

## 21. Open Space, Sport and Recreation

### OS1 – Open Space

*As viability and evidence base work on the Local Plan progresses further detail will be added to this policy, including site specific information where appropriate.*

- OS1.1** The council will provide, connect and protect a high quality, multi-functional network of open spaces across Trafford.
- OS1.2** All protected parks and open spaces are identified on the Policies Map, whilst individual parks within the hierarchy below are listed in Appendix 2:
- a) Country Parks
  - b) Borough Park
  - c) Town Parks
  - d) Neighbourhood Parks
  - e) Local Parks
- OS1.3** The Council will protect, improve and connect existing open spaces such as parks, play areas and recreation grounds as defined by the typology employed in the Open Space Assessment:
- a) Parks and open spaces
  - b) Children’s play and youth space
  - c) Amenity green space
  - d) Semi Natural Greenspace
  - e) Playing fields
  - f) Other open spaces including cemeteries, memorial gardens and community gardens

#### Open space provision in new developments

- OS1.4** Proposals for major new residential development will be expected to demonstrate how they help to:
- a) Improve the quantity and quality of accessible open space in the local area,
  - b) Improve and connect the existing network of open space in with the walking, cycling and active travel network,
  - c) Address any quantitative or qualitative deficiencies revealed through the open space assessment or any related strategic study of open space provision in Trafford,
  - d) Contribute to the provision of a high quality, accessible range of children’s play and youth facilities.
- OS1.5** All new major residential developments as defined in national planning policy will be expected to make open space provision in line with the council’s open space standards, taking into account existing local provision, site constraints and the most effective means of meeting the open space needs of new residents. Where off-site local provision represents the most effective method of meeting open space needs, this will be secured via a Section 106 agreement.
- OS1.6** Residential developments of 50 or more units will be expected to make on-site open space provision, unless valid justifications are made as part of an open space assessment or site constraints exist which make on-site provision unfeasible.

**OS1.7** Trafford’s open space standards are detailed below in table 5. These standards are derived from the Fields in Trust Guidance for Open Space Provision, applied to current provision across Trafford.

**Table 5: Trafford’s open space standards**

Provision	Quantitative Standard per 1000 Population	Accessibility Standard (Distance from home)
Local Open Space	1.35ha (13,500sqm)	300m
Children’s Play and Youth Provision	0.14ha (1,400sqm)	240m
Semi Natural Greenspace	2.0ha (20,000sqm)	1200m

**OS1.8** Further information on open space provision via developer contributions is contained within the Planning Obligations Policy PO1 and through the more detailed information contained within the Planning Obligations SPD.

**OS1.9** The Council’s open space standards will be applied to strategic GMSF 2020 allocations at New Carrington and Timperley Wedge and also as part of the residential components of proposals within the identified Areas of Focus.

**Loss of open space**

**OS1.10** Development that potentially results in a quantitative loss of open space will only be permitted where one or more of the following exceptions have been met:

- a) Equivalent or better replacement open space in terms of quantity and/or quality and will be provided in a suitable, accessible location; or
- b) An up to date assessment shows the site to be surplus to community requirements for any open space use; or
- c) The proposed development is ancillary to and complements the existing or an amended open space use for the site.

**OS1.11** It is important to note that areas of public open space not allocated as protected open space on the Policies Map remain protected by the provisions of this policy and Policy GT1 Green infrastructure and will be subjected to the application of the exceptions outlined above.

**Local Green Space**

**OS1.12** National planning policy enables local communities to identify and propose the designation of Local Green Space through the Local Plan process, including the development of Neighbourhood Plans.

**OS1.13** The Council will therefore consider applications for Local Green Space designation where they meet the criteria set out in national planning policy.

**Allotments**

**OS1.14** An adequate supply of allotment provision will be maintained to meet existing and future needs. Individual sites are listed in Appendix 2 and are shown on the Policies Map.

