit requirement for delivering Outdoor Sports.

#### **Design Brief for Delivering Integrated Outdoor Sports**

##### **a) Informed by Guidance from National Governing Bodies (NGBs)**

4.2.5. Due consideration should be given to evidence-based guidance published by relevant NGBs and specialist sporting organisations to ensure that provisions are coordinated, well-designed, and functional.

##### **b) Situation & Extent**

4.2.6. To assess the feasibility of the proposed site, a technical appraisal should ideally be carried out by a competent, independent professional.

4.2.7. Limits of acceptable pitch orientation should be arranged between 325° and 20°, with the best common orientation being 345°. If pitches are not within this range, then sufficient evidence must be provided to demonstrate that it is in keeping with recommendations made by NGBs.

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<sup>9</sup> Playing field is defined as “the whole of an open space which encompasses at least one playing pitch”.

<sup>10</sup> See page 8 (including paragraph 6.2) of the [The Playing Fields \(Wales\) Regulations 2015](#) for definition. Nevertheless, the Council endorses a more flexible approach in fulfilling the requirement through the inclusion of other Outdoor Sports Facilities to complement traditional Playing Pitches.

## SPG: Open Space - Draft for Reporting

- 4.2.8. The size of Playing Pitches must be in accordance with [the minimum area requirements for Community Sports as provided by Sport England](#)<sup>11</sup> (and as endorsed by Sports Wales). This should ideally be the Overall Area (abbreviated as O/A within the document) to allow for space for necessary safety margins. If indicated, the preferred size should be selected however proposals for sports provision only consisting of the Principal Play Area (abbreviated as PPA within the document) will be assessed on a case-by-case.
- 4.2.9. There should be a minimum buffer zones of 30m from the boundary of Multi-Use Games Areas, BMX Tracks and Skateboard Parks to the nearest residential property.
- 4.2.10. Recommended layouts for common sporting types can be found [here](#). If multiple pitches are proposed, a sufficient buffer zone should be placed around each comprising playing pitch within a playing field.

### c) Surfacing

- 4.2.11. The right surface option for outdoor sports needs an adequate consideration of both short-and long-term environmental, health and wellbeing factors. A generalised cost overview of the advantages and disadvantages of surfacing types is presented below (Table 8).

**Table 8.** A high-level, life cycle cost comparison between natural turf and artificial surfaces.

Cost	Natural Turf (£)	Artificial (£)	Notes
Ground Preparation	Less	More	Both are dependent upon the sites characteristic however artificial surfaces often require more ground works and drainage considerations.
Capital	Less	More	Initial costs of artificial surfaces are usually higher although is often offset by the reduced requirement for maintenance.
Maintenance	More	Less	Natural surfaces require regular mowing, infilling/re-dressing, recompacting, and are significantly more labour intensive. Annual inspection and condition reports needed on artificial surfaces.

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<sup>11</sup> [Comparative Sizes of Sports Pitches & Courts \(OUTDOOR\) – Sport England](#) (use whichever is the latest version published).

**SPG: Open Space - Draft for Reporting**

End-of-life	Less	More	Artificial surfaces often cost more to dispose of, and can be subject to flood damage. Both are likely to require sinking funds.
Longevity	More	Less	The average lifespan of natural grass turf can be up to 25 years, roughly double of that of artificial turf. Artificial surfaces are also more susceptible to vandalism.
Accessibility & Scheduling Opportunities	Less	More	All-weather artificial pitches can permit play for a longer period throughout the year. Can also reduce incidences of cancelled games (providing more recreational benefit), and are generally more accessible to wheelchair users.
Environmental Impact	Less	More	Natural grass can have certain benefits such as heat dissipation and carbon sequestration. Whilst materials used in artificial surfaces can be sourced as recycled, they are seldom recyclable, and can have secondary pollution effects. Grass requires regular mowing and herbicidal treatment.

4.2.12. Whilst dependent on the existing nature of the site (e.g., drainage, gradient, orientation, and flood risk), surfacing should be determined in line with its suitability to permit the targeted sporting provisions and future maintenance requirement. Consideration must also be given to permitting the use of the site year-round and that of existing sporting provisions within the nearby vicinity.

4.2.13. Proposals are expected to adhere to the Design Guidance Notes published by Sport England for both [Natural Turf](#) and [Artificial Surfaces](#) for Outdoor Sport.

4.2.14. Guidance for [Selecting the Appropriate Artificial Sport Surface](#) has been jointly developed by the NGBs of Hockey, Football, Rugby Union and Rugby League in conjunction with the Football Foundation and Sport England.

**d) Supporting Amenities**

4.2.15. All fixtures which enable safe play (e.g., fencing, posts, netting, and line marking) should be consistent with that recommended by NGBs. Typically, artificial pitches are likely to require fencing on all sides.

4.2.16. The inclusions of floodlights should be considered to extend hours of play. If incorporated, proposals should be accompanied by a light pollution assessment to ensure that it does not adversely impact local residents or the natural environment. Planning conditions may be attached to restrict hours of operation.

4.2.17. Whenever possible, changing facilities should be integrated into a community building that provides additional social function for the wider community. Stand-alone

### **SPG: Open Space - Draft for Reporting**

changing facilities are typically more expensive to build and manage, and are prone to vandalism (however this may be the only option in rural areas). The number of changing rooms required will depend on the number of pitches and sports being served (whichever is greater). There should also be some provision for a referee room to enable team sports.

- 4.2.18. Space for spectators (including structures and/or benches) should be relevant to the size of the provision and located at least 5m away from principle play area.

#### **e) Inspections & Maintenance**

- 4.2.19. Planning for outdoor sports does not end with their installation. Appropriate maintenance is essential for longevity and to ensure that their usage can be perpetuated for the community across multiple generations. The follow considerations are in addition to those outlined in Section 4.5.

- 4.2.20. Specific regard should be given to the maintenance requirements associated with any equipment used, and any guidance provided by the manufacturer and/or contractor.

- 4.2.21. All pitches should have a maintenance schedule in line with recommendations made by the manufacturer. Resource longevity and the health and safety of users is contingent on the maintenance of artificial turf pitches. Additionally, if natural surfaces are neglected and/or become heavily contaminated it will compact and effect drainage, reducing the performance characteristics and life of the pitch. In some circumstances the infill may need replacing through a pitch rejuvenation process.

- 4.2.22. Maintenance will need to extend to the floodlighting system. It is recommended that, following the completion of any warranty period, a specialist floodlighting contractor is retained to maintain the system.

#### **f) Sinking Fund**

- 4.2.23. Artificial surfaces have a life span of approximately five to ten years whilst natural surfaces can last significantly longer (dependent on factors such as pitch type and quality, usage, incidence of flooding/vandalism, and maintenance). Therefore, an allowance needs to be made for replacement of the surface within this timeframe

**SPG: Open Space - Draft for Reporting**

(referred to as a 'sinking fund'). The amount annually ring-fenced should be in line with recommendations made by the appropriate NGB.

- 4.2.24. Life cycle costs for [artificial surfaces](#) and [natural turf pitches](#) has been published by [Sports England](#).

### 4.3. Accessible Greenspace

- 4.3.1. There is a growing appreciation of accessible greenspace, particularly in urban areas, as providing some fundamental need of society rather than just surface level amenity. Local communities can use them non-prescriptively, whether for physical exercise and social interactions, or relaxation and mental restoration. By offering a connection to nature close to where we live, work, and play, exposure to greenspace benefits us by reducing mortality and morbidity from chronic diseases, improving mental health and pregnancy outcomes, and reducing obesity. These social benefits are in addition to the numerous environmental and economic benefits which are also obtained from such spaces.
- 4.3.2. New integrated, local-scale accessible greenspace should be fully delivered as part of all new development to help facilitate the human-nature connection. Proposals which are in proximity to existing landscape and local scale greenspace resources should also deliver effective and coherent physical access routes to these areas, wherever possible.

#### Principles for Accessible Greenspace

The following criteria will be expected from all Greenspaces (Table 4).

