

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes**MBLP Policy DM11 Open Space and Recreation**

Final Decision-Maker	SPS&T Committee
Lead Director or Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Jillian Barr, Principal Planning Officer
Classification	Non-exempt
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:

1. That the Committee approves the proposed Open Space Standards for inclusion in Policy DM11 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan for Regulation 18 consultation.
2. That the Committee approves amendments to Policy DM11 and supporting text for Regulation 18 Consultation.
3. That the Committee notes proposed draft Open Space Quality Standards at Appendix 4.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all.
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough Council.

Timetable

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Policy and Resources Committee	N/A
Council	N/A
Other Committee	N/A

MBLP Policy DM11 Open Space and Recreation

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The green spaces of Maidstone Borough are an important and precious asset. The benefits they provide are wide and varied and include: sport and recreation; regeneration; access to nature; access to tranquillity; and opportunities to improve health and fitness. They also provide a range of ecological services, including climate regulation, improving water resources and reducing flood risk.
- 1.2 The value of publicly accessible open space has long been recognised in planning policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) stresses the need to ensure effective planning for high quality open spaces, sport and recreation facilities based on robust assessments of the existing and future needs of communities.
- 1.3 This report describes the process of identifying local standards for open space provision. These are based on a substantial evidence base and will form the basis of a robust planning policy to ensure delivery of high quality open space through development schemes to meet the needs of future communities. New quantitative, qualitative and accessibility standards are proposed and the justification for them is explained.
- 1.4 The existing Open Space and Recreation Policy DM11 of the Regulation 18 draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2014) is revised to include the quantitative, qualitative and accessibility standards and the Committee is recommended to approve this revised policy for consultation under Regulation 18.
- 1.5 The process of producing a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, which is being prepared alongside the emerging Local Plan, has contributed to the proposed standards. Once agreed, the Open Space Standards will also form the basis for identifying existing local deficiencies in open space provision. This is not the subject of this report, but the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy will, through an Action Plan, identify ways in which existing deficiencies can be resolved, often through enhancement of existing spaces in the urban area, through environmental and access enhancements elsewhere and identifying potential new or extended open spaces.
- 1.6 The standards will also be used to establish whether strategic open space allocations need to be made in the emerging local plan to meet the needs of the future occupants of proposed allocated sites.

2 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework stresses the need to ensure effective planning for high quality open spaces, sport and recreation facilities based on robust assessments of the existing and future needs of communities.

2.3 The green spaces of Maidstone Borough are an important and precious asset. Open spaces serve a wide range of functions and are essential to sustainable communities. They can:

- Create or enhance a distinct sense of place;
- Give access to tranquillity and improve health;
- Provide sport and recreation opportunities;
- Preserve and enhance biodiversity and give access to nature;
- Support sustainable modes of transport, including walking and cycling;
- Contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation; including climate regulation, improving water resources and flood management.

2.4 The NPPF advises that assessments of open space should include the following:

- A quantitative element – to identify how much new provision is needed;
- A qualitative element - against which to measure the need for enhancement of existing facilities;
- An accessibility element – which should include distance thresholds and the cost of using a facility.

2.5 The new development proposed in the Borough results in the need to identify new open spaces to meet the future needs of new communities. Robust quantitative, qualitative and accessibility standards are needed to ensure that appropriate provision (in terms of size, location, type and future maintenance) is secured.

2.6 Open space standards will guide the types and amounts of open space that should be delivered by development. Amendments to Policy DM11 are proposed to include open space standards and provide further guidance on the application of the standards. Parts 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the Policy were previously considered and approved by Cabinet in January 2015 for Regulation 19 Consultation.

2.7 This report considers each open space element: quantity, quality and accessibility in turn, and sets open space standards for the Borough. It does not seek to allocate sites, nor identify existing deficiencies at this point. Progress towards open space allocations in the Local Plan and their relationship with the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy is clarified later in this report.

3 Open space quantity standard

3.1 In 2004 Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) was one of the first councils to produce a green spaces strategy. As part of its development, green space was

audited and categorised into eight different green space types. In 2006, an Open Space DPD was adopted and this included quantitative open space standards. These 2004 green space types and adopted standards can be seen in the table below.

