

## Appendix 4

### Draft Quality Standards for Open Space

The quality standards aim to ensure open spaces are fit for purpose, sustainable over the long term, well designed, well built, appropriately managed and can adjust to changing user needs and requirements.

#### Quality standard for new public open space

All open spaces should be designed as part of the green infrastructure network in a locality, contributing to local landscape character, connecting with local routes and green corridors for people and wildlife as well as providing multi-functional benefits such as addressing surface water management priorities. The spatial relationship between new open spaces and built development needs to be carefully considered to ensure open spaces are conveniently and safely located to serve the local community and are sufficiently overlooked by active building frontages. The location and shape of the space should allow for meaningful and safe recreation. Small, poorly located, oddly shaped, 'left over' sites will not be acceptable.

The design of new and improved open spaces should meet the needs of, and be developed in consultation with the local community wherever possible. New open spaces must include a management plan with adequate resources identified for on-going management and maintenance. All types of open space should be designed to meet the Green Flag Award standard on criteria relating to design and accessibility as set out below. Criteria should be applied proportionately to the size of the site and some criteria such as lighting will be less relevant to smaller, particularly natural and semi-natural sites, where creating habitats for wildlife will take priority.

- (1) Site is easily found and accessible by road, cycleway, footpaths and public transport including by those with disabilities, with pedestrian crossings on roads where appropriate.
- (2) Entrances are accessible for all users, are of appropriate size and inviting with a welcoming sign.
- (3) Clearly defined, accessible footpaths and cycleways where appropriate, to and around the site.
- (4) Waymarking signage provided where needed outside and within the site.
- (5) Information about the site clearly displayed for visitors in various formats (noticeboards, leaflets)
- (6) Site is well-designed to provide interest and activities for a wide range of users in particular meeting the needs of elderly and less able users as well as children, young people and families.
- (7) Provision of well-located seats and benches.
- (8) Equipment, structures and surfacing of high quality, safe to use and appropriate for the site.
- (9) Clearly defined boundaries with fences or hedges where needed to ensure safety of users.
- (10) Sufficient litter bins provided for general waste, dog waste and compost where appropriate.
- (11) Appropriate lighting to ensure safety of users without adversely affecting wildlife.

- (12) Emergency equipment where relevant (eg lifebelts by water) available on or near the site and clearly signposted.
- (13) A range of planting, with appropriate mix of species, maintained to a good standard.
- (14) Biodiversity is promoted on site through design, choice of species and management practices.
- (15) Information for visitors on biodiversity is available on site.
- (16) Any water bodies have clean, clear water, with appropriate marginal and other vegetation.
- (17) Any landscape, geological features, buildings or structures of historical value are identified and conserved appropriately.

## **Additional requirements for specific types of space:**

### **Outdoor Sports Space**

The specific type of outdoor sports space that should be provided on-site or added to existing sporting facilities in the area is to be agreed with the Council on a site by site basis.

Outdoor sports space should be designed to meet the technical performance quality standards in Fields in Trust's, 'Design and Maintenance of Outdoor Sports Facilities', 2004 and the technical standards produced by Sport England or the relevant Governing Bodies of Sport.

Playing surfaces must be appropriately maintained and drained, serviced by appropriate built accommodation (changing rooms/pavilion), toilets, car and cycle parking space and landscaping.

It may be appropriate to consider the provision of outdoor sports space in the form of synthetic/hard surface provision. Where the views of the local sports community indicate this would be a better option than grass provision, this will be taken into account.

### **Natural/Semi-Natural green space**

The type of natural/semi-natural green space to be provided will depend on the location of the site. The choice of plant species and the design of the planting environment must be appropriate to the context, complementing local landscape character and addressing habitat requirements identified as priorities in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The size, specification and provenance of planting stock should be suited to the environment and take into account disease resilience and the ability to adapt to climate change.

The shape and layout of the space should allow for meaningful and safe recreation. These areas should be clearly distinct from similar areas provided for the purposes of ecological mitigation, where public access will not be encouraged. Where possible, new sites should connect with the existing network of natural and semi-natural green spaces within the borough, providing movement corridors for wildlife.

### **Children and young people's play space**

Play spaces should conform to EN1176 standards and will require regular inspection in accordance with ROSPA guidance. All areas should afford good natural surveillance from

nearby streets and frontages of residential properties, whilst maintaining a minimum distance of at least 20m to the nearest dwelling (habitable room facade).

Play areas should be designed in accordance with Play England's, '*Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces*', and specifically should incorporate the 10 principles for designing successful play spaces which states that play spaces should:

- (i) be 'bespoke'
- (ii) be well located
- (iii) make use of natural elements
- (iv) provide a wide range of play experiences
- (v) accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children
- (vi) meet community needs
- (vii) allow children of different ages to play together
- (viii) build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- (ix) be sustainable and appropriately maintained
- (x) allow for change and evolution

A wide range of play experiences should be provided and include the following:

- (i) **For young pre-school children:** Natural play features, paving that allows the use of toddler wheeled toys such as pedal cars and tricycles and items of play equipment that provide, as a minimum, for swinging, climbing, balancing, themed play and items useable by family groups e.g. basket swings. There should be seating for accompanying adults.
- (ii) **For other children up to teenage years:** Natural play features and pieces of play equipment providing for climbing, swinging, balancing, themed play, items facilitating group play, rotating equipment, physically challenging items and a small flat ball games area with multi-goals, sheltered seating and 'very low key' wheel play facility (undulating riding surface with features). There should be seating for accompanying adults.
- (iii) **For teenagers/young people:** Ball play and/or wheeled play opportunities, and covered seating to use as a meeting place.
- (iv) **Provision for those with disabilities:** Access to both disabled and non-disabled children, seating suitable for disabled children and their carers and a variety of the equipment designed to be useable by children with disabilities.
- (v) Some space with no predefined function should be incorporated into the layout to allow potential for change and evolution.

## Allotments

Allotments should:

- (i) be well related to residential properties, which enables natural surveillance.
- (ii) preferably co-located with schools or community facilities.
- (iii) sit sympathetically in the landscape.
- (iv) have well-drained soil which is capable of cultivation to a reasonable standard.
- (v) have direct access by footpaths and cycleways and safe vehicular access to the car park from the adopted highway.
- (vi) provide car parking and cycle parking facilities on or adjacent to the site.

- (vii) have perimeter security fencing with one lockable combined vehicle and pedestrian gate as a minimum. Where it is not desirable, for security reasons, to completely screen the security fencing with hedging the choice of fencing and its appearance will need to be acceptable for the context.
- (viii) have a metered mains water supply with four water supply points for watering, one to be at the site store and all fitted with stop cocks and frost-proof housing.
- (ix) provides a lockable and secure site store of at least 3m x 4m with double doors and external sink with soak away or mains drainage and a mains connected, lockable toilet with hand washing facilities.
- (x) have compound turf paths edged with flat-topped pre-cast concrete kerb edging between rows of plots and adjacent to the perimeter fencing.
- (xi) have permeable surfacing of crushed stone car parking.
- (xii) have concrete slab paving through entrance gates and beneath, and in front of, site store and portable toilet.
- (xiii) have, where desirable, a manageable hedge, capable of providing a year-round screen and fitting the urban context is to be provided around the outside of the perimeter security fencing.
- (xiv) provide for disabled access.
- (xv) provide for composting facilities.
- (xvi) provide protection and enhancement for biodiversity where possible.