**Table 4. Design Principles for New Accessible Greenspaces.**

New Accessible Greenspace must...	
<b>1</b>	<p>be positively designed and effectively located within site layout</p> <p><b>a</b> New accessible greenspace should be positively designed within the overall site layout and fully integrated from design stage consideration of built form, access, and drainage infrastructure.</p> <p><b>b</b> Provisions should aid GBI network connectivity within the site and to the wider area.</p> <p><b>c</b> Complement the placemaking context and wider local landscape character.</p>

	<p><b>d</b> Occupy sufficient site area to effectively deliver open space requirements alongside wider LDP policy objectives relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ecological enhancement</li> <li>• retention of existing landscape and ecological elements</li> <li>• visual amenity and landscape character</li> <li>• creation of attractive places and public spaces which contribute to people’s health and wellbeing</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p>deliver clearly defined functions and promote multifunctionality</p>
	<p><b>e</b> Design functions should relate to the specific needs and priorities of the site and create areas in which public use relates strongly to the experience of nature.</p> <p><b>f</b> Deliver landscape design solutions which, create a diverse place-based greenspace, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maximise the well-being value of greenspace through the provision of path routes and opportunities for informal recreation, with seating, shade, and resting spots.</li> <li>• maximise the natural sense of place through appropriate tree, shrub, and perennial planting.</li> <li>• maximise ecological enhancement and allow appropriate segregation for areas which deliver specific ecological design functions.</li> <li>• incorporate nature-based SuDS as part of GBI.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p>be safe and accessible for all users</p>
	<p><b>g</b> New accessible greenspace should be designed to ensure safety for all users, with clear routes and wayfinding.</p>
	<p><b>h</b> Designs must incorporate suitable gradients to enable safe access for all, and the implementation of safe maintenance operations.</p>
<p><b>i</b> Site layout should ensure that greenspace is visible from the street scene and subject to good natural surveillance.</p>	
	<p>be designed sustainably</p>

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**j** New accessible greenspace should be designed to support effective long-term management and maintenance, and deliver resilience to climate change.

**k** Construction materials should be sustainable, both in terms of sourcing and their durability over time.

**l** Consideration should be given to the avoidance of human wildlife conflicts.

### Types of Accessible Greenspace

4.3.3. In practice, there are many diverse types of accessible greenspaces. Most areas of predominately natural character with due consideration towards naturalistic design/management/planting schemes tailored to provide amenity, recreation, and environmental benefits are likely to be considered as accessible greenspace. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Natural greenspace (e.g., woodland, meadow, and wetland, alongside nature reserves);
- Semi-natural and/or urban greenspace (e.g., botanical gardens, pocket parks, and other public gardens);
- Green corridors such as tree-lined streets, walkway and cycleways alongside hedgerows, disused railway lines, and green belts; and
- Water features including ponds, rivers, and waterfronts.

4.3.4. In promoting the concept of multifunctional open space – whereby an area of greenspace alongside a play space and/or playing field could be naturalised (at least in part of the total open space area) – this is supported if all relevant appropriate design principles and sympathetic management considerations are duly considered.

### Guidance for Accessible Greenspace

4.3.5. Full reference should be made to the *Green & Blue Infrastructure SPG* and *Placemaking and Sustainable Design SPG*.

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- 4.3.6. The design solutions and guidance contained in *Green & Blue Infrastructure SPG* affect the whole proposal area (i.e., not just any area devoted as open space), therefore, the meterage dedicated by the Open Space Requirement is not exclusive of other GBI associated responsibilities and obligations placed upon the applicant.

## 4.4. Community Growing Space

- 4.4.1. Gardening and self-sufficiency have had a recent resurgence in popularity, and are shown to have a range of well-being benefits. While only representing a small proportion of the overall *Open Space Requirement*, development proposals integrating this kind of provision can develop a strong sense of community and have a significantly positive impact on residents' health and wellbeing.
- 4.4.2. Major developments will be expected to provide dedicated areas to attain such benefits (relevant to the size of the minimum requirement for this kind of open space), however subtle features will be accepted for smaller proposals.
- 4.4.3. Community Growing Spaces are challenging to develop during the construction of a development given the prerequisite for effective community engagement and participation. Proposals should develop a flexible approach in that if their eventual uptake does not materialise, the design permits such areas to be incorporated into the wider open space provision to avoid any deficiency.

### Principles for Community Growing Spaces

- 4.4.4. The following criteria will be expected from all Community Growing Spaces (Table 9).

