Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Open Space and Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Appendix 1 - Detailed Design Standards for Publicly Accessible Greenspace (PAG) Compliant Parks, Allotments, Green Network Corridors and Accessible Sustainable Drainage Systems (ASuDS)

2021

Nuneaton & Bedworth
United to Achieve

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Designing greenspace provision - layout and detail

Introduction

Designing high quality greenspace provision within new developments should be an integral part of the site layout and design process from the outset and such land should be seen as a positive asset to the development - not as a hindrance or afterthought to be bolted on or dealt with at the end of a design process solely seeking to maximise delivery of units on the site and to pass on undevelopable parts of the site.

Creating the Publicly Accessible Greenspace (PAG) areas of the site should start with the best features of the existing landscape and connect these and then add the buffers and further PAG land needed where necessary to provide extra green infrastructure links and to host the facilities such as play provision in new and enhanced areas of landscape.

Sequentially the process should typically involve:

1. Encompassing the best bits of the existing landscape
2. Enhancing this landscape
3. Connecting it up
4. Adding additional PAG land in areas that need or would benefit from further biodiversity enhancement
5. Incorporating the facilities that the development needs / that are applicable to the scale of development

In this way the new development will make the most of those pieces of land and all additional land required as a result of the PAG requirements (and also land involved in wildlife habitat creation as a result of ecological impact mitigation) to achieve high quality landscape, ecological habitat, and recreational provision where applicable.

When seen as a highly positive asset that can help to visually 'frame' the development - and offer possible purchasers / future residents an attractive environment on their doorstep - the resulting greenspace can help to drive sales of houses and result in reputational enhancement for development companies.

Greenspace as a whole in the development is likely to be a combination of the PAG land requirement and as scale of development increases other elements particularly ASUDS or SUDS, along with any other private greenspace ,should be seen holistically and blended together coherently to maximise landscape, ecological and recreational benefits and value.

General design requirements in development sites under 145 units:

On smaller developments any retained and newly created ecological areas are likely to be the dominant element. Recreational provision (other than in the sense of walking and cycling links or routes and links) will likely be inappropriate through being too small in scale placing recreational activities too close to housing. The previous thresholds in this SPD at which Local Park provision becomes required determine that this will be the case under 145 units.

Recreational provision on sites of less than 145 units will usually take the form of Green Network links for walking and dog walking and cyclepath links etc. They will have most value when forming onward connections into adjacent and nearby wider and larger areas of greenspace, ecological habitats adjacent to the development site and connections to the wider greenspace network. As such the usual expectation will be that wherever it is possible to place PAG land to make such onward connections that that will be the first use of PAG land in small developments. Where that cannot be done then concentrating the PAG land together into 'village green' type areas may have the most landscape / amenity and recreational value.

Green network links and ecological habitat areas etc still require suitable boundary treatments to prevent unauthorised vehicular access which should follow the details set out in the general park and greenspace requirements section.

Unless very small in scale, green network links will typically require bin provision at entrance points taking the form of which should follow the details set out in the general park and greenspace requirements section.

Seating to add some additional recreational value to smaller areas of PAG and Green Network link areas is desirable but needs to be carefully sited in line with the details set out in the general park and greenspace requirements section in this SPD - keeping benches at least 30m from property curtilages.

Wherever small green network areas will link onto or sit very close to wider and more extensive areas of greenspace then 'green network' metal fingerpost signage will also be required to reflect the role of the greenspace land in the development site within a wider network of greenspaces and their associated green network pedestrian and cycle routes.

If land is not being adopted by NBBC (which is unlikely on small sites unless the land forms a critical link in the greenspace or ecological networks) then a metal sign / signage identifying the managing body for the land and giving a contact phone number must be provided within the PAG land in a prominent position.

N.B. Multiple design concerns and principles set out below in the 598 units plus (Community Park + general PAG) design guidance also may apply right down to the smallest areas of PAG – e.g. issues about topography and levels etc. As such this brief outline of the principle considerations on small sites must be read in conjunction with that fuller design guidance and all aspects that can be seen to be applicable to a smaller site that are found within that section of the guidance must also be fully taken into account and responded to in preparing plans and proposals for smaller sites.

General design requirements in development sites where a Local Park provision is required (145 units to 597 units)

All the design guidance and principles in the 598 units plus (Community Park + general PAG) design guidance below also will apply to the provision of a Local Park facility and to the other associated and linked PAG areas within this size of development.

The only Local Park specific consideration that differs from the Community Park and PAG guidance and principles below is the number of items of play equipment to be provided but for coherence in terms of reading the play area design principles and not duplicating them here those figures are shown within that section below - alongside the rest of the detail on design and provision of play facilities.

General design requirements in development sites where a Community Park provision is required (598 units or more)

+ design of all general areas of PAG at all scales of development

Form and scale of areas:

At all scales of development greater landscape, ecological and recreational benefit will typically result from the PAG land being concentrated into fewer and larger areas.

Under a later heading below it will be suggested that land for Local and Community park recreational provision is not usefully delivered in a relatively linear form but on smaller sites and in terms of retaining and creating natural / ecological habitat areas of PAG, providing circular recreational routes (e.g. around a site perimeter) and making green network links may well each mean that linear PAG areas are the best use of much of the PAG requirement or parts of it.

However - in terms of both more linear corridor type provision and more 'blocky' recreational park provision the bigger the scale the better - so fewer but larger linear and 'block' / 'hub' areas are the desirable form for PAG provision . (This may mean for example that recurring lengths of species poor hedgerow in narrow linear corridors retained between houses should actually be avoided / removed and instead fewer but larger corridors around the highest value retained features (e.g. species rich hedgerows, watercourses and wetland areas etc) should be retained / enhanced and created.)

Topography:

Successful publicly accessible greenspace areas need to be safe and maintainable and topography can have a significant influence on this. Equally a successful and interesting park / greenspace will also often have diverse or interesting landscape which can be created in part by the natural or manipulated terrain.

Varied topography like hills and valleys can create wetter and drier areas, can create views and can hide unsightly areas / unsightly adjoining land uses and can also be used to create recreational facilities like BMX tracks and allow embankment slides / 'forts' etc to be used/created within play facilities.

Changes in topography - both existing and resulting from the development - can therefore be used to help create different zones and facilities within a park/greenspace which can add to recreational and aesthetic value. Done appropriately this manipulation of the environment is normally welcomed.

Caution is also needed though when manipulating the topography to avoid level changes unintentionally making an area more challenging to maintain, making accessibility difficult, causing ongoing drainage and erosion issues, affecting water tables, or impacting sensitive existing features.

Changes in level, from pre-development levels, are not generally permitted / appropriate within tree and other ecological feature protection and buffer areas.

The topography of the site must also be designed to enable safe and economical maintenance of it and this includes safe and appropriate access to proposed landscaping and ecological habitat where this requires maintenance to sustain it. The topography must therefore be able to be evidenced to meet commonplace commercial machinery manufacturers safety guidelines if it is proposed to be maintained in a certain way.

For example a grassed area must be able to be cut (either frequently - or on a 'cut and remove' occasional basis where created or retained for ecological purposes) or it will not sustain as grassland. If it is to be cut regularly and in a safe and commercially viable manner then no slope is to be greater than 1 in 6. Therefore grassland areas of more than 1 in 6 will not be accepted as commercially/ economically / safely maintainable and where they are being proposed as wildflower grassland it will also not be accepted they will achieve or sustain long term or high ecological value as grassland due to the inability to safely maintain them.

Steep slopes can also create hazards for park and greenspace users and make existing hazards like water bodies more dangerous. The topography of a site should be designed to minimise or remove all such hazards.

Changes in topography along paths must be overcome with gentle slopes – steps are to be avoided in all but exceptional circumstances and are not appropriate on any principal paths. Current best practice guidelines for accessibility should be met.

Both a full pre-development levels plan and a full post-development levels plan are to be submitted wherever any changes in topography for any development will exceed 0.5m from the predevelopment levels.

The post development plan must clearly show all open space features in relationship to each other and in relationship with the built environment. The plans are to include full details of changes in level within the landscape features themselves e.g. of paths, bridges, any ponds, brook/river basins/banks etc.

Regular section drawings must also be submitted wherever more significant changes in levels of 1.5 metres or more are to be made so that changes in level across different built environment and greenspace features and along features can be clearly seen - including all areas where any retention structure such as walls, gabion baskets, crib lock and other timber retention structures, sheet piling etc are involved and through SUDS and newly created wildlife ponds..

Minimum spacings for facilities required within parks and greenspaces

Providing sufficient space between different land uses is critical to reducing conflict between greenspace users and to reducing conflicts between greenspace users and residents. It can also help protect park and greenspace users from hazards. (N.B. also see related tables on ecological buffer distances for retained and new ecological features elsewhere in this SPD).

