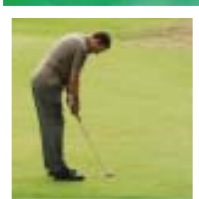




SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE
Development Department

PLANNING

PLANNING AND OPEN SPACE



PAN65

Planning series:

() provide statements of Scottish Executive policy on nationally important land use and other planning matters, supported where appropriate by a locational framework.

, which also provide statements of Scottish Executive policy, contain guidance on policy implementation through legislative or procedural change.

() provide advice on good practice and other relevant information.

Statements of Scottish Executive policy contained in SPPs and Circulars may be material considerations to be taken into account in development plan preparation and development control.

Existing National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPGs) have continued relevance to decision making, until such time as they are replaced by a SPP. The term SPP should be interpreted as including NPPGs.

Statements of Scottish Executive location-specific planning policy, for example the West Edinburgh Planning Framework, have the same status in decision making as SPPs.

Enclosure 31

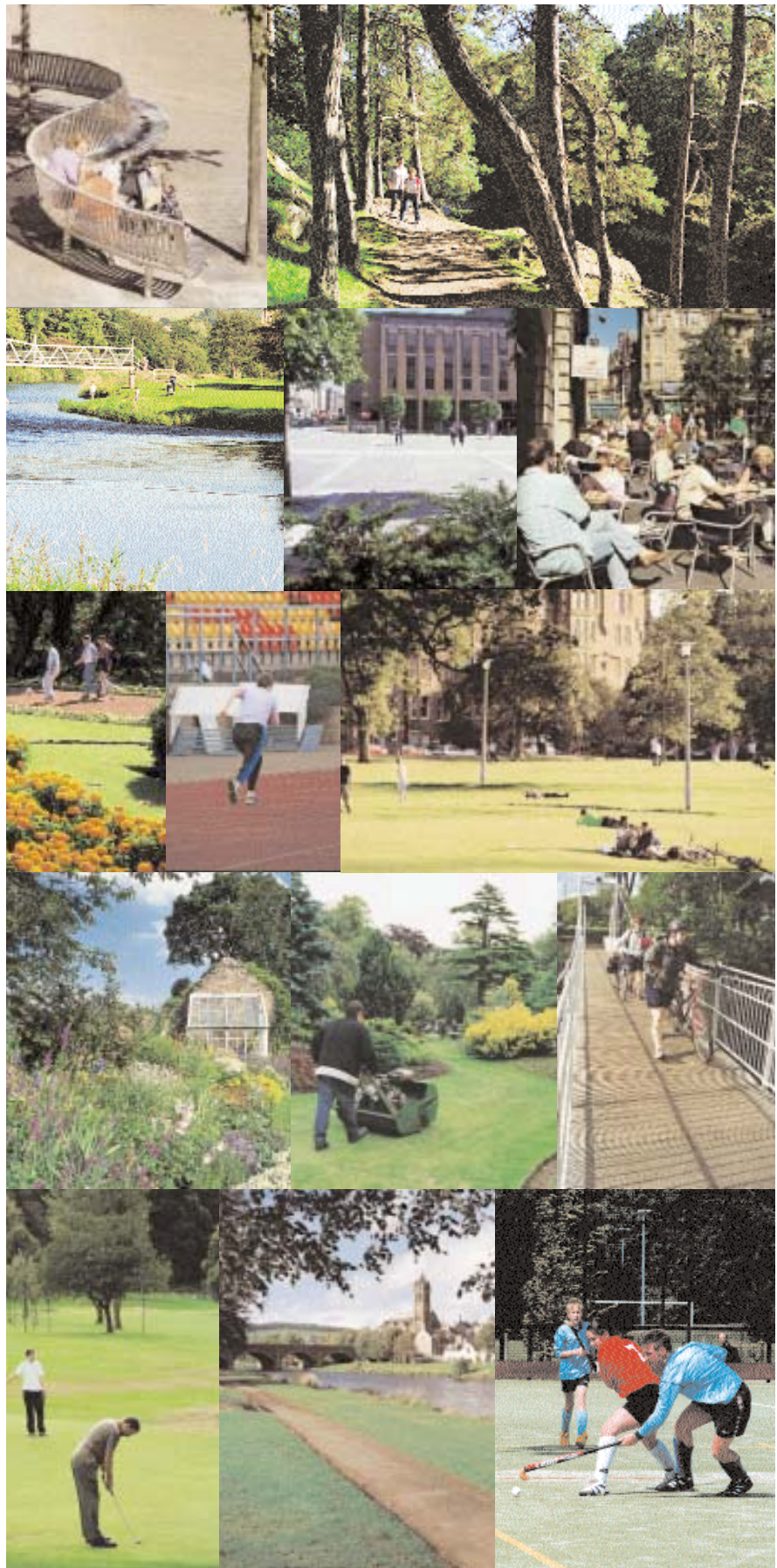


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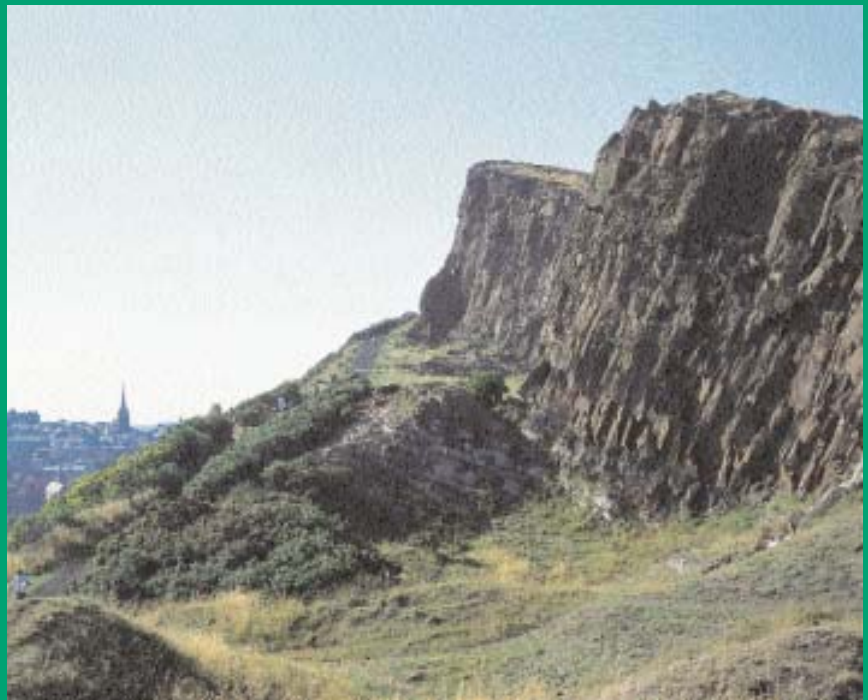
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Scotland's open space: an invaluable asset

1. Open spaces are important for our quality of life. They provide the setting for a wide range of social interactions and pursuits that support personal and community well-being. They allow individuals to interact with the natural environment and provide habitats for wildlife. They can also be important in defining the character and identity of settlements. New areas of open space of enduring quality and value have, however, been the exception rather than the rule and existing spaces are under pressure not just from physical development but also from poor management and maintenance.



2. The Scottish Executive, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the Scottish Greenbelt Company, the Scottish Greenbelt Foundation, Scotland and the Scottish Wildlife Trust jointly funded research into open space. The objective was to demonstrate how local authorities and others can prepare strategies for maintaining and enhancing open space provision and provide examples of good practice in the creation of quality open spaces and green networks in our towns and cities. The research was carried out by Kit Campbell Associates and published, as *Rethinking Open Space*, in March 2001.

3. This Planning Advice Note (PAN) draws upon this research and gives advice on the role of the planning system in protecting and enhancing existing open spaces and providing high quality new spaces. It supports National Planning Policy Guideline (NPPG) 11: Sport, Physical Recreation and Open Space. The PAN also sets out how local authorities can prepare open space strategies and gives examples of good practice in providing, managing and maintaining open spaces. The advice relates to open space in settlements: villages, towns and major urban areas. A key aim of the PAN is to raise the profile of open space as a planning issue.



The planning system and open space

4. The planning system performs two key functions in relation to open space:

- protecting areas that are valuable and valued; and
- ensuring provision of appropriate quality in, or within easy reach of, new development.



Policy framework

5. NPPG 11 sets out how the Scottish Ministers expect open space issues to be considered by local authorities. It recommends that councils carry out an analysis of the spaces in their area and the different needs they serve, and develop local standards for open space. It stresses that disposal of land should only be considered on the basis of an analysis of open space provision and need. In addition, Scotland's *Planning Policy for the Protection of Playing Fields* sets out the factors it will take into account in assessing proposals.



6. *Designing Places: A Policy Statement for Scotland* sets out Scottish Executive aspirations for higher design standards and re-emphasises that design is a material consideration in determining planning applications. The policy statement will be followed by advice, for example, on the design and layout of housing developments, which will also be relevant to open space.

7. The future growth of settlements and the need to find sustainable locations for housing and economic development will have implications for open space. *NPPG 17: Transport and Planning* supports higher densities in locations that are most accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. This should not lead to a loss of amenity and will place greater emphasis on the need for a well-distributed, well-connected and accessible supply of quality open space.



BOX 1: Related policy and advice

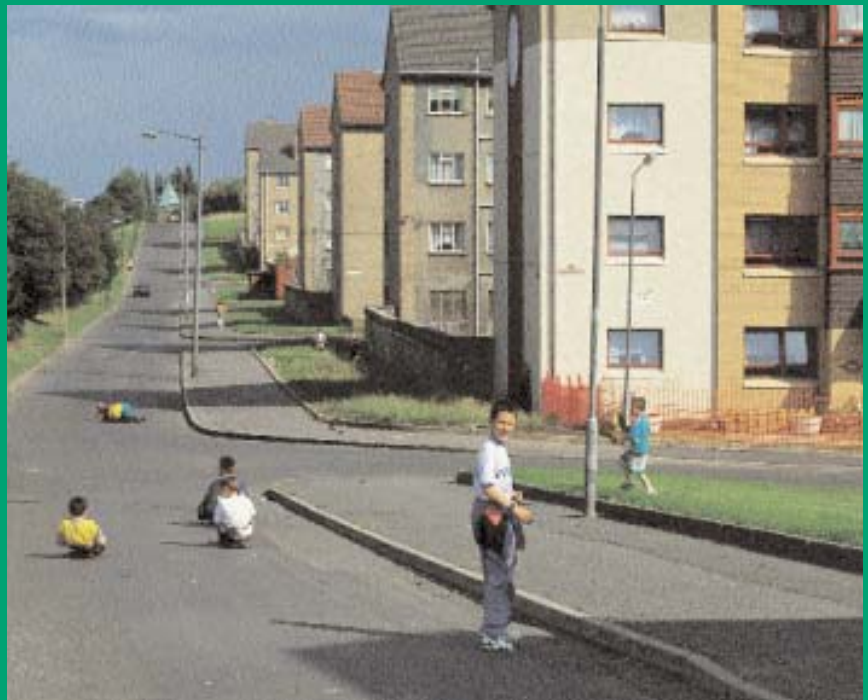
Open space is fundamental to a range of other planning policies. *SPP2: Economic Development* and *NPPG 3: Land for Housing* emphasise the importance of open space in commercial and residential developments. *NPPG 14: Natural Heritage* recognises that the accessible and familiar natural heritage of our urban open spaces makes a valuable contribution to local identity and quality of life. *PAN 60: Planning for Natural Heritage* promotes the concept of the green network, which can contribute to wider landscape, biodiversity and urban design objectives. *PAN 61: Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems* (SUDS) identifies the important role of SUDS.

Both *NPPG 17* and *PAN 57: Transport and Planning* support the development of networks of paths, trails and green spaces that encourage walking, cycling and riding and link urban areas with the surrounding countryside and jobs to homes. *PAN 59: Improving Town Centres* illustrates that the overall quality and viability of town and city centres depends, very largely on the design, management and maintenance of public spaces in order to fulfil their role as an important social and visual focus.

NPPG 18: Planning and the Historic Environment acknowledges the important relationship between buildings, cultural features and the natural environment in historic areas. It emphasises that the spaces between buildings, the settings of historic buildings and areas, urban parks, trees and historic street patterns can contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the historic environment and promotes their conservation. *PAN 52: Planning and Small Towns* emphasises the need to understand how open space in towns is used and supports analysis of the characteristics and functions of spaces.

The need for advice

8. *Rethinking Open Space* indicated that local authorities have not given high priority to the implementation of the policies in NPPG 11, particularly the need to analyse the spaces within their areas and derive local standards for open space provision. Only a handful of councils have prepared formal open space strategies, although others have begun preparatory work.



9. Meanwhile, valuable spaces, particularly green spaces, continue to be lost to development through a piecemeal approach and, in some cases in pursuit of capital receipts. Lack of awareness and recognition about the type, function and quality of spaces in the local area has led to a reliance on simplistic quantitative standards. Without a long-term strategy, incremental planning and land disposal decisions can cumulatively erode environmental quality. Spaces should not be allowed to deteriorate through inadequate management, nor should poor maintenance regimes provide justification for the disposal of open space for development.

10. In some recent housing developments, the provision of landscaping and open space is very limited with the result that children play on busy streets. Particular difficulties can be found in developments on windfall sites in densely built-up areas. Without firm development plan policies and a clear planning brief setting out the standard of development that the council expects, getting an appropriate balance between buildings, car parking and open space is difficult to achieve. But even in areas of planned release, the provision and subsequent maintenance of open space can leave much to be desired.

11. Many new shopping developments do not provide a strong landscape framework or make any contribution to defining high quality civic spaces. Planting is often minimal, of inappropriate species and not always maintained to a high standard, attracting litter and other debris. In contrast, some edge of town commercial developments contain generous open space provision which is well maintained.



The value of open space

Social

12. Well-managed and maintained spaces can create opportunities for all sections of the community to interact. They can promote a sense of place and be a source of community pride and also offer opportunities for people to play an active part in caring for the local environment. Well-designed spaces can reduce opportunities for crime and the fear of crime. Open space provides opportunities for sport and recreation, helping to promote active and healthy lifestyles, and can open up opportunities for environmental education, for local groups, schools and individuals.



Environmental

13. Open space can define the landscape and townscape structure and identity of settlements. Well-designed networks of spaces help to encourage people to travel safely by foot or bicycle. Green networks and corridors linking spaces also promote biodiversity and enable movement of wildlife. Trees and planting can play a role in the control of air and water pollution and contribute to energy reduction by providing shelter for buildings. They can also help to soften the impact of development and make green and civic spaces more appealing.

Economic

14. Well-designed and managed spaces can raise the quality of business, retail and leisure developments making them more attractive to potential investors, users and customers. Areas of open space can also provide economic benefits in their own right; for example, produce from allotments, timber and other wood crops. The quality of civic spaces undoubtedly helps define the identity of towns and cities, which can enhance their attraction for living, working, investment and tourism.



BOX 2: Sustainable Urban Drainage System in Dunfermline



Planning consents for the East Dunfermline Expansion Area, covering 290 hectares and draining naturally into four watercourses, required that best management practice be used to deal with surface water from the site. A series of attractive ponds even out the flow of surface water and help to improve the quality of surface water before discharge to watercourses. Safety issues, in relation to access to open water, were addressed in this scheme by way of fencing. Ponds have delivered important drainage, pollution control and ecological benefits, while providing a significant amenity feature and forming a major part of the landscape structure of the area.

Types of open space

15. The term 'open space' covers *greenspace* consisting of any vegetated land or structure, water or geological feature in an urban area and civic space consisting of squares, market places and other paved or hard landscaped areas with a civic function. Some spaces may combine green and civic space elements, but one type or other will usually predominate. The advice note focuses on green space, but touches on civic space.

16. A typology of spaces, based on the research in *Rethinking Open Space*, can be useful in preparing open space strategies and in setting development plan policies.

17. Open space may serve a range of functions and some areas, particularly informal spaces, may not fit neatly into the typology. An appreciation of the hierarchy of open spaces can help councils to understand the different functions they perform and distinguish between spaces of strategic, local and neighbourhood importance. They should be tailored to fit local circumstances, and are usually most applicable to parks, greenspaces and woodland areas. Criteria linking population catchments to the size of different spaces and sensible distance or time thresholds, can be included, helping to ensure that spaces of different types, functions and sizes are easily accessible to the communities they serve.

18. All spaces, regardless of ownership and accessibility (i.e. public and private spaces) contribute to the amenity and character of an area and can be taken into account by councils when assessing existing provision and determining future requirements.

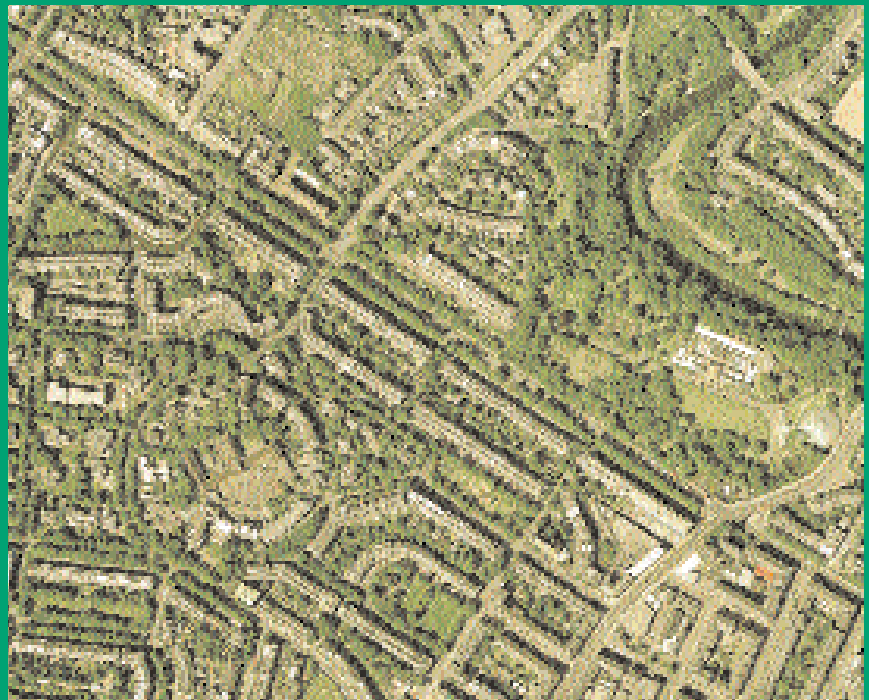


BOX 3: Types of open space

	Type	Description
		Areas of land normally enclosed, designed, constructed, managed and maintained as a public park or garden.
		Areas of land normally enclosed and associated with a house or institution and reserved for private use.
		Landscaped areas providing visual amenity or separating different buildings or land uses for environmental, visual or safety reasons i.e. road verges or greenspace in business parks, and used for a variety of informal or social activities such as sunbathing, picnics or kickabouts.
		Areas providing safe and accessible opportunities for children's play, usually linked to housing areas.
		Large and generally flat areas of grassland or specially designed surfaces, used primarily for designated sports i.e. playing fields, golf courses, tennis courts, bowling greens; areas which are generally bookable.
		Routes including canals, river corridors and old railway lines, linking different areas within a town or city as part of a designated and managed network and used for walking, cycling or horse riding, or linking towns and cities to their surrounding countryside or country parks. These may link green spaces together.
	/ -	Areas of undeveloped or previously developed land with residual natural habitats or which have been planted or colonised by vegetation and wildlife, including woodland and wetland areas.
		Allotments, churchyards and cemeteries.
		Squares, streets and waterfront promenades, predominantly of hard landscaping that provide a focus for pedestrian activity and make connections for people and for wildlife, where trees and planting are included.

Open space networks

19. Some of the best open spaces are parts of networks. These can help to define the landscape or townscape structure, provide links with the countryside and allow movement of people and wildlife. National planning policy and advice highlight these attributes. Some valuable open spaces can only be self-standing but, where feasible, planning authorities should try to extend and enhance networks of spaces.



20. Local authorities should aim to maintain or form networks of green and civic spaces which:

- contribute to the framework for development;
- maintain and enhance environmental qualities;
- provide a range of opportunities for recreation and leisure;
- link and create wildlife habitats; and
- encourage walking and cycling and reduce car use, in line with local transport strategies.

21. Publicity in the form of signs, maps and leaflets can raise awareness of the network, which in turn can increase community commitment to its better use and management.



Spaces are places

22. Open space designers, planners and managers should be aware of the potential to improve the quality of our environment and create long-lasting, beautiful places of which we can be proud. To achieve this, green and civic spaces must be fit for purpose and have a relationship with the surrounding buildings and uses, and the movements through them. Spaces should be designed with ease of access, particularly for groups such as the elderly, mothers with pushchairs and disabled people. The proper provision, management and maintenance of open space are key aspects of good design.

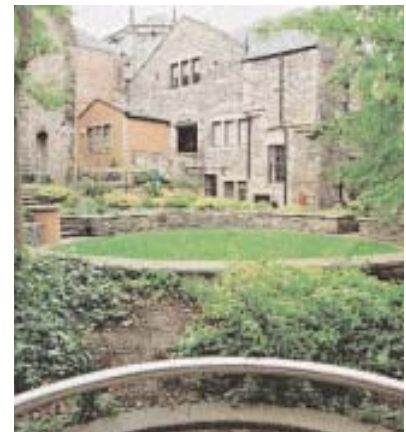


23. *Designing Places* highlights that the most successful places have certain qualities in common: identity; safe and pleasant; ease of movement; a sense of welcome; adaptability; and good use of resources. Open space should therefore be:

- – linking into the open space network, connecting into well-used routes and overlooked by buildings, helping to foster a feeling of safety and discourage anti-social behaviour as well as being easily accessible to all.
- – designed to reduce vandalism and, where appropriate, maintenance, with the use of high quality durable materials and incorporating elements of interest, for example, through public art.
- – covered by a management and maintenance regime attuned to the type of space, durability, wildlife habitats present, level of usage and local interests.
- – be capable of serving a number of functions and adapting to different uses while promoting a range of benefits such as biodiversity, flood control or environmental education.



24. Spaces that exhibit these characteristics are likely to be of high quality, safe and therefore well used. Spaces that do not are likely to appear neglected, feel unsafe and contribute little to the quality of the surrounding environment. The role of landscape architects and urban designers in creating spaces that achieve these qualities should not be underestimated.



BOX 4: Home Zones



Local authorities should consider the potential to create Home Zones within their areas, under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001. Home Zones can help give street space in residential areas back to pedestrians and prevent the movement and parking of vehicles from dominating the environment. Sensitive design and the use of high quality materials and landscaping can be used to improve the environment and create attractive places for children to play and people to meet. Home Zones may link into the open space network, providing a safe link for pedestrians and cyclists between parks and recreational spaces and community facilities such as schools and shops. Pilot Home Zones are currently being developed in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Thurso.

Open space strategies

25. An open space strategy can be an effective means of co-ordinating the policies of the different council departments with responsibilities for open space and in focusing liaison with relevant public, private and community interests. It is a corporate document that provides a context for, and feeds into, other strategies and plans, including development plans, as well as decisions on spending.



26. An open space strategy can help local authorities to move towards a more structured, rigorous and rounded analysis of open space supply and requirements. Its preparation can require a major commitment of staff resources. However, some information or analysis is likely to exist within council departments. Prioritising attention on particular types of spaces such as sports pitches or children's play space, or for neighbourhoods or settlements where open space provision is low, can make the task more manageable.

27. A strategy should comprise three elements:

- an audit of existing open space provision;
- an assessment of current and future requirements; and
- a strategy statement with a clear set of priorities and actions.

Open space audits

28. The essential elements of an audit are to record the type, size, condition, location and maintenance requirements of the spaces and to provide some insight on levels of use. An audit should also clarify the main functions of the spaces. It may sometimes be useful to record details such as ownership or any history of flooding. Qualitative indicators, for example ranking quality and condition of facilities, can help to establish fitness for purpose. Such information, about the extent and nature of open spaces, their levels of use and maintenance costs, is required to inform local authority budget and Best Value decisions and should be regularly collected and updated.



BOX 5: Open space audits with the help of Geographic Information Systems



South Ayrshire Council are using GIS in an inventory of the area's parks, grounds and open spaces. The Parks and Environment Department began by transferring information from existing paper maps into the GIS, giving each area a unique identifier, linked to the Council's asset database. Digital air photographs have been used to capture more detailed information about the type and location of the spaces. This provides an effective way of recording the quality of the Council's open space. The GIS information is now available to staff across the department. A review of the function and use of existing open space has also been completed and input into the GIS as part of a Parks & Public Open Spaces Strategy. The GIS forms the basic structure around which decisions are taken.

29. External bodies such as amenity groups, residents' associations or consultants may be able to carry out audit work, guided by local authority staff. The use of a Geographic Information System (GIS) allows the data to be overlaid with information on planning consents and development plan policy. Importantly, the use of GIS will allow the information to be shared widely.

30. SNH and [scotland](#) may be able to offer help in funding open space audits or strategy work, or aspects of them, for example, parks or playing fields surveys. Dundee City Council received financial support from SNH in preparing their *Public Open Space Strategy*, which included an audit.

Assessing current and future requirements

31. Audit information will form the basis of an assessment of current and future needs. Different types of open space require to be considered separately. This can be thought of most simply as 'supply-led', 'demand-led' and 'standards-based' approaches. Where there is a mix of characteristics, the primary use of the space should be the guide.

32. Spaces most suited to a [-](#) are urban parks and gardens, civic spaces, woodlands and other natural greenspaces. This should assess the existing size and distribution of spaces against their current and future role and allow for the formulation of a strategy that protects and enhances these spaces.

33. A [-](#) is suited to those spaces for which a quantifiable demand can be identified, for example, sports facilities, green corridors and functional spaces such as cemeteries and allotments. This should allow the local authority to consult with relevant user groups or carry out necessary survey work in order to establish the demand for facilities. [scotland's Guide to the Preparation of Sports Pitch Strategies](#) gives more guidance on strategies for this type of open space.



BOX 6: National Playing Fields Association: Minimum standards for outdoor playing space, 2001



The 2001 revision of the NPFA 'Six Acre' Standard clarifies that the standard relates only to outdoor play space, which is not the only form of open space. The Association recommends its use as a minimum standard per 1000 population of: 4 acres (1.6 hectares) for outdoor sport, including pitches and greens; and 2 acres (0.8 hectares) for children's playing space.

Where standards are required (see paragraph 34), this may act as a useful starting point, but it should not substitute for standards developed locally which take into account existing and desired quality, quantity and accessibility of open space. The Association does emphasise the need for local authorities to carry out a robust assessment of needs and stresses that if used in isolation, it will lead to inappropriate land use policies.

34. Where the need for a type of space is broadly the same everywhere, or where the demand for a particular use is difficult to quantify, for example, when attempting to predict the future community's needs in a new housing area, it may be appropriate to use a - . However, any standards should be carefully tailored to the circumstances of the area and a single standard will not be suitable for all parts of the country. Very different standards are also likely to be required for different functions such as play areas for children and teenagers and informal recreation areas.

35. Standards should contain three elements:

- – a benchmark against which quality can be measured;
- – an amount of space per house unit or head of population; and
- – an amount of particular types of open space within a specified distance i.e. a distance threshold.

Strategy statement

36. The strategy statement brings together the audit and assessment in a coherent vision with clear policies and a set of priorities for action. The statement must set out deficiencies and problems and make explicit the choices and their implications. In the absence of a statement, the danger of ad hoc losses of open space, through speculative development proposals, increases.

37. An open space strategy has a number of advantages:

- heightened public awareness of the resource and the issues surrounding its protection and management;
- improved rationale for policy, land disposal and spending decisions; and
- stronger basis for accessing funds for improvements in provision (see Annex for information on funding sources).



BOX 7: Hamilton Palace Grounds



Hamilton Palace Grounds, part of Strathclyde Country Park and close to Hamilton town centre, included an extensive area of playing field and other outdoor sports facilities. Although well used, these facilities were of poor quality and low environmental value. The redevelopment of the town centre provided an opportunity to upgrade the facilities. The project was led by the Hamilton Ahead Initiative with funding from the Council, ERDF and the lottery funds of Scotland and the Scottish Arts Council. New and improved sports facilities include natural turf sport pitches, synthetic grass pitches and tennis courts, bowling greens, a 9-hole golf course and a changing pavilion. With its well designed landscaping, public footpaths and public art features, the project demonstrates that good quality outdoor sports facilities can form an attractive green space.

Community involvement

38. The needs and desires of the local community towards space must be established. Attention should be paid to the aspirations of all communities and interests, including ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups, women, children, older people and those with disabilities. Community councils can provide a useful starting point. Community planning mechanisms may also help channel wider community aspirations into the open space strategy.

39. Street or neighbourhood surveys can help to establish what types of spaces are needed and wanted in an area. In developing their public open space strategy, Dundee City Council carried out market research that provided the council with valuable information, for example, on the number of visits to open spaces each year, the types of activities carried out and the main improvements people wished to see locally.

40. Community involvement is not only about local residents and businesses, but also about the specific users of spaces. Interests such as sports clubs, youth groups, ramblers, wildlife groups, civic associations and local history societies will also have an important input to the process.

BOX 8: The Aberdeen Countryside Project

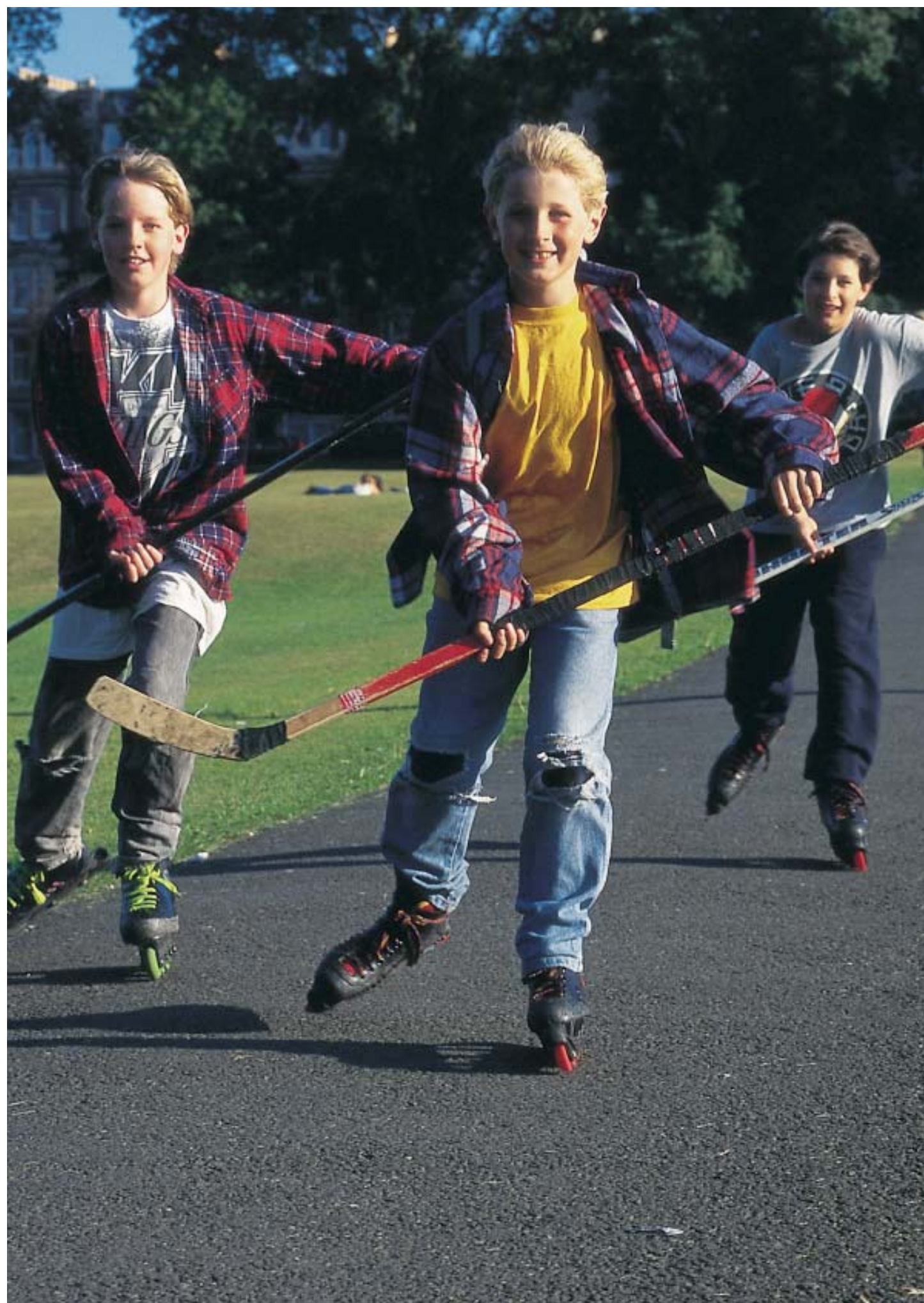


The Aberdeen Countryside Project (ACP) has been successful in diverting landfill tax credits and other funds towards positive environmental improvements around Aberdeen. ACP is a charitable partnership with a Board of Directors drawn from relevant bodies including Aberdeen City Council, SNH, the Forestry Commission and the private sector. The project addresses three main concerns: the decline of wildlife habitats through neglect or development pressures; the lack of integrated path networks or opportunities for countryside access; and poor levels of awareness about the local countryside and urban greenspace. The project was designed to be flexible to respond directly to the needs of the local community. A range of partnership organisations work together with the local community to lever in finances and implement a range of different schemes. The project will benefit the city as a whole as well as enhancing the urban fringe. The scheme was given an Award in the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2000 (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/planning/award/index.asp>) in light of its innovative approach to funding, strong local agenda and achievements on the ground.

BOX 9: Whistlestop Community Woodland



The tree planting and woodland development at Garmouth in Moray provides a living green space linking the village with the Spey Viaduct Walk, as well as a craft centre. The community has been involved since the outset in the planning, and later in tree planting and path creation. Within the wood a pond has been created, providing a rich focus for wildlife, with plenty to keep the interest of walkers. By working together, the owners and community have added value from the creation of a community woodland to give future generations in the village great pleasure. The Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme was used to supplement the funds provided by the owners. The council contributed to the formation of a car park, and the local community contributed their labour, energies, ideas, and enthusiasms.



Development planning

41. Development plans have a key role to play in protecting and promoting high quality open space. Development plans should safeguard important open spaces from development in the long term and identify spaces that require improvement. In some cases, it may be better value to promote a consolidated high quality network of open spaces, rather than a more extensive network where management and maintenance of significant areas are neglected. Open space networks can be identified on the local plan proposals map. In some cases, for example river corridors, there may be merit in highlighting the network in the structure plan, recognising that it may transcend local plan boundaries.



BOX 10: Character assessment of Oxford in its landscape setting

The Countryside Agency, in partnership with Oxford City Council commissioned consultants to carry out an integrated landscape and townscape character assessment of the city in its landscape setting. The study was completed in March 2002. The assessment is holistic in its approach and considers the historic, cultural and architectural associations, open places, wildlife and natural habitats that make the Oxford city landscape special and distinctive.

The results of the study will feed into the Oxford Local Plan review with four specific objectives:

- to understand which of the open spaces in the city are important in landscape terms, both in their own right and in relation to the built up areas of the city;
- to identify opportunities for the city's landscape to be enhanced;
- to determine the areas of the city which merit designation as areas of high landscape value as part of the Local Plan review; and
- to support development control decisions on design matters.

42. Plans should indicate the circumstances in which new green or civic spaces will be required as part of new developments. In areas of new development or redevelopment, the development plan can set out the circumstances in which developers will be required to:

- provide on-site spaces, and, if so, the type(s) and amounts they must provide and the amount of any commuted payments for maintenance; or
- contribute to off-site open space, and if so, the types and amounts required as a basis for determining the level of their cash contributions.

43. The development plan may also point to supplementary planning guidance that can be used to promote good design, for example through urban design frameworks, development briefs, master plans and design guides. Briefs and master plans can specify the type and quality of open space required on a development site, for example, civic spaces, amenity space or children's play areas, how it should be integrated within the wider network and highlight specific criteria such as maintenance requirements or access for disabled people. Supplementary guidance can also be used to set out local standards for open space provision in greater detail.

BOX 11: Master Plan for Ardler, Dundee

In the regeneration of the Ardler housing estate, almost all of the existing 3,160 council rented units will be demolished and replaced with 1079 houses for rent, low-cost homes and owner-occupier houses. This will radically change the whole estate, a large part of which was occupied by tower blocks and vast swathes of under-used open space. With the involvement of the local community, a masterplan setting out a 'Vision for Ardler' was produced.

The masterplan considers the layout of the area and its position in the wider context of Dundee. It embraces the design of buildings, the open spaces that surround them, the infrastructure that supports the site and the local community. It is intended to go beyond making buildings and parks, to making better places, for people today and in the future. It addresses permeability, vitality, identity, variety, legibility, safety and surveillance, robust building types, sustainable forms of transport, provision of a public open space hierarchy, ecological systems and sustainable urban drainage systems. The principles used in planning the open space were drawn from Dundee City Council's Public Open Space Strategy.

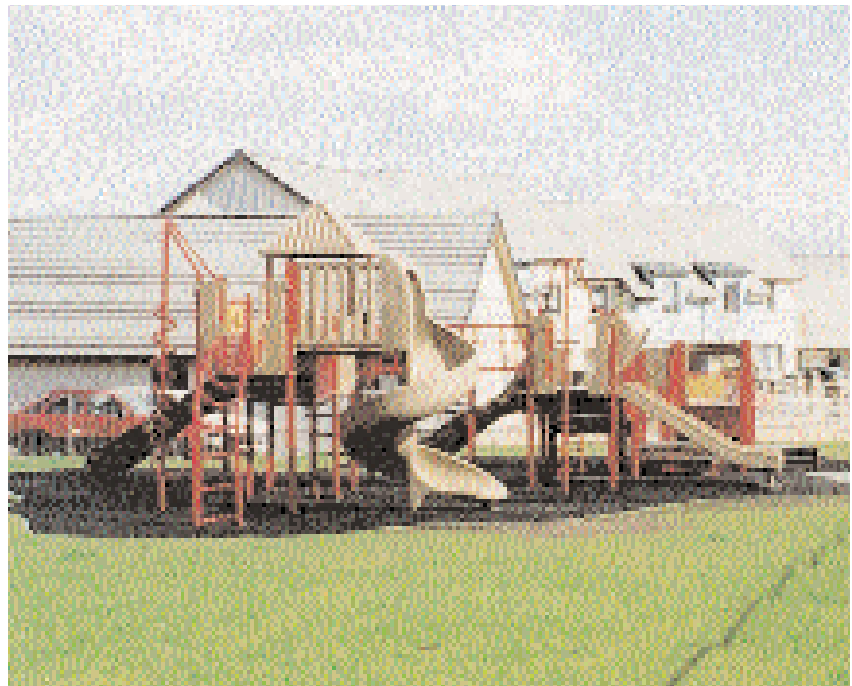
Development control

44. The emphasis and importance attached to open space in the strategy and development plans should be reflected in development control decisions. The credibility of the planning system can be significantly undermined when policies on the protection and provision of open space are set aside, without sound and clear justification, in development control decisions, particularly where councils have an interest in the land. A number of planning applications have been called in by the Scottish Ministers in circumstances where councils have been minded to grant planning permission for development on open space in their ownership despite being contrary to a recently adopted local plan and local objections.



45. Pre-application discussions can help to explore the issues associated with open space provision and management at an early stage. A design statement from the developer can help communicate the factors that have been taken into account in preparing the layout and design of the project. They can be particularly helpful in the context of speculative applications.

46. Planning agreements or bonds are often used to secure financial contributions from developers for open space provision or enhancement. Planning conditions or agreements can also be used to ensure that maintenance is put in place. Agreements must be reasonable and relevant to the proposed development. Further guidance on the use of planning agreements can be found in *SODD Circular 12/1996: Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1972: Planning Agreements*.



BOX 12: Developer contributions

Developer contributions are capital payments used for on-site or off-site works, for example, the improvement of a nearby playing field. Commuted sums are one-off payments by the developer to fund a stream of revenue payments usually for the maintenance of open space. Commuted sums should only be used for on-site works.

The use of open space capital receipts or developer contributions for general council purposes has led to calls for the ring-fencing of funds for open space provision and maintenance. However, local authorities have discretion over the vast majority of the resources they receive from the Scottish Executive grant and through local taxation. Scottish Ministers have stated that, where possible, they are keen to avoid the need for additional ring-fenced allocations and hypothecation. It will be necessary for local authorities to act responsibly and determine their expenditure requirements on the maintenance of open spaces, including from developer contributions or capital receipts.

Design, management and maintenance

47. *Designing Places* emphasises that arrangements for management and maintenance will be essential to the quality of the open space environment. Design should take into account the way spaces are likely to be maintained in the future. Open space maintenance relates to a set of defined tasks that aim to preserve the condition of spaces, while management of the resource suggests a long-term perspective, with flexibility to respond to a range of issues such as community needs, local involvement, improving access for particular groups, biodiversity needs, quality, safety and competing uses. It is therefore important that effective links are made between open space planning, design and management.



48. Empowering communities to get involved in the design, management and ongoing maintenance of open spaces can help the community to take pride in the ownership of spaces, and reduce vandalism of facilities and anti-social behaviour. Organisations established to promote community capacity building might use open space provision or enhancement as the vehicle to achieve it.



Adoption and maintenance

49. The planning system has limited control over open space maintenance. But it can, however, make provision for maintenance through planning conditions or agreements on planning consents ensuring the provision of new or improved open space as part of housing or commercial development proposals.

BOX 13: Parks and open spaces in Glasgow



The City of Glasgow Council's Parks and Open Spaces Strategy has helped to support a more natural approach to maintenance, through Pond Naturalisation Projects and a review of grass maintenance. While a number of ponds have been retained for model boating, some neglected ponds have been turned into semi-natural ponds with reduced maintenance requirements, by introducing aquatic plants, wildflowers and in some cases islands. Barley straw has helped to reduce toxicity from algae. The council's Grassland Management Review has helped to identify the most appropriate maintenance routine for different greenspaces based on the potential for spaces to provide a more diverse natural habitat. Grass cutting can be stopped or reduced to only once or twice a year, providing a richer environment which can bring natural heritage and financial benefits.

50. Councils should work with developers and other bodies to seek the best mechanisms and funding for the long-term maintenance of new open spaces. A number of options are set out below.

- **Setting up a residents' association with factoring arrangements.**

Developers may wish to hand over the cost of maintaining open space to the residents of a new development. Where this is clearly set out in the sale agreement, new residents effectively share the cost of maintaining the open space, usually on an annual basis. A factor can then be appointed to carry out the necessary work.

- **Developer/owners handing over the title to new areas of open space to the local authority, usually with a commuted sum with which the local authority can fund future maintenance.**

By agreeing an appropriate commuted sum with the developer, the local authority may agree to take over ownership and future maintenance of new open spaces in housing or commercial developments. Commuted sums are generally calculated as a multiple of the annual maintenance cost. Wherever possible, the development plan should set out the relevant multipliers for commuted sums, which should be reasonable and proportionate to the development. Most councils use a multiplier of around 15-20 times the maintenance cost.



BOX 14: Midlin Play Zone, Dundee



The Midlin Play Zone was developed as part of the Masterplan Strategy for Mid Craigie and Linlathen Social Inclusion Partnership Area in Dundee. Demolition of traditional local authority housing stock allowed the creation of public open space and a new play area. Dundee City Council had been approached by local youth groups seeking a multi-sports pitch. The initial design was developed in consultation with the local community groups and orientated to the public needs.

With the involvement of the local ward councillor, community groups at public consultation forums and events chose the type of equipment they would like and the different sports that they wanted within the multi-sports pitch and were consulted on landscaping and tree types. The area was landscaped with public safety in mind, with clear visibility and no hidden areas. The site has proven very popular with the local community and vandalism is at much lower levels than at any equivalent facility in Dundee.

- **Councils or developers making arrangements with a suitable third party, for example, the Scottish Greenbelt Company, for long-term maintenance.**

The Scottish Greenbelt Company (SGC) is a non-profit body concerned primarily with the repair and management of land, and the conservation and enhancement of the landscape. One of its key roles has been to take ownership of open spaces provided through new developments and to assume long-term maintenance responsibilities, through annual management fees and factoring. The company has also bought or leased large-scale publicly-owned land, including derelict areas, and created productive use for recreation, community woodland or woodcrops, to benefit the local community.

51. Councils have an important role in ensuring that the existing spaces in their area are maintained to a good standard and enhanced where possible. They might also consider the scope for offering communities and the voluntary sector opportunities to become involved in management and maintenance. Some options are suggested on the next page.



BOX 15: Greenhead Moss Nature Park



Greenhead Moss in North Lanarkshire lies on the site of former opencast coal and landfill operations, between the communities of Waterloo, Newmains, Cambusnethan, Greenhead and Wishaw in North Lanarkshire. In 1997, North Lanarkshire Council resisted further applications for opencast and related developments, compulsorily purchased the site and began the task of reinstating the landscape. A restoration plan was compiled, drawing on substantial European funding. Begun in 1999, the capital programme aimed to reverse the decline in a remnant of raised bog on the site; encourage more local use of the site; increase biodiversity; and provide training for local unemployed people. Local people have always had close ties with the site, and had campaigned against proposed extensions to mining and landfill operations in the mid-1990s. A Community Trust was established, with nominations for community directors received from all the distinct communities around the site. The nature park is now run by the Trust – a partnership of the public sector and local people.

- **Facilitating a community to arrange management themselves, with support or appropriate funding from the local authority.**

Initiatives such as Management Trusts or 'Friends' schemes are becoming more popular. 'Friends' are local residents, visitors and even one-off tourists who have made financial pledges or committed time to help maintain a space. With the support of local residents and visitors from around the world, the 'Friends of Barnhill Rock Garden' in Broughty Ferry have taken over some of the maintenance responsibilities for this space and helped to enhance the garden with new beds and plants. The future of the garden has been secured and maintenance costs for the Council have been dramatically reduced.



- **Encouraging local businesses to contribute to local open space maintenance and environmental improvement initiatives.**

Initiatives such as Britain in Bloom can bring together local volunteers and businesses to sponsor improvements to the appearance of towns and cities. Committees may be able to attract additional funding, for example, from the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. There may be opportunities for local businesses to fund open space maintenance by sponsoring green and civic spaces.



BOX 16: Tollcross Park, Glasgow



Identified in the City of Glasgow Council's Parks and Open Spaces strategy as a District Park, Tollcross Park was successful in attracting a grant of £1.8m towards the cost of restoration. Historic Scotland part-funded restoration of historic features and the balance was met by the council. The restoration of much of the original design highlights a number of distinct zones, e.g. the Winter Garden and Ornamental Parkland; the bowling greens; and a sports area. The regeneration of the park involved the creation of new formal garden areas, a new café and a multi-purpose space. The local Development Officer successfully initiated a Friends scheme that has been instrumental in promoting the park and organising over 150 community events each year, helping to secure the park's viability.



Conclusions

52. This Planning Advice Note recognises the importance of creating successful places and promotes effective links between the planning, design and management of open space. The planning system plays an important role in protecting valuable and valued open space and ensuring provision of appropriate quality in or within easy reach of new development. The PAN encourages partnership between local authority departments with responsibility for open space, with active participation from local communities, open space users, amenity bodies, and the development industry in the achievement of quality open space. It emphasises that open space strategies are an effective way of co-ordinating policy and assessing provision and need. They should feed into the development plan process, providing the basis for informed policy, land disposal and spending decisions.