**Table 9.** Design Principles for Community Growing Spaces.

New Community Growing Space must...	
<b>1</b>	Be suitably located and accessible
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a</b> All Community Growing Spaces should enhance the public realm, add to the local food growing network, and complement other open spaces provisions and active travel routes.</li> <li><b>b</b> When selecting a location and site for an allotment, it's critical to ensure that the land has (or is provided with) cultivable soil that is free from contaminants. It must also be safe from flooding (i.e., not used as part of a SuDS) and receive enough sunlight (i.e., is not shaded by adjacent trees/building etc and is, ideally, south facing).</li> </ul>

	<p><b>c</b> No growing space should be within the immediate vicinity of under/overground services (gas/electricity).</p>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p>Evolve from/to the needs of the community</p>
	<p><b>d</b> Early engagement with relevant stakeholders and the prospective community should be conducted to shape the design process and identify potential management partners.</p> <p><b>e</b> It is important to thoughtfully consider the layout to permit future site changes. Maintenance plans should also be adaptive to permit the uptake of voluntary work by the community.</p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p>Provide an appropriate level of ancillary facilities</p>
	<p><b>f</b> The provision of ancillary facilities will be dependent on the extent and location of the provision, but it should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seating and/or picnic benches;</li> <li>• A water supply (ideally supplemented by rainwater collection);</li> <li>• Storage facilities (e.g., communal shed); and</li> </ul> <p><b>g</b> Wider community facilities (e.g., indoor/covered area to hold educational workshops, outdoor community meeting area, toilets).</p>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p>Be secure</p>
	<p><b>h</b> Where appropriate, protective boundaries should be used for public safety and protection from potential pests (particularly if know to the area, e.g., deer, rabbits).</p> <p><b>i</b> Any vehicular access to the site should be via a lockable gate with a restricted-profile combination padlock.</p>

## **Types of Community Growing Spaces**

4.4.5. This type of open space provides great flexibility in the way it can be integrating into a design. All provisions should be centred on facilitating active recreation, outdoor education, and community interaction through the medium of growing food. These include:

- Community Gardens;
- Orchards;
- Allotments;
- Smaller communal space for food growing (e.g., shared raised beds); and
- The inclusion of fruit trees, perennial fruit bushes, edible landscaping, and/or features within other open space provisions (e.g., Edible Activity Trails, Edible Playgrounds).

4.4.6. It is anticipated that proposals on strategic sites or for large-scale major developments will need to engage with existing stakeholders such as [Bwyd Bendigedig Sir Gaerfyrddin \(Incredible Edible Carmarthenshire\)](#) to inform the design process and develop ties between the site and existing community groups. Non-major developments may wish to consider delivering a small integrated provisions such as an orchard, and/or request to pay a Commuted Sum to meet this requirement.

### **Guidance for Community Gardens**

4.4.7. Community Gardens are developed and managed by local people who want to grow food, socialise, and learn, at the benefit of the wider community. These are typically managed collaboratively and there are many difference models for establishing such. The [Social Farms & Garden](#) has information on how to design and maintain a community gardening site.

### **Guidance for Orchards**

4.4.8. Many community orchards serve as excellent wildlife habitats and carbon sinks, in addition to providing fruit for residents for many years. Community orchards are becoming more popular because they are relatively easy to start, require little maintenance, and can be used for outdoor neighbourhood events.

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- 4.4.9. Social Farms & Gardens has published a topic sheet on [Starting up Community Orchards and Fruit Gardens](#). Consideration should be given to the growing location (i.e., ample sun, frost pockets, soil type and depth), the appropriate rootstocks and spacings, and onward maintenance.
- 4.4.10. In more traditional community orchards, fruit trees may consist of standard varieties (on M25 rootstocks) which are intended to be minimal trained. Surrounding grassy areas may also be kept as a wildflower meadow, typically requiring fewer maintenance visits per year than conventional amenity grassland. However, in proposals using other training choices (e.g., cordons, fan, espalier), onward maintenance requirements are likely to be increased. This should be reflected within the accompanying maintenance plan.
- 4.4.11. All tree plantings should be planted where soil depth and type are adequate, and sufficient spacing should permit machinery access.
- 4.4.12. Proposals should consider provenance, and Welsh heritage varieties are encouraged.

