



Castle Point Borough Council

# **Draft Developer Contributions Guidance**

## **Open Spaces**

April 2026

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance sets out the Council's expectations for open space provision and financial contributions associated with new development. Its purpose is to provide clarity for developers, landowners and applicants on how open space needs are assessed, how contributions are calculated, and what standards will be applied when determining planning applications.
- 1.2 The legal basis for seeking planning obligations in connection with open space is Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Planning obligations secured under Section 106 must meet the statutory tests set out in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), which require that obligations are:
- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
  - Directly related to the development
  - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development
- 1.3 The primary policy basis for open space provision in Castle Point is Policy CF1 of the 1998 Castle Point Local Plan (saved policies). Policy CF1 establishes the principle that new residential development should contribute towards appropriate improvements to social infrastructure to serve the needs of the new development.
- 1.4 At the national level, the following National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 paragraphs are relevant:
- planning policies must be informed by robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sports and recreation facilities (103)
  - planning obligations should only be sought where they meet the statutory tests (58)
  - planning conditions must meet the six tests of necessity, relevance, precision, enforceability, reasonableness and proportionality (59)
  - development should support healthy and safe communities and provide sufficient provision of community facilities (96)
- 1.5 The Castle Point Plan was submitted for examination in January 2026 and does not yet form part of the adopted development plan. Until examined and adopted, only limited weight can be afforded to its policies. However, the submitted Castle Point Plan represents the Council's most up-to-date strategic direction, and the following emerging policies are relevant:

- Policy SP1: Supporting Enhancement of the Borough's Green Spaces
- Policy Infra4: Open Spaces — which identifies a requirement for quality improvements and additional open space over the plan period
- Policy ENV3: Securing Nature Recovery and Biodiversity Net Gain
- Policy SD3: Sustainable Drainage Systems

1.6 This guidance document ensures a consistent and transparent approach to securing open space improvements across the borough, helping applicants understand requirements at an early stage and supporting effective and timely decision making.

1.7 This guidance document should be utilised by those who intend to submit a planning application. This guidance will set out:

- The required standards for open space in new development
- The type and kind of open space required
- Determining off-site or on-site contributions
- The requirements of maintenance of open space.

1.8 This document ensures that new development provides appropriate mitigation for its impact on existing open spaces. It also helps to establish when new public open space provision will be required to support growth. The document also provides directions on landscaping and development design, promoting the delivery of well connected, high quality open spaces that are planned with long term management and maintenance considerations from the outset.

1.9 This document should be read alongside the [Developer Contributions Guide Cover Document<sup>1</sup>](#), which provides greater detail on the process to follow where the Council expects planning obligations to be sought and implemented. Contributions for open space are typically one of a range which will be secured from new residential developments, assessed on a case-by-case basis.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.castlepoint.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/cover-document-developer-contributions-guidance-spd-march-2023>

## 2. Why are open spaces important?

- 2.1 Open spaces play a vital role in Castle Point. They contribute to the Borough's character, offer residents easy access to nature, and support active, healthy lifestyles. Protecting and enhancing these spaces is essential to sustaining the quality of life that local people value.
- 2.2 Open spaces also serve a wider set of functions that contribute to the overall quality, climate resilience and sustainability of places. They provide opportunities for informal recreation, social interaction as well as community activities. Simultaneously these spaces support biodiversity, ecological networks and aid in the protection of important habitats. These spaces help manage surface water, reduce flood risk and contribute to climate resilience through natural cooling and carbon storage. Together, these roles ensure that open spaces deliver long term environmental, social and health benefits, reinforcing their importance across multiple policy areas including biodiversity, health and leisure, climate change and resilience and flood resistance.



**Image 1: View looking eastwards towards Hadleigh and Southend with Canvey golf course in the foreground**

### 3. Policy Requirements

#### **National policy and the role of open space**

- 3.1 National policy recognises the importance of open spaces, sport and recreation in supporting health, wellbeing and overall quality of life, and the delivery of such spaces in connection with new development is an established and legitimate role of the planning system.
- 3.2 This is evident through NPPF paragraphs 58,59,96 and 103.
- 3.3 Open space can be secured in a variety of ways, including on-site provision, off-site improvements and developer contributions where appropriate.
- 3.4 To ensure that all communities have access to high-quality outdoor environments, the Council will seek the provision of open space that meets the standards set out in the Castle Point Open Space Assessment (April 2024), which are derived from adopted Policy CF1 of the 1998 Local Plan. These locally evidenced standards ensure that new development contributes proportionately to the open space needs it generates.
- 3.5 The Essex Design Guide provides detailed guidance on quality and character of open spaces and applicants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with its relevant sections. However, the Essex Design Guide is only guidance and does not form adopted policy for Castle Point.
- 3.6 Regardless of the size or scale of a site, every opportunity should be taken to protect and enhance features of environmental and visual importance. This may include retaining natural vegetation, preserving groups of trees, or providing landscaped footpaths alongside watercourses. Such measures help maintain local character, support biodiversity and strengthen the wider green infrastructure network.
- 3.7 Open spaces form an essential component of high-quality development, supporting natural habitats, biodiversity, health and wellbeing. In line with national policy and the borough's evidence base, new development must ensure that open spaces contribute positively to ecological value. Proposals should incorporate habitat features and utilise landscaping approaches that enhance existing biodiversity, including the use of appropriate native species.

## The Castle Point Open Space Assessment

- 3.8 The Castle Point Open Space Assessment (April 2024)<sup>2</sup> provides the borough's up-to-date evidence base for understanding the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space. It was prepared in line with the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance and draws on the established PPG17 methodology. The Assessment includes a full audit of 311 sites, a review of local needs, and the development of locally derived open space standards. As the Assessment states, its purpose is "to provide a robust and up to date evidence base to support the Castle Point Plan and assist in the determination of planning applications".
- 3.9 The Assessment identifies clear quantitative and qualitative deficiencies across several open space typologies, alongside areas where accessibility to open space falls below the recommended standards. It concludes that developer contributions are necessary to ensure that new development mitigates its impact and supports the delivery, enhancement and long-term management of open space. The Assessment explicitly notes the need "to justify the collection of developer contributions towards open space quality and quantity management and improvements".
- 3.10 The quantity, quality and accessibility standards applied in this guidance are taken directly from the Assessment. These standards are locally derived, evidence based and achievable, reflecting the borough's settlement pattern, demographic profile and existing provision. The Assessment emphasises that "the key to developing robust local quantity standards is that they are locally derived, based on evidence and most importantly, achievable". These standards form the basis for calculating the scale of on-site provision or financial contributions required from development.
- 3.11 In accordance with NPPF paragraph 103, planning policies must be informed by "robust and up to date assessments of the need for open space". The Open Space Assessment fulfils this requirement and therefore provides the primary evidence base for determining developer contributions. This guidance applies the Assessment's findings to ensure that development supports high quality, accessible and multifunctional open spaces that contribute to health, wellbeing, biodiversity and climate resilience.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.castlepoint.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/open-space-assessment-2023>

## Castle Point Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy Update

- 3.12 The Castle Point Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy Update (2025)<sup>3</sup> (GBI Study) provides essential evidence on the environmental pressures, climate risks and functional deficiencies affecting the borough's green and blue infrastructure network. It sets out the strategic need for investment in multifunctional open spaces that deliver flood resilience, biodiversity enhancement, urban cooling and improved access to nature. The study emphasises that green infrastructure is not just “nice to have” it is essential infrastructure. This highlights the need for coordinated and long-term investment across the borough.
- 3.13 The GBI Study identifies Castle Point as one of the most climate vulnerable areas in South Essex, with “around 45% of the Borough lying within Flood Zone 3” and multiple Critical Drainage Areas in Benfleet, Hadleigh, Thundersley and Canvey Island. The study makes clear that open spaces must play an active role in managing water, stating that features such as wetlands, swales and naturalised drainage “absorb stormwater, reduce surface runoff, and store and slowly release water to prevent downstream flooding”.
- 3.14 The GBI Study highlights significant ecological fragmentation, with many Local Wildlife Sites and green corridors under pressure from urbanisation and climate change. It identifies the need for habitat creation, woodland expansion, meadow restoration and improved connectivity between key ecological assets such as West Canvey Marsh, Hadleigh Marshes, Daws Heath woodlands and Two Tree Island. The study notes that biodiversity functionality is often low in existing open spaces, with “short-mown turf, sparse planting, and a lack of natural features” limiting ecological value. Developer contributions are therefore necessary to deliver biodiversity uplift, support Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities and ensure that open spaces contribute meaningfully to nature recovery.
- 3.15 The GBI Study identifies clear inequalities in access to high-quality open space, particularly in central Canvey Island, northern South Benfleet and parts of Hadleigh. It emphasises that well-designed open spaces support physical activity, mental health and climate resilience, noting that green and blue infrastructure “provides places of shade, relief, and connection during extreme weather”. Developer contributions are required to improve the quality, accessibility and functionality of open spaces in areas where provision is currently poor or underperforming.

