

## Policy DP52: Protection of open space and recreation

Development on open space will only be permitted provided:

- The open space is clearly shown through an assessment to be surplus to local requirements and will not be required for current or future needs; or
- The loss of open space is to be replaced by at least equivalent or better in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility and there will be no overall negative impact on the provision of open space; or
- The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, which meets locally identified needs and clearly outweighs the loss of the current or former use.

In the case of school playing fields development proposals will only be acceptable where the development is for education purposes or the Department for Education is satisfied that the land is no longer required for school use and its loss would not result in a shortfall in recreational open space/playing pitches for the local community as identified through an appropriate playing pitch assessment.

Development proposals affecting other green and blue spaces will only be permitted provided they do not adversely affect areas which make a worthwhile contribution to the amenity and/or the character, setting and visual attractiveness of an area.

### Justification

There is a wide range of multi-functional recreational, amenity and natural greenspaces within North Somerset. The policy reflects the importance of these open spaces and the need to protect them from development except where certain criteria apply. This approach reflects the NPPF. This policy should also be read in conjunction with Policy DP51: Protection of community facilities and Policy DP34: Green Infrastructure. This policy specifically relates to managed open spaces which act as a focus for the community, contribute to community cohesion and visual amenity and are important for recreation and the local economy. Examples of open space provision can include:

- Parks and gardens
- Children's playgrounds and hardcourts
- Recreational grounds
- Playing fields and sports pitches
- Amenity open space in residential developments, including incidental green space
- Informal provision for children and young people

Any proposals for development on all or part of open space should be accompanied by a detailed assessment of that open space. The quantity, type and primary purpose of the open space in question will determine the extent and type of assessment required. For example, open space which is primarily parks and amenity open space would have an assessment that had greater emphasis on the recreational value of the open space, whilst natural greenspace would have more detail on the ecological values. If the open space is multi-functional in terms of acting as a buffer/aesthetic value as well as being of ecological value, then an assessment



would be expected to clearly demonstrate that the loss of that open space would not be detrimental to any of the functions and purposes of that open space.

Where development is proposed on playing fields including school playing fields then regard should be had to Sport England “Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance” or any subsequent guidance in the assessment of the suitability of the site for alternative uses.

In addition to allocated/designated open space the council will seek to protect both public and private open space which has public value, including those not shown on the adopted Policies map. Non-designated open space in urban and rural areas can have additional value which can include visual, recreational and biodiversity benefits.

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