Minimum required distance from named development feature	Property curtilage	Top of bank of over ground SuDS built to PAG standard	Top of bank of over ground SuDS not built to PAG standard	Under ground Suds	Quiet residential Road (dead end /cul-de-sac etc)	Feeder / main Road /busier road	Over 30 mph Road	Power lines	Bank of brook or stream	Bank of existing pond lake or SUDS	Bank of river	Landfill or made up ground which is safe
Benches	30m	5m	10m	10m	20m	20m	20m	20m	10m	7.5m	10m	0m
Footpath	5m (except where making a connection to road)	5m	10m	10m	3m unless making connection to road for access)	5m unless making connection to it for access	10m unless making a connection to it	5m	10m	10m	15m	0m
Dual use path	7.5m	5m	10m	10m	3m unless making connection to it	5m unless making connection to it	10m unless making a connection to it	5m	10m	10m	15m	0m
Bin	10m	5m	10m	10m	1m	1m	1m	5m	10m	10m	15m	0m
Under 12 play area small	30m	15m	35m	15m	25m	30m	35m	40m	20m	35m	45m	20m
Larger play areas and those for teenagers	40m	15m	35m	15m	30m	35m	40m	50m	20m	35m	45m	20m
Active Recreation Facilities	40m	15m	35m	15m	30m	35m	40m	50m	20m	35m	45m	20m

Soft landscape

The park and greenspace landscape is important because it adds the structure and character to a park / greenspace and in a park can help zone different activity areas. The landscape will play its own part in providing recreational value.

An appealing and attractive landscape is one that compliments the wider setting and celebrates existing mature and established features within the design, by creating views of the best bits and by productively using, expanding and enhancing interesting or attractive areas. Spending sufficient time understanding the existing landscape and topography and getting the best out of it can be a very important part of park and greenspace design.

For example, utilise naturally wetter low lying areas by creating ponds that will not need artificially lining and further wetland habitats that can be landscaped to attract wildlife, expand small groups of trees into larger groups of trees and create small woodlands, use old and new field hedgerows to screen busier roads and less attractive features and to define certain park zones creating a series of 'rooms' and creating quiet 'refuge' zones for wildlife.

Existing landscape features

If existing features, for example trees, water courses or water bodies are to be incorporated into the park or other accessible open space they must be assessed to see if any work is needed to make them safe for public access. This work must then be completed by the developer prior to public access.

Existing landscape features to be retained must be protected during the construction of the development.

Existing landscape features to be retained, for example grasslands, will need to be managed appropriately prior to, during and post development.

Existing retained landscape features to be retained will need to be sufficiently buffered from hard landscaping , built features and services during construction phases and post development to protect them from harm.

Avoid placing areas of high use too near sensitive features. For example, avoid placing areas of high use too near existing mature trees or sensitive grasslands. The compaction and erosion caused by such use may cause damage.

Avoid creating changes in ground conditions for example changes to water table, run off, or soil levels near existing landscape features to be retained as these features may not be able to adapt to these changes.

Ensure that existing individual and groups of retained tree and shrubs/hedgerows have enough space at maturity to thrive and reach their ecological and aesthetic potential. Do this by sufficiently setting back new features from existing trees and shrubs/hedges. Indicate this in your plans by showing mature canopies of all existing shrubs /hedges and trees on post development plans.

Please see our table of minimum buffers to understand our required standoffs/buffers from existing landscape features during development and post development.

New Landscape features

Park and greenspace areas park must have their own interesting and economically manageable landscape added where needed.

Use formal / hard wearing grass species alongside paths and near heavy use areas, including around play areas, and active recreation areas.

Provide a formally landscaped and hard wearing 5-10m buffer area along the boundary of where development meets/overlooks PAG green space. Formal/hard wearing grass species are recommended in this area or 'flowering lawn' grass and wildflower mixes can be used to increase ecological value, or other low growing or visually permeable species (like occasional trees) may be used in this area as appropriate. This formal buffer area helps the transition between the developed area and the green space. This formal boundary also helps the park/green space feel managed and maintained.

Trees should be added into park and greenspace areas wherever appropriate and it is often desirable to use trees which it wouldn't be practical in a garden i.e use small trees for gardens and include where appropriate larger trees in larger areas of open space. Size appropriate species must be used in all situations i.e make sure the proposed species is suitable for the location and won't outgrow the location in which it is planted thus allowing the tree to achieve its natural ecological and/ or aesthetic potential. Ensure you use The Right Tree in the Right Place for a Resilient Future. To understand how to do this see the Urban Tree Manual published by Forest Research.

Native and nectar/fruit rich species should be used wherever possible to enhance the environment for wildlife, however non-native trees of high landscape value and good mature form are also appropriate in formally landscaped settings.

To demonstrate to us that the tree or shrub will 'fit' into the proposed location and not cause nuisance to properties, to the highway, to paths and recreational facilities a plan is required at full or detailed development stage showing the anticipated canopy spread of all trees at maturity.

Soil appropriate species must be used. The general soil type be that Clay Soil, Sandy Soil, Silty Soil, Peaty Soil, Chalky Soil or Loamy Soil.must be identified by the developer prior to picking plant species.

Care should be taken to provide landscape interest throughout the year by including a variety of species which will add flower, leaf and bark colour and interest in different seasons.

Use low growing species where views out/in are desired.

Where possible include species that provide food for the wildlife found locally and include night flowering species for nocturnal species like moths and bats

Invasive species, must be avoided completely, and aggressive or high maintenance species should be avoided wherever possible.

Vegetation on steep slopes is generally less easy or impossible to maintain and may require specialist machinery or equipment to perform this maintenance. For this reason, species selection in these areas must not require regular maintenance and should be selected to 'fit' the location/situation. If maintenance is required we will require details on how this will be achieved

including safety assessments and proposed equipment /access etc. It is not normally reasonable to expect residents management companies to perform specialist type maintenance.

Please see our tables of minimum buffers to understand how new landscape features can successfully be integrated with hard landscaping and other development features

All soft landscape features

Sufficient space must be left for both existing and new landscape features to mature (e.g. trees and hedges) and for these features to be maintained. A plan showing the landscape at maturity will be required, i.e showing the spread of the trees, scrub and hedges. This mature spread plan should help inform the layout of hard landscaping like paths and buildings and the maintenance access plan.

For more information on choosing the right trees in the right place please see the chapter headed **Trees.**

Sufficient space must be left to the side of paths to allow clear sight lines around corners, to allow people to pass each other comfortably and to reduce or remove the need for regular cutting back operations. Surfaced paths require a path edge/grass verge zone. This zone must be formed of a 1-2m mown grass verge which is safe to walk on and is clear of impeding branches and obstacles and therefore accessible for ride on mowers or similar equipment. Paths must also have a 2.5-3.5m height clearance zone above them which is free from overhanging or impeding vegetation/branches etc. When locating paths or planting near the path zone designers should ensure that tree and scrub canopies would not normally be expected to grow into this path edge/clearance zone **A full soft landscaping plan will be required at the time of full or reserved matters / condition discharge applications** which shows the location, plant type, density/numbers and planting method and proposed maintenance. This landscape plan/plans should also show all existing retained landscape features.

The developer is normally responsible for the maintenance and success of the landscaping from the time it is planted (or retained if it is existing) to the end of first year after site practical completion. Achieving practical completion can take some time to reach depending on the scale and complexity of the development. The developer will be required to replace any trees, shrubs or grasslands that fail within this period and for an initial 12 months after practical completion and also typically for a longer period of up to 5 years by condition. Therefore, it is in the developer's best interest to make sure that the quality of plants, seed, ground preparation and aftercare is sufficient to ensure the landscape successfully establishes. It is also in the developer best interest to satisfactorily protect and manage existing habitats and features identified for retention or they will be required to replace them with a like for like replacement. Best practice guidelines must be met for all horticultural processes.

The maintenance access to all soft landscaping features will need to be accommodated by the lay out and infrastructure of the development. A proposed maintenance and maintenance access plan is required. Maintenance on a commercial/economical scale will normally require access for a ride on mower, 4x4 vehicle, cherry picker and/or tractor and so this must be accommodated in the development design. For example if a wildflower meadow is proposed, access for a tractor baler will normally be required. This access including any gates, bridges, movement routes and turning circles will need to be sufficiently large and strong enough to accommodate this machinery.

These routes and design accommodations should be clearly indicated on the maintenance access plan and associated landscape design specifications. Topography will also play a large part in enabling suitable and safe maintenance access and therefore must also be appropriately designed to accommodate the proposed maintenance and maintenance access route.

Hard Landscape

Dual use cyclepaths and footpaths

Paths provide durable access to the park and greenspace landscape, facilities and onward routes. Footpaths must accordingly be surfaced to cater for the level of use anticipated within an urban area and to minimise future maintenance liabilities and costs. Grass 'mown' paths are not accepted under any circumstance.

Tarmac dual use cyclepaths are required for all principal cycling and walking routes connecting entrance points, facilities within parks and greenspaces etc.

