



Walsall Council

**Supplementary Planning Document
to the Walsall Unitary Development Plan**

Urban Open Space:

Sustainability Appraisal and Screening Statement

April 2006

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Matters

- Title of SPD:** Supplementary Planning Document for Urban Open Space.
- Subject:** This SPD expands on “saved” policies GP3 and LC1 to LC6 of the Walsall UDP regarding provision of open spaces in the borough of Walsall.
- Consultation:** Comments could be made on the draft SPD and the Sustainability Appraisal between 27 January and 24 February 2006.
- Address:** Further information may be obtained, in written or electronic form, from:
Physical Regeneration Strategy Team
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
2nd floor, Civic centre
Darwall Street
Walsall
WS1 1TP
Telephone: 01922 652450
Fax: 01922 623234
Email: LDF@Walsall.gov.uk
The relevant documents can be inspected on the Council’s website, at www.walsall.gov.uk, during normal opening hours, at Planning Services reception in Walsall Civic Centre and at public libraries in the borough of Walsall.
- Adoption:** Anyone could ask to be notified of the adoption of this SPD at a specified address.
- Evidence:** The evidence base for the SPD will be the Audit and Assessment Report (“The Audit”) for the Walsall Greenspace Strategy (GSS), which is being developed in parallel with the SPD.
Reference is also made to the Council’s Playing Pitch Strategy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Walsall Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted in 2005, says in paragraph 1.17 that the Council will prepare a supplementary planning document to set local standards, in accordance with PPG 17, which will be used as a guide to decision-making on development proposals and the use of resources.
- 1.2. The purpose of this SPD, then, is to explain with reference to the UDP the requisite local standards and the contributions that developers will be required to make towards the provision and improvement of open spaces.
- 1.3. The SPD is not intended to be site-specific and will not be used to determine the specific location of open space facilities, nor will it be used to determine the particular usage of specific sites.
- 1.4. The SPD will be, chiefly, a guide to the scale and kind of contribution that developers will be required to make towards the provision of new, and the improvement of existing, open spaces. The local standards will also be used as a guide to how much on-site provision will be required for larger developments.

Accompanying documents

- 1.5. Every SPD must be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal, the purpose of which is to assess the likely environmental, social and economic impact of implementing the SPD. In summary, the Sustainability Appraisal concludes that the impacts in this case are likely to be minor, but generally positive as there will be more resources for open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- 1.6. It is also necessary to prepare a Screening Statement, which explains whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required in terms of the SEA Directive¹.
- 1.7. There is also a Statement on Consultation, which describes how people have been consulted on the SPD, in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, and how their comments have been taken into account in preparing the SPD.

Consultation

- 1.8. Comments may be made on the draft SPD and the Sustainability Appraisal between 27 January and 24 February 2006 to the Physical Regeneration Strategy Team, Walsall Council, Civic centre, Darwall Street, Walsall WS1 1TP or email to LDF@Walsall.gov.uk.
- 1.9. The consultation is being carried out in accordance with the Walsall Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2005. This has involved a householder survey, workshops, discussions with interested parties and other informal consultation prior to this formal stage. A separate Statement on Consultation describes the consultation and responses in detail.

¹ European Directive 2001/42/EC, known as the "SEA Directive", as translated by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

2. Sustainability Appraisal

Scoping

- 2.1. A Sustainability Appraisal is required to accompany all SPDs. The purpose of a Sustainability Appraisal is to address the environmental, economic and social impacts of the SPD. The Sustainability Appraisal is to be prepared in parallel with the SPD so that sustainability impacts can be taken into account in developing the policies in the SPD itself.
- 2.2. At the outset it is important to note that the SPD will not create new policy and any policies in the SPD must remain within the parameters set by the UDP.
- 2.3. The SPD will not in itself lead to any new open spaces being created, any existing open spaces being developed or any change in the management, use or appearance of any particular open space. It will simply guide the collection and use of developer contributions towards open space provision and enhancement.
- 2.4. The only influence that the SPD will have over what happens on the ground will be to increase the resources available relative to the present, when no off-site contributions are being collected. It might, therefore, accelerate provision or enhancement of open space or lead to better maintenance or more durable equipment.
- 2.5. In cases where on-site provision is not appropriate, the SPD will require commuted sums to be provided in respect of a range of types of open space, see SPD Table 7.1. The cost of sustaining set local standards has been evaluated and a framework for use of resources is set out in SPD Table 7.3.
- 2.6. For some types of open space, the proposed local standard for new homes is a little lower than current overall provision. However, it is anticipated that newer provision will be more efficient and of higher quality and that any actual shortfall, which is likely to be negligible, can be made up from mainstream budget.
- 2.7. The scope of the Sustainability Appraisal will therefore be limited to the likely impacts of having more resources available for open spaces.

Approach to the sustainability appraisal

- 2.8. The approach to sustainability appraisal in this report reflects the Government's sustainability agenda. The Government sets out four aims for sustainable development in its 1999 strategy².
- 2.9. These are:
 - social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
 - effective protection of the environment;
 - the prudent use of natural resources; and,
 - the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.(see PPS 1: Delivering Sustainable Development.)
- 2.10. This sustainability appraisal translates these broad aims into a range of twenty factors against which to test each policy and proposal, so that judgements can be

² A Better Quality of Life – A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK – CM 4345, May 1999. The strategy is currently subject to review.

made about the effects of the SPD in terms of the Government's basic aims and on a more detailed, practical level.

Who prepared the SPD?

- 2.11. This sustainability appraisal was prepared alongside the draft SPD. Walsall Council's Regeneration Service prepared it.

Who has been consulted?

- 2.12. Details of the consultation are given in the accompanying Statement of Consultation.

Purpose of SPD

- 2.13. Sustainable development embraces economic, environmental and social concerns, and covers a range of issues from local to global. This appraisal considers the Supplementary Planning Document for Urban Open Space in terms of its sustainability. It tests two options against a set of sustainability objectives, to see whether it will contribute positively to delivering sustainable development in Walsall:

Option 1: An SPD is prepared and adopted to add value to the UDP policies by enabling the Council to negotiate an appropriate provision of Open Space, Sport and Recreation facilities to meet the local needs of Walsall Borough.

Option 2: The existing UDP Policy on Open Space, Sport and Recreation is not supported by an SPD.

- 2.14. This appraisal focuses on the difference between continuing with the UDP alone and expanding it with this SPD. A chart setting out the net gain in sustainability terms is set out at Annex A below.

Summary of likely environmental impacts

- 2.15. The aim is to allocate developer contributions towards new and improved provision of a range of types of open space. The types of impact are summarised below.

Type	Environmental	Economic	Social
Children & Young People	More appropriate provision should lead to better perceptions of local environment for children and young people.	Encourage or keep families into area.	Children and young people are better able to socialise.
Parks & Gardens	Improvements to greenness, air quality, safety and health.	Encourage or keep people in area.	Places to relax and socialise.
Playing fields (including ancillary facilities)	Greenness and exercise; better health.	Healthier, fitter workforce.	Opportunities for people of all backgrounds to mix.
Amenity space	More pleasant local environment.	Encourage or keep people in area.	Local meeting places.

Allotments	Greenness, local produce.	Encourage or keep people in area.	Mix of people with shared interest. Exercise.
Natural & Semi-natural	Greenness, peace and quiet, space, wildlife.	Encourage or keep people in area.	Escape from busy working life.
Access for All	Everyone can reach some less accessible places.	Encourage or keep people in area.	Inclusion of people with limited mobility.

- 2.16. As the above table shows, people benefit from better open spaces in a variety of ways. These benefits are reflected in Annex A.
- 2.17. In a borough where people take too little exercise, the health benefits of open spaces should not be underestimated. However, the benefits derived from this SPD relate only to about 600 new homes per year, compared to approximately 100,000 existing homes. In that context the impact will still be relatively minor.

3. Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.1. The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regs) require Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be carried out for certain types of plans and programmes, including some supplementary planning documents (SPD). The Regs translate the European Directive 2001/42/EC, known as the “SEA Directive” into the context of the English planning system.
- 3.2. The Regs set out a series of tests as to whether SEA is required and are helpfully translated into a diagram in “A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive”; Figure 2 on page 13, which is the basis for the assessment below.

Question	Response
Is the PP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Yes. The SPD is prepared by a local authority for adoption through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated regulations.
Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Yes. See above.
Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2(a))	No. The SPD is for town and country planning, but will not set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annex I or II.
Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))	No. The SPD will only influence the resource available to support nature conservation in the borough.
Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	No. The SPD will only influence the contribution made by developers towards provision or enhancement of open spaces.

- 3.3. On this basis, the Open Space, Sport and Recreation SPD does not require a SEA.

Annex A: Sustainability Impacts of Urban Open Space SPD; net gain on UDP

	Sustainability Indicators																			
	Social Inequalities				Land allocations			Accessibility		Centres	Environment					Efficient land use			Need to travel	
Open Space Policies in the SPD	Inclusive	Healthy	Safe	Crime free	Housing	Industry	Retail & Commercial	Jobs	Services	Supporting centres	Biodiversity	Pollution	Waste	Energy	Overall Quality	Higher density	Mixed use	Previously-developed land	Public transport	Reducing overall
OS1: Qualifying Development	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
OS2: Planning Obligations	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
OS3: Scale of Contribution	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	--	--	--	--	✓	✓	--	--	--	✓	--	--	✓	--	✓
OS4: Local Standards	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	--	--	--	--	✓	✓	--	--	--	✓	--	--	✓	--	✓
OS5: Use of Contributions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	--	--	--	--	✓	✓	--	--	--	✓	--	--	✓	--	✓
OS6: Quality and Value	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	✓	--	--	✓	--	✓
OS7: Minimum Specifications	✓	✓	✓	✓	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	✓	--	--	--	--	--
OS8: Phasing			✓	✓	✓										✓					

Key

Major benefit	✓✓
Minor benefit	✓
Neutral	--
Minor detriment	x
Major detriment	xx