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<sup>3</sup> [castlepoint.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/castle-point-green-and-blue-infrastructure-strategy-update-july-2025-1-of-2-pdf](https://castlepoint.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/castle-point-green-and-blue-infrastructure-strategy-update-july-2025-1-of-2-pdf) and [castlepoint.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/castle-point-green-and-blue-infrastructure-strategy-update-july-2025-2-of-2-pdf](https://castlepoint.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/castle-point-green-and-blue-infrastructure-strategy-update-july-2025-2-of-2-pdf)

- 3.16 The study identifies several borough-wide functional gaps:
- Insufficient shade and canopy cover in urban areas, contributing to overheating.
  - Limited integration of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and naturalised drainage in parks and public spaces.
  - Poor connectivity between open spaces, limiting ecological and recreational value underperforming amenity spaces that lack biodiversity, shade, or multifunctionality.
- 3.17 These gaps reduce the ability of the open space network to act to the most optimal effect as green infrastructure. Developer contributions are therefore essential to retrofit existing spaces and ensure new development delivers multifunctional, climate-ready open space.
- 3.18 The GBI Study provides a clear and compelling evidence base for requiring developer contributions towards open space. It demonstrates that Castle Point faces acute climate risks, ecological fragmentation and functional deficiencies that cannot be addressed without targeted investment. Contributions secured through this guidance will ensure that development mitigates its impacts and supports the creation, enhancement and long-term management of a resilient, multifunctional open space network across the borough.

### **Summary of Evidence Outcomes**

- 3.19 As is evident by both the Open Space Assessment and the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, open spaces form an essential component of high quality development. In line with national policy and the Council's evidence base, new development must ensure that open spaces contribute positively to ecological value.
- 3.20 The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy Update (2025) and the Castle Point Open Space Assessment (2024) both highlight the need for multifunctional open spaces that deliver environmental, recreational and climate resilience benefits.
- 3.21 Open spaces also provide significant opportunities to enhance ecological networks and improve the borough's environmental resilience. Measures such as native planting, habitat areas, wildflower meadows and structurally diverse landscaping can increase ecological value while improving visual quality and recreational appeal. These interventions support Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities and help address the ecological fragmentation identified in the GBI Study.

- 3.22 As set out above, the Council places particular emphasis on improving the accessibility of open space and the quality of ancillary facilities. Where relevant, proposals and contributions should seek to include:
- Improved and accessible public toilets
  - Upgraded footpaths suitable for pushchairs and mobility vehicles
  - Lighting improvements (including solar options) to enhance public safety
  - Measures that support the Essex standard for “Planning for Women and Girls” principles.
- 3.23 These improvements must be proportionate to the scale of the development and directly related to the impacts of that development, in accordance with the statutory tests set out in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended).

### **The Emerging Castle Point Plan**

- 3.24 The Castle Point Plan was submitted for examination in 2026 and therefore does not yet form part of the adopted development plan. Until examination and adoption, only limited weight can be afforded to its policies. However, the submitted Plan represents the Council’s most up-to-date strategic direction on green infrastructure, open space, biodiversity, climate resilience and sustainable development.
- 3.25 Although not examined at the time of producing this guidance, the submitted Plan sets out the framework for enhancing open space and green infrastructure across the borough. Policies such as SP1 (Enhancing Green Spaces), ENV3 (Biodiversity Net Gain), SD3 (Sustainable Drainage Systems) and Infra4 (Open Space) articulate the expectation that development should contribute to high-quality, multifunctional and climate-resilient environments.
- 3.26 The Castle Point Plan identifies a requirement for quality improvements and additional open space over the plan period (Policy Infra4), reflecting the scale of provision needed to meet future needs and support sustainable growth.

### **Loss of Existing Open Space**

- 3.27 Policy RE3 of the 1998 Castle Point Local Plan (saved policy) requires the protection of open space and recreational land from development. Where a planning application proposes the redevelopment of open space for an alternative use, an Open Space Assessment will be required to establish the level of existing provision in the surrounding area. Material considerations may in some cases justify granting permission, but the Council will require appropriate compensation to ensure community benefit is maintained. Compensation may take the form of on-site retention and enhancement, off-site replacement, or a financial contribution calculated in accordance with Chapter 5 of this guidance.
- 3.28 When a planning application proposes the redevelopment of open space for an alternative use, an Open Space Assessment will be required to establish the level of existing provision in the surrounding area, this also aligns with NPPF paragraph 104. In some cases, material considerations may justify granting permission for development on open space. Where this occurs, the Council will seek appropriate compensation to ensure that the resulting community benefit outweighs the loss of the open space.
- 3.29 These requirements are also set out in Policy Infra 4 of the emerging Castle Point Plan.

#### 4. When will new open space be required?

- 4.1 Policy CF1 of the Adopted 1998 Castle Point Local Plan requires that new residential development contributes towards appropriate improvements to social infrastructure to serve the needs generated by new development. Open space is an established form of social infrastructure, and this chapter sets out the circumstances in which on-site provision will be required.
- 4.2 The Castle Point Open Space Assessment (2024) provides the evidence base for determining what types of open space are needed, in what quantities, and at what scale of development provision becomes necessary. The benchmark thresholds set out in this chapter are derived from that Assessment. The emerging Policy Infra4 of the Castle Point Plan (submitted January 2026) identifies a requirement for quality improvements and additional open space over the plan period, which provides further strategic context for these requirements.
- 4.3 Furthermore, policy RE3 of the 1998 Castle Point Local Plan requires the protection of open space and recreational land from development. Where a planning application proposes the redevelopment of open space for an alternative use, an Open Space Assessment will be required to establish the level of existing provision in the surrounding area. Material considerations may in some cases justify granting permission, but the Council will require appropriate compensation to ensure community benefit is maintained. Compensation may take the form of on-site retention and enhancement, off-site replacement, or a financial contribution calculated in accordance with Chapter 5 of this guidance
- 4.4 The benchmark scale of development which is normally expected to provide equipped or designated open spaces on-site is below:

**Table 4.1 – on site contribution requirements**

Type of Provision	10-19 Dwellings	20-49 Dwellings	50-199 Dwellings	200+ Dwellings
Allotments and Informal Growing Spaces	×	✓	✓	✓
Amenity Green Space	×	✓	✓	✓
Parks and Recreation Grounds	×	×	×	✓
Play Space (Children)	×	×	✓	✓
Play Space (Youth)	×	×	×	✓
Accessible Natural Green Space	×	✓	✓	✓

- 4.5 Where a development is expected to provide open space on-site in accordance with the benchmarks above, but site characteristics, layout constraints or the nature of the scheme mean that only part of the required provision can reasonably be delivered, the Council may seek a combination of on-site provision and off-site financial contributions. In such cases, on-site provision should prioritise the typologies most directly required to serve the development, with financial contributions used to address any remaining quantitative, accessibility or quality deficits in nearby open spaces. This ensures that the full open space needs arising from the development are met, even where complete on-site delivery is not feasible.
- 4.6 The Castle Point Open Space Assessment (2024) contains specific advice regarding open space provision in relation to specialist accommodation for older people, recognising that such residents have different access needs and usage patterns compared to occupants of general market housing.
- 4.7 For the purposes of this guidance, specialist older person accommodation including sheltered housing, extra care housing and care homes will be assessed on the following basis:
- The occupancy assumption applied to general market housing will not be used for specialist older person accommodation
  - The Council will instead apply an occupancy figure consistent with the Open Space Assessment’s evidence on the likely residential profile of such schemes (1 for 1 ratio e.g. 1 bed:1 person, 2 bed: 2 person)
  - Provision requirements will need to reflect the accessible and inclusive open space needs of older residents, with particular emphasis on

quieter amenity spaces, sensory gardens and accessible seating areas in close proximity to the development. Contributions for children's playgrounds and youth facilities will not be required for these schemes.

- The Council will have regard to any on-site communal outdoor space provided as part of the scheme when calculating the contribution required.

4.8 Applicants proposing specialist older person accommodation are strongly encouraged to engage with the Council at pre-application stage to discuss the most appropriate approach to open space provision for their specific scheme.