### **Guidance for Allotments**

- 4.4.13. Allotments are large dedicated growing areas divided into small plots. Most existing allotments in Carmarthenshire are statutory, and are either owned by the County or Community Councils. [Welsh Government Guidance for Growers & Growing Groups](#) provides an overview of the types of allotments and relevant legislation for their management and protection. In most instances, an integrated allotment delivered by an applicant would be considered as a 'community allotment' which are not subject to the same laws as their statutory counterparts.
- 4.4.14. Proposals for community allotments must be no smaller than 1012 m<sup>2</sup> to make the future transfer of a community allotment as a statutory site possible.
- 4.4.15. The National Allotment Society has prepared guidance which should be used to inform the design of [21st Century Allotments in New Developments](#).

## **4.5. Maintenance Plans**

- 4.5.1. The management of open space provisions will be expected to maximise amenity value and environmental conservations, whilst ensuring the provision of maintenance remains viable for the duration of the development's lifetime.
- 4.5.2. Details relating to the management and maintenance of open spaces should be presented in conjunction with other landscape and ecological requirements placed upon the applicant (i.e., Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)). Such information of this can be found within the *Landscape Character SPG*.
- 4.5.3. All management and maintenance plans are expected to be costed to determine whether provisions are appropriately funded and their future enjoyment safeguarded.

## 5. Useful Contacts

### **Development Management**

*Main point of contact for advice on planning applications (including pre-application).*

[Planning@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:Planning@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01558 825285

### **Forward Planning**

*For queries relating to the LDP and Supplementary Planning Policy.*

[Forward.Planning@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:Forward.Planning@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01267 228822

### **Sustainable Drainage Approval Body**

*For queries relating to the management and design of SuDS in Carmarthenshire.*

[SABregistrations@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:SABregistrations@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01267 228828

### **Family Information Service**

*Contact for advice on how to create a rich play environment for all ages.*

[www.fis.carmarthenshire.gov.wales](http://www.fis.carmarthenshire.gov.wales)

### **Play Wales**

*For detailed advice on how to create effective and functional play spaces.*

[www.play.wales](http://www.play.wales)

### **Sport Wales**

*To seek advice on outdoor sports and relevant National Governing Bodies (NGBs)*

[www.sport.wales](http://www.sport.wales)

### **Sport England**

*For comprehensive design and maintenance guidance for outdoor sports.*

[www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)

### **The National Allotment Society**

*For practical, policy-based guidance on how to include allotments in new developments.*

[www.nsalg.org.uk](http://www.nsalg.org.uk)

### **Social Farms & Gardens**

*For advice establishing a community growing projects and potential partners.*

[www.farmgarden.org.uk](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk)

### **Town & Country Planning Association**

*To find the Green Infrastructure Resource Library and other placemaking resources.*

[www.tcpa.org.uk](http://www.tcpa.org.uk)

### **Design Council**

*For advice on maintaining and managing of greenspaces, amongst other resources.*

[www.designcouncil.org.uk](http://www.designcouncil.org.uk)

