

# LDP Ceredigion

Cynllun Datblygu Lleol  
2007 - 2022

## Supplementary Planning Guidance Open Space



Ceredigion County Council Adopted April 2014



## Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Open Space	1
2.1 Why is Green Infrastructure Important?	4
2.2 Open Space and Planning	4
3. Types of Open Space	6
3.1 Natural Amenity Green Space	6
3.2 Communal Accessible Natural Green Space	7
3.3 Un-Equipped Natural Play Space	8
3.4 Equipped Natural Play Space	9
4. Open Space and Biodiversity	11
4.1 Open Space and the Ecosystem Approach	11
5. Calculating Open Space on Development Sites	11
6. Designing Open Space	14
7. Play Spaces	15
8. The Ten Principles for Designing Play Spaces	15
9. Open Space in Non-Residential Developments	17
10. Maintenance and Adoption of Open Space	17
11. The Planning Application Process and New Open Space	18
12. Existing Open Space	18
13. Planning Application and Existing Open Space	20
14. Conclusion	20
References and Resources	21
Glossary	21

In accordance with Welsh Government Guidance (“Local Development Plans Wales” paragraph 5.3), the Open Space Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has been prepared in partnership with stakeholders and was subject to public consultation between 16th January 2014 and midday 28th February 2014. Annex 1 (available on [www.ceredigion.gov.uk](http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk) only) of this report sets out the responses received to the consultation and a Ceredigion County Council (CCC) response along with any recommended changes to the SPG.

This SPG document was formally adopted by Ceredigion County Council on 24th April 2014 (Minute No: 9 a, b & c).

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is one of a series of guidance notes which support the policies of the Local Development Plan (LDP). Although decisions on planning applications will be based on the LDP’s policies (as indicated in part 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004), the content of the SPG is a material planning consideration.

The Guidance does not set out policy independently of the LDP but only provides supplementary guidance. Therefore, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004, it has not been considered necessary to subject it to separate Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The results of the Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) of the policies relevant to this SPG, Policy LU22: Community Provision and Policy LU24: Provision of New Open Space, may be viewed in Appendix 3 of the Ceredigion Local Development Plan Final Sustainability Appraisal Report (April 2013).

## 1. Introduction

The main purpose of this SPG is to assist in the interpretation and application of national and local policies concerned with the protection of existing open space and the creation of new open space. This SPG therefore forms a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications which could affect existing open space or the development of new open space. It will provide detailed guidance to members of the public, developers, planning officers and the Council's planning committee on planning issues relating to open space. The Guidance:

- Introduces the relevant planning policy context in relation to the provision of open space and where development may affect existing open space;
- Provides an overview of the various elements that need to be considered when providing open space and where development may affect existing open space; and
- Provides clear guidance for developers, Members and planning officers relating to open space.

## 2. Open Space

The County of Ceredigion benefits from outstanding natural beauty and throughout Ceredigion there are a variety of open and amenity spaces, formal and informal, private and public.

Open space encourages residents to have an active lifestyle which is beneficial in a variety of ways as it provides opportunities to have fun, try new things, meet new people and lead to a healthier lifestyle.

For the purposes of the LDP open space is defined as all open space of public value, including not just land, but also bodies of waters which offer important opportunities for sport and outdoor recreation but also act as visual amenity. Within the LDP open space in this context also includes spaces within new developments that would be considered 'private' in that it is developed for the residents of a new housing site or a new office block etc. It is considered that whilst this provision would be developed to meet the needs of a specific development and its resident's visitors to the site will also benefit and therefore the private space becomes semi-private.

Open spaces not only provide the opportunity for Ceredigion's residents to be more active and healthier but there are also economic benefits associated with a better work environment as well as opportunities for environmental gains. Open spaces also have indirect benefits, for example environmental ones such as; water purification, air purification and food for pollinators.

Having a well landscaped site which includes a provision of open space can add value to a development site. It is also likely that a new development will fit in better with the existing landscape if it incorporates as part of the site mature growth and screening.

When considering open space it is important to think about all types of open spaces. Formal open space such as parks, formal gardens, village greens, play areas and playing fields are easily identified as open space but Ceredigion has many natural and semi-natural spaces such as the beach, woodland walks, wetlands etc. that also have an important role in providing open space. There are also some spaces that perhaps aren't often recognised for their important contribution to the overall provision of open space. Such areas include private gardens, river banks, allotments, cycle and pedestrian paths, cemeteries and churchyards all of which are important environments that offer either access to open space or a feeling of being within or surrounded by 'green' space.

