



The Provision of Children's Play Space
within New Residential Development

Planning Guidance Note 11

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2.2 These principles can be translated into the following objectives:-

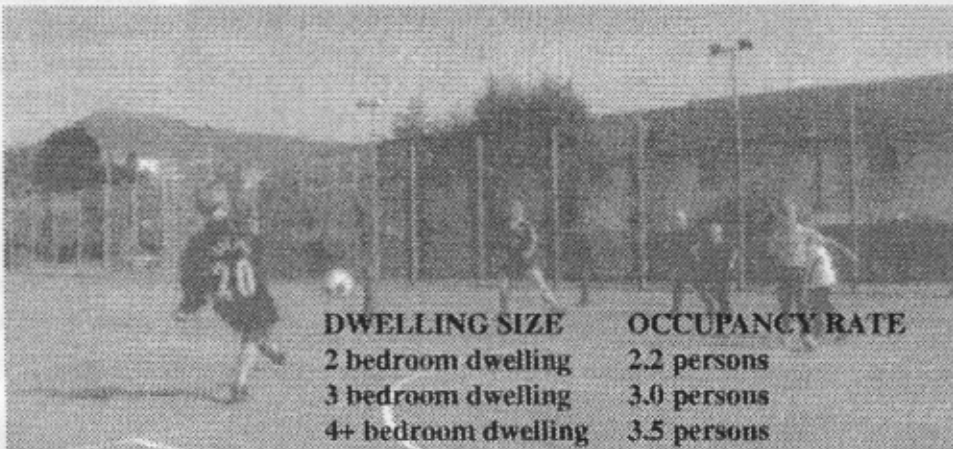
- A) Ideally all childrens play facilities will be provided on the development site to the appropriate standard, being:-
- i. The full amount and range of casual play space, some of which should, where practicable, be in the form of Local Areas for Play (LAPs), see section 5.3 - 5.4. Casual play space not in the form of LAPs should be clearly appropriate to meet the informal play needs of children, see section 5.2.
 - ii. The full amount of equipped play space in the form of Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) or Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs), see sections 5.5 - 5.7, where the development is large enough to accommodate the equipped element to a satisfactory standard and without undue impact on occupiers of existing or new housing.
- B) New residential development of 10 or more family dwellings will usually be able to accommodate all or a satisfactory amount of casual play space, to include LAPs, on site, see Section 6.4.
- C) In some cases the provision of equipped play space on site may be inappropriate or less desirable than off-site provision, where this can be provided in a location that meets the needs of the occupiers of the proposed development, see Section 4 and 6.1 - 6.3.

3. How much childrens play space am I required to provide in my residential development ?

3.1 The Council's standards for children's play space in new residential developments are based on the National Playing Field Association's (NPFA) standards. The significant amount of research carried out by the NPFA on such standards provides a sound basis for play requirements in new residential development. For developments consisting of 10 or more family dwellings it is expected that in the order of 6 - 8 sq metres of play space should be provided per person. Of this total amount it will be expected that between 2 - 3 sq meters per person of equipped play space is provided, and 4 - 5 sq meters per person of casual play space, see section 5.

But how many people are going to live in my development ?

3.2 The population generated by a proposed residential development is estimated by multiplying the number of proposed dwellings by the occupancy rate for each size of dwelling. The occupancy rates by size of dwelling, shown in the table (below), are based on data from the 1991 census result for Plymouth.



DWELLING SIZE	OCCUPANCY RATE
2 bedroom dwelling	2.2 persons
3 bedroom dwelling	3.0 persons
4+ bedroom dwelling	3.5 persons

So, how much play space will the Council require ?

- 3.3 By way of example, the following calculation shows the range of childrens play space that would be sought from a hypothetical development of 25 houses consisting of; 10 x 2 bed dwellings and 15 x 3 bed dwellings.

Estimated number of occupants according to the occupancy standard:

10 x 2 bedroomed dwellings	or	10 x 2.2 = 22 residents
15 x 3 bedroomed dwellings	or	15 x 3 = 45 residents
Total = 67 residents		

Total play space per resident = $6m^2$ to $8m^2$, therefore the range of play space sought from this development, by category, is:-

$2m^2$ to $3m^2$ x 67 = $134m^2$ to $201m^2$ of equipped play space

$4m^2$ to $5m^2$ x 67 = $268m^2$ to $335m^2$ of casual play space

$6m^2$ to $8m^2$ x 67 = $402m^2$ to $536m^2$ of total play space

But I'm not building family housing !

- 3.4 Some specialist types of development, such as sheltered housing, and single bedroom accommodation will not create a significant demand for children's play space. In such circumstances the requirement to provide childrens play facilities would be inappropriate. However, the residents of such schemes will benefit from the provision of amenity space and the Council will expect the provision of a satisfactory amount of such space to meet the needs of residents.

- 3.5 In cases where a proposal involves the conversion of an existing building into residential accommodation, the same method of calculating the amount of play space will be used where the conversion comprises of 10 or more units of family accommodation, i.e. 2 bedrooms or more. However, it is recognised that many conversions are more likely to have constrained sites and will be very limited in their ability to make on site provision in any capacity. Therefore, conversion will normally be expected to make financial contributions towards off-site provision for play in reasonable proximity to the site. The closest open spaces or parks will often present the best opportunity for off-site provision.

4. Do I need to provide play areas on the same site as my development ?

- 4.1 In some cases, it may not be appropriate to provide equipped childrens play facilities on the actual development site. This may be because of site constraints and/ or the close proximity of the site to an existing public open space or school grounds which have a reasonable degree of public access (where equipped childrens play facilities would be better located) or where an equipped space is likely to cause disturbance to occupiers of nearby dwellings. Where the provision of play facilities off-site is most appropriate, the Council will require the developer to contribute financially to the provision/ improvement of nearby play areas. The sum sought by the Council will be based on the amount of play area, by category, which would have otherwise been provided for on-site.
- 4.2 The standard in section 3 will be used to determine how much play space should be provided on site. For each square metre of play space, by category, that is not provided on-site the Council will require the developer to contribute £99.50p/sq meter for equipped play space and £45.00/sq meter for casual play space. This contribution will then be put towards the improvