

**SC12 URBAN OPEN SPACE**

The Council will protect all urban open space, including parks, playing fields and other areas of urban greenspace, which is considered to have landscape, amenity, recreational or ecological value, with particular reference to the areas identified on the Proposals Map. Development involving the loss of urban open space will only be permitted where:

- (1) There is no adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area, particularly through the loss of amenity space planned as an integral part of a development;
- (2) In the case of recreational open space, it can be clearly demonstrated from the Council's open space audit, or a site-specific local audit of provision in the interim, that the area is surplus to recreational requirements, and that its release for development will be compensated for by qualitative improvements to other open space or recreational facilities;
- (3) The area is not of significant ecological value, having regard to Policies EQ24 and EQ25; and
- (4) Connectivity within the overall open space network is not threatened and public access routes in or adjacent to the open space will be safeguarded.

4.31 New developments must contribute meaningfully to the provision of open space and play facilities in the local area, according to the principles contained in Policy SC13. The Council's overall adopted standard for open space provision is 2.8 hectares per 1000 population, as established in the Structure Plan, which equates to 62.4 sq.m. per dwelling (based on Falkirk Council's average household size of 2.23 people per household). Until such time as the open space audit and strategy have been completed, it is considered appropriate to adopt the new National Minimum Standard for open space of 60 sq.m. per dwelling. Traditionally, the requirement has been met through on-site provision, and this will continue to be the case with most larger developments. However, in certain circumstances, financial contributions to off-site provision or upgrading may be a more appropriate alternative. The Council intends to prepare Supplementary Planning Guidance to detail the circumstances where financial contributions towards the upgrading of off-site provision will be deemed appropriate. The SPG will also provide additional guidance on design, management and maintenance.

**SC13 OPEN SPACE AND PLAY PROVISION IN NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

New development will be required to contribute to open space and play provision. Provision should be informed by the Council's open space audit and strategy and the SPG Note on 'Open Space and New Development', once available, or a site-specific local audit of provision in the interim, and should accord with the following principles:

- (1) Open space and facilities for play and outdoor sport should be provided in broad accordance with the guidance in Table 4.2. These requirements may be increased where the extent and quality of facilities in the area are proven by the open space audit to be below a suitable standard. Above ground SUDS features, small incidental amenity areas, structure planting and road verges will not count towards requirements.
- (2) Financial contributions to off-site provision, upgrading, and maintenance, as a full or partial alternative to direct on-site provision, will be sought where
  - existing open space or play facilities are located nearby and are able to serve the development through suitable upgrading;
  - in residential developments, the size of the development falls below the threshold of 10 houses indicated in Table 4.2, or where it is otherwise not practical, reasonable or desirable to provide facilities on site; or
  - as part of a co-ordinated approach, a centralised facility is the optimum solution to serving a number of different developments in an area;
 The required financial contribution per house will be set out in the SPG Note on 'Open Space and New Development'.
- (3) The location and design of open space should be such that it:
  - forms an integral part of the development layout, contributing to its character and identity;
  - is accessible and otherwise fit for its designated purpose;
  - links into the wider network of open space and pedestrian/cycle routes in the area;
  - sensitively incorporates existing biodiversity and natural features within the site;
  - promotes biodiversity through appropriate landscape design and maintenance regimes; and
  - enjoys good natural surveillance;
- (4) Developers must demonstrate to the Council that arrangements are in place for the management and maintenance of open space, including any trees, paths, walls, structures, and play areas which form part of it.