Footpaths, where it can be agreed they are likely to be solely for pedestrian use, should be tarmac, kerb edged and constructed to Warwickshire County Council's highway path specification. Footpaths should be 1.8m in width with a 2m grass verge either side. Clearance should be maintained at a minimum height of 2.5m throughout the path and verge area.

Crushed stone footpaths are only appropriately used for very occasional secondary path loops in larger parks that are purely to add recreational value and do not form routes linking desire lines and key destinations and facilities. They might for example loop on and off a main tarmac path through wildflower meadow areas adding aesthetic variety and contrast through their more 'rural' / informal feel. They will not be appropriate at all on any areas with moderate or severe slopes due to recurring surface water run off causing damage and maintenance issues and costs.

Dual use paths must be provided to serve routes to school, key routes to significant facilities and employment and to serve all other cycling routes that go through park areas or publicly accessible green infrastructure/open space. All significant green network links must be provided with dual use paths.

These dual use paths must be built to Warwickshire County Council's highway specification (normally excluding lighting provision.

The dual use paths within park and greenspace settings would normally be unsegregated and will be required to be 3m wide with 2m physical clearance either side – e.g from knee rails and fencing etc. The clearance area to the side of the path should normally be formed of a grass strip which is not going to be impeded by overhung vegetation/branches.

Segregated routes (which are to be segregated by a line and not any other physical means) may be required when particularly high use is expected - for example on routes approaching the town centres or very close to schools or industrial and commercial estates.

Segregated routes will need to be at least 4m in width with 2m clearance to either side of the path.

In all cases clearance should be maintained at a minimum height of 3.5 m throughout the path and verge area. Please note that dual use paths may require lighting in some locations.

All paths must be designed to shed water and so either be built with a cross fall to the lower side (as long as the surrounding ground levels are slightly below the path edge and then fall adequately away from the path) or be built with a camber and be slightly proud even at the lower edge of the camber from the surrounding ground whichever is more suitable in the local circumstance of the path. Paths in gulleys between two slopes descending to the path will always be problematic in terms of surface water run off etc and will not be accepted.

Paths should be designed to avoid surface water flooding and run-off issues and this should be properly achieved through natural drainage across slopes. Piped and similar drainage solutions in wet areas / low lying areas etc are always prone to siltation and blockage and are reliant on regular and ongoing maintenance and as such must be avoided.

Footpath routes should not exceed 1 in 20 in gradient. Camber or cross falls should not exceed 1 in 50.

All paths must include all the necessary infrastructure to provide a safe and accessible route across the park, this infrastructure must be in in line with best practice guidelines and be appropriate for site conditions. This infrastructure will include all necessary directional signage, bridges and protective fencing / guardrails (and lighting or steps where required but these will both only be in exceptional circumstances). The open space specification sets out specification requirements and details for these items.

Where these routes feed out of parks and greenspaces into the surrounding urban area drop kerbs, tactile paving, pedestrian barrier fencing, crossing points including traffic lights, refuges, speed tables or other infrastructure as appropriate must be provided to facilitate safe and accessible onward connections to the wider footpath and cycle path network.

Paths, roads and drives, walls and fences near trees

New footpaths, roads, drives walls and fences must always avoid areas beneath the canopy or within the root protection area of existing trees.

If it is demonstrated that no other option (including omission of housing units) allows the avoidance of construction of paths, drives or roads within a root protection area then a 10% rule applies. The 10% rule is that paths, drives or roads should not be placed within an area exceeding 10% of the total spread of the anticipated root spread. Where paths, drives or roads are proposed within the root spread of an existing tree the paths will need to be hand dug and specialist construction will be needed to ‘float’ the path over the root area to spread the load of people walking over this area reducing tree root damage or compaction.

Walls and fence post holes will not be accepted within the RPA of trees due to the risks of permanent and significant damage during construction to structural tree roots and general detrimental impact on tree health in the long term.

New trees must be planted at a minimum distance of 5m to paths, drives and roads. The buffers in tables elsewhere in this document and relevant best practice guidelines will need to be adhered to.

Steps and ramps

Steps and ramps should in almost all circumstances be ‘designed -out’ of proposals. If they are proposed, specific justification must be made for their use.

In the exceptional circumstance that they are unavoidably required then for some, steps are easier to negotiate but for many a ramp is the preferable option. Steps can prevent access or make access difficult or impossible for those using mobility vehicles/wheelchairs, those with children in push chairs and those on a bike.

Where the space allows both options should be provided without excessive detour but if there isn’t the space for both then a ramp is the preferred method to access up and down steep slopes.

Ramp criteria should be used when the footpath or desire line is climbing up or down a hill at a greater angle than 1m in every 12m

Ramp design criteria

Ramped paths of a gradient of no more than 1 in 12 will be acceptable for short distances (less than 10m) if followed by a flat section of at least 2m (these provide valuable rest points for people with mobility difficulties).

Ramps will need to always be formed using tarmac with PCC edgings.

If the ground drops away to one side of the ramp greater then 600mm, a handrail and lower rail must be provided.

Drainage crossfalls whilst necessary must be kept to an absolute minimum.

Retaining structures supporting ramps will need to be specified and certified in writing by a qualified structural engineer prior to submission of detailed / reserved matters / full applications.

Drainage should be provided as necessary with particular care taken to address the area at the bottom of the ramp.

On all paths tactile paving must be provided immediately prior to the bottom and to the top of the ramp.

Steps design criteria

This design guidance is based on guidelines provided by the sensory trust.

Avoid single steps as these are easily overlooked and ramped steps and angled steps as these are difficult for most people to use.

Step riser: Maximum 150mm, avoid open risers.

Step tread: Minimum 280mm. (Walking frame users: riser max. 100mm; tread min. 550mm).

Resting platforms, or landings, of approximately 1.8m should be provided for each 1.2m flight of steps.

Steps should be uniform within a series, with consistent risers and treads. Maximum rise per flight of steps: 1.2m.

Steps should contrast visually with their background. Use paint or contrasting materials to highlight step nosings. Highlights should be at least 55mm deep and extend the full width of the step.

On all paths tactile paving must be provided immediately prior to the bottom and to the top of the ramp to provide warnings for people with visual impairments.

A metal handrail should be provided on each side of the flight of steps.

Steps should have a slight cross-fall to shed water.

Bridges

Bridges must be provided within the park in order to facilitate park footpaths, dual use paths and maintenance routes wherever necessary or desirable.

For pedestrian bridges a specification is provided within the open space specification document.

For any vehicular bridges required to e.g. achieve maintenance access points the bridges must be designed to relevant best practice guidelines and British Standards to cater for their intended use and will need to be specified and certified in writing by a qualified structural engineer prior to submission of detailed / reserved matters / full applications – including setting out the bridges design suitability and load capacity.

Bridges must also be built to aesthetically suit their surrounding and be durable with a life expectancy of at least 30 years.

Bridges must be used instead of culverts on all brooks, streams and rivers in order to maintain biodiversity connectivity across the site. This is especially important where roads cross these features.

Where it is demonstrated it is unavoidable to use a culvert - i.e. on the written instruction of the Highway Authority - then the culvert must provide a route of at least 1m width that remains dry during normal conditions i.e. provide a ledge running the length of the culvert that can be used by wildlife and that runs flush into surrounding semi-natural vegetation at either end of the culvert. A secondary higher dry culvert connection must also be provided above routine anticipated flood levels.

The culvert itself must also pose no barrier to the movement of fish and other aquatic wildlife that may be using the stream or river - i.e. it must not be stepped at either of the ends etc. as per WCC's Flood Risk & Sustainable Drainage Local guidance for developers culverts should normally be placed below the watercourse bed by at least 1500mm.

When work is planned to a river or watercourse for example by providing a bridge or installing a culvert the works may need an environmental permit. These are normally gained via the

Environment Agency – for rivers or Warwickshire County Council -the lead flood authority - for other watercourses . Evidence of this permit, or written confirmation that it is not needed will be required prior to full/detailed planning permission being granted.

Significant diversion of existing footpaths from their natural or most direct route or avoidance of provision of a logical path meeting a desire line to avoid the provision of a bridge or bridges will not be accepted.

Park and greenspace boundary treatments

Park / greenspace boundary treatment is needed for several reasons:

- To define the edge of a park / greenspace
- To define different ownership boundaries and help prevent encroachment
- To protect the park / greenspace against access and parking by unauthorised vehicles
- To help protect the park against fly tipping
- To protect from or at least warn park users, in particular children, about hazards outside the park / greenspace

It is always essential for the park / greenspace to be overlooked by adjacent residents and passers-by and for park users to be able to look out of the park into surrounding areas and for this reason low level boundary treatments should be used except in exceptional circumstances.

In some cases where there is a significant hazard or unattractive feature outside of the park / greenspace then more enclosed boundary treatments may be appropriate for limited lengths of the boundary. However it is normally better to screen using vegetation rather than fencing as the fencing itself can become unattractive if it becomes covered in graffiti or is in disrepair.