## 5. Off-site Financial Contributions

- 5.1. Where it is shown that there are identified quantitative or qualitative deficits in existing provision, any additional demand from new residential development will otherwise worsen deficiencies unless suitably mitigated through additional provision. In such cases, mitigation is required to avoid unacceptable planning harm and an obligation will be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. In some instances, the size, layout or constraints of a site will mean that policy compliant open space cannot be delivered on site, or that on-site provision would not achieve the required quality, usability or function. In these circumstances, off-site provision may be the most appropriate means of mitigation. This is consistent with national planning practice, which allows planning obligations to be secured for off-site compensatory measures that directly address the effects of a development.
- 5.2. All financial contributions sought under this guidance will be subject to the statutory tests in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), as set out in Chapter 1 of this guidance. In summary, obligations must be necessary, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.
- 5.3. For major brownfield developments where genuine site constraints limit the capacity to provide meaningful on-site open space, the Council will apply a flat rate open space contribution per dwelling, separate from the typology-based tariff in Table 5.1. The qualifying criteria for this brownfield tariff are set out below.
- 5.4. Contributions secured under this tariff will be directed towards enhancing the quality, capacity, accessibility and long-term management of existing open spaces within close proximity to the settlement to which the development is located.
- 5.5. To qualify for the brownfield tariff, a development must meet all of the following criteria:
- The site must be previously developed land as defined in the NPPF
  - The application must qualify as a major application
  - The site must be located within an area with high or very high connectivity to public transport to support higher-density development,

as evidence by the [Essex Parking Guidance Connectivity Assessment](#)<sup>4</sup> and the Castle Point Plan Viability Study (July 2025)<sup>5</sup>.

- 5.6. Some developments, as set out in Chapter 4, may be required to provide the necessary open space on site, with the remainder addressed through off-site financial contributions. Where this occurs, the Council will apply the typology based tariff to the shortfall. For qualifying major brownfield developments in premium sustainability areas, the flat rate brownfield tariff will apply instead of the typology based tariff.
- 5.7. This approach ensures that all developments contribute proportionately to the open space needs they generate, whether through on-site provision, off-site investment, or a combination of both, and that improvements are targeted to locations where they will most effectively mitigate the impacts of new development.
- 5.8. The financial contribution rates have been determined having regard to the quantity, quality and accessibility of existing open space, the costs of providing, enhancing and maintaining open space within the borough, and the characteristics of the population likely to arise from new development. In setting these rates, the Council has taken into account relevant national and sector guidance, including the NPPF, the Essex Design Guide, national open space and play space benchmarks such as those published by Fields in Trust, and cost and lifecycle guidance produced by organisations such as Sport England and the Landscape Institute. A separate flat rate tariff has been established for major brownfield sites in premium sustainability areas, reflecting their distinct characteristics and the Council's approach to securing high quality off-site open space outcomes in these locations.
- 5.9. The Council has had regard to demographic information from the Office for National Statistics, including Census 2021 data on household size and composition, to understand the likely population generated by different dwelling sizes. The numerical assumptions used to calculate the contribution rates, including assumed household occupancy, open space quantity benchmarks and cost estimates, are set out in Appendix A. The contribution for a development is calculated by applying a fixed tariff per dwelling, differentiated by dwelling size and by open space typology. For each dwelling size, a per dwelling rate has been identified for allotments, amenity

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<https://essexhighways.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/basic/index.html?appid=e091ea6890294613b115121dc25ec3e3>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.castlepoint.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/viability-study-report-july-2025-pdf>

and natural green space, parks and recreation grounds (including playing pitches), play space for children and play space for young people.

- 5.10. The total contribution for a scheme is calculated by applying the relevant per-dwelling rate for each open space typology to the number of dwellings of each size and then adding the totals together. This ensures that larger dwellings, which are likely to accommodate more people, make a proportionately higher contribution towards open space provision. The tariff is set out in table 5.1 below. The formula used to calculate this tariff can be found in Appendix A. A worked example for a 30 dwelling scheme is provided in Appendix B. The typology based tariff applies only to developments required to provide on-site open space under Chapter 4.
- 5.11. The open space contribution costs set out in this document were originally derived from a 2024 evidence base. In order to ensure that the costs remain reflective of current construction market conditions, they have been updated to 2026 values through the application of the RICS Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Index, prepared and published by the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS). The 2026 index figure of 400 has been applied against the 2024 base index figure of 381, producing an uplift multiplier of 1.0499 (an increase of approximately 4.99%). All costs presented in this document reflect this adjustment.
- 5.12. The costs contained within this document are indicative and reflect values as at 1 April 2026. They are based on the RICS CIL Index applicable for the 2026 calendar year (1 January to 31 December 2026 inclusive), in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations. These figures should be treated as a guide only and may be subject to change. Applicants and developers are advised to confirm the prevailing contribution rates with the Council prior to submission of any planning application, as costs may be reviewed and updated in line with subsequent index publications.