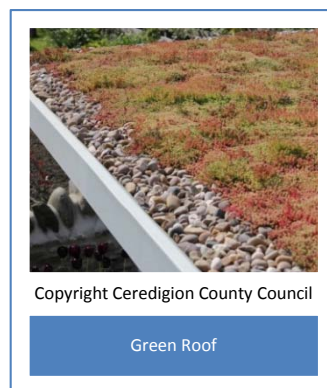
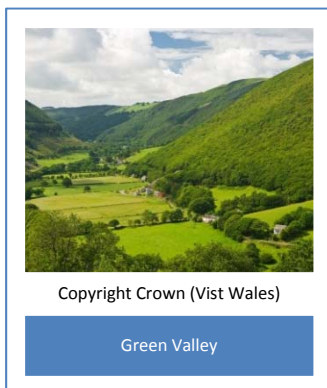
When looked at all together, the different types of formal and informal, natural and man-made open spaces are often referred to as 'Green Infrastructure'.

Green Infrastructure can be viewed as a network of functioning open space. These spaces support natural and ecological processes and are essential to the health and quality of life of Ceredigion's residents.

In simple terms green infrastructure is the 'green' and 'blue' spaces (see below for definitions) that make Ceredigion the naturally beautiful place it is.

Green Infrastructure is a network of high quality green and blue spaces and other environmental features

Green spaces include private and public facilities which include: gardens, hedges, parks, street trees, woodlands, green roofs



Blue spaces include the sea, rivers, lakes, ponds.



Throughout this SPG we will refer to not only open space but also Green Infrastructure.

When we refer to Open Space we mean spaces that are accessible on a public or semi-private basis. For example a play area or a woodland path.

When we refer to Green Infrastructure we are discussing all the bits of open space, private and public, that when added together make up Green Infrastructure. The easiest way of thinking about this is seeing Green Infrastructure as the green lungs of Ceredigion.

Overall this SPG focuses on the creation of new open space.

All open spaces when planned in advance are capable of being multi-functional spaces, which helps contribute overall to Green Infrastructure. For example a natural play space can help meet biodiversity requirements (policies DM14: Nature Conservation and Ecological Connectivity, DM15: Local Biodiversity Conservation, DM20: Protection of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands) whilst also helping achieve sustainable drainage (policy DM13: Sustainable Drainage Systems). The more multi-functional and inter-connected spaces are the more successful and sustainable they are.

Protecting existing natural heritage assets and enhancing biodiversity are fundamental principles when considering green infrastructure.

Street design, new open space and water management systems should be designed to enhance the natural green (and blue) infrastructure of the site, creating an integrated network of habitats, providing wildlife corridors and enhancing biodiversity.

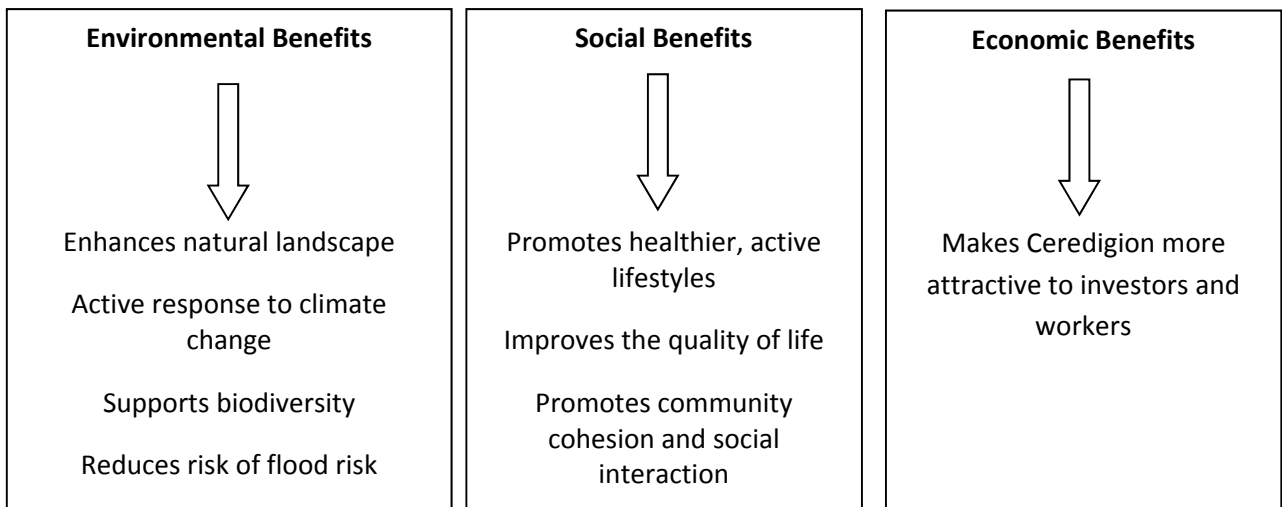
## 2.1 Why is Green Infrastructure Important?

