



Community Facilities



The policies for Community Facilities set out the approach to be taken to both new and existing open space, community and recreation facilities.





Community and Recreation

Policy CR1 - Existing Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities

This policy sets out the approach taken to existing open space, community and recreation facilities. The preferred policy reads

Policy CR1 - Existing Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities

1. Support will be given to proposals that help create, protect, retain or enhance open space, community, sport and/or recreation assets (land and/or buildings) that
 - a. improve access to assets by non-car modes of transport
 - b. improve assets
 - c. retain assets where there is scarcity
 - d. improve community wellbeing
 - e. improve the safety and accessibility of assets.
2. Proposals for development which would involve the entire or partial loss of an existing public or private open space, community, sport and/or recreational facilities will only be supported where
 - a. The continued use of the site would conflict with other national and or local planning policies
 - b. The loss of the facility is integral to the strategic proposal to improve the community services within the locality
 - c. The loss would not cause significant harm to the amenity and local character of the area
 - d. It can be demonstrated that there is a surplus of similar facilities in the area and the loss of a particular facility would not adversely affect the existing and potential/future needs of the local population, making allowance for likely demand generated from allocations and directions of growth identified within this plan
 - e. A satisfactory replacement is to be provided elsewhere on the site or in a suitable and accessible location for the community served before the existing facility is lost and is at least equivalent in terms of size, use, quality and attractiveness
 - f. The existing use is no longer financially or operationally viable and there is no reasonable prospect of securing a viable satisfactory alternative use
 - g. The land is incapable of its continued use due to its size, location and physical condition.
3. Where a proposal involves the change of use to an alternative open space, community, sport and/or recreational asset, an assessment of provision and need should be submitted, with the benefits of the proposal needing to demonstrate that the new proposed use would outweigh the loss of the existing site use.



4. With regards to the improvement of existing facilities by way of redevelopment or extension, support will be given unless it would
 - a. Cause unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers
 - b. Have an unacceptable impact on the operation of the highway network.

Justification

Community, cultural, amenity and recreational assets are all critically important resources for the district, in terms of promoting healthy lifestyles, creating vibrant and inclusive places as well as supporting the wellbeing of sustainable communities. The district contains a wealth of sport, open space and recreational facilities all of which make a positive and important contribution towards the health and wellbeing of residents as well as contribute towards the overall offer of the district to visitors and residents alike.

This preferred policy aims to protect, maintain, strengthen and enhance existing open space, sport, community and recreational assets and facilities. The policy applies equally to land and/or buildings currently in use or last used for these purposes, including land which has been neglected for an extended period of time but is capable of being brought back into active use with reasonable endeavours. Support will be given to proposals which help create, protect, retain or enhance open space, community, sport and/or recreation assets.

The policy also sets out clear criteria for which applications that involve the partial or entire loss of a facility should be assessed against. An assessment should be submitted as part of any application for the loss of such asset and/or facility to help assess the acceptability of a loss and whether any existing and potential needs of the local population would be adversely affected. Any assessment would also need to take into account the quality of the existing asset and/or facility as well as its community value and its contribution to the character and appearance of the local area.

Any application for the change of use of an existing open space, community, sport and/or recreational asset to an alternative community or recreational use should be accompanied by an assessment of provision and need. The assessment would need to clearly demonstrate that the new proposed use would outweigh the loss of the existing use. The consideration of such proposals should take into account the criteria as set out in part two of the above preferred policy as well as weigh up whether there would be any public benefit gained in such change of use.

Furthermore, the conservation and protection of smaller amenity spaces within villages is of key importance as these areas tend to be of special value to the local community. Any proposal which would result in the loss of this space would only be acceptable under exceptional circumstances where the public benefit would outweigh any harm to amenity and the local character of the area and where it would enhance the overall function of the space. Some spaces, where they meet the specific criteria, are identified as Local Green Spaces and so are further protected and any loss of such space would be subject to further considerations as outlined in Policy NE6 (Local Green Spaces).

In accordance with Sport England guidance, a Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Strategy are currently being developed to, in specific relation to this policy, provide a strategic framework to ensure that the quality and quantity of outdoor playing pitches and built sport facilities meets the needs of residents (both existing and future) and visitors to the district. The studies will explore opportunities for improving the quality of facilities either by improvements to existing or through the provision of new purpose built facilities. Therefore, there may be some changes required to the preferred policy to align with our evidence base.



What you have told us?

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive, accessible and safe places which promote social interaction as well as enable and support healthy lifestyles. This includes creating places which promote opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, for example through using street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods. Creating places which are safe and accessible is key in ensuring crime and disorder does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion, this for example being done through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes and high quality public space which encourage the active and continual use of public areas. Furthermore, through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, allotments and development layouts that encourage walking and cycling, healthier lifestyles can be enabled and achieved (Paragraph 91).

Paragraph 92 states that 'planning policies and decisions should, in order to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all sections of the community
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs
- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.'

The NPPF outlines that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of communities and that 'Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate' (paragraph 96).

In addition, paragraph 97 suggests that 'existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements, or
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location, or
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.'



Issues and Options Consultation

Some representations were made which highlighted the importance of Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities. Representations were made by Sports England, referring specifically to Sports and Recreation Facilities, detailing that the level of provision should be determined locally and be informed by robust evidence, namely the Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Strategy. As set out previously, there may be some amendments required to the preferred policy once all the evidence base documents have been completed.