## Appendices

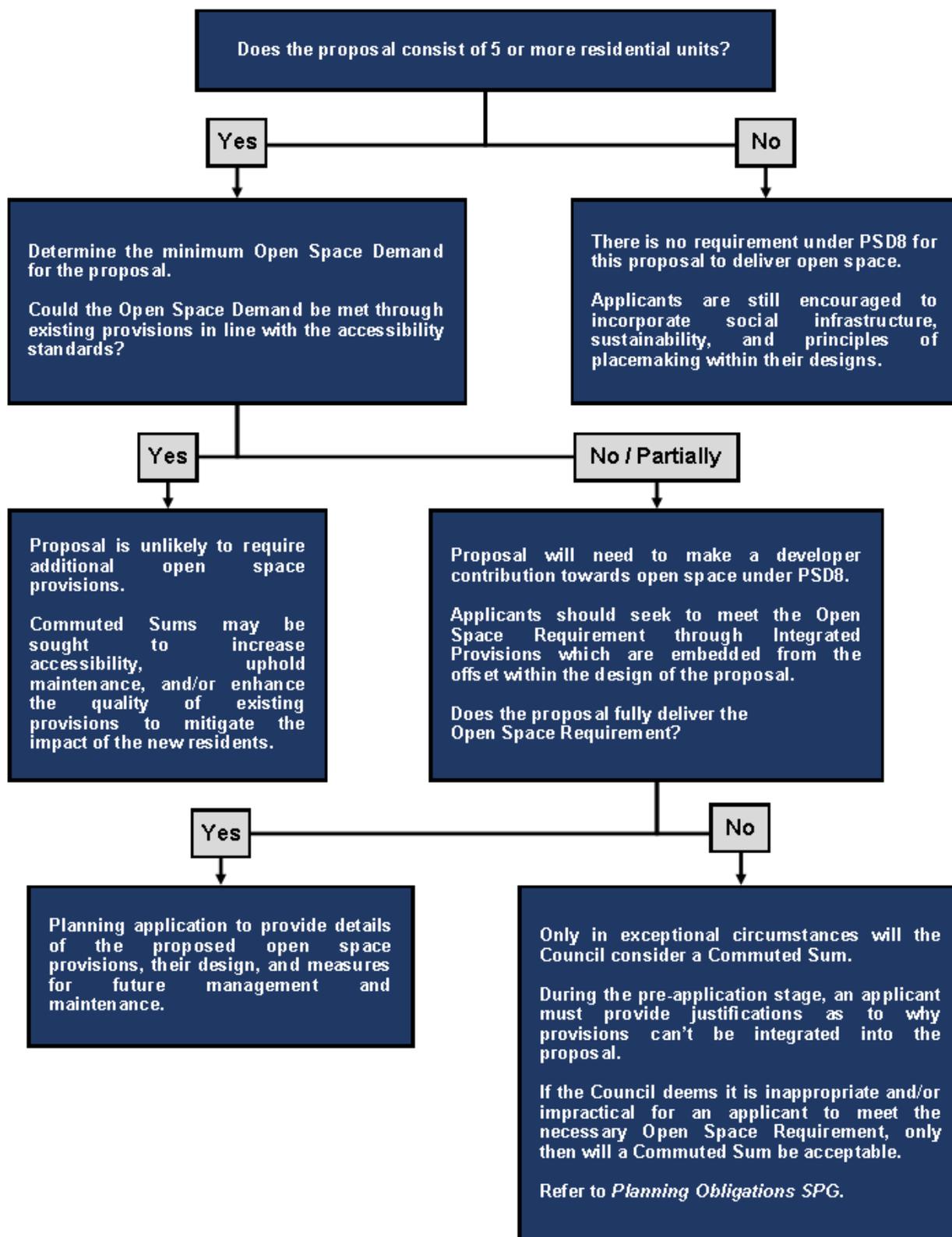
### Appendix A: Glossary

Term	Definition
<b>Accessibility Standards</b>	<p>The Public Open Space Assessment devised accessibility standards for each type of open space. It represents the walking distance from the site to the dwelling via the existing transportation infrastructure. Together with quantity standards, these make up 'Carmarthenshire's Open Space Standards' (See Section 2.1).</p> <p>No accessibility standard for community growing space has been devised as provision is only calculated a spatial area basis (see the quantity standards).</p>
<b>Commuted Sums</b>	<p>A mechanism through which open space requirements are met wholly, or in part, through a financial contribution. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council consider a Commuted Sum. See Planning Obligation.</p>
<b>Doorstep Play Space</b>	<p>A small, landscaped space with engaging play features and where young children can play within view of known adults.</p>
<b>Exceptional Circumstance</b>	<p>The extent and scale of the proposed delivery mechanisms (i.e., Integrated Provisions and Commuted Sums, or approximate mix thereof, which a developer to meets their Open Space Requirement) will be duly considered on a case-by case basis. Justifications should be put forward by the developer during the pre-application for the Council to assess whether the site is inappropriate and/or impractical for integrated provisions.</p> <p>Additionally, any deviation from the Open Space Standards will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.</p>
<b>Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI)</b>	<p>The network of multi-functional green space, encompassing both land and water (blue space). The Green and Blue Infrastructure areas include existing and new (created) features in both rural and urban areas. The Green and Blue Infrastructure network delivers a wide range</p>