The protection and enhancement of Green Infrastructure and as part of this green networks and open spaces in and around Ceredigion will help the Council and other organisations, for example Natural Resource Wales, achieve many of its priorities. Green Infrastructure can make places more beautiful and interesting and help enhance their character and give them a distinctive identity.

Green Infrastructure can provide many social, economic and environmental benefits close to where people live and work.

As previously mentioned open space is one element of providing Green Infrastructure. The focus of this SPG is on open space and how it should be created. This focus has been taken because the creation of open space as part of a new development is an active way new development can help contribute towards Green Infrastructure. Other SPG such as the Built Environment and Nature Conservation all contribute to Green Infrastructure and these SPGs provide detailed guidance on their specific elements.

The provision and enhancement of open space helps in three ways.



## 2.2 Open Space and Planning

National and local planning policy helps protect existing open space and encourages the development of new.

This national approach is further supported within the Ceredigion Local Development Plan (LDP) 2007-2022. The LDP has a range of policies that seek to protect and enhance the natural environment and open spaces whilst also securing new elements that contribute towards green infrastructure.



The policies are:

- Policy LU22: Community Provision
- Policy LU24: Provision of New Open Space
- Policy DM10: Design and Landscape
- Policy DM13: Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Policy DM14: Nature Conservation
- Policy DM15: Local Biodiversity Conservation
- Policy DM20: Protection of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands
- Policy DM23: Coastal Management

These policies can be accessed via the Council website at: <http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/ldp> when used in conjunction these policies seek to protect important, existing spaces and features but also secure the development of new spaces.

Policy LU24: Provision of New Open Space seeks to provide additional open space where appropriate as part of new developments. All allocated housing sites are required to provide an element of open space. Additionally any windfall or non-allocated site that provides more than 10 bedrooms will be required to provide an element of open space.

**Policy LU24:**

**Provision of New Open Space**

As specified in the Settlement Group Statements land allocated for housing will be required to make provision for open space.

Development that occurs on windfall and non-allocated sites will also be required to provide open space if the development results in the provision in total of more than 10 bedrooms.

Any provision of open space will be required to meet the CCW Accessible Natural Greenspace Benchmarks and the Fields in Trust (FIT) Children's Playing Space Benchmark Standard and further design guidance within the Supplementary Planning Guidance.

### 3. Types of Open Space

The type and level of provision of new open space will depend upon the size of the development. The provision will be based on natural open space broken down into four categories. The categories are:

Remember, open space is required on any new development that results in 10 bedrooms or more.

#### 3.1 Natural Amenity Green Space

Aimed at residents of all ages. This is the smallest type of open space provision likely to be sought and it focuses on the landscaping of the site, concentrating on the retention and/or enhancement of high quality natural features where possible. The aim of this basic level of open space is to encourage movement through the development, be it physically or visually, by having interesting and engaging landscape and planting on site.

This type of open space emphasises the importance of visual amenity space and how a development that has greenery is a more inviting place to live and enjoy.

Natural Amenity Green Space works in combination with the overall landscaping of a new development and therefore thought should be given to the types of landscaping to be used. For further guidance on development and landscaping refer to the SPG: Built Environment, once it has been published.

The use of trees, bushes, front gardens with low boundary walls/hedges all add to the visual richness of a development.

This type of open space provides the developer with the opportunity to not only meet the open space provision as set out within policy LU24 but also the landscaping provision as required by policy DM10: Design and Landscaping which requires all new developments to provide a landscaping scheme.



### 3.2 Communal Accessible Natural Green Space

Designed for residents of all ages, this space is similar to a Natural Amenity Green Space but on a larger scale. It is a natural to semi-natural space which residents should be able to access and use at any time, therefore it is not for a single defined group i.e. toddlers, but for all residents.