**Table 5.1 – off site financial contributions**

<b>Dwelling Size</b>	<b>Allotments</b>	<b>Amenity / Natural</b>	<b>Parks &amp; Recreation Grounds</b>	<b>Play Space (Children)</b>	<b>Play Space (Youth)</b>
1 bedroom / studio (1.3 persons)	£95.35	£286.62	£1,749.53	£143.23	£156.02
2 bedroom (2.0 persons)	£143.63	£440.96	£2,691.59	£220.35	£240.03
3 bedroom (2.5 persons)	£179.53	£551.20	£3,364.48	£275.44	£300.04
4+ bedroom (3.5 persons)	£251.35	£771.68	£4,710.28	£385.62	£420.05
<b>Older Persons Accommodation</b>	<b>Allotments</b>	<b>Amenity / Natural Green Space</b>	<b>Parks and Recreation Grounds</b>		
1 Bed (1 person)	£71.81	£220.48	£1,345.79		
2 Bed (2 persons)	£143.63	£440.96	£2,691.59		

- 5.13. For flatted brownfield developments, where onsite provision is not possible, the Council will apply a flat-rate open space contribution per dwelling, separate from the typology-based tariff in Table 5.1. The Council recognise the additional costs associated with brownfield redevelopment and will therefore charge a flat rate for all flats on urban brownfield sites of £2,430.75 per dwelling, the equivalent of the one bedroom/studio rate.
- 5.14. Contributions secured in lieu of on-site provision will be used to deliver new open space, enhance the quality, capacity or accessibility of existing open spaces, or support their long-term management and maintenance, having regard to identified needs and priorities in the Council’s Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and Open Space Assessment. The Section 106 agreement may identify funding to be used within close proximity to the settlement to which the development is located, however if a named project becomes fully funded from alternative sources, the Council may reallocate the contribution to another eligible open space project within the same ward or area, provided it meets the statutory tests.

## 6. Management, Adoption and Long-Term Stewardship

- 6.1. To ensure that open spaces remain high quality, safe, and functional throughout the lifetime of the development, applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with the Council's Environment Team at the earliest possible stage. Early engagement enables the Council to review emerging layout and design proposals, identify long term maintenance requirements, discuss potential commuted sums, and ensure that appropriate management arrangements are secured.
- 6.2. Applicants will be expected to set out the proposed long-term ownership and management model. Acceptable approaches include adoption by the Council (subject to agreement and the securing of appropriate commuted sums), management by a private management company, transfer to a community trust or similar body, or retention by the developer provided the space is supported by a secured management and maintenance plan.
- 6.3. Where open space is to be managed privately, whether by a management company, community trust, by the developer or others; the Council will require as a minimum:
- A Landscape and Open Space Management Plan approved by the Council prior to first occupation
  - An annual reporting requirement or the right for the Council to undertake an inspection, to confirm the upkeep of maintenance
  - A commuted sum is secured to cover ongoing maintenance, inspections, and cyclical rejuvenation.
- 6.4. The Council does not operate a fixed standard for determining the best model for long term ownership therefore early engagement is essential to determine the most appropriate approach for each site.
- 6.5. The Council may, at its discretion, adopt open spaces where:
- The space meets required quality and accessibility standards
  - Long term maintenance liabilities are fully understood.
  - A commuted sum is secured to cover ongoing maintenance, inspections, and cyclical rejuvenation.
- 6.6. Contributions will be assessed on a case by case basis, reflecting:
- The scale and nature of the open space

- The anticipated maintenance and inspection requirements
  - The need for cyclical replacement and repairs
  - The locality of the development
- 6.7 Any commuted sum will be secured only where it meets the statutory tests for planning obligations as set out in paragraph 58 of the NPPF.
- 6.8 A Landscape and Open Space Management Plan will be expected for:
- All new open spaces created as part of major development.
  - Any open space being reconfigured, enhanced, or replaced.
  - Any open space where biodiversity, flood storage, or recreational functions must be safeguarded.
- 6.9 The plan should include:
- Maintenance schedules and responsibilities.
  - Biodiversity management prescriptions.
  - Inspection regimes for play equipment and infrastructure.
  - Arrangements for litter, safety, and vandalism management.
  - Funding mechanisms for ongoing maintenance.
- 6.10 Management arrangements must be secured through:
- Planning conditions, and/or
  - Section 106 obligations (e.g., commuted sums, management company obligations, public access agreements).
- 6.11 Stewardship arrangements must be agreed prior to first occupation to ensure that maintenance responsibilities and funding mechanism are in place from the outset.