	of Ecosystem Services including environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
<b>Green Corridors</b>	Routes which linking different areas within and between settlements/development that are designed to provide benefits to nature.
<b>Integrated Provisions</b>	Open space contributions delivered by an applicant/developer. All residential proposals are expected to meet their open space requirement through delivering integrated provisions.
<b>Local Space Play</b>	A medium-sized, landscaped space with play features that can be accessed safely by children independently and with friends, without an accompany adult.
<b>Major Development</b>	<p>As defined within the LDP, major developments are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential developments of 10 or more dwellings or 0.5 hectares or more;</li> <li>• The provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or</li> <li>• Development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more</li> </ul>
<b>Neighbourhood Play Space</b>	A larger, varied natural space with secluded and open areas which contain a wide range of play features. Flexibility for physical recreational activities for children of all ages, and young people.
<b>Open Space</b>	<p>See Section 1.1. The present SPG considers open space closely in line with TAN16 however, to ensure that those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage have the same opportunity as those who are not, open spaces must explicitly also be permanently accessible without financial restriction. A delineation between Limited access and Public Open Spaces is made within the Public Open Space Assessment (both are still protected by PSD7).</p> <p>Definition within the LDP: <i>'All space of public value, including public landscaped areas, playing fields, parks and play areas, and also including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, which can offer opportunities for sport and recreation or can also act as a visual amenity and a haven for wildlife'.</i></p>

<p><b>Open Space Demand</b></p>	<p>The open space need arisen from the proposed development in line with household occupancy rates. It does not include the capacity for existing sufficiencies to meet such.</p>
<p><b>Open Space Requirement</b></p>	<p>The minimum amount of open space which a proposal is expected to integrate within their design.</p>
<p><b>Placemaking</b></p>	<p>Process and tool to collectively design and manage the public realm to create quality places that people want to live and work in, that are appealing, accessible, safe and support social interaction and amenities.</p>
<p><b>Planning Obligation</b></p>	<p>A legal agreement between an applicant and the local planning authority to ensure a development is carried out in a certain way. Also referred to as a Section 106 Agreement.</p>
<p><b>Pre-Application Consultation (PAC)</b></p>	<p>There is a requirement for applicants to submit a pre-application consultation report for all outline or full applications for Major Development. The requirement to undertake pre-application consultation and to submit a PAC report with a formal planning application is a requirement of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.</p>
<p><b>Quantity Standards</b></p>	<p>The Public Open Space Assessment devised quantity standards for each type of open space. It represents the minimum area needed to provide for a range of recreational and amenity for residents. Together with accessibility standards, these make up 'Carmarthenshire's Open Space Standards' (See Section 2.1).</p>

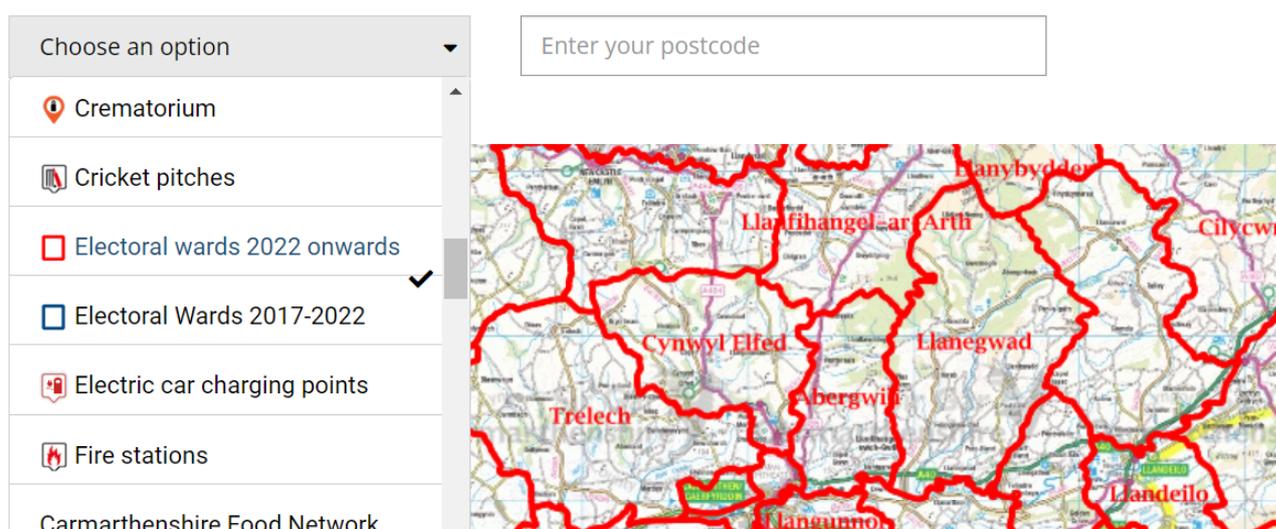
## Appendix B: Identifying Open Space Requirements