As a result we would normally expect the park / greenspace to be defined by low level trip rail using either:

- 150x150 mm pressure treated soft wood posts and rails – as specified in the park and greenspaces specification document.

  or

- Powder coated black metal trip rail – again as specified in the park and greenspaces specification document.

Should the park users need to be protected against a significant hazard outside of the park (e.g. trunk roads, quarry areas etc) and access appropriately prevented to this hazardous area then solid 20mm vertical bar fencing is required as it is durable, strong, unable to be climbed readily and is aesthetically pleasing. 6 foot solid vertical bar fencing power coated moss green RAL 6005 as specified in the park and greenspaces specification document.

Private boundary treatments near or adjacent to the park / greenspace

Private / resident management company owned boundaries adjacent to the park / greenspace should desirably be different in form from publicly maintained boundaries. This will help to readily identify fencing responsibilities. Such boundary treatments will need to be at least as durable as those used in the park / greenspace.

These boundary treatments in whatever form is proposed should be attractive, visually permeable, long lasting and encourage passive surveillance of the public open space.

Low level fencing should be used wherever possible and screening of the park with vegetation e.g laurels or conifers or hedges reducing views into the open space should be avoided.

Metal black estate fencing or something similar should generally be used where the private boundary is adjacent to the park / greenspace and the fencing is lending some protection to the park and private land.

Care should be taken to allow key desire lines into the park / greenspace to be facilitated by gaps, bollards, or K barriers as appropriate. Gaps into the park / greenspace should be no larger than 1.2m in width to prevent car access.

House and property boundaries to open space:

In all but the most demonstrably exceptional circumstances (not just the need to amend / revise a proposed housing layout) houses must always look toward parks / greenspace not back or side toward them. If properties side to parks / greenspace this must only be a very limited occurrence and 2 significant windows in at least one primary used room (living room / kitchen) must overlook the park / greenspace.

In the most exceptional circumstance - that for some technically convincing reason a private garden boundary or side of the property is unavoidably facing the park/greenspace area - then this must only occur for a short length of boundary – 10 metres or less.

In those circumstances the boundary treatment must add value to the park and be attractive and extremely durable. Blank walls - or lengths of close boarded fencing etc - will not be accepted. Detail and pattern should be added to any walls that are used and graffiti protection added to all surfaces to aid its removal. Artwork can also potentially be added to walls alongside the park to improve its appearance and suitability for the setting.

Park and greenspace entrances

Park entrances provide a first impression of the park / greenspace and so must be welcoming, safe, accessible and attractive.

The location of the entrances must be positioned so as to address all likely desire lines into the park / greenspace and to encompass approaches and exit points of existing or proposed through routes/onward routes that cross the park or greenspace areas.

Entrances should normally cater for pedestrian and bicycle access and be accessible for disabled people.

All entrances must be served by a path, nearby bin and appropriate signage within the park / greenspace.

Drop kerbs, pedestrian barriers, crossing point/traffic lights/refuge/speed table or other infrastructure within the highway as necessary dependent on the levels of traffic, speed limit etc will be required to facilitate continuation of a safe route outside of the park/greenspace wherever routes continue to the opposite side of the road.

At locations where the entrances feed onto a busier (e.g spine road) or fast road (i.e. over 30mph) and particularly on routes to or from parks and play provision, pedestrian barriers will normally be required to prevent children directly accessing or riding onto the carriageway.

Primary entrances on dual use cyclepaths should always ensure that unauthorised vehicles are excluded from the park / greenspace typically with a single black Manchester Duracast bollard (single red reflective band) centrally placed in the 3m width tarmac path at the entrance point with accompanying boundary treatments reaching fully up to the path edge. (Bollard to be removable if maintenance access to the park is to be provided at these points with covered padlockable spare socket to be provided nearby set into grass for bollard stowage).

Where land is not being adopted by NBBC other bollards may be used but will need to be of comparable strength, durability and aesthetic quality.

Pedestrian only entrance points should have gaps of 1.2m at each entrance to allow pedestrian access but restrict vehicular access. Site boundary treatment for example trip rails should reach fully up to the gap so will overhang e.g. a 1.8m path by 30cm at either side.

Parks requiring protection from motorbikes

Some parks may require pedestrian motorbike inhibitors at entrances to deter motorbike access. NBBC will highlight where this approach is necessary. In these locations boundary treatments of the park / greenspace will need to be brought fully up to the installed barrier so it cannot be bypassed.

- K barriers (with above and below ground adjustment) these barriers installed in powder coated moss green RAL 6005 can be tightened or opened up to further restrict or constrict access. They allow access to most mobility scooters and most bikes. They should always be installed at their widest setting underneath the ground and must be installed to the manufacturer's guidelines.
- K barrier maintenance access gates should be used where maintenance access is also required at the particular entrance point and space allows their installation– these allow pedestrian and push bike access through the middle but can be opened up wider to allow maintenance or emergency access. These are made to measure so that they can match up

with space and clearance requirements. Please be aware that k barrier gate arms open wider than the width of the closed gate in order to provide the full access clearance width.

Maintenance entrances and emergency access

Some entrances will also need to accommodate access for park maintenance and emergency vehicles.

If an entrance has been identified as an emergency access point then a height and width clearance of 3.5m must be provided. Should the emergency vehicle be unable to approach the gate straight then this width may need to be larger. Please be aware that this clearance must be retained at landscape maturity and with minimal maintenance.

Standard maintenance access points either need to be formed by lockable removable Manchester Duracast bollards (with lockable stowage sockets with covers) and associated dropped kerbs allowing a minimum 3m width to be delivered when the bollards are removed or alternatively can be formed by metal vehicle access barriers in locations away from path entrances.

Gates must always open inwards into the park / greenspace and must never obstruct the highway when open. As maintenance is normally completed by single members of staff the gates must have a slam post or similar set up to which the gate can be secured when opened.

The surface underneath maintenance entrances should be appropriately reinforced to accommodate year round access by vehicles in excess of 17 tonne (the approximate weight of a tractor trailer with material or a fire engine). See the open space specification document for further information.

Access points for park maintenance vehicles and equipment must be wide enough to give clear passage to the equipment or vehicle and an adequately shallow angle of approach / egress from the highway so that the manoeuvre on and off the carriageway is easy and safe for the driver

Park and greenspace 'site furniture'

Signage - 'Welcome to' signage, safety signage, directional signage and interpretation

All park and greenspace areas must include prominent and highly durable signage naming the body responsible for management of the facility from the point the greenspace is opened to the public, through practical completion and through the 12 month maintenance period with signage being updated / replaced / amended to reflect any handover to NBBC or to a residents management company. The signage must include including any standard daytime phone number and a 24hr contact phone number so that residents can report both routine issues and emergency situations.

Where land is being adopted by NBBC please work with the Parks team to develop your site signage as this signage will need to be in keeping and comparable to that being used elsewhere in the borough to help provide a consistent park brand/recognisable park ownership at a glance.

Community Park sites must include a metal cased interpretation and information board sign in a central location near the play provision and a key path junction point - which includes information

about the park, a park map also showing onward connections to nearby open spaces, safety messages and interpretation.

Where a management company is to be responsible for any significant areas of land a comparable form of and a comparably durable specification of sign will need to be agreed with NBBC.

If the park / greenspace connects through paths / cyclepaths into the wider green network or closely adjoins it then directional 'green network' cast metal fingerpost signage must also be provided at the entrance points (and at key locations within the park / greenspace if the land is significant in scale). This directional signage should include approximate times for walking or cycling to nearby and further away key features both within the park and beyond it with the details to be agreed with NBBC.

When providing green network signage, there is a need for consistency in the signage to create a consistently recognisable 'green network' brand across the Borough. This will need to be agreed with the Council in advance to ensure that it is appropriate for use. The Council's Parks and Green Spaces team will be able to advise as to the form and design of signage. Appropriate examples and a list of potential suppliers can be provided upon request.

Bins

Bins are essential to help keep publicly accessible green infrastructure/open space tidy and clear of litter and dog excrement. Within the Borough we allow the dual use of the same bins for both dog excrement and litter in order to reduce the number of bins necessary.

The bin we currently use (other than within play areas) is a Broxap Derby Weyburn Litter Bin – Stainless steel – powder coated moss green RAL 6005 with ground spike for installation in grass. In order to obtain some conformity and universal identity to our parks and greenspaces we would expect the same bin wherever the land is to be adopted by NBBC and bins of at least comparable durability need to be installed on new areas of open space being taken on by a management company with the specification to be approved by NBBC.

Bins must be accessible directly from the path without the need to step off the path but without the bin overhanging the path. Should they need to be set back from the path then the relevant path surfacing should be extended to fully wrap around the bin.

Bins must be accessible by vehicle or be within 50m of a vehicle access point to aid efficient bin emptying.

Bins must be installed across public open space wherever they are logically needed but they should always be provided in the following situations.

1. Within 5 - 10m of each entrance to a park or green network link corridor.
2. In a reasonably central position in smaller play areas and at entrances of larger play areas and play zones. A minimum of two bins should be provided in play areas - and in active recreation and teenage play facilities including MUGAS / skateparks and bmx tracks etc multiple bins will be required in logical positions near focal gathering points and or entrances.

3. On larger sites bins should be provided at points where multiple paths meet.
4. Bins should not be installed directly adjacent to any bench due to the smell the bins may emit on warm days. Please leave a minimum gap of 5 m.

Seats / benches

Park seats are essential within PAG to help people to access this space, to socialise and to allow people to stop and rest and enjoy the open space.

Seats make PAG accessible for more people. This is because some people will physically need to be able to sit down regularly when using the park / greenspace and may not be able to use this open space if this facility is not available. When people need to sit down, they may also need to help support themselves whilst sitting down or getting up and for this reason arm rests and seat backs are needed to help them do this.

The seat we provide within our parks / greenspaces is a streetmaster clarendon seat, black or dark green (with street tough coating) with arms to both ends and installed using extended legs which are concreted in. This type of seat should be provided on new areas of open space to be adopted by NBBC and that seat or another seat of similar design, appearance, colour and durability must be utilised on land passing to a residents management company.

Seats must be installed level, as per manufacturer's instructions and at an appropriate height for comfortable use. The comfortable position for people to sit down is with their backs to the back rest and their feet flat on the ground with knees at 90 degrees.

Seats must be secured to the ground appropriately to avoid theft and vandalism - and for this reason new benches must be provided with feet extending into the ground and secured in the ground with sufficient concrete.

In order for benches to be used all year round the ground below a bench must be surfaced which prevents muddy eroded wear patches and summer weed growth. This surface should match the nearest path surface and be created through an extension of the path surface around and slightly behind the bench - or where a bench is provided well away from a path for any reason then the levelled surface beneath a bench must be shuttered flush to the ground and in more urban settings be concrete or tarmac and dub-base infilled to a 150mm depth. In a more informal setting it should be surfaced with compacted crushed stone with a sub-base layer and a fines to dust layer compacted to at least 150 mm total depth.

Seats must be installed across public open space wherever they are needed but they must not be sited closer than 30m to property facades.

They should always be provided in the following situations where practicable whilst ensuring that that the distance from property requirement is met:

1. Within each play area/zone – a minimum of 2 seats are required within a play zone/area.
2. Seats should be located as needed within high use / highly formal areas

3. At least 1 seat should be provided every 400m along any significant recreational path as long as in an appropriate position with attractive surroundings and outlook and ensuring appropriate distancing from houses whilst also desirably still being overlooked from housing
4. A seat / seats should be provided at significant viewpoints
5. Seats should be provided at locations where someone who is infirm may need to rest for example near the top of steps or ramps

Further details on specification and installation requirements can be found in the Parks and Greenspaces Standard Specification which can be supplied on request and which will be made available online.

Health and safety and personal safety when designing parks and greenspaces:

Park and greenspace areas need to be safe for park users, those who live nearby and for those maintaining it. The careful design of parks and greenspaces is crucial in order to design out hazards, create safe maintenance routes and areas and ensure those living adjacent to the park are not subjected to unnecessary problems potentially resulting from proximity to the PAG.

Parks users need to be safe but they also should feel safe and the design of the park can help with both of these factors. To help achieve this the park design needs to be risk assessed prior to submission in order to remove or adjust items that may cause a real or a perceived risk to the public, maintenance staff or neighbours.

Some good Secured by Design and general design principles are included below to check proposals against to help make the park safer and feel safer but this list is not exhaustive.

- **Allow and encourage passive surveillance of the park by ensuring new and existing properties overlook as much as possible of the open space**.

  Use low fences and very low or no vegetation along the edge of the park / greenspace. Trees should be selected to have clear stems and crowns that will allow clear sightlines below the crowns without any recurring maintenance and placed so views in and out of the park are filtered but not restricted. All new properties must front toward the park /greenspace.

- **Design in long sight lines along paths so that what is coming up next (be that another person/dog/bike or park feature) can be anticipated.**

  Avoid narrow walkways and dense planting near footpaths, ensure that vegetation is planted well back from the path edges especially on corners and bends – a minimum of 5m for newly planted or retained semi-natural vegetation or native hedges. Also be mindful of the size of vegetation at maturity, ask - will this sight line still be there when planting matures and does maintenance of sight lines rely inappropriately on routine maintenance? If so the wrong plants / vegetation have been selected and different plants should be specified - i.e. right plant, right place.

- **Use our buffer guidance to set back different park features/land uses from each other**.

  These buffers will help reduce the likelihood of hazards created by park features (like trees and water) from impacting adjacent landowners, park users or maintenance activities. The separation of different land uses will also help reduce conflicts between park users themselves and between park users and nearby residents

- **Reduce or completely avoid the use of protective fencing by designing out or vastly reducing the hazard it guards against wherever possible.**

  Fences can and do get damaged within a park setting and when this happens the hazard is exposed. The best solution is always to design out the hazard or reduce it so much that the risk is small or negligible.

  For example, when dealing with water features you could do the following

  Use gentle slopes, shelving and shallow water near the water's edge. Using gentle slopes and shelving as opposed to steep slopes will allow people to get out of the water more easily if they fall in or venture in and assist the safety of anyone trying to help rescue them.

  Set back footpaths from water courses and water bodies to move park users away from the hazard. When locating paths near water always ensure there is plenty of space between the path and the waterbody so that the path edge can be mown and there is still space for a good width of longer vegetation between the path and waterbody. This longer vegetation will deter access into the water and bank edge. On most water bodies and water courses we will ask for at least a 5 m gap between the path and the top of the bank of the water feature.

Local and Community Park specific design requirements:

Park location

When locating any park area / areas the aim will be to choose a location/locations that help to:

- Ensure all new housing is located within the catchment of the new park / parks + any existing nearby parks.

- Create parks of sufficient size - both when your development site adjoins other housing development sites – this can be done by providing opportunities for the park to be expanded by others for example by locating the park on the edge of your development and also in

situations where your development adjoins an existing park and will be used to expand that parks size and facilities.

- Incorporate / buffer or join onto retained existing landscape and ecological features of value/interest.

- Connect the park to the wider green infrastructure network within and beyond the development site

Park Size

The minimum size of a park area delivering a Local park facility is normally 1.43 hectares and the usual minimum size of a community park is 5.9 or more hectares. There is nothing precluding larger park areas being provided and the 'park' may be significantly extended in scale due to adjacent ASUDS or SUDS provision and adjacent ecological and green network corridor areas all joining onto the primarily formal park provision.

Park Shape

The shape of the parcel of land provided as a park is important because the park will need to provide a hub of activities and functions. Recreational activities require space and buffering from other site hazards and uses. A near square / circular / oval or rectangular block of space is therefore far more useful than linear or scattered pockets of space due to the blocks' greater ability to provide for a range of different recreational activities and their associated buffers. Linear space should be reserved for wildlife corridors and green/active transport links and should not be provided at the expense of a block of land that can be used more diversely.

Topography

Where a park is being provided at least one full path route around the park and all key desire lines across the park must be fully accessible with slopes of no more than 1 in 20.

Paths

1. At least one full 'circular' path dual use cyclepath around the park is to be provided potentially with additional secondary path loops to add variety and choice
2. Paths must provide for and address all desire lines into, across and out of the park to reach the park facilities and to accommodate long distance routes, the cycle network, routes to school, facilities and employment etc

3. Paths must address all desire lines to all the parks features and facilities providing routes to, between and from all likely different start points/directions

4. Paths must take in areas of interest for example viewpoints, industrial artefacts etc.

Play and active recreation facility provision in Local and Community Parks

The play area

A successful park is often one that has, amongst other things, a good play area. A good play area is one that provides a good range of play equipment and an interesting environment that will keep kids happy, stimulated and engaged every time they visit.

A Local or Community Park play area will be used many times by the children that live locally and so must provide a real variety of ways in which to play in it - in order to retain interest.

The play area should be designed taking into account Play England's Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces

The play environment / landscape

Children and young people's play equipment must be located within an interesting and stimulating environment – a play 'landscape' - that has been designed to provide stimulate imaginative play in association with actual items of play equipment.

This means providing interesting topography, soft and hard landscaping and other items within the play environment that encourage further imaginative play beyond the limits of the equipment. The play landscape should complement and help frame the equipment being provided but provide multiple separate informal opportunities for play.

For example if you locate a piece of climbing equipment as part of a trail of boulders or mounds, perhaps with additional board walks between them and surround the area with a fence that resembles a fort - it will help stimulate children's imagination when using the climbing equipment and the environment will have created more opportunities for play. In contrast the same climbing equipment but set on flat ground in 'wet pour' safety surface surrounded by a rectangular bow top fence around it has much more limited use for play and will be less stimulating for the children using it.