Access to natural green spaces for fresh air, exercise and quiet contemplation has benefits for both physical and mental health. Green spaces have the potential to offer ecological benefits but also they help us adapt to changes in climate through their role in reducing the risk of flooding, soil erosion for example. This type of open space again provides Developers the opportunity to meet multiple LDP requirements in terms of biodiversity, landscaping and sustainable drainage systems.

The purpose of this open space is to offer an area where people can go and be close to nature, so that a feeling of naturalness is allowed to predominate. Natural Resource Wales (previously The Countryside Council for Wales) define Natural Green Space as the following:

1. Woodlands and woodlots with freely growing shrubbery or extensively managed grassland underneath. Trees and tree clumps with freely growing shrubbery or extensive grassland underneath.
2. Freely growing scrub and dwarf shrubs (e.g. heathland).
3. Rough grassland, semi-improved grassland, wild herbs and tall forbs.
4. Rocks and bare soil where natural succession is allowed to freely occur (including bare soils in wastelands).
5. Open water and wetlands with reeds, tall forbs, etc.
6. Coasts which have natural features such as tidal flats, sand dunes or rocky shores.

Taken from CCW's document, Providing Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities: A Practical Guide to Assessing the Resource and Implementing Local Standards for Provision in Wales).

The Authority accepts that within a new housing development it is unlikely that new woodlands or open waters will be developed. However, the Authority considers that natural space can be provided and that some examples of how to do this are:

- 'Wild' area: a parcel of land left for nature e.g. long grass, free growing native shrubs;
- Planting of a small coppice;

- Swales: this will also help achieve sustainable drainage systems (policy DM13) and allows a natural wet space to occur (for more information on SUDS refer to SPG: Built Environment once produced).

### 3.3 Un-Equipped Natural Play Space

A natural play space allows children to explore their immediate world in a naturalised setting. It is a play landscape where plants and trees provide the background for physical and creative challenges and fun. Some things to consider are:

- Long grass and wildflowers: Grass areas are often mown on a regular basis to provide informal play areas, yet long grass and wild flower planting can also provide habitat and play space (thus meeting the requirements of LDP open space policies and biodiversity policies);
- Plants for play: arranged plants can become play houses, hideouts, castles, bases and home camps;
- Plants of different colour, aroma and texture can add interest to a natural play space;
- Grassy mounds: using leftover earth to create a grassy mound which children can run or roll down.



### 3.4 Equipped Natural Play Space

This is a natural play space which has a provision of equipment which is aimed at children, although not a specific age group. This equipment does not have to mean traditional play equipment e.g. swings, roundabouts, but can be more nature inspired e.g. tunnels, log rolls, grassy mounds etc. Some examples that could be considered are:

- Play logs: Logs from surrounding woodland areas can be arranged in patterns to create seating, balancing beams or other play opportunities. These can make great play elements left as they are, hollowed out and shaped by a sculptor, or balanced between two points and either used as a balancing beam or a seat;
- Play paths: An interestingly designed and constructed path provides a variety of play opportunities for those with the imagination to create their own adventure or game;
- Boulders: Boulders can be used to create a maze, seating, or as stepping stones;
- Sculpture: Sculpture and art, whether permanent or temporary, can add an extra dimension to children's play, particularly if children have been involved in its creation;
- Mud and water: It is possible to incorporate water (small pools, puddles and muddy areas) into open spaces in a safe way;
- Grassy mounds and ditches: children love to run up and down slopes, it's even more fun to roll down them! Ditches allow children to hide and jump out on friends and relatives;
- Trees: sometimes trees have to be removed as part of the development, instead of getting rid of them they can be used to provide seating, balance beams, climbing structure;
- Hiding places and sneaky views: having some planting that provides a hiding place allows children to sneak up and jump out on friends and relatives.

The Natural Resource Wales (previously the Forestry Commission) has developed numerous guidance notes on the different types of natural play spaces that can be created, they are available at: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-7LSEHW>



All images copyright RAY Ceredigion. Big Lottery Child's Play grant funding and the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007 – 2013 which is funded through the Welsh Assembly Government and the European Union

## 4. Open Space and Biodiversity

Not only does the provision of open space improve the physical and mental wellbeing of people, but it can also provide much needed areas for biodiversity and wildlife habitats to establish themselves within our built environment. This in turn provides access to nature for people of all ages and mobility, be it physical access to the sites or just in terms of visual amenity.