3.2 Existing standards

GREEN SPACE TYPE	HECTARE (Per 1000 population)	
	URBAN	RURAL
Parks and Gardens	2.30	N/A*
Natural and semi-natural areas	ANGSt standard	ANGSt standard
Amenity Green space	0.7	0.8
Provision for Children's and Young People's Equipped Play	0.12	0.09
Green Corridors	N/A	N/A
Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.4	2.7
Allotments and Community Gardens	0.21	0.18
Cemeteries and Graveyards	0.66	0.59

3.3 A new open space audit was carried out in 2014. The new audit has sought to update and improve the understanding of open space provision in the Borough. An exercise to identify and map open spaces was undertaken. There were, however, some changes to the methodology used in 2004, to ensure that the emerging information was even more detailed and robust.

- (i) The new audit measured publicly accessible open spaces only. For example, it did not include green areas where the only official right of access was a public footpath passing through the site;
- (ii) Whilst very important green spaces, green corridors were not included as a typology in the audit since these cannot be measured;
- (iii) Parks and gardens were not included as a separate typology in the audit because these are normally a combination of open space types. Instead, the component parts of each park were measured separately. This has resulted in a more detailed measurement of natural and semi-natural spaces, play spaces, amenity spaces and playing pitches;
- (iv) Cemeteries and graveyards were not included as a separate open space type. Closed graveyards, in particular, can be valuable spaces for wildlife, so this category was incorporated in the natural and semi natural open spaces typology. Graveyard capacity should be reviewed separately.

3.4 Summarised results of the audit are set out at Appendix 1 of this report.

3.5 New standards for open space provision were generated. Using a recognised 'best practice' methodology recommended during the operation of the Planning Policy Guidance 17 (now revoked) and 'Open Space Strategies: Best Practice Guidance' published by CABI Space.

3.6 The draft standards have been set by taking account of:

- (i) The current adopted standard (Para 3.2 above);
- (ii) Existing measured provision (Open Space Audit, Appendix 1);
- (iii) Residents' feedback (Telephone Survey Report, Appendix 2);
- (iv) GBI Stakeholder Workshops (May 2015);
- (v) Where applicable, national standards;
- (vi) Comparable standards from nearby Kent districts (Appendix 3).

3.7 Unlike the current adopted (2006) open space standards, the draft open spaces standards do not propose separate standards for urban and rural areas, because there is no clear justification for this.

3.8 The draft open space standards identify the minimum size of facilities to ensure that usable spaces are created.

3.9 Proposed new quantity standards are set out below:

Open Space Typology	Draft Standard (hectares per 1000 population)	Minimum Size of Facility (hectares)
Amenity Green Space	0.7	0.1
Provision for children and young people	0.25	0.25 excluding a buffer zone*
Outdoor sports	1.6	To meet the technical standards produced by Sport England or the relevant Governing Bodies of Sport
Allotments	0.2	0.66
Natural/semi-natural space	6.5	0.2

* but in cases where accessibility to children's and young people's provision is poor, for example outside a reasonable walking distance or where the crossing of major roads is necessary, smaller areas of open space may be justified on-site. Features such as mounding or natural elements such as tree trunks and an open, level area of open space will provide opportunities for informal local play. Traffic calming measures to minimise vehicle speeds will help make streets safer in these areas and encourage use.

3.10 Justification for draft quantity standards for open space

3.11 **Amenity Open Space:** Amenity open space is defined as open space which provides space for informal activities and visual enhancement to residential areas.

3.12 The current adopted standard is 0.7ha per 1000 population for the urban area and 0.8ha for the rural area. In terms of new provision, there appears to be no justification for varying the provision of amenity open space between the urban and the rural area. As a benchmark, the standard broadly equates with the standard set in nearby Kent districts.

3.13 Of the five typologies, amenity green space and natural and semi natural open space are the most popular in terms of claimed usage. The vast majority of residents believe the amount of amenity open space available in the Borough is either very good or good (Telephone Survey Report, May 2015). This view was generally supported by Parish Councils who attended the Parish and Neighbourhoods GBI Workshop (20 May 2015) and the desire to protect open space was a clear message. Current provision equates to 0.7ha/1000 in the urban area and 1.47ha/ 1000 in the rural area and existing amenity open space should be protected.