## Appendix C: Determining Electoral Wards & Household Occupancy

To discover what electoral ward the proposed development site will be situated within, use the ‘[In My Area](#)’ function our website, enter the postcode and select the ‘Electoral wards 2022 onwards’ (Figure #). Now use Table 10 to determine the associated Household Occupancy rate within that ward.

In my area



**Figure #.** Screenshot of In My Area from the Carmarthenshire County Council Website.

**Table 10:** Population and household estimates by Electoral Wards within the County obtained from Census 2021 data. ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 30 January 2023].  
 \* = These wards are shared with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority. Average household occupancy across all wards is 2.31.

Electoral Wards (2022)	Population	Households	Household Occupancy
Abergwili	2,331	963	2.42
Ammanford	5,439	2,464	2.21
Betws	2,398	987	2.43
Bigyn	6,587	2,779	2.37
Burry Port	4,037	1,934	2.09
Bynea	4,519	1,886	2.40
Carmarthen Town North & South	9,111	4,317	2.11
Carmarthen Town West	5,521	2,283	2.42
Cenarth and Llangeler	5,550	2,468	2.25

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Cilycwm	2,547	1,126	2.26
Cwarter Bach*	2,853	1,249	2.28
Cynwyl Elfed	2,273	931	2.44
Dafen and Felinfoel	5,195	2,207	2.35
Elli	1,988	867	2.29
Garnant*	2,049	886	2.31
Glanamman*	2,506	1,105	2.27
Glanymor	6,409	2,903	2.21
Glyn (Carmarthenshire)	2,163	939	2.30
Gorslas	5,082	2,153	2.36
Hendy	3,205	1,378	2.33
Hengoed (Carmarthenshire)	4,308	1,914	2.25
Kidwelly and St Ishmael	5,053	2,248	2.25
Laugharne Township*	2,588	1,150	2.25
Llanboidy*	2,097	855	2.45
Llanddarog	2,070	857	2.42
Llandeilo*	2,959	1,372	2.16
Llandovery*	2,591	1,119	2.32
Llandybie*	4,390	1,842	2.38
Llanegwad	2,444	1,061	2.30
Llanfihangel Aberbythych	1,749	766	2.28
Llanfihangel-ar-Arth	2,780	1,218	2.28
Llangadog*	1,941	820	2.37
Llangennech	5,437	2,275	2.39
Llangunnor	2,628	1,174	2.24
Llangyndeyrn	5,239	2,230	2.35
Llannon	5,368	2,231	2.41
Llanybydder	2,787	1,196	2.33
Lliedi	5,336	2,338	2.28
Llwynhendy	4,390	1,874	2.34
Manordeilo and Salem	2,625	1,123	2.34
Pembrey	4,175	1,780	2.35
Penygroes	3,052	1,317	2.32
Pontyberem	2,864	1,214	2.36
Saron	4,263	1,832	2.33
St Clears and Llansteffan	5,189	2,259	2.30

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<b>Swiss Valley</b>	2,471	1,101	2.24
<b>Trelech</b>	2,731	1,133	2.41
<b>Trimsaran</b>	2,500	1,063	2.35
<b>Tycroes</b>	2,683	1,171	2.29
<b>Tyisha</b>	5,041	2,336	2.16
<b>Whitland</b>	2,381	1,067	2.23