Opportunities should be taken to retain existing areas of wildlife importance and to create new wildlife habitats and green corridors. See the SPG: Nature Conservation once produced for more information and LDP policies DM14: Nature Conservation and Ecological Connectivity and DM15: Local Biodiversity Conservation.

### 4.1 Open Space and the Ecosystem Approach

The Convention of Biological Diversity states that:

‘The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.’

Green infrastructure forms part of the ecosystem approach. Open spaces can provide a range of services, when designed carefully and the ecosystem approach used. This can include positive impacts on health and wellbeing, flood prevention, water purification, air purification, food for pollinators etc.

An open space, which is one element of Green Infrastructure, should be designed to maximise these services, ensuring the use of natural features, particularly those that already existing. Refer to LDP policy DM22: General Environmental Protection and Enhancement.

More information can be found in the SPG: Nature Conservation once produced.

## 5. Calculating Open Space on Development Sites

Policy LU24 looks to provide open space in line with benchmarks set out by Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) ‘Greenspace Toolkit’ (now Natural Resources Wales) and the Fields in Trust (FIT) Standards.

This is set out as 2.8ha per 1000 people broken down into 2ha accessible natural green space (CCW standards) and 0.8ha play space (FIT standards). The formula for calculating the total amount of open space required is as follows:

**2.8ha per 1000 population  $2.8/1000 * \text{number of bedrooms} = \text{overall space}$ .**

The amount of land sought for open space provision under Policy LU24 is dependent on the number of bedrooms being developed and as such the more bedrooms ‘developed’ (depending of course on the type of dwellings) the different levels and types of open space required.

As a general guide the table below can be used to find out what type of provision is required within a proposed development. If however you think you cannot provide what is suggested then you can do the calculation to find out what exact amount of land should be given over as open space, in this instance you will be required to submit evidence based justification as to why the contribution cannot be met in full.

**Table 1: Open space provision calculation based on number of bedrooms proposed overall as part of the development**

<b>Number of Bedrooms</b>	<b>Approximate Number of Units</b>	<b>Calculation</b>	<b>Type of Provision Required</b>
10	3-7	Beds x 0.0028 ha	Natural Amenity Green Space
20	8 - 12	Beds x 0.0028 ha	Natural Amenity Green Space
40	13 - 22	Beds x 0.002 ha	Communal Accessible Natural Green Space
		Beds x 0.0008 ha	Un-equipped Natural Play Space
60	23 - 30	Beds x 0.002 ha	Communal Accessible Natural Green Space
		Beds x 0.0008 ha	Equipped Natural Play Space
120	31 – 89	Beds x 0.002 ha	Communal Accessible Natural Green Space
		Beds x 0.0008 ha	Equipped Natural Play Space
240	90 - 100	Beds x 0.002 ha	Communal Accessible Natural Green Space
		Beds x 0.0008 ha	Equipped Natural Play Space and Informal Recreation Space



You will notice that the smaller developments e.g. those resulting in 20 bedrooms, do not have to provide a dedicated area of play space. This is because generally these sites are small and therefore to make sites more developable the overall landscaping and amenity green space should encourage play rather than have dedicated play space.

When the LPA allocated land for housing in the LDP the provision of open space was taken into consideration when working out the densities.

The Authority has not, as part of the information provided on allocated sites (Volume 2a of the LDP), however stated how much of the site should provide for open space. The reason for this is whilst it is possible to calculate the required open space it is equally likely in some instances that developers could offer an enhanced provision on smaller areas which the Authority may equally consider acceptable. The Allocated Site Schedules do however set out the type of provision likely to be sought from allocated housing sites.

It may also be possible to provide part of the open space in areas of the site that have been removed from the land available for development for other reasons e.g. biodiversity, sustainable drainage systems. These removed areas are referred to as undevelopable areas, they cannot be built upon but they still form part of the development site and can be utilised to meet requirements relating to biodiversity and on occasion open space, SUDs etc.

If however you do wish to calculate exactly how much land is required as part of a development you can do so via the following calculations:

#### Example 1: 25 bedrooms

$25 \times 0.002 \text{ha (natural green space)} = 0.05 \text{ha}$

$25 \times 0.0008 \text{ha (play space)} = 0.02 \text{ha}$

$0.05 + 0.02 = 0.07 \text{ha}$

The total amount of land required for open space would be 0.07ha. Based on the guidelines set out in Table 1 of this document the type of open space sought for this level of development would be natural amenity green space.