## 7. What to do when submitting a planning application

- 7.1 In pre-application discussions involving new housing developments, the Council will advise developers of the relevant policy requirements as early as possible. This is to ensure that any costs relating to the provision of open space are highlighted prior to, or during, the developers own initial site evaluation exercises while they work up the details of their proposal.
- 7.2 Where applications for any form of planning permission are received, the Council will seek to enter into a Planning Obligation and/or impose a planning condition to address open space requirements if relevant or applicable to the scheme.

### **Validation Requirements and Submission Checklist**

- 7.3 To ensure timely and robust decision making, it would be beneficial for applications that affect open space to be accompanied by the following information, proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal:
- **Open Space Assessment** - Required where any loss, reconfiguration, or change of use of open space is proposed. Must address quantity, quality, access, and value.
  - **Open Space Quantity and Accessibility Calculations** - Demonstrating compliance with the Open Space Needs Assessment standards and identifying any deficits created or addressed by the proposal.
  - **Replacement Provision Strategy** - Where loss is proposed, evidence that replacement is equivalent or better in quantity, quality, and accessibility
  - **Management and Maintenance Plan** - Required for all new or reconfigured open spaces
  - **Phasing Plan** - For large schemes where open space delivery is staged.

8. Where will the contributions be held?

- 8.1 Where financial contributions are received, legal agreements will specify the site(s) and the sum(s) involved.
- 8.2 Funds will be held in a ringfenced Section 106 account, which is subject to audit. Funds will be used solely for the provision, maintenance, or improvement of public open space as set out in a planning obligation or condition.

## Appendix A: Tariff Formula

- A.1. This appendix sets out the formula used to calculate per dwelling financial contributions towards open space provision. It explains how the Council's quantity standards, cost assumptions and occupancy assumptions are combined to produce the tariff rates set out in the main guidance.
- A.2. The Council's open space quantity standards are expressed in square metres per person (m<sup>2</sup>/person). These standards are derived from the Council's Open Space Assessment and represent the amount of each typology required to meet the needs of each additional resident generated by new development.
- A.3. The quantity standards used for tariff calculation are as follows:
- Allotments: 2 m<sup>2</sup>/person
  - Amenity Green Space: 6 m<sup>2</sup>/person
  - Accessible Natural Green Space: 18 m<sup>2</sup>/person
  - Parks and Recreation Grounds: 11 m<sup>2</sup>/person
  - Play Space (Children): 0.7 m<sup>2</sup>/person
  - Play Space (Youth): 0.7 m<sup>2</sup>/person
- A.4. For tariff purposes, Amenity Green Space and Accessible Natural Green Space are combined into a single "Amenity / Natural Green Space" category.
- A.5. The Council applies the following cost assumptions to each typology:
- Allotments: £34.20/m<sup>2</sup>
  - Amenity Green Space: £16.40/m<sup>2</sup>
  - Accessible Natural Green Space: £6.20/m<sup>2</sup>
  - Parks and Recreation Grounds: £116.53/m<sup>2</sup>
  - Play Space (Children): £149.91/m<sup>2</sup>
  - Play Space (Youth): £163.30/m<sup>2</sup>
- A.6. Applying the quantity standards and cost assumptions results in the following per person costs:
- Allotments: £68.40
  - Amenity Green Space: £98.40
  - Accessible Natural Green Space: £111.60
  - Amenity / Natural combined: £210.00
  - Parks and Recreation Grounds: £1,281.83

- Play Space (Children): £104.94
- Play Space (Youth): £114.31

A.7. To convert per person costs into per dwelling contributions, the Council applies bedroom based occupancy assumptions, which reflect local household size evidence and produce an overall average household size of approximately 2.4 persons per dwelling. The assumptions are:

- 1 bedroom / studio: 1.3 persons
- 2 bedroom: 2.0 persons
- 3 bedroom: 2.5 persons
- 4+ bedroom: 3.5 persons

A.8. In regards to accommodation for Older Persons the following assumptions apply:

- 1 bedroom / studio: 1 person
- 2 bedroom: 2.0 persons

A.9. The financial contribution for each dwelling is calculated using the following formula: Contribution per dwelling = Occupancy × Cost per person

A.10. These costs were originally derived from a 2024 evidence base. In order to ensure that the costs remain reflective of current construction market conditions, they have been updated to 2026 values through the application of the RICS Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Index, prepared and published by the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS). The 2026 index figure of 400 has been applied against the 2024 base index figure of 381, producing an uplift multiplier of 1.0499 (an increase of approximately 4.99%).

A.11. Applying the formula alongside the RICS Community Infrastructure Levy produces the per dwelling tariff schedule at Table A1.1.