3.14 The recommended new standard for amenity open space is 0.7ha/1000 population which aligns with the current standard and broadly aligns with the standard set in nearby Kent districts.

3.15 **Children's and young people's provision:** Provision for children and young people includes areas such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters with a primary purpose to provide opportunities for play and social interaction involving children and young people.

3.16 The current adopted standard is 0.12ha for the urban area and 0.09ha for the rural area. In terms of new provision, there again appears to be no justification for varying the provision of play space between the urban and the rural area.

3.17 There are concerns with regard to the amount of play area provision for children and young people on which the current standard is based, with 40% rating provision as fair, poor and very poor (Telephone Survey Report, May 2015). It is therefore proposed to increase the standard.

3.18 The recommended standard is 0.25ha/1000 population which would equate to the 'equipped playing space' in the Fields in Trust (previously known as National Playing Fields Association) standard and would align more closely with the standards set in nearby Kent districts. A minimum size of 0.25ha is proposed for children's play space, advocating the delivery of a smaller number of well-equipped play areas.

3.19 **Outdoor sports:** Outdoor sports facilities is a wide ranging category of open space and includes natural or artificial surfaces which are publicly accessible and which are used for sport and recreation. Examples include playing pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens and golf courses.

- 3.20 The current adopted standard is 1.4ha for the urban area and 2.7ha for the rural area. This difference emerged because the adopted standards were adjusted to allow for golf courses in the rural area. Most golf courses have not been included in the new audit due to restrictions to public access. Under the new audit, sports pitch provision in the urban area equates to 0.85ha/1000 and 0.44ha/1000 in the rural area. As a result there appears to be no justification for varying sports pitch provision between the urban and the rural area. The standard set in nearby Kent districts ranges between 1 and 2 ha/1000 population. The Fields in Trust standard is 1.6ha/1000 population.
- 3.21 There are concerns with regard to the amount of outdoor sports facilities with 43% rating them as fair, poor and very poor (Telephone Survey Report, May 2015). There is also information from the Football and Hockey Associations that provision for these sports in the Borough is inadequate.
- 3.22 A comprehensive Playing Pitch Needs Assessment, as advocated by Sport England, would provide a range of benefits, including identifying current levels of provision in the Borough, across the public, education, voluntary and commercial sectors, and to compare this with current, and likely future, levels of demand. A supply and demand analysis for playing pitches will help identify the possible surplus or deficiencies of pitches across the Borough. Such an analysis would help to underpin future planning for playing pitch provision and help to support bids for external funding.
- 3.23 The proposed outdoor sports standard is 1.6ha/1000 population which would equate to the Fields in Trust standard and would align closely with the standard set in nearby Kent districts.
- 3.24 **Allotments:** In terms of open space provision, allotments provide many local residents with access to healthy food, exercise, the pleasure of gardening and a social outlet. They also form an important open visual aspect and add significantly to the biodiversity of an area.
- 3.25 The current adopted standard is 0.21ha for the urban area and 0.18ha for the rural area. In terms of new provision, there appears to be no justification for varying the provision of amenity open space between the urban and the rural area. The standard closely equates with the standard set in nearby Kent districts.
- 3.26 Not all residents were familiar with allotment provision, but of those that answered the question, 42% of residents believe the amount of open space available in the Borough is either very good or good (Telephone Survey Report, May 2015). Parish Councils who attended the GBI workshops (20 May 2015) supported a view that the provision of allotments was good and there was a clear desire to protect the existing open space (Parish and Neighbourhoods GBI Workshop 20 May 2015). Current provision equates to 0.2ha/1000 in the urban area and 0.22ha/1000 in the rural area and existing allotments should be protected.