#### Example 2: 40 bedrooms

$40 \times 0.002 \text{ha (natural green space)} = 0.08 \text{ha}$

$40 \times 0.0008 \text{ha (play space)} = 0.032 \text{ha}$

$0.08 + 0.032 = 0.11 \text{ha}$

The total amount of space required when is 0.11ha. Based on the guidelines set out in Table 1 of this document the type of open space sought for this level of development would be delivered as communal accessible green space and un-equipped natural play space. Two types of play space are required at this level due to the size of the development.

## 6. Designing Open Space

If your application affects an existing open space provision policy LU22: Community Provision applies. Look at Section 11 in this document.

The design of any new development should be an inclusive process so that when applied it can help raise public aspirations, reinforce pride and a sense of place in an area.

As the LDP requires that all allocated housing and any windfall housing development that results in ten or more bedrooms, this includes conversions, provides open space, a focus on designing that space is inevitable.

However, a key element of the design process is considering how the site as a whole is to develop and therefore the provision of open space is only

one element that has to be factored into the design at the outset.

In order for open space to work well and be embraced by the local community it will serve it needs to be an intrinsic part of the development, not left to the end as an add on or afterthought.

The location of open space will contribute to its future use. If it is too close to houses there is a risk that some residents will complain about noise or the damage caused by ball games. If it is tucked away in a shaded corner, it will not be used at all and may become a 'dumping ground'.

LDP Policy DM10: Design and Landscaping requires that the majority of new developments will have to submit a landscaping plan. It is important to consider how the overall landscaping of the site can contribute to some of the open space requirements and how any designated open space will fit into the development and its landscaping overall.

By incorporating additional landscaping as part of your site e.g. new tree planting, hedges etc. this all adds to the visual richness of a site. On smaller sites this landscaping is essential to assist in making the site feel mature and inviting. By having interesting landscaping as part of the site it encourages residents to use the site and engage with each other. Developers should assess what existing features can be incorporated into the open space e.g. existing trees. Even a small amount of landscaping can provide a benefit to the local environment.

It is also important to assess how the site works in the wider context, for example, can there be connection into an existing green space/corridor, what can be done to make the development 'greener' as a whole. Refer to SPG: Built Environment once produced.

A key element to providing better access to and management of the public realm is as important as the provision of play areas. The Design SPG and Policy DM09:

Design and Movement should be taken into consideration when designing the open space, ensuring that routes to and from the open space are safe.

## **7. Play Spaces**

In the document 'Creating a Play Friendly Wales - Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities' on assessing for sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas, Welsh Government describes a rich play environment as one which is flexible, adaptable, varied and interesting. It also maximises the potential for socialising, creativity, resourcefulness, challenge, and choice. It is a trusted public space where children feel free to play in their own way, on their own terms.

Play areas are key in ensuring that children have access to open space. Areas defined as 'play areas' vary considerably not only in terms of whether there is any play equipment or whether it is just a parcel of land where people can just enjoy being out in the open, but also in terms of who is responsible for the management of the land.

Ceredigion County Council has undertaken an audit of open space available within the County focusing on the Service Centres as defined by the LDP (see Volume 1, Appendix 1 for a list of Service Centres). This is available from the Council's website <http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/ldp>

What the report demonstrates is that the availability of open space is limited in many areas. Whilst in the Urban Service Centres a range of formal open space facilities e.g. tennis courts, football pitches etc are available to meet the needs of the community there was a distinct lack of formal open space within 60 meters. This is the straight line distance of how far a person should walk to access this type of facility as defined by the Field In Trust Standards.

Having a safe space where children and young people can go is essential to their physical, social and cognitive development. An outdoor space however is particularly valuable for everyone as it provides opportunities to experience the elements but also provide a social value for parents, young adults and the elderly to meet informally, providing opportunities for multi-generational, social interaction.

## **8. The Ten Principles for Designing Play Spaces**

A successful play space is a place in its own right, specially designed for its location, designed for that locality. It is not a case of 'one size fits all', every space should be bespoke to each development.