Alternatives Considered

No policy on Existing Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities

An alternative option would be to have no Local Plan policy on existing Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities and rely on national policy. This is not considered an appropriate option as the preferred policy sets out the criteria for which applications involving such existing facilities should follow. Without the preferred policy a locally tailored approach to existing Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Assets and Facilities would not be possible, with national policy only setting out broad principles to these assets and facilities. Therefore it is felt necessary and essential that the robust preferred policy is included. For these reasons, the option of having no policy has been discounted.



QUESTIONS

Do you agree to preferred policy CR1 - Existing Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities?

If not, do you agree with the general approach to policy CR1 but have any suggested changes?

Please provide any further comments.



Policy CR2 - New Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities

This policy sets out the approach taken to the provision of new open space, community, sport and recreation facilities.

The preferred policy reads

Policy CR2 - New Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities

- 1) New housing and mixed use development will be required to provide new open space, community, sport and recreational facilities to cater for the needs generated from the proposed development. This should, in the first instance, be provided on-site, and where this is not possible, should be provided in the form of a monetary contribution to be used within the local vicinity. The formula for calculating contributions is set out below

FORMULAS TO BE CONFIRMED

- 2) Proposals for new sports, open space and recreational facilities should ensure
 - a) They are located in or adjacent to built-up areas, or located in the best suitable and accessible location to serve the intended catchment of the population
 - b) There is a demonstrable need for the additional facility
 - c) It would not have an unacceptable impact on the operation of the highway network, including significant traffic congestion, or highway safety
 - d) Any buildings or structures are of a scale and nature appropriate to its setting and are well-designed and well integrated into the site
 - e) They would not detract from the character and appearance of the wider area
 - f) There would be no significant rise in residential amenity problems as well as excessive noise disturbance or light pollution.
- 3) Proposals for sport and recreational facilities which are likely to attract a high number of visitors/footfall should be proportionate to the size and role of the settlement.
- 4) All proposals should refer to and be informed by the Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (2021, TBC), the Playing Pitch Strategy (2021) and the Built Facilities Strategy (2021) and any other subsequent national guidance and local adopted supplementary planning document and/or guidance.

Justification

The aim of this preferred policy is to facilitate social interaction and create inclusive communities by maintaining and delivering the right community and recreation assets that meet and promote the needs and health and wellbeing of existing and growing communities. This includes creating places to meet and interact, formally and informally, inside buildings and outdoors.



Housing and mixed use developments will be expected to contribute to new open space, community, sport and recreational facilities to cater for the needs generated from the proposed development. This should, in the first instance, be provided on site. Where this is not possible, the contribution should be provided in the form of a monetary contribution which would be used within the local vicinity and/or on nearby existing facilities and assets. Where facilities are provided on site, necessary and appropriate arrangements should be made in relation to the ongoing maintenance of the new facility and/or asset. The formula(s) for calculating new facility contributions are still under consideration and will be made publicly available to view as part of the Pre-Submission consultation stage of the Local Plan Review. In accordance with Sport England guidance, a Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Strategy are currently being developed to, in specific relation to this policy, provide a strategic framework to ensure that the quality and quantity of outdoor playing pitches and built sport facilities meet the needs of residents (both existing and future) and visitors to the district. The studies will also support those organisations, including the Council, involved in the provision of outdoor and built sports facilities in the district and provide robust and objective justification for future playing pitch and built sport facilities provision throughout Richmondshire. They will explore opportunities for improving the quality of facilities either by improvements to existing or through the provision of new purpose built facilities. Therefore, there may be some changes required to the above preferred policy to align with our evidence base.

What you have told us?

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive, accessible and safe places which promote social interaction as well as enable and support healthy lifestyles. This includes creating places which promote opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, for example through using street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods. Creating places which are safe and accessible is key in ensuring crime and disorder does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion, this for example being done through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes and high quality public space which encourage the active and continual use of public areas. Furthermore, through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, allotments and development layouts that encourage walking and cycling, healthier lifestyles can be enabled and achieved (Paragraph 91).

Paragraph 92 states that 'planning policies and decisions should, in order to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs
- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.'



The NPPF outlines that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities and that 'Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate' (paragraph 96).

Issues and Options Consultation

Some representations were made which highlighted the importance of Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities. Representations were made by Sports England, referring specifically to Sports and Recreation Facilities, detailing that the level of provision should be determined locally and be informed by robust evidence, namely the Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Strategy. As set out previously, there may be some amendments required to the preferred policy once all the evidence base documents have been completed.

Alternatives Considered

No policy on New Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities

An alternative option would be to have no Local Plan policy on new Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities and rely on national policy. This is not considered an appropriate option as the preferred policy sets out the approach to be taken with regards to providing new Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities. Without the preferred policy a locally tailored approach to providing new Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Assets and Facilities would not be possible, with national policy only setting out broad principles to these assets and facilities. Therefore it is felt necessary and essential that the robust preferred policy is included. For these reasons, the option of having no policy has been discounted.



QUESTIONS

Do you agree to preferred policy CR2 - New Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities?

If not, do you agree with the general approach to policy CR2 but have any suggested changes?

Please provide any further comments.