**OS1.15** Allotment sites in Trafford will be protected from development unless they are proven to be surplus to community requirements, they cannot serve an alternative open space use or improved alternative provision is made.

**OS1.16** New allotments and communal growing space will be sought from within residential developments to meet the needs of the new residents where appropriate.

## **Cemeteries and burial spaces**

**OS1.17 Trafford's existing cemeteries and crematoria will be protected as open spaces for burial and memorial use as allocated on the Policies Map.**

**OS1.18 The Council will protect the existing cemeteries at Urmston, Sale, Altrincham, Hale and Dunham and seek to address the identified shortfall in burial space by supporting applications for burial grounds where the proposals satisfy the following criteria:**

- **Sustainable location in terms of accessibility via roads, public transport and active travel networks;**
- **Not at risk of flooding;**
- **Located outside a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.**

**OS1.19 Proposals for new burial space in the Green Belt will need to be the subject of a sequential test to demonstrate that there are no suitable alternative sites outside the Green Belt.**

**OS1.20 Opportunities to enhance the biodiversity value of cemeteries and burial spaces will be explored, for example by securing off-site biodiversity net gain and access improvements in the context of Trafford's GI network.**

## **Justification**

Providing access to a range of high quality, multi-functional, connected open spaces is important for the physical, mental and emotional well-being of Trafford's residents, as well as providing the setting for formal and informal recreation and physical activity, supporting housing and economic growth and helping to achieve inclusive neighbourhoods.

'Green and Connected' and 'Health and Wellbeing' are two of the Council's key Corporate Objectives, linked to Trafford's Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Sports and Physical Activity Strategy ('Trafford Moving') via The Trafford Partnership. Within The Council's Corporate Plan, the 'Green and Connected' strategic priority refers to maximising Trafford's green spaces and encouraging their continued use through proper maintenance and promotion of active lifestyles.

National planning policy places a strong emphasis on the importance of open space for sport and physical activity and also for the health and well-being of communities by enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of open space and recreation facilities, from which issues and opportunities can be identified.

The GMCA commissioned Natural England, supported by Ordnance Survey, to undertake a Greater Manchester Accessible Natural Greenspace Analysis. The study complements the existing greenspace audits and strategies that have been produced by the ten districts of Greater Manchester to support their own district Local Plans by considering and identifying a consistent evidence base for accessible greenspace. The study found that:

- Approximately 44% of residents in Greater Manchester live within 300 metres from an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 hectares in area.
- Approximately 79% of residents in Greater Manchester live within 2 km from an accessible natural greenspace of at least 20 hectares in area.
- Approximately 74% of residents in Greater Manchester live within 5 km from an accessible natural greenspace of at least 100 hectares in area.

- Approximately 61% of residents in Greater Manchester live within 10 kilometres from an accessible natural greenspace of at least 100ha in area.

At the local level, this policy has been informed by the Council's open space assessment, which measures public access to greenspace against the nationally recognised Natural England ANGST standard at both ward and neighbourhood level to provide a comprehensive picture of provision and issues to be addressed.

Key issues highlighted in Trafford include a limited range of open space types and accessibility in the north east of Trafford in areas where residential growth is proposed, including several allocated Areas of Focus.

Given the scale of residential growth proposed for Trafford over the plan period in the urban area within identified Areas of Focus, there will be a need to provide open space and recreational facilities to support and sustain this growth, whilst providing further opportunities to remedy deficiencies in quantity and quality of provision apparent through the open space assessment and greenspace strategy.

It is not appropriate to set quantitative standards for general amenity greenspace as this is not covered in the Fields in Trust guide for recreational open space provision, although amenity spaces are included in the open space assessment in terms of residents' access to greenspace, which uses Natural England's widely recognised Accessible Greenspace Standard.