We encourage the play facilities to be located within an existing interesting landscape where this can already be found and utilised on a development site - however care should be taken to ensure the existing landscape is not sensitive to heavy use or may cause a hazard to children. For example, it is not appropriate to locate children's play equipment near fast flowing water / significant water

bodies - or alongside or under old or veteran trees - or in an ecologically valuable area of grassland etc. Please adhere to our buffer guidance when deciding where to locate play facilities.

The play equipment and active recreation facilities:

Children's play equipment:

The play equipment should be taken from suppliers within the Council's play supplier framework. This is to aid the efficiency of and reduce the cost of future maintenance, speed of sourcing spare parts etc. This also helps to ensure the quality /durability of the play equipment will be suitable for publicly accessible land.

The play equipment must meet The British and European Standard for playground equipment and surfacing (as amended) BS/EN 1176

Equipment should primarily normally be in metal with timber and panel detailing. Plastic must never be a substantive component of any of the equipment.

Slides are always to be stainless steel (embankment or attached) and generally oriented north. Embankment slides must always have surfacing at the top, bottom and up both sides addressing inevitable wear from children returning directly back up to the top of the slide.

Grass mat safety surfacing is to always be used unless specific items of equipment necessitate wetpour due to critical fall height requirements. A combination of paths and grass mat must address all likely / foreseeable desire lines both between items of equipment, along the corridors around play trail items and between all equipment and access points

In the following descriptions of Local and Community Park requirements 'substantive items' means items that are not single spring animals or rocks, boulders or minor trail type items such as stepping stones / logs / fixed balance beams etc although these are an essential part of creating the additional play 'landscape' that is also required)

Local Park play equipment:

- In a Local Park the play area play equipment must include at least 4 substantive items aimed at 2-5 year olds and 5 substantive items aimed at 6 – 12 year olds.

- Within the 2-5 year old range one item must be a 2 bay cradle swing set and in the 6 -12 year old range one item a 2 bay flat seat swing set.

- The equipment must include at least a climbing unit for the younger children and a climbing unit for the older children incorporating slides with the units or separately. Both climbing units must have several different means of accessing into and descending from them and more than one tower.

- In both age ranges climbing, rocking, rotating, sliding, balancing and swinging play activity must all be delivered by the range of equipment.

- Visual and /or aural sensory stimulus of more than a token / nominal form must also be included but very careful selection of items that create noise is needed to avoid unanticipated impacts causing annoyance to nearby residents.

- This equipment should include at least 1 substantive item that is fully inclusive.

Enhanced Local Park provision with active recreation facilities:

As unit numbers increase between 145 units and 597 units the land available to form a Local Park within the total PAG provision will be increasing and the recreational demands that residents will place on the Local Park provision will increase. As such at the two intermediate points of 296 units and 446 units additional Local Park elements become required to help address the additional demand placed on the Local Park by the increasing numbers of residents.
Additional local park elements at 296 units:

Either:
a) 2 x outdoor heavy duty table tennis tables on tarmac wear pad; or
b) mini assault course provision (5 stations)

Additional local park elements at 446 units:

Either:
a) Single basketball hoop / or fun basketball shot basket - in either case sited on tarmac wear pad + outdoor heavy duty table tennis table on tarmac wear pad
b) Climbing rocks provision – minimum 3 varied rocks
c) Miniature streetball court on tarmac pad + outdoor heavy duty table tennis table on tarmac wear pad

Community Park play provision:

- In a Community Park the play area play equipment must include at least 5 substantive items aimed at 2-5 year olds and 7 substantive items aimed at 6 – 12 year olds

- Within the 2-5 year old range one item must be a 2 bay cradle swing set and in the 7 -12 year old range one item a 2 bay flat seat swing set.

- The equipment must include at least a climbing unit for the younger children and a climbing unit for the older children incorporating slides with the units or separately. Both climbing units must have several different means of accessing into and descending from them and more than one tower.

- In both age ranges climbing, rocking, rotating, sliding, balancing and swinging play activity must all be delivered by the range of equipment.

- Visual and /or aural sensory stimulus of more than a token / nominal form must also be included but very careful selection of items that create noise is needed to avoid unanticipated impacts causing annoyance to nearby residents.

- This equipment should include at least 1 substantive item that is fully inclusive.

Teenage play equipment in a Community Park provision

As children get older and become teenagers and young adults, their needs change and the need to play in the traditional sense will decrease. However, they will still want to challenge themselves physically, to be active and to socialise. It is important that active recreation in this age group is encouraged. Equipment specifically designed for older children and teenagers and even young adults should be provided to help facilitate this. The facilities for older children, teenagers and young adults must include at least:

- 2 substantive items of equipment which challenge them physically (e.g. through climbing/balance) – e.g. something they can swing on for example a basket swing and e.g. rotary items you hang off etc.
- In addition a 'gathering point item' as a place to meet and "hang-out'. The hang out location must not be enclosed or fully sheltered e.g. possibly net play with flat seating areas incorporated or e.g. a HAGS SMP Arena meeting point which strikes a good balance of durability, openness and moderate shelter

These teenage play facilities will normally appropriately be co-located close to the Community Parks 'active recreation' facilities such as the multi-use games area, skate park, assault course or bmx track to encourage ongoing participation in active recreation.

The design and specification for these facilities must be discussed with the Parks and Greenspaces team. Further details on specification and installation requirements can be found in the Parks and Greenspaces Standard Specification which can be supplied on request and which will be made available online.

Active recreation facilities within a community park provision:

A park is the key location to provide active outdoor recreational activities for the whole community. The park's active recreation facilities provide a gateway to more active lifestyles and, in some cases, may indirectly encourage participation in more formal / organised sport in other settings.

You will be asked separately from the requirements of this SPD to contribute to facilities delivering formal organised sport in accordance with the Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2031 and the Sports, Recreation and Community Facilities Strategy 2016-2031.

The active recreation facilities in a park should be aimed towards engaging people in active and healthy activity without them necessarily considering they are undertaking exercise intentionally.

Access to active recreation on the community's doorsteps is essential to encouraging active lifestyles. With a Borough that is not as active or as healthy as other areas in Warwickshire and indeed the country it is especially important to encourage all the community to have more active lives.

The active recreational facilities to be delivered in a community park are as follows

1. A multi-use games area (including 5 a side and basketball hoops and goals) so that informal games of football, hockey, netball or basketball can be played

2. A level area of formal grass and goals that is of the size of a junior sized football pitch. This area will be multifunctional for kick abouts, exercise classes, kite flying, frisbee, community events etc. Seating should be available at reasonably regular intervals around this area.

3. A Green Gym with 10 stations or a green gym 'hub' with 4 stations together and 6 stations spread at intervals around the measured distance path circuit described below.

4. A measured mile route (or if that is not deliverable a measured 1km or half mile route) that is suitable for fitness activities. This means including a 3m width generally circular / oval tarmac main path route around the park along with associated measured distance motivation markers / signage and interpretation etc.

5. And either (dependent on what is available nearby – discuss with NBBC):
    a. A fun fitness zone with skills wall, challenges and fun athletics track
    b. A climbing rocks zone

6. And either (dependent on what is available nearby – discuss with NBBC):
    a. An assault course with 8 stations
    b. A crushed stone MTB / BMX skills training trail course

7. And either (dependent on what is available nearby – discuss with NBBC):
    a. A concrete street style skatepark facility for 15 skateboards / scooters / in-line skates on the surface at any one time
    b. A tarmac BMX pumptrack facility suitable for 10 riders at any one point of time

Defining the play area perimeter

- Play area for toddler + junior equipped provision to be defined by grassed mounding (slopes less than 1 in 6) The mounding should form an integral part of the play landscape.

- In any exceptional circumstances following discussion with NBBC if required to be bounded by fencing - 16mm bowtop in black or dark green and monohinge pedestrian gates (2 minimum) and 1x monohinge lockable vehicle gates 3m width

Play area ancillary facilities:

Cycle stands:

- Local Park - Cycle parking – Sheffield stands including adult and junior sizes with at least 2 adult capacity and 4 children capacity.

- Community Park - Sheffield stands including adult and junior sizes with at least 4 adult capacity and 6 children capacity in location between teenage and toddler junior provision.

Bins:

- Local Park - 2 x Bins in play area sited near entrances = Earth Anchors Big Ben bin with lid.

- Community Park - 3 x Bins in play area sited near entrances = Earth Anchors Big Ben bin with lid.