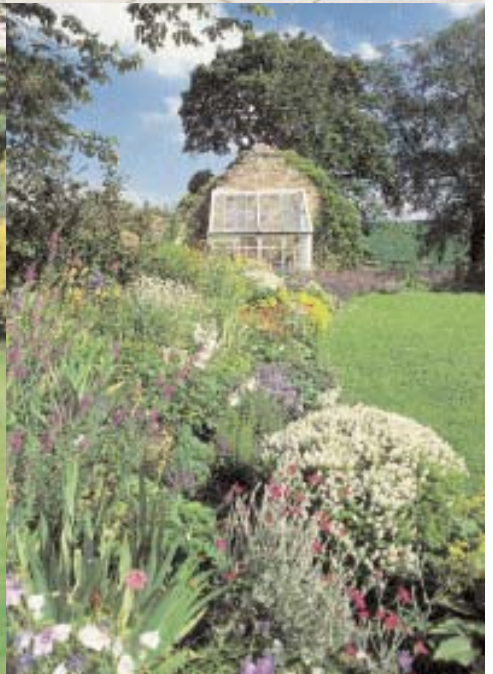
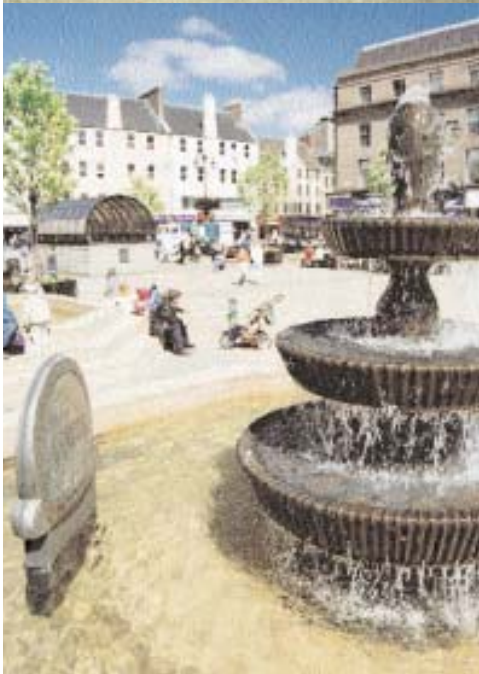


Enquiries

53. Enquiries about the content of this Planning Advice Note should be addressed to Rosie Grant, Planning Division 3, Scottish Executive Development Department, 2-H, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ (0131 244 7553) or by e-mail to:

Further copies may be obtained by telephoning 0131 244 7543. A copy of this PAN is also available on the Scottish Executive planning website at <http://www.scotland.nhs.uk/planning/>





summary

Open space is important to our quality of life and provides a range of social, environmental and economic benefits.

There are many different types of open space, with a range of functions. Open space is both green space and civic space.

The planning system has a key role in:

- protecting areas that are valuable and valued; and
- ensuring open space provision of appropriate quality in or within easy reach of new development.

Where possible, spaces should link together in a network, providing the landscape and townscape structure in the urban area. Networks can encourage walking and cycling, while green networks and corridors can promote biodiversity.

Open space strategies are a means of co-ordinating the aims of different council departments with responsibilities for open space, and liaising with users, community groups and the private sector. Strategies should be based on an audit and assessment of open space provision and need.

Strategies should feed into the development plan, providing the basis for informed policy, land disposal and spending decisions.

Effective links between open-space planning, design and management, and the involvement of local communities, can ensure long-term viability of open space that meets current and future needs.

Annex: Additional funding sources

A variety of new sources of funding have recently become available for open space-related projects. While this is extremely welcome, care must be taken to ensure that revenue funding for maintenance is available for new capital projects. The following sources of funding may change over time.

- The Scotland Lottery Fund (www.sportscotland.org.uk) provides capital grants for sports facilities under the five headings of school/community, national, regional, local facilities, and safety at sports grounds. The local facilities strand, which offers a modest £500,000 per annum in grants, would be the main focus for open space projects. This could include playing fields (new pitches and improvements, and changing facilities), multi-courts (basketball, 5-a-side, football, etc.), golf courses and bowling greens. Grants have also been given to help fund footpath projects.
- The Heritage Lottery Fund (www.hlf.org.uk) gives grants for capital and revenue projects that relate to the improvement and restoration of heritage assets including historic parks and gardens, urban greenspaces, town squares, cemeteries, playgrounds and paths. The fund can also help in land purchase for countryside or nature conservation projects.
- Through the 'Fresh Futures' programme, the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) is providing funding for greenspaces and the promotion of more sustainable communities in Scotland over the period 2003-4. Local authorities, community-based groups and other not-for-profit organisations may apply for these funds, for the creation, acquisition and improvement of greenspaces, especially in disadvantaged areas. The programme is being administered by SNH (www.snh.org.uk) and Forward Scotland (www.forward-scotland.org.uk). The NOF is also providing additional funding in Scotland for 'Healthy Living Centres' and for school sports facilities.
- The Forestry Commission (www.forestry.gov.uk) provides grant aid under the Woodland Grant Scheme and the Community Woodland Contribution scheme (CWC) for the creation of woodland areas. The CWC in particular encourages projects for the creation of new woodlands near towns and cities that can be used for informal recreation by local people.
- The Scottish Land Fund also established under the New Opportunities Fund, and administered by Highland and Islands Enterprise (www.hie.co.uk), helps communities establish the feasibility, complete the purchase, and undertake the development and management of local land and land assets.
- Through the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme (www.entrust.org.uk), introduced by the Government in 1996, landfill operators can gain funding credits that they pass to certain organisations for environmental projects. Examples of suitable projects could be the reclamation, remediation and restoration of old landfill sites or industrial sites which are presently uneconomic or improvements to public parks and the creation of wildlife habitats or conservation areas in the vicinity of landfill sites (approximately 10-mile radius).
- Where specific open space improvement projects or their ongoing maintenance provides opportunities for training in new skills, the New Deal Environment Task Force (ETF) may be able to provide additional support by employing local people to carry out the work, under the guidance of Council staff. Local authorities are the lead providers in the New Deal ETF and council New Deal contacts will be able to offer more advice on the scheme, which could facilitate projects relating to forest and park management and the reclamation of derelict or waste land.

Useful contacts

Forestry Commission, National Office for Scotland,
231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT, tel 0131 334 0303,
www.forestry.gov.uk

Heritage Lottery Fund, 28 Thistle Street, Edinburgh EH2 1EN,
tel 0131 225 9450, www.hlf.org.uk

Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management in Scotland,
PO Box 18017 Glenrothes, Fife KY6 3YH, tel 01592 743948,
e-mail: info@ilamsotland.co.uk

National Playing Fields Association, 25 Queen Street,
Edinburgh EH2 1JX, tel 0131 225 4307, www.npfa.co.uk

New Opportunities Fund, www.nof.org.uk Guidance on
'Fresh Futures' is available from the Fresh Futures Enquiry Line:
0845 000 0123.

Paths for All Partnership, Tullibody Road, Alloa, FK10 2HU,
tel 01259 218888, www.pathsforall.org.uk

Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Erskine Court,
Castle Business Park, Stirling FK9 4TR, tel 01786 457700,
www.sepa.org.uk

Scottish Greenbelt Company Ltd, 4 Roman Road, Bearsden,
Glasgow G61 2SW, tel 0141 942 3922,
www.greenbeltgroup.co.uk

Scottish Land Fund, Taigh Fearn, Auchtertyre, Balmacara,
Kyle of Lochalsh IV40 8EG, tel 01520 722988 www.hie.co.uk

Scottish Natural Heritage, Head Office, 12 Hope Terrace,
Edinburgh EH9 2AS, tel 0131 447 4784, www.snh.org.uk

Scottish Wildlife Trust, Cramond House, Kirk Cramond,
Cramond Glebe Road, Edinburgh EH4 6NS, tel 0131 312 7765,
www.swt.org.uk

scotland, Caledonia House, South Gyle, Edinburgh
EH12 9DQ, tel 0131 317 7200 www.sportscotland.org.uk

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