Similarly, quantitative standards are not set for outdoor sports provision in the form of playing fields in keeping with the current Sport England approach to planning for outdoor sport. However, due to their multi-functional role, playing fields are included in the accessible greenspace evidence. Further detail is included in the outdoor sport policy.

An updated Greenspace Strategy will highlight priorities for investment in the context of the parks hierarchy, including information relating to the quality of parks and open spaces and facilities under the council's management.

### Children's Play and Youth Facilities

The three-tiered structure will be used to guide the provision of children's informal and equipped play space areas in line with Fields in Trust guidance:

- LAPs (Local Areas for Play)
- LEAPs (Local Equipped Areas for Play)
- NEAPs (Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play)

Further technical detail and costs relating to open space will be available in the Planning Obligations SPD.

### Allotments

Allotments create potential for local food production, healthy lifestyles and physical activity, whilst also forming an important part of Trafford's green infrastructure and nature network.

Trafford's provision of allotments amounts to approximately 1,500 plots across 37 sites, which equates to provision of approximately 7 plots per 1000 population. Opportunities to make provision for communal growing space will be explored outside the urban area and also as part of residential developments within the identified Areas of Focus. This ratio will be employed as a guide to potential provision.

### Cemeteries and burial space

Cemeteries and burial space including churchyards represent an important but often overlooked open space resource that provide important benefits and services in terms of access to greenspace, biodiversity and green infrastructure.

However, cemeteries and burial grounds are particularly adversely affected by flooding and as such must not be located in areas of flood risk (from any source of flooding). Applications will be refused if there is any risk of flooding to the site, regardless of the results of any sequential test or evidence based needs assessment.

Similarly, these sites have the potential to contaminate groundwater supplies and are therefore the subject of rigorous regulations from the Environment Agency to ensure that there are no adverse impacts for identified Groundwater Source Protection Zones, which are available as open source data.

National planning policy lists facilities for cemeteries as being potentially acceptable in Green Belt. However, the presumption is that this relates to existing cemeteries and that new cemeteries and burial grounds would need to demonstrate exceptional circumstances before being permitted in Green Belt, in line with the Green Belt policy of this plan.

## **OS2 – Indoor leisure**

*As viability and evidence base work on the Local Plan progresses further detail will be added to this policy, including site specific information where appropriate.*

- OS2.1 The Council will encourage the continued use of indoor sports facilities within Trafford and will support proposals which expand and enhance the range of such facilities, where they do not conflict with other Local Plan policies.**
- OS2.2 Provision of new indoor sports facilities which help to meet an identified need, as demonstrated by the Council's most up to date assessments, will be encouraged to ensure that provision is accessible across Trafford.**
- OS2.3 Support will also be given to proposals that enable community use of school facilities, particularly where they help to meet indoor sport needs of local communities as identified by the Council's most up to date assessments.**
- OS2.4 Where there is an identified need for new, or improvements to existing, indoor sports facilities, planning obligations, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or equivalent contributions may be required on residential developments of more than 10 dwellings.**
- OS2.5 Development involving the loss of indoor sports facilities, including their change of use, will only be granted permission were it can be demonstrated that:
  - a) a detailed needs assessment clearly shows that the site is no longer required to meet an identified need; or**
  - b) equivalent or better replacement facilities in terms of quantity and quality are provided to compensate for those lost, and are easily accessible for existing and potential new uses; or**
  - c) the proposal is for alternative indoor sport provision, where the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss, and it can be demonstrated that there are no reasonable alternative sites available.****

## **OS3 – Outdoor sports facilities**

*As viability and evidence base work on the Local Plan progresses further detail will be added to this policy, including site specific information where appropriate.*

- OS3.1** The Council will protect existing playing pitches and outdoor sport facilities allocated on the policies map as protected open space, parks hierarchy or priority outdoor sport, recognising that provision for outdoor sport is often made in a variety of settings, including Council managed parks, education sites and on privately owned and managed sites.
- OS3.2** The Council will support proposals which improve the quality, capacity, accessibility and management of outdoor sports facilities, particularly at sites and within areas identified as priorities as part of the most recent Playing Pitch Strategy evidence.
- OS3.3** Proposals for new outdoor sports facilities should ensure harm to character and the historic and natural environment is avoided in line with other Local Plan policies.
- OS3.4** Although Sport England consultations through the planning process are confined to those involving impacts on playing fields as defined in national planning policy and reinforced in Sport England’s planning guidance, the approach contained within this policy will be applied to all sports covered by the playing pitch strategy and protected on the policies map.