Benches:

- Local Park - 2 Benches = Clarendon Seat RAL 6005 with tarmac pcc edged wear pad as extension of tarmac path fully surrounding bench
- Community Park - 3 Benches = Clarendon Seat RAL 6005 with tarmac pcc edged wear pad as extension of tarmac path fully surrounding bench

Signage:

- Metal signage adjacent to each entrance point to be maintained up to date at all times clearly identifying who to contact to report issues with the play area to including a current 24 hour accessible phone number – also describing the nearest road name in case of need to share this with any emergency services – wording to be approved by NBBC

The design and specification for these play facilities must be discussed with the Parks and Greenspaces team. Further details on specification and installation requirements can be found in the Parks and Greenspaces Standard Specification which can be supplied on request and which will be made available online.

Maintenance considerations for park and greenspace areas

At the full / detailed / reserved matters stage a landscape management plan will need to be submitted detailing proposed inspection regime frequencies and maintenance activities, methodologies and maintenance frequencies for all areas and features.

Responsible bodies for organising the works and also the competencies the bodies organising the maintenance works need to possess will need to be described in that plan.

Maintenance access routes should be marked and identified on a plan within the document.

Please be aware that the developer and/or landowner is still responsible for the successful establishment of all plants and trees for a 12 month maintenance period after practical completion.

This means that should any plant or tree fail in this period the developer/landowner will be required to replace it at their own cost with a comparable item. It is therefore in the developer's best interest to look after the existing and planted landscape to ensure that additional costs are not incurred.

Park and greenspace adoption

NBBC will wish to adopt all equipped park areas and play areas and are likely to also seek to adopt all associated key links in ecological and green networks.

NBBC will not usually seek to adopt 'incidental' / amenity landscaped areas.

NBBC will never adopt SUDS features or any associated pipework, inlets and outfalls and other associated engineering structures.

Allotment site requirements:

For an allotment site to succeed in attracting and retaining members and as a result having an adequate committee and elected officers a modern allotment site requires the following facilities.

Where off-site contributions toward allotment provision are sought the costings underlying the calculation will also be based on the following allotment provision standards:

- 1.8m Paladin (or agreed equivalent) fencing with separate padlockable 1.8m high, 3m wide metal vehicle gate and a 1.8m high, 1.5m wide metal pedestrian access gate with digital lock + key override
- crushed stone roadways (3m) and crushed stone pathways (1.2m)
- 5 crushed stone surfaced car parking bays
- 30mm metered water supply with auto-fill water-troughs at not more than 50m intervals
- individual small sheds
- communal composting and material delivery bays x3
- secure building with metered water, sewage and metered electrical supply, machinery storage, safe chemical and fuel storage, shop storage, small kitchen and meeting area and disabled accessible plumbed toilet

Accessible Green Network Corridors

An accessible green network is made up from two things, a green landscape/wildlife corridor and a path network. These elements must coexist for the space to qualify as PAG/a AGNC.

We recognise that these elements will exist separately from each other within developments but where they do they will not be considered PAG.

Due to the pressing need for development to accommodate and improve wildlife connectivity and resilience to climate change, accessible green network corridors must provide, in all but exceptional cases, connectivity for the wildlife identified on the development site and for wildlife reasonably anticipated to exist in the future urban environment.

The Accessible Green Network's two elements are separately categorised into neighbourhood and strategic which is reflective on their relative importance for people, for wildlife and the landscape.

Strategic path routes and green infrastructure/wildlife corridors must be identified at an early stage of development planning (normally at the outline stage of the application as part of biodiversity/sustainability/active travel considerations) so that they can be appropriately accommodated for in future plans.

Neighbourhood paths and minor additions/changes to the green network can normally be determined at the detailed application/full application stage when the detail of the development is determined.

Providing sufficient space for these wildlife and people movement corridors is crucial to their success, sustainability and general landscape value. Wildlife corridors that are too narrow often fail to sustain the desired landscape features (they get removed or mis managed to accommodate the limited space) and are often of limited value wildlife.

The Path Network

A neighbourhood path will predominantly serve just the immediate population for example routes to the local shop, local park, bus stops, links between groups of houses/mini estates, isolated/low scale facilities etc, but they may also provide the local populations links into the wider strategic network. The scale of these paths can be smaller due to the lower anticipated level of use however they normally still need to dually accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. This type of path requires a 2.5m wide tarmac path with a 1.5m grass verge either side with an overall path and verge width of 5.5m.

A strategic path will normally serve key links to significant or multiple facilities for example routes to school, community centres/facilities, to destination parks, community parks, to employment hubs, into and around the town centre and to public transport hubs like train stations/bus stations etc. These paths need to facilitate and encourage active travel and be suitable for reasonably high use. Paths must be fully accessible, be suitable for bicycles and pedestrians and have the capacity to accommodate other forms of active travel as they develop. This width of this path will be dependent on its anticipated level of use with those areas of highest use e.g near town centres or on key feeder routes to school requiring a 4m width path and other areas requiring a 3m width path. Paths must also have a 2m grass verge either side of the tarmac path. The path must meet Warwickshire County Council's adoption standards and therefore normally requires lighting. The overall width to allow for this path and verge is therefore 7-8m.

The Landscape / Wildlife Corridor

To qualify as PAG / as an Accessible Green Network Corridor the path must be accompanied by greenspace of either local/neighbourhood or wider/strategic importance for wildlife and the landscape.

Neighbourhood greenspace links should facilitate the species found locally and other commonly found urban species. The strategic green links should cater not only for locally found and commonly found species, but also for species which are more disturbance/light sensitive and species found in the wider context, which may be moving through the landscape.

In many cases the existing habitat and species on a development site will predetermine the green corridor's location and nature, normally making this element very site specific. For example, there may be an existing water course, hedge or other linear habitat that runs through the development that could be used (alongside the provision of a path) to create an AGNC.

Accessible Green Network Corridors can also be created by providing paths alongside existing green corridors outside but adjacent to your development site, if these green features provide real landscape value to those using the path i.e the green corridor that you are putting your path alongside is at least of neighbourhood value. The added path/verge will then count towards your PAG requirement.

In addition, Accessible Green Network corridors can also be created by providing green space alongside existing paths. To qualify the green corridor added must be either of neighbourhood or strategic value and must be adjacent to the existing publicly accessible path. The added green space will then count towards your PAG requirement.

Where paths are needed but no existing habitat exists new landscape features like SUDs corridors/new hedges/ linear trees/grassland can be provided by the development to create the green element of the accessible green network corridor. These created corridors must be designed and managed to be of significant value to the wildlife found locally and to those species commonly present in the urban environment.

Existing or proposed habitat size, buffers, and space for maintenance access (see Biodiversity Chapter) will largely dictate the width of the green network element of the AGNC. However, to help developers anticipate the space required we have listed commonly found linear habitats and typical widths required below, grouping these habitats into local or strategic groups regarding their typical importance for the wildlife living and moving through the urban landscape.

Locally important linear habitats/landscape features

Native Hedges – minimum width required 15-16m – space includes hedge width, hedge edge habitat, buffer (DEFRA) and maintenance access - space stated does not cater for hedge trees which may require additional space.

Brook corridor – minimum width required 25m - watercourse width and minimum buffer 12m either side of watercourse (DEFRA).

Existing linear trees – width/space required is species and ecological importance dependant (related to height/ spread/behaviour/ecological/aesthetic value of tree– see Biodiversity/Tree Chapters) As an example an existing class A/B oak tree will require a buffer of 25-30m around it to protect it from

harm from the development. Depending on the existing root spread this buffer space may need to exclude the new path.

Newly planted linear trees – width requirement is species dependant - sufficient space must be provided to allow the trees to reach their natural full size/landscape/ecological potential without detrimentally impacting the built environment/people living adjacent. As an example, providing a new oak tree will require a buffer of at least 15m all around it to allow for the growth/spread of the canopy and root system. The new path can be located within this space but at least 3m back from the planting line.

Linear SUDS features accommodating PAG compliant design – similar space requirements to brook corridors.

Strategic linear habitats/landscape corridors

Strategic corridors vary vastly in width due to the type and expanse of habitat involved. To allow these corridors to support the more sensitive species we would recommend that a minimum width of 30m is provided where these are present or needed to preserve as a minimum and ideally enhance their more diverse wildlife functionality.

Disused and active railways and associated habitat

Rivers and associated habitat

Canal and associated habitat

Wetland corridors including wetland/ grasslands/scrub/ponds/swamp etc

Ecologically important grasslands

Large scale mixed/mosaic habitats for example grassland/scrub/woodland/wetland corridors

Summary of typical AGNC width/space requirements

If a neighbourhood path and a neighbourhood green network corridor is required/present a minimum width of 5.5m should be allowed for the path and 15m for the green landscape/wildlife corridor element.

If a neighbourhood path is required and a strategic landscape corridor is required/present, then a minimum of 5.5m should be allowed for the path and 30m should be allowed for the green landscape/wildlife corridor element.

If a strategic path is required and neighbourhood landscape corridor is required, then a minimum of 8m should be allowed for the path and 15m should be allowed for the landscape/wildlife corridor element.

