Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Open Space and Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Introduction

2021

Nuneaton & Bedworth

United to Achieve

Contents

1. Introduction

Following the adoption of the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Plan in June 2019, this SPD provides supplementary planning guidance to Borough Plan Policies NE1 – Green infrastructure, NE2 - Open Space and NE3 - Biodiversity and geodiversity. The SPD therefore covers their interrelated policies and strategies.

This SPD (comprising all relevant component parts) explains the Council's requirements for publicly accessible green infrastructure/open space and explains how developers should deal with biodiversity which cuts across both public and private green spaces. Please note however that the scope of the SPD does not cover formal or organised sports and playing pitch provision. Those aspects are to be addressed separately under Policy HS6 and guidance supplementary to that policy. Nonetheless, new developments should consider and address the relevant principles set out in Sport England's Active Design checklist[1].

This SPD, which is split into separate documents relating to different types and scale of development, determines the land and facility requirements to be delivered by developments and explains the related planning obligations (whether through section 106 contributions or through Community Infrastructure Levy) that may be required.

This document is intended to be read by those conceiving the general layout of the development, by those locating, designing and laying out the open space and flood relief provisions and by those who will be responsible for protecting the existing and delivering the future ecological value of the site.

The SPD is to be viewed as a reference document for developers covering all relevant open space and green infrastructure considerations including publicly accessible greenspace, park provision, biodiversity, trees, sustainable drainage systems, accessible green network corridors and allotments. The Open Space and Green Infrastructure SPD sets the Council's expectations in terms of key principles and processes for developers to adhere to when masterplanning and delivering new development sites. As the SPD will act as a resource document for developers, this should help to 'frontload' the process as far as possible and help prevent protracted negotiations, or abortive work, at the planning application stage, and ultimately deliver sustainable and high quality development in the Borough.

2. Policy NE1 - Green Infrastructure

What is green infrastructure?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines green infrastructure as:

---

[1] https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/spe003-active-design-published-october-2015-email-2.pdf

'A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.'

Why have it?

Benefits that green infrastructure can provide include:

- **Opportunities for greener and more active travel** – accessible greenspace facilitated with footpaths and cycle paths can provide opportunities for active travel (walking and cycling) to employment and local facilities. This will help encourage a modal shift away from car use which can have positive impacts on areas affected by congestion and air pollution and reduce the carbon footprint of the development and help to make communities fitter.
- **Healthier communities** - appropriately facilitated greenspace can provide opportunities for sport, active recreation and active transport and this encourages active lifestyles, improving the health of local communities.
- Increased biodiversity - the provision of wildlife corridors, links and stepping stones provided a part of the green infrastructure that runs through the development will create a more permeable environment for wildlife and increases biodiversity.
- **Attractive places to live and work** – a well-designed and well-maintained green environment creates a more attractive and pleasant place to live and work.
- **Economic benefits** – An attractive environment draws investment, skilled workers, tourists, and economic activity and this boosts house prices.
- **Local and global climate benefits**. A living green environment plays it part in absorbing carbon, producing oxygen and cooling the local area.
- **Air and noise pollution reduction** – A living green landscape and in particular trees absorb air and noise pollution making it a more peaceful and pleasant environment to live and work in
- **Flood risk reduction** - Green areas absorb water, slowing its movement. Green areas can therefore reduce the rate of flow of water into drains helping to reduce flood risk.
- **Improved social cohesion** - Appropriately designed accessible green infrastructure/open space provides opportunities for people to meet and interact, pulling communities together and increasing cohesion.

What makes up green infrastructure in urban developments?

The green infrastructure that runs through a development can be made up of a wide range of green and living spaces. These spaces can be publicly accessible or private.

Publicly accessible green infrastructure may include:

Accessible land based green corridors
Accessible blue corridors made up of water-based networks including accessible rivers, streams, lakes, flood basins and sustainable drainage systems
Accessible Parks
Community Gardens and allotments

Private elements of green infrastructure may include:

Privately owned networks of living spaces within the built environment for example networks of gardens
Landscape buffers within industrial complexes
Inaccessible brooks and rivers, lakes and SuDS,
Private sports provision,
Private allotments
Farmland

What does our Borough Plan require from new development regarding Green Infrastructure?

The Borough plan states that:

'The borough's green infrastructure assets will be created, protected, managed and enhanced. New development proposals will create new, and enhance existing, green infrastructure assets.'

And it goes on to explain that:

'The delivery mechanisms for this policy are as follows:
• Green infrastructure requirements and mitigation for strategic housing sites.
• Implementation of the following policies: HS2 - Sustainable transport, HS5 - Health, NE4 - Managing flood risk and water quality, NE3 - Biodiversity and geodiversity, NE5 - Landscape character, as well as site specific policies.
• Delivery of Open Space Strategy.
• Delivery of Green Infrastructure Plan.
• Delivery of Allotment Strategy.
• Delivery of the proposed strategic cycle network plans'

This SPD outlines the different delivery mechanisms for Green infrastructure and develops a standard and proportionate way in which new development can deliver green infrastructure as part of their proposals.

