



# Open Space

## Topic Paper No 4 – Summary

### Introduction

The Planning System controls and influences development activity and has a key role to play in the continued protection of existing open space, and in the creation of new open space as part of new development.

### Context

The availability of open space is an important element of everyday life. Open space is valued by people for its visual benefits but also for its health and recreational benefits. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) requires that open spaces should be protected from development, particularly in urban areas where they fulfil multiple purposes, not only enhancing the quality of life, but contributing to biodiversity, landscape and nature conservation and air quality. PPW also seeks the protection of playing fields. An integral part of new housing developments is the provision of usable open space in terms of its location and type so that it enhances the overall quality of development.

In addition to informal and formal open space there are also green spaces within the County which are valued for their landscape and wildlife value and as a visual and character break. Often such green spaces form important corridors and provide links to wider open countryside.

### The role of the Plan

At the core of the approach to open space within the Local Development Plan will be a recognition

that well managed good quality open spaces support healthy lifestyles enabling children, young people and adults to play, to take part in sport and to take regular daily exercise within safe and attractive semi-natural environments. Networks of open spaces provide the opportunity for people to travel in vehicle-free safe environments and for wildlife to migrate, breed and colonise improving the diversity and richness of our local natural environment to the added enjoyment of the local people. Given the different types of open space, they need to be managed carefully in terms of different users to ensure that conflict is avoided or reduced.

### Supporting Documentation

- United Nations Resolution “The Rights of the Child”.
- People, Places, Future, Wales Spatial Plan (2004)
- Planning Policy Wales Edition 5 (2012)
- Technical Advice Note 16: Recreation and Open Space (January 2009)
- Fields in Trust – Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Recreation (2008)
- Creating an Active Wales
- Climbing Higher (2005)
- Children and Families Measure (2010) & Regulations
- Our Healthy Future: The Wales National Public Health Strategy (2009)
- Regional Transport Plan
- Flintshire Countryside Strategy (2000)
- Flintshire Coast Green Infrastructure

- Action Plan (2011)
- Lower Dee and Neston Green Infrastructure Action Plan (2012)
- Creating an Active Flintshire (2010)
- Green Space Framework Strategy (2013)
- Leisure Strategy (2009)
- Flintshire Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan (2013)
- Flintshire Wildlife Strategy

## Issues to be Addressed by the Plan

The current available evidence presents a number of key messages as follows:

- Open space has value to the local community and requires protection to ensure 3.2 hectares of open space provision is available for every 1000 population (or 32 square metres per person);
- There are quantitative deficiencies in open space provision however there are types of open space including coast, common and private facilities which should be taken into account when considering needs;
- The quantity of open space is important as well as the quality and location of open space particularly for communities in densely developed areas where there are few opportunities to access open space;
- There is a County wide quantitative deficiency in the provision of sports pitches across the County and there are further qualitative problems with the existing stock of sports pitches;
- New development should contribute to the provision of new open space to meet new residents needs particularly in areas with open space deficiency - should this apply to single dwellings? ;
- New open spaces are appropriately managed and safeguards are included to ensure that the spaces continue to be available for their intended purposes in the long term;
- The Dee is a strategic linear open space opportunity which could, if accessibility were

improved provide local communities with local opportunities to access open space;

- Open spaces have greater value when connected in a wider network of open spaces forming green corridors;

## Issues to be Addressed by the Plan

- Open Spaces in areas identified for future development should be protected within the plan;
- Proposals involving the loss of open space should be subject to a Health Impact Assessment;
- Identification of the Coastal Zone;
- New development in / adjacent to the coastal zone should contribute land and/or finances to creating a Flintshire River Dee Coastal Park;
- The identification of green spaces and strategic green corridors;
- New development in and adjacent to identified green corridors should not prejudice the value of those spaces for people and wildlife movement and should positively contribute land and/or finances to improving the green corridor in question.
- New open spaces should be well planned; conveniently and safely accessible for all users; well planted and landscaped; be subject to visual surveillance; and incorporate generous buffer zones to minimise disturbance to neighbouring houses.

## Need for Further Evidence

In the review of the evidence available certain shortcomings in the evidence base have been identified and further study will be required as follows:

- A County Playing Pitch Assessment
- Completion of the Accessible Natural Green Space Study