A.12. The values from the tariff schedule below are used throughout the guidance and are applied to individual developments in accordance with the thresholds and requirements set out in Chapter 4.

**Table A.1 – Dwelling Tariff Schedule**

<b>Dwelling Size</b>	<b>Allotments</b>	<b>Amenity / Natural</b>	<b>Parks &amp; Recreation Grounds</b>	<b>Play Space (Children)</b>	<b>Play Space (Youth)</b>
1 bedroom / studio (1.3 persons)	£95.35	£286.62	£1,749.53	£143.23	£156.02
2 bedroom (2.0 persons)	£143.63	£440.96	£2,691.59	£220.35	£240.03
3 bedroom (2.5 persons)	£179.53	£551.20	£3,364.48	£275.44	£300.04
4+ bedroom (3.5 persons)	£251.35	£771.68	£4,710.28	£385.62	£420.05
<b>Older Persons Accommodation</b>	<b>Allotments</b>	<b>Amenity / Natural Green Space</b>	<b>Parks and Recreation Grounds</b>		
1 Bed (1 person)	£71.81	£220.48	£1,345.79		
2 Bed (2 persons)	£143.63	£440.96	£2,691.59		

## Appendix B: Tariff Example

- B.1 The following example illustrates how the tariff based approach is applied to a residential development. It shows how the dwelling mix determines which types of open space provision are required for a scheme of this scale, and how the corresponding off site financial contributions are calculated using the per dwelling tariffs set out in the main guidance.
- B.2 A residential development comprising 30 dwellings on a greenfield site is used to illustrate how the tariff based approach is applied. The scheme includes:
- 10 one bedroom units
  - 10 two bedroom units
  - 5 three bedroom units
  - 5 four bedroom units
- B.3 In accordance with the thresholds set out in Chapter 4 of the guidance, a development of 20–49 dwellings is required to provide on-site contributions towards:
- Allotments and Informal Growing Spaces
  - Amenity Green Space
  - Accessible Natural Green Space
- B.4 Due to the scale of development, on site contributions towards Parks and Recreation Grounds, Play Space (Children) and Play Space (Youth) are not required, however an off-site financial contribution would be required. .
- B.5 The development is unable to make a full on site provision for all amenity and accessible natural green space, and is unable to make any provision for allotments.
- B.6 As the tariff schedule combines Amenity Green Space and Accessible Natural Green Space into a single “Amenity / Natural Green Space” category, a single contribution is calculated to meet both requirements. The tables provided below show the breakdown in the tariff across the unit sizes.

Table B.1 - Allotments

Dwelling Size	Quantity	Allotments Tariff	Allotments Subtotal
1 Bed	10	£95.35	£953.50
2 Bed	10	£143.63	£1,436.30
3 Bed	5	£179.53	£897.65
4+ Bed	5	£251.35	£1,256.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	-	<b>£4,544.20</b>

Table B.2 – Amenity/Natural Green Space

Dwelling Size	Quantity	Amenity / Natural Green Space Tariff	Amenity / Natural Green Space Subtotal
1 Bed	5	£286.62	£1,433.10
2 Bed	5	£440.96	£2,204.80
3 Bed	2	£551.20	£1,102.40
4+ Bed	3	£771.68	£2,315.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	-	<b>£7,055.34</b>

Table B.3 – Park & Recreation Grounds

Dwelling Size	Quantity	Parks & Recreation Grounds	Parks & Recreation Grounds subtotal
1 Bed	10	£1,749.53	£17,495.30
2 Bed	10	£2,691.59	£26,915.90
3 Bed	5	£3,364.48	£16,822.40
4+ Bed	5	£4,710.28	£23,551.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	-	<b>£84,785</b>

Table B.4 – Play Space (Children)

Dwelling Size	Quantity	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Children) subtotal
1 Bed	10	£143.23	£1,432.30
2 Bed	10	£220.35	£2,203.50
3 Bed	5	£275.44	£1,377.20
4+ Bed	5	£385.62	£1,928.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	-	<b>£6,941.10</b>

**Table B.5 – Play Space (Youth)**

<b>Dwelling Size</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Play Space (Youth)</b>	<b>Play Space (Youth) subtotal</b>
1 Bed	10	£156.02	£1,560.20
2 Bed	10	£240.03	£2,400.30
3 Bed	5	£300.04	£1,500.20
4+ Bed	5	£420.05	£2,100.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£7,560.95</b>

B.7 In this example, a total off site financial contribution of **£110,886.59** is required.