### **Outdoor sports provision in new developments**

- OS3.5** As part of residential development proposals of around 300 dwellings or a lower number of dwellings which have a proposed capacity of 600 residents or more, the council will use information provided by Sport England as part of the statutory consultation process and compare this with information contained within the most recent Playing Pitch Strategy evidence.
- OS3.6** A decision will then be reached in conjunction with developers, agents and relevant Council services and partners as to whether:
- a) existing provision is able to accommodate the additional demand
  - b) improvements are required to increase capacity at existing provision in order to meet the demand or
  - c) new provision is required
- OS3.7** In all cases, Sport England’s most up to date costs will be used to determine the level of any developer contributions, as detailed in the Planning Obligations SPD.
- OS3.8** This policy will be applied to the Council’s Areas of Focus (Policies AF1-8) in the context of the development of masterplans and planning applications in order to identify existing and potential issues of supply and demand across that area and in the relevant locality area as defined in the playing pitch strategy.

### **Loss of outdoor sports facilities**

- OS3.9** The loss of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities will only be permitted where one or more of the following criteria have been satisfied:
- a) a comprehensive assessment demonstrates that that the site is no longer required to meet current or future demand for outdoor sport
  - b) equivalent or better replacement facilities are proposed in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility

- c) the proposal is for alternative outdoor or indoor or sport or open use that meets identified need that outweighs any adverse impacts of the loss of playing pitch or outdoor sports facilities.**

### **Golf courses**

**OS3.10 Existing golf courses will be protected and enhancements encouraged to their green infrastructure functions appropriate to their setting. The sites are listed in Appendix 2 and allocated on the Policies Map.**

**OS3.11 In considering applications for new and/or expanded gold courses the Council will give consideration to the following criteria:**

- a) The impact of the development (including any buildings) on the landscape qualities of the area**
- b) The effect of the scheme on the rural character of the area, including the balance of formal and informal land uses in the locality**
- c) The effect of the proposal on the conservation of natural habitats**
- d) The effect of any proposal that would lead to the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land and**
- e) Other relevant policies in the Local Plan and National Planning guidance.**

### **Justification**

The improvement of the health, social and cultural wellbeing of communities and the need to provide sufficient community and cultural facilities to enable this represents a key focus of national planning policy.

The importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation that can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities is also emphasised in national policy.

Local Plans needs to be based upon a robust evidence base, with national policy recommending that information gained from assessments is used to guide the provision of open space, sports and recreational provision. For Trafford, this takes the form of the adopted Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report and Action Plan, reviewed annually, along with additional sport-specific evidence such as the Local Football Facilities Plan.

An updated Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) for Trafford was completed and adopted during 2017/18 in accordance with Sport England's updated guidance. The purpose of the PPS is to assess the supply and demand of playing pitches in Trafford in order to develop proposals for the improvement of the stock and quality of playing pitches. This involved assessing different areas within Trafford as well as looking at Trafford as a whole. The areas as assessed were North (Old Trafford and Stretford), West (Urmston and Partington), South (Altrincham) and Central (Sale).

Sport England's approach to planning for outdoor sport is embedded in the Council's approach, which is underpinned by a detailed understanding of existing provision, condition and capacity across the borough in order to respond effectively to development proposals that create significant potential levels of demand in terms of outdoor sports facilities.