If a strategic path is required and strategic corridor is required/present, then a minimum of 8m should be allowed for the path and minimum of 30m allowed for the strategic landscape/wildlife corridor element.

Accessible Green Network design considerations

Path gradients:

It is important for green network corridors to be accessible to the whole community and therefore they need to be fully inclusive to all abilities. This means that the routes should be level or nearly level (max 1 in 20) and steps should be avoided through the selected path alignment and /or by manipulating the topography.

Paths:

Only tarmac paths are suitable on both neighbourhood and strategic green network routes.

On the approach to roads (at least 5m back from road edge) the use of tall vegetation should be avoided so that full visibility is given to route users and cars passing the network. This is an important safety consideration.

When the route meets a road the appropriate dropped kerbs and tactile paving should be used

When the route meets a road, it should cross the road in a location away from corners, junctions and obstacles so that maximum visibility of oncoming vehicles is allowed

When a route meets any road, besides a quiet dead-end residential road, the need for crossing support should be considered. Assistance must be provided if the road is a feeder/busy/spine road, a road with speeds over 30mph or a main / trunk road. Crossing support should be in the form of a pedestrian/bicycle refuge / speed table, zebra or signalised crossing as agreed with the Highway Authority. Where a route needs assistance to cross a busy or faster road and is serving a school or college or is on a strategic green network route a signalised (likely Toucan) crossing must be provided.

Signage:

Signage – Directional ‘green network’ fingerpost signage is required at all key entrances (entrances where a public road feeds into the network, near key features, at the park , school and employment zone etc) and at regular intervals / path junctions along the network. This directional signage should include approximate times for walking or cycling to nearby and further away key features. There isthe need for consistency in the signage across the Borough in order to create a recognisable ‘green network’ brand across the Borough our preferred supplier and design specifics are available on request.

Bins (as described in Community and general PAG requirements section) should be provided at primary entrances, at regular intervals and at path junctions. Bins should be accessible to vehicular collection or within 50m or vehicular access.

Seating:

Seats (as described in Community and general PAG requirements section) should be provided at least every 400m although they must always be at least 30m from the nearest dwelling's facade and so this will limit the number that will be practical, due to the typically linear nature of this space.

Boundary Treatments:

Boundary treatments - see park and greenspace boundary treatments elsewhere in this document.

Further details on specification and installation requirements can be found in the Parks and Greenspaces Standard Specification which can be supplied on request and which will be made available online.

7 Accessible Sustainable Drainage Systems (ASUDS)

7.1 Introduction

Most developments are required to provide a flood impact assessment and to provide sustainable drainage systems. Sustainable drainage systems are the drainage systems which collect and manage surface water runoff from developments. They are required on most developments to reduce the rate of water flow into the surrounding environment to pre-development rates and where required they must also cater for storm events. They are also used to protect the wider environment from pollutants in the runoff from developments by creating systems that absorb the pollution before it reaches wider water courses.

Warwickshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority, Severn Trent and Ciria/Susdrain provide guidance and best practice advice for developers on the construction, functionality and design of drainage systems which we ask you to appropriately accommodate in your SUDs design.

Whilst the function of the SUD systems is to manage water runoff from the development, suds can play a multifunctional role within developments. When appropriately designed they can add aesthetic appeal to a development, can be accessible and safe for the public to use and enjoy, can improve the landscape and can provide valuable wildlife habitats increasing a site's biodiversity value. When performing all of these additional roles within a development the SUDS features can be classified as part of the publicly accessible greenspace and can therefore form part of the developments PAG requirement.

This chapter outlines our specific requirements for making these systems PAG/ASUD compliant. The standards we discuss are made on the assumption that the SUDS system will also be designed to fulfil the required drainage/flood alleviation functionality and meet the flood authority's and adoptees requirements.

If the SUDS satisfy WCC's/Seven Trent's functionality requirements and are designed to fulfil our ASUD standards then they will count towards your (PAG) requirement.

If SUDS are proposed/provided that do not meet our ASUD standards then they will not count towards your PAG requirement.

7.2 What is an accessible sustainable drainage system?

An accessible sustainable drainage system for the purposes of this SPD is a drainage system that not only delivers the required water management functionality but which is also suitable for unsupervised public access, is appropriately provided with infrastructure for this public access, is safe enough that fencing is not generally required, is safe to manage, is economic to manage, has significant sustainable ecological value and provides tangible aesthetic value to the development.

7.3 What design standards do we require to make it an ASUD/PAG compliant?

7.3.1 Ecological design of SUDs:

7.3.1a Ponds, lakes and basins

- The design of the ponds, basins and lakes must provide significant ecological value. Susdrain provide good advice on how to achieve this with SUDs
- The design of the SUDS features must promote the best water quality possible Where practical water quality in ponds/SUDs features must be progressively improved in stages, by fully implementing SUDS treatment trains so that water quality is as clean as possible prior to it reaching the wider environment.
- Ponds and lakes must have gentle slopes around the perimeter and include shelving so that people (and wildlife) are able to climb free if they accidently or intentionally enter the waterbody. The maximum gradient around the perimeter of the pond or lake suds feature must be 1 in 6 except for exceptional and very localised areas of the feature where it is agreed to be unavoidable.
- Permanent water must be provided in the basin areas. The permanent water must cover at least 1/3-2/3rds of the base of the suds feature, during normal conditions. This can be done in a series of small ponds if there is sufficient space or in a singular larger pond where space is limited. If creating several ponds, ensure that some ponds are not exposed to the main pollutant burden, so that more sensitive animals and plants can exploit these areas.
- The shape of the SUDS feature(s) must be made as naturalistic as possible so that it could easily be mistaken for a naturally occurring feature – i.e not an even oval or round shape for the basin and not straight when it comes to the ditch lines (especially where these move through natural type habitat).
- Native emergent planting must be provided – avoid aggressive species like reed mace and use plants like Phragmites instead where this type of rush vegetation is desired.

- Suitable native planting should be provided around the rest of the SUDS feature that is in keeping with the setting and is practical and safe to maintain.
- Locate ponds near to (but not directly connected to) other wetland areas where possible e.g. near natural ponds, lakes and river floodplains. Plants and animals from these areas will colonise the new ponds, and potentially recolonise it if pollutant flushes impact the ponds.
- Maximise the area of shallow and seasonally inundated ground dominated by emergent plants: these are generally more tolerant of pollutants than submerged aquatic plants. To do this, create very gentle slopes at the water's edge (e.g. 1:50)
- Create undulating 'hummocky margins' in shallow water; these mimic the natural physical diversity of semi-natural habitats.
- Plant trees, scrub and wet woodland in the vicinity of the ponds: these provide a valuable habitat for amphibians and a food source for invertebrates.
- Encourage development of open and lightly shaded areas or pools; this will add to the diversity of habitats available.
- Encourage the development of mosaics of marginal plants (rather than single species stands) to maximise habitat structural diversity.
- Do not plant non-native water plants, trees, shrubs or grass mixes; take special care to avoid invasive alien plants such as Crassula helmsii.
- If the SUDs feature is of sufficient size islands that are inaccessible to the public or dogs should be provided. These islands should remain dry except in extreme storm conditions

7.3.1b Ditches/watercourses

- Ditch lines and water courses must be designed to provide significant ecological value. Susdrain provide good advice on how to achieve this with SUDs
- The maximum gradient of ditches is 1 in 6.
- Avoid culverting water courses or ditches and use bridges rather than culverts where paths and roads pass over these features.
- Ensure ditch lines are naturistic in appearance and mimic the meandering appearance of natural watercourses wherever possible.
- Permanent water should be provided for example in small ponds where suitable.
- Native planting and native emergent planting must be provided – avoid aggressive species like reed mace.

7.3.2 Public access

- Provide surfaced paths where required. Due to the urban setting tarmac paths are suitable in this location. Always set paths back as per our Parks requirements so at least 5m back from the edge of a bank. This allows for a mowing margin next to the path and am area of rough vegetation alongside the feature to deter entrance into it.
- Provide bins as necessary
- Provide interpretation to the public about the feature, why its there what it contains, what they might see etc, contact details of adoptee for example Severn Trent and of the management company so that any issues can be reported, describe what hazards are present and the safety precautions that are needed.

7.3.3 Maintenance

A maintenance plan of the SUDS must be provided including methods, frequencies, aims and associated monitoring/inspections. A plan of maintenance access routes must also be provided. All infrastructure and topography must facilitate safe and economic maintenance using commercial type machinery and vehicles.

7.3.4 Health and safety

An independent risk assessment of the design must be submitted showing how any concerns have been addressed and improved. The aim of the design should be to design out or significantly reduce hazards.

7.3.5 Adoption

The Borough Council will not adopt SUDs. We strongly advocate that the sewer function of SUDs will be adopted by Severn Trent, and so its design should be in accordance with their requirements, and the landscaping will normally be adopted by the landowner or management company.