Play England have a range of resources available to help with the design of play spaces. The principles can be applied in Wales just as easily. They have devised a list of Ten Principles that should be considered when developing and designing open space, they are:

1. **Imagine a play space designed to enhance its setting:** Successful play spaces are designed to fit their surroundings and enhance the local environment, complementing attractive spaces and enhancing poorer environments.
2. **Imagine a play space in the best possible place:** Successful play spaces are located carefully 'to be where children would play naturally'. While children often enjoy feeling as if they are away from adult oversight, there is a fine balance between a space that is pleasantly secluded and one that is remote and hidden away.
3. **Imagine a play space close to nature:** Grassy mounds, planting, logs, and boulders can all help to make a more attractive and playable setting for equipment, and planting can also help attract birds and other wildlife to literally bring the play space alive.
4. **Imagine a play space where children can play in different ways:** Successful play spaces can be used in different ways by children and young people of different ages and interests; they can also be important social spaces for parents and carers, as well as for children.
5. **Imagine a play space where disabled and non-disabled children play together:** Children with different abilities can play together in well-designed play spaces, and parents and carers who are themselves disabled should be able to gain access to play spaces if they are to accompany their children.
6. **Imagine a play space loved by the community:** A successful community engagement process will help create a site that the community likes and which meets its needs.
7. **Imagine a play space where children of all ages play together:** Good play spaces avoid segregating children on the basis of age or ability, and are laid out so that equipment and features can be used by a wide range of children, even allowing different patterns of usage throughout the day or week.
8. **Imagine a play space where children can stretch and challenge themselves in every way:** Children and young people need opportunities to experience challenge and excitement in their play.
9. **Imagine a play space maintained for play value and environmental sustainability:** Good play spaces are designed and constructed using sustainable materials and maintained to encourage different play experiences.
10. **Imagine a play space that evolves as the children grow:** Building some 'slack space' into the layout – space with no predefined function – can help introduce potential for change and evolution.

(Design for play: a guide to creating successful play spaces, Play England, 2008)

## **9. Open Space in Non-Residential Developments**

Open space isn't only important for residential developments but also many other types of developments for example offices, hospitals etc.

The provision of open space in these areas should still be based upon the types of natural space as set out previously within this document however it is recognised that in some situations these might not be wholly appropriate.

Within developments that are work based e.g. office developments it is encouraged to provide some seating outside for the enjoyment of the staff. This could simply take the form of picnic benches allowing staff to eat outside during their lunch break.

For hospitals access to open space can help improve the health and wellbeing of patients, allowing them time to escape from a clinical environment. Open space within hospital sites needs to be carefully considered, ensuring the space made available is one suitable for all, including those who may be very ill.

Often certain elements which positively enhance a new development are overlooked when the development is for a specific group e.g. student accommodation. The provision of open space is important for these occupiers as any other group, possibly more so as they have often have much less personal space than a traditional private residential development.

## **10. Maintenance and Adoption of Open Space**

The maintenance and general up-keep of open space is essential if the long term success of the open space is to be achieved. There are numerous options available in terms of who adopts and maintains the open space.

The County Council and Town/Community Councils generally will not take over the ownership of open space due to the cost of maintaining it. This may not always be the situation and the County Council and some Town/Community Councils may be willing to take ownership if a commuted sum is awarded for an agreed length of time e.g. 5, 10 or 20 years. It is suggested that you approach the County Council and/or Town/Community Council prior to submitting your application to see whether they would be willing to adopt and maintain the open space.

Another approach is that 'Management/ Maintenance fee' could be applied to householders. This is often a yearly fee and is paid by the householders into a central 'pot' of which the money is used to maintain and manage the open space.

In time the residents of the development may wish to set up a Residents' Group or Community Association and take over the running and maintenance of the area.

If part or all of the development involves a Housing Association this organisation may be willing to take over the ownership and maintenance on behalf of their tenants.

## 11. The Planning Application Process and New Open Space

Before submitting a planning application it is advised that you have a pre-application discussion with the Planning Service. This will enable you and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to discuss your proposals and for you to receive advice and guidance on the proposed development. To arrange a pre-application discussion you can download the form via the Council website [www.ceredigion.gov.uk](http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk)

As part of your planning application you need to submit clear information so the LPA can determine whether what you are proposing meets the LPD policy criteria. You need to submit:

- A plan clearly showing where the open space will be located;
- Information detailing what type of open space is to be provided; and
- Information on how the open space will be maintained: adoption by community council, management/maintenance fee etc.

## 12. Existing Open Space

Policy LU22: Community Provision looks to resist the loss of buildings and spaces that are used by the community. This includes the loss of existing open spaces.