Sport England Guidance identifies 5 stages to be followed in developing and maintaining a PPS:

- Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach (Step 1)
- Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision (Steps 2 & 3)
- Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views (Steps 4, 5 & 6)
- Stage D: Develop the strategy (Steps 7 & 8)
- Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date (Steps 9 & 10)

Headline issues identified in Trafford's 2017 Playing Pitch Strategy included:

- General spare capacity of grass football pitches, especially for adult 11 v 11 football pitches. Some of this capacity is created by clubs purposefully underusing pitches in order to maintain the quality of the pitch surface. However there is overplaying on some pitches in Trafford.
- 10% of Trafford's football pitches regarded as of "good" quality and 27% are have been classified as in "poor" condition.
- During the peak cricket season, there is a sufficient supply of match sessions with enough spare capacity to cater for future demand. However nearly 50% of available pitches are located in the south.
- Rugby league's primary demand is sufficiently met as Trafford currently only has one team, although the 35 rugby union pitches represent a shortfall of 5 pitches for the 7 clubs and 67 teams. The south has the largest proportion of rugby pitches.
- A shortfall of at least 1 sand based or water based (not 3G) artificial grass pitch with floodlighting in the central location for Hockey.
- Demand for lacrosse, Gaelic sports, tennis, crown green bowling and athletics in Trafford is currently sufficiently catered for. Tennis however does have a need for flood lighting on courts and the quality of the athletics tracks needs improving.
- A shortfall of at least 7 full size 3G artificial grass pitches that are required for community use.

The strategy is reviewed annually to reflect changes and key issues emerging over that period that have had an impact on the provision of outdoor sports facilities.

Sport England's 'Towards an Active Nation' Strategy aims to target the 28% of people who do less than 30 minutes of exercise each week, with a focus on the least active groups; typically women, the disabled and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The Strategy will help deliver against the five health, social and economic outcomes set out in the Government's Sporting Future strategy:

- Physical Wellbeing
- Mental Wellbeing
- Individual Development
- Social & Community Development
- Economic Development



In keeping with this focus and the 'GM Moving', GM's blueprint for physical activity, the council and partners have developed a Sports and Physical Activity Strategy 'Trafford Moving' which aims to get every resident in Trafford moving more, every day. Currently, 24.3 per cent of Trafford residents are inactive, which means they do 30 mins of activity or less a week.

The strategy supports the Council's Corporate Plan under the 'Health and Wellbeing' and 'Green and Connected' strategic priorities and the aim for Trafford to become a national beacon for sports, leisure and activity for all, by investing in leisure

facilities across the borough and encouraging more people to get involved in physical activity. By creating better spaces and places to be physically active and attracting key sports investment into the borough, the council aims to make Trafford a place where residents start well, live well and age well by being more active.

The Football Association's (FA) National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS) provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities and targets for football over a ten-year period, with a simple vision that "Within 10 years we aim to deliver great football facilities, wherever they are needed"

The Strategy sets out shared aims and objectives it aims to deliver on in conjunction with The Premier League, Sport England and the Government, to be delivered with support of the Football Foundation.

These stakeholders have clearly identified the aspirations for football to contribute directly to nationally important social and health priorities.

To support in delivery of the NFFS, a Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) has been produced for every local authority across England. Trafford's LFFP identifies priority sites for investment as part of a scoring matrix, the delivery of which through partnership funding will also meet some of the critical issues identified through the PPS.

Trafford is well provided for with golf courses. As well as providing opportunities for sport and promoting opportunities for healthy life style golf courses have an important function as green infrastructure, providing valuable habitats, landscape and routes for walking and cycling. Situated on the edge of the urban areas in the Green Belt they connect to the wider countryside. Improvements to golf courses that strengthen these links would be valuable in enhancing green infrastructure.

**Q20. Do you agree with the draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation policies OS1 – OS3? If not, please explain why (providing supporting evidence where appropriate).**