- 3.27 The recommended standard is 0.2ha/1000 population which would equate to the current adopted standard, the current provision and aligns closely with the standard set in nearby Kent districts.
- 3.28 **Natural/semi-natural space:** The current adopted standard is the ANGSt standard. This is an accessibility standard.
- 3.29 In terms of new provision, there appears to be no justification for varying the provision of natural and semi natural open space between the urban and the rural area.
- 3.30 Of the five typologies, amenity green space and natural and semi natural open space are the most popular in terms of claimed usage. 72% of residents rated the amount of natural and semi natural space as very good / good (Telephone Survey Report, May 2015). This view was generally supported by Parish Councils who attended the GBI Workshop (20 May 2015) and the desire to protect the existing open space was a clear message. Current provision equates to 6.31ha/1000 in the urban area and 6.95ha/1000 in the rural area and existing natural and semi natural space open space should be protected as one of the Borough's key assets which supports the Council's priority of maintaining Maidstone as an attractive place to live. To set a lower standard than current provision is an option the Council can consider, but it is not recommended because it is important for the Maidstone pattern of growth to maintain accessibility for communities.
- 3.31 The recommended standard for future provision is 6.5ha/1000 which sets a quantitative standard for natural and semi natural space in Maidstone Borough for the first time. This is approximately the same as the current measured provision and represents a significant level of provision in association with new development – in part, because there is no longer a park and garden standard (which would normally include an element of natural and semi natural open space). The standard would represent the highest for this typology when compared with the standard set in nearby Kent districts.

4. Open Space Quality Standards

- 4.2 There are currently no adopted quality standards in the Local Plan.
- 4.3 Quality standards, by their nature, must be applied flexibly so that they can respond to the location and character of a site. As a result, Local Plan Policy DM11 requires that development proposals provide an Open Space Layout and Design assessment which will demonstrate how the site meets the proposed quality standards. An SPD will be produced, setting out quality standards for open space.
- 4.4 It is essential that future and existing open spaces are managed as far as possible to enhance their ecological value and contribution to habitat networks, wherever possible. As such, the Open Space Layout and Design Statement should incorporate ecological enhancement and management measures.

- 4.5 The draft Quality Standards that are proposed to be taken forward to SPD are set out in Appendix 4 to this report for the Committee's information. The SPD will be subject to future Committee approval and consultation.
- 4.6 An assessment of the accessibility and quality of existing open spaces was carried out in 2014 and 2015. The assessment included visits to open spaces across the Borough, including parks, natural and semi natural open spaces and allotments. As a benchmark for the assessments, criteria were developed that were based closely on the Green Flag Award Programme and its standards. Criteria were applied proportionately to the size of the site. For example, some criteria such as car parking and lighting are less relevant to small natural and semi-natural sites, where creating habitats for wildlife will take priority. It is important to note that the Green Flag standard was used as a benchmark for the assessment. It is not proposed, however, to attempt to bring all sites up to a set standard according to the criteria, since this might not be appropriate for all sites. This is particularly the case for some natural or semi-natural sites, for example, where improving access may not be appropriate for reasons of controlling the amount of disturbance to sensitive habitats or species.
- 4.7 The assessments will help to establish a quality standard for the Borough's existing open space provision, identify sites that would benefit from improvement, and give a clear and robust overview of the physical condition of open space across the Borough and within defined areas.
- 4.8 A quality standard for existing open spaces and priorities for improvement will be agreed as part of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.
- 4.9 This will enable the council to make informed decisions with regard to the improvements needed to sites in terms of their design and content, and in site management and maintenance.
- 4.10 It should be noted, however, that a quality standard and GBI Action Plan priorities for investment can be used to target investment from developer contributions when off-site provision is required. It can also inform management priorities of specific spaces for improvements if resources become available, and in some cases may be a long term aspiration.

5 Accessibility standards

- 5.1 Open spaces should be readily accessible to residents. They need to be in the right place to meet local need or demand, and the Council needs to determine acceptable distances for local people to travel to the different types of provision.
- 5.3 Some types of open space (such as amenity open space, or smaller areas of natural and semi-natural open space) are for local use within a neighbourhood or village and are generally accessed on foot. The accessibility standards are based around walking time. A short 5-8 minute walk (400 – 640m) to such local facilities is considered reasonable. Barriers such as main roads, railways or rivers that sever the route to an amenity open space should be avoided.