### **Policy LU22:**

#### **Community Provision**

The LDP will help sustain and enhance community provision by:

1. Supporting the development of new sustainable community provision, provided that:
  - i. They are located within or adjoining a settlement;
  - ii. The planning application demonstrates that the feasibility of multi use has been considered;
  - iii. No suitable facility exists nearby which could appropriately accommodate the proposed use; and
  - iv. where the proposal is for a facility being relocated, it can be demonstrated that the existing site is no longer suitable for that use.
2. Resisting the loss or change of use of an existing community provision unless:
  - i. Alternative provision of at least equivalent local community value can be provided either within or adjoining the settlement or other settlements which are part of the Settlement Group. In relation to open space specifically, the alternative should be an enhanced provision which is preferably located within close proximity to the existing provision.

- ii. It can be demonstrated that existing level of community provision is inappropriate or surplus to the community needs of that settlement or Settlement Group; or
- iii. The current use has ceased to be viable and no other community use can be viably established.

A report will need to be submitted with any planning application for the change of use or loss of facility explaining why the loss or change of use is justifiable.

In some cases development may affect an existing community provision. When this provision is related to open space it is important that you have consulted and engaged with users of the space in an appropriate manner. It is important that you engage with all the people that use that community provision, be they children or adults.

It is important to recognise that consulting with children and young persons will require different engagement methods.

RAY Ceredigion (<http://www.rayceredigion.org.uk>) are based in Aberaeron and able to design and lead bilingually on consultancy projects with children and communities to obtain the views of children, young people and the wider community.

Ceredigion County Council's Participation Officer ensures the participation of children and young people in service development, policy and planning and can provide advice and support. Contact the Children and Young People Partnership on 01545 574185.

In order for the LPA to be satisfied that the existing community provision is either no longer required or can be appropriately mitigated against (e.g. relocation) a report should be submitted with the planning application which sets out:

- Details of the consultation that has taken place with the local community and its findings;
- evidence as to why the existing provision is no longer required (if that is the case); and
- evidence as to how the loss has been mitigated against if that is the case).

### **13. Planning Application and Existing Open Space**

Before submitting a planning application it is advised that you have a pre-application discussion with the LPA. This will enable you and the LPA to discuss your proposals and for you to receive advice and guidance on the proposed development. To arrange a pre-application discussion you can download the form via the Council website [www.ceredigion.gov.uk](http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk)

As part of your planning application you need to submit clear information so the LPA can determine whether what you are proposing meets with LPD policy criteria. If you are proposing to redevelop an existing open space you will need to submit a statement explaining the proposal. If the open space is to be relocated etc. you will need to explain why the open space has to move and where the alternative provision is to be located.

### **14. Conclusion**

Open Space enhances the character and appeal of an area. Open space is one element of providing Green Infrastructure, which is a network of high quality green and blue spaces, which benefit the local community and environment.

Open spaces provide opportunity for Ceredigion's residents to be more active and healthier. It also helps new developments fit in better to the existing landscape and can add value to a new development.

The open space required as part of any new development can be delivered in combination with other policy requirements. A developer may be able to meet the open space, biodiversity and sustainable drainage requirements all within the same area of land. This integrated approach can help reduce the amount of un-developable land within a development.

Overall open space benefits the individual and the developer.



## References and Resources

These are some resources that you may find useful when designing your open space.

<http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/ldp>

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-7LSEHW>

<http://www.playwales.org.uk>

<http://www.rayceredigion.org.uk/>

<http://www.playengland.org.uk/>

<http://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk>

<http://www.ccw.gov.uk/default.aspx>

<http://www.participationworks.org.uk>

## Glossary

**Ecosystem:** A system made up of plants, animals, microorganisms, soil, rocks, minerals, water sources and the local atmosphere interacting with one another

**Green Infrastructure:** a network of functioning open space

**Section 106 Agreement:** Section 106 Agreement (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a Local Planning Authority (LPA) to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner in association with the granting of planning permission.

**Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS):** A drainage system developed in line with sustainable development principles that take into account of quantity, quality and amenity.

**Open Space:** all open space of public value, including not just land, but also bodies of waters which offer important opportunities for sport and outdoor recreation but also act as visual amenity

**Windfall Site (non-allocated):** A site not specifically allocated for development in a development plan, but which unexpectedly becomes available for development during the lifetime of a plan.