3. Policy NE2 – Open space

What is open space?

The National Planning Policy Framework describes open space as "all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity"

This is the accessible elements of green infrastructure and is made up of an array of different types of green space that have recognised recreational value and which are fully accessible to the public.

What does the Borough Plan require from new development regarding Open Space?

The Borough plan states that:

'New development will create an improved green network of publicly accessible and linked open spaces to support growth by:

1. *Protecting and enhancing the hierarchy of open spaces which are made up of destination parks, community parks and local parks.*

2. *Creating new open spaces and links for the strategic housing sites.*

3. *Improving access to nature where there is a deficit of space.*

4. *Addressing open space through new provision or improving existing provision in line with standards set out in the Open Space Strategy.*

5. *Providing new allotments or improving existing allotments in order to enable communities to grow food where deficiencies exist, in line with standards set out in the Allotment Strategy.*

6. *Providing new or improving existing children's play facilities and facilities for young people in line with the standards in the Open Space Strategy.*

7. *Providing new playing fields in line with the Playing Pitch Strategy.*

8. *Creating a network of strategic and local walking and cycling routes in order to increase the connectivity of open spaces. '*

It goes on to explain that:

'The delivery mechanisms for this policy are as follows:

- *Open space requirements for strategic housing sites.*
- *Delivery of Open Space Strategy.*
- *Delivery of Green Infrastructure Plan.*
- *Delivery of Allotment Strategy.'*

This SPD seeks to create a standard and proportionate approach to delivering open space and open space facilities based on the needs of the different types and scales of development.

It explains what open space facilities need to be delivered on-site or contributed to off-site.

It also creates a standard for the different types of open space provision based on the Open space Strategy's aspirations so that all new developments of all different types offer high quality, recreationally valuable, sustainable, safe and secure open space that is of benefit to the communities that it serves.

4. Policy NE3 – Biodiversity and geodiversity

What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity is the variety of all living things on Earth. Retaining the variety of different animals and plants is essential to allow life to adapt to our planets' changing conditions.

A healthy environment is essential for everyone. Without a healthy environment we suffer increased impact from flood events, reduced food productivity, increased pests, lower house prices and we are more likely to suffer from poorer health.

The obligation for local authorities and developers to protect, enhance and provide new opportunities for wildlife is deeply entrenched in legislation, policies and agreements at international, European, national, regional and local level.

From United Nation agreements through to local polices the target is consistently to halt the decline of biodiversity and see gains for biodiversity wherever possible.

What does our Borough Plan say it requires from new development regarding Biodiversity?

Policy NE3 of the Borough plan states that:

'Development proposals will ensure ecological networks and services, and biodiversity and geological features are conserved, enhanced, restored and, where appropriate, created….

Geological diversity Development proposals will avoid adversely impacting sites of geological interest and, where appropriate, conserve and enhance such features for the enjoyment of residents, and for reasons of advancing local geological education.'

The Borough Plan reflects legal and policy requirements and emphasises the need to increase biodiversity, its connectivity and its resilience to climate change as part of development.

The strategy considers the nature of the biodiversity found within the Borough and recognises the great importance that Local Sites and Local Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species have in the local context especially regarding the ecological network.

With this knowledge it gives locally important sites, habitats and species substantial protection within its aims and targets.

The plan's targets are very clear on its approach to development and biodiversity and are included below for easy reference.

Policy reference	Target/indicator description	Target/indicator
NE3a	Deterioration in SSSI, Special Area of Conservation and local wildlife sites	No deterioration; maintain at favourable status
NE3b	Development causing habitat net losses	Zero
NE3c	Development causing a loss of Local Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species	Zero
NE3d	Planning permission granted on designated statutory sites and sites with high biodiversity distinctiveness	Zero
NE3e	Local wildlife sites in positive management	All local wildlife sites
NE3f	Increase or decrease in connectivity of ecological network.	Year on year increase

This SPD determines a standard approach for the different scales of development when surveying for biodiversity, protecting biodiversity and achieving net gains for biodiversity in line with the Borough and national policies and guidance.

5. Structure of this SPD

This SPD comprises 5 main component parts covering the various requirements for different development types:

Part A: Householder applications and small residential developments up to 9 dwellings developments

Part B: Residential developments of 10 or more dwellings

Part C: Supported living developments – covering applications such care homes, retirement living and assisted living developments

Part D: Commercial and Industrial developments

The below supporting document is to be read in conjunction with some of the documents (particularly Parts B, C and D) where applicable/referenced and is part of this SPD:

Appendix 1 - Detailed Design Standards for PAG compliant Parks, Allotments, Green Network Corridors and ASUDS

Other particularly relevant documents to this SPD which are available on request are:

- Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council's Tree Policy (as amended)
- Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council's Parks and Greenspaces Standard Specification (as amended)
- The Open Space Strategy (as amended)