- 5.4 Children's and young people's provision are for local use within a neighbourhood or village and are generally accessed on foot. The accessibility standards are based around walking time. A 12 minute walk (965m) to such local facilities is considered reasonable. A walking time of 12 minutes from home was proposed to the Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee in April 2013 as reasonable provision within easy reach for all age groups, with the large majority of households in the borough being within this range. Physical Barriers such as main roads, railways or rivers that sever the route to an open space should be avoided.
- 5.4 Other facilities such as outdoor sports, allotments and larger areas of natural and semi-natural open space can be more distant. For outdoor sports, the proposed standard relates to a 20 minutes walk. This is higher than the Fields in Trust standard of 15 minutes for playing pitches, but accords with the standard for tennis (20 minutes) and is less than the recommended standard for athletics (45 minutes). Outdoor sports teams will commonly be made up of players from across the borough and beyond.
- 5.5 Actual distances are converted to straight line (radius) distances by a 40% reduction to allow for the fact that routes to open spaces are not straight line distances, but more complex. The 40% reduction is based on research by National Playing Fields Association (now known as Fields in Trust). For example, a 15 minute walk, of 1.2 km, has a straight line distance (radius) of 720 metres.
- 5.5 The telephone survey carried out in 2015 indicated that three quarters of residents consider the access of open spaces on foot to be very good or good (75%). The vast majority of residents consider the access of open spaces by car to be good or very good. Of the five typologies, amenity green space, play area provision and allotments appear to be in close proximity to residents with 62%, 64% and 61% respectively indicating it takes up to 10 minutes to reach them. 53% of residents indicated it takes up to 10 minutes to reach the natural and semi natural space they use.
- 5.6 ANGSt (Access to Natural Green Spaces Standards) standards have been included in full. This is a recognised standard prepared by Natural England.

5.7

Open Space Type	Draft Accessibility Standard (radius from open space)
Amenity Green Space	400m
Provision for children and young people.	600m
Publicly accessible outdoor sports.	1000m
Allotments and community gardens.	1000m
Natural/semi-natural areas of open space	300m (2 Ha site) 2km (20 Ha site) 5km (100 Ha site) 10km (500 Ha site)

5.8 If a proposed development site lies outside the accessibility boundary of an open space type then the development will need to provide additional facilities. These should ideally be provided on site, but may be provided off-site if this is necessary due to site constraints. Alternatively, if a development is too small to deliver new open space provision, an alternative contribution may be sought in lieu of new provision to improve existing sites and enhance the capacity of existing provision.

5.9 Priorities for improvements to existing spaces will be set out in the Action Plan which will accompany the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. Contributions from smaller development within the urban area, for example, might contribute to improvements to existing urban parks, or river the frontage. These improvements could range from habitat enhancements, to provision of multi-use games areas, to footpath improvements.

6 Proposed Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

6.1 References to an Open Space SPD replace references to a Green and Blue Infrastructure SPD in the new policy text. This is because the SPD will be a technical document relating to the application of the policy. The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy will identify existing deficiencies and potential ways to meet those deficiencies in an Action Plan.

6.2 An Open Space SPD will include the detailed draft quality standards set out in Appendix 4, accompanied by best practice case studies.

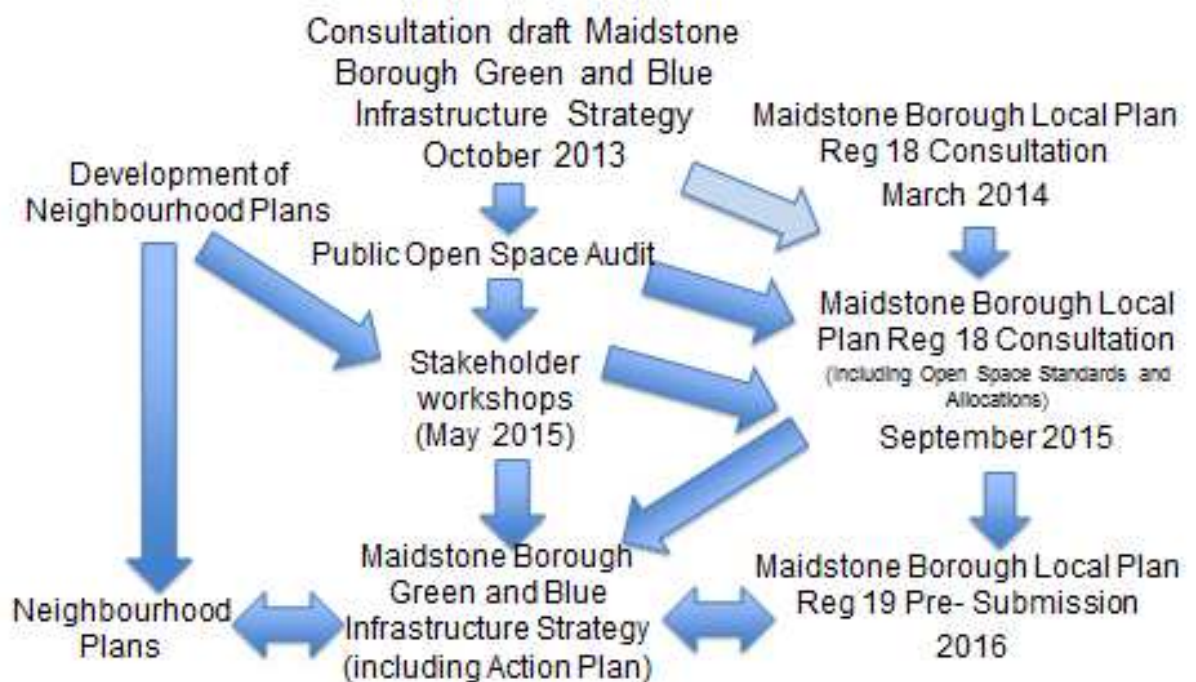
6.3 The SPD will also provide further guidance on the application of the standards, including:

- (i) Explanation on how Policy DM11 will be applied;
- (ii) Providing further detailed advice on how the Council calculates the population anticipated from a development;
- (iii) Providing further detailed advice on how the Council calculates the amount of open space required using the standards;
- (iv) Providing further detailed advice on how the Council calculates thresholds for on-site delivery of open space;
- (v) The circumstances when off-site provision or financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision should be sought;
- (vi) Advice on Council spending of contributions –restrictions and Green and Blue Infrastructure Action Plan;
- (ii) Advice on setting up management companies;
- (iii) Calculating commuted maintenance sums;
- (v) Adoption standards.

6.4 The Open Space SPD will apply to the whole of the Maidstone Borough.

- 7 Relationship of Policy DM11 Open Space and Recreation to Site Allocations and Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.
- 7.1 The standards will be used to identify whether strategic open space allocations need to be made in the emerging Local Plan to meet the needs of the future occupants of proposed development site allocations. Any proposed strategic open space allocations will need to be approved by this Committee for public consultation (Regulation 18) before being incorporated into the Local Plan for publication and final consultation (Regulation 19).
- 7.2 The GBI Strategy is being prepared alongside the emerging Local Plan and it is informing the Local Plan at each stage of preparation.
- 7.3 The illustration below describes this integral process in more detail.

GBI Strategy and the Development Plan



8. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 8.1 Option A: To set the standards out in an Open Space SPD. This option would give more flexibility in the future, but would not have the benefit of the same weight in decision making as a Local Plan policy that is subject to independent examination.

- 8.2 Option B: To include the standards in Policy DM11 and to take the amended policy to consultation. Including standards in a policy which is tested through Local Plan Examination will give them more weight in decision making. Additional 'reasoned justification' text will give further advice on how the policy is applied.
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9 PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.2 In accordance with Option B, the revised Local Plan Policy DM11 is recommended for approval for public consultation under Regulation 18 of the Local Plan Regulations. Representations made during consultation will be reported to Committee and recommendations made for any further amendments before a final policy is agreed for inclusion in the Regulation 19 Local Plan Publication draft.
- 9.3 The draft Quality Standards at Appendix 4 are also available for comment, although these will form part of a future SPD on Open Space, rather than the draft Local Plan.
- 9.4 The draft Policy DM11 sets out the open space standards for the Borough, including quantity, quality and accessibility standards. Each new development will be required to provide the range of open space types by quantity and to the desired quality, in so far as the development is of sufficient size to deliver the minimum identified size of facility. Financial contributions may be acceptable if the site is too small to deliver open space on site or if, in the case of identifying off-site provision, an appropriate site cannot be identified.
- 9.5 The recommended revised Policy for consultation is set out below, with changes in **bold** and ~~strike through~~. Changes already agreed by Cabinet on 14 January 2015 have been included in the Policy, with the exception of the addition of cemeteries and churchyards because these uses can be classed as more than one open space type. Only additional changes to the Policy and supporting text are highlighted.

Policy DM11 - Open space and recreation

11.52 High quality, publicly accessible open space can bring about opportunities for promoting social interaction and inclusion in communities. Sports and recreation areas and facilities can contribute positively to the well being and quality of those communities. Open space can also have a positive impact upon the quality of the built environment and can be of ecological value. The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the provision and retention of high quality open spaces, a stance that the council supports.

11.53 The council will seek to secure publicly accessible open space provision for new housing and mixed use development sites, in accordance with standards [to be defined] in the green and blue infrastructure supplementary planning document **quantity, quality and accessibility standards set out in Policy DM11.**

11.53a New major developments will be required to meet their obligations for open space on-site. This recognises the demand for additional sports and recreation facilities to meet the needs of a growing population. Off-site provision in an accessible location will be acceptable if provision on-site is demonstrated to be undeliverable for reasons of site constraints or location.

11.53b If a development is too small to deliver new open space provision on site, then an alternative contribution will be sought in lieu of new provision to improve existing sites and enhance the capacity of existing provision. Priorities for improvement will be set out in the Action Plan to the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.

11.53c The Council will produce an Open Space Supplementary Planning Document to provide further detail to support the policy, including qualitative open space standards.

11.54 It is important to ensure that any new publicly accessible open space and sports provision preserves the quality of life for existing residents, as well as the visual amenity of the locality. Intense sports uses, such as multi use games areas, can generate significant amounts of noise; while sports and other recreation uses may include lighting, such as floodlighting. This can be harmful to the living environment of nearby occupiers and to the visual amenity of the countryside where levels of artificial lighting are generally very limited. The council will seek to ensure that new publicly accessible open space and recreation areas are appropriate to their setting in these regards.

11.54a Provision of open space should be an integral part of design and layout of development, and should be sited to make a contribution to biodiversity networks. The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy will set out the aims and objectives for the provision and enhancement of green space in the Borough over the period of the plan.

11.54b The Council will expect future management and maintenance of new open spaces to be delivered by means of a private limited management company or trust. However, where appropriate, the Council will seek to enter into an agreement with the developer for the future management and maintenance of the open space provision.

11.55 The loss of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities will be resisted, unless there is a proven overriding need for the development and there would be no resulting deficiency, or net loss, of such space/facilities in the locality. In considering the impact of the loss of open space, the council will have regard to the visual amenity and biodiversity value of the land in question.

Policy DM 11

Publicly accessible open space and recreation

1. For new housing or mixed use development sites, the council will seek to deliver the following categories of publicly accessible open space provision in accordance with the specified standards:

(i) Quantity standards

Open Space Type	Draft Standard (ha/1000 population)	Minimum Size of Facility (hectares)
Amenity Green Space	0.7	0.1
Provision for children and young people	0.25	0.25 excluding a buffer zone*
Publicly accessible outdoor sports	1.6	To meet the technical standards produced by Sport England or the relevant Governing Bodies of Sport
Allotments and community gardens	0.2	0.66
Natural/semi-natural areas of open space	6.5	0.2

* but in cases where accessibility to children's and young people's provision is poor, for example outside a reasonable walking distance or where the crossing of major roads is necessary, smaller areas of open space may be justified on-site.

(ii) Quality Standards

All new open spaces must take account of design and accessibility and other quality requirements specific to each open space type set out in the Open Space SPD. An Open Space Layout and Design statement, to incorporate ecological management measures, should be submitted for approval by the Council.

(iii) Accessibility Standards

Open Space Type	Draft Accessibility Standard (radius from open space)
Amenity Green Space	400m
Provision for children and young people provision	600m
Publicly accessible outdoor sports	1000m
Allotments and community gardens	1000m
Natural/semi-natural areas of open space	300m (2 Ha site) 2km (20 Ha site) 5km (100 Ha site) 10km (500 Ha site)

2. A financial contribution in lieu of open space provision will be acceptable, provided:

- (i) the proposed development site would be of insufficient size in itself to make the appropriate new provision.**
- (ii) the open space cannot be accommodated on site due to site constraints, and alternative appropriate off-site provision cannot be identified.**

3. Proposals for, and including, new publicly accessible open space and recreation will, where feasible, seek to reinforce existing landscape character, as defined in the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment.

4. Proposals for, and including, new publicly accessible open space and recreation provision shall respect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, by ensuring that development does not result in excessive levels of noise or light pollution. New lighting relating to such development will also preserve the character and visual amenity of the countryside.

5. Proposals for new development which would result in the net loss of open space or sport and recreation facilities will not be permitted unless there is a proven overriding need for the development. In addition, the development will only be permitted if:

- i. There is no resulting deficiency in open space or recreation facilities in the locality; or
- ii. An alternative provision, determined to be of an equivalent community benefit by officers of the Council and community representatives can be provided to replace the loss.

6. In dealing with applications to develop existing open areas within the urban area, rural service centres, larger villages and other locations, the Borough Council will have regard to the impact of the loss of the contribution that the existing site makes to the character, amenity and biodiversity of the area.

The Open Space supplementary planning document will contain further detail on how the policy will be implemented

10 CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

10.2 Previously, the draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan (MBLP) has been subject to public consultation according to Regulation 18 of the Local Plan Regulations.

10.3 This report introduces revision of a Policy and is required to be submitted for further public consultation regarding its content and justification through evidence. If approved, this consultation will take place in September 2015.

11 NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

11.2 Following approval for consultation, Policy DM11 together with its reasoned justification will be subject to consultation in accordance with Statement for Community Involvement. Representations to this Policy will be collated and assessed and amendments will be made where appropriate to take account of issues raised by stakeholders and the public.

11.3 On completion of the Regulation 18 public consultation, a revised version, known as the Local Plan Publication, will be presented to Committee for approval for a final consultation prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Public.

12 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Provision of open space is key to ensuring that Maidstone remains a green and attractive place.	Sue Whiteside, Spatial Policy
Risk Management	This report seeks approval to consult. Any objections or concerns raised will be reviewed and the policy amended before a final publication version of the plan is completed.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Financial	There are direct financial implications arising from this report in terms of future revenue costs for the council. Open	Zena Cooke, S151 Officer and Paul

	space budgets are fully committed and the report recognises that innovative ways to secure maintenance of spaces, such as management companies set up by developers, should be explored. It also provides for ensuring that appropriate financial contributions are secured for future maintenance of spaces adopted by the Council.	Holland, Finance
Staffing	An Open Space SPD can be managed within existing staff resources.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Legal	Public consultation on the emerging Local Plan is a legal requirement and essential to assisting the soundness of the Local Plan at Examination In Public	Kate Jardine, Team Leader (Planning), Mid Kent Legal Services
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	Accessibility for all is a key element in consideration of the quality of our open spaces.	[Policy & Information Manager]
Environmental/Sustainable Development	Creation of open space standards provide the Council with a framework for improving the environment and the lives of residents. The creation of up-to-date open space standards will be a positive step in the sustainable development of Maidstone Borough.	Sue Whiteside, Spatial Policy
Community Safety	Safety is a key element in consideration of the quality of our open spaces.	Sue Whiteside, Spatial Policy
Human Rights Act	N/A	Sue Whiteside, Spatial Policy
Procurement	N/A	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development and Zena Cooke, Section 151 Officer]
Asset Management	N/A	Sue Whiteside, Spatial Policy

13 REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Results of the Open Space Audit 2014
- Appendix 2: MBC Open Space Telephone Survey Report 2015

- Appendix 3: Local Authority Open Space Comparison
 - Appendix 4: Draft Open Space Quality Standards
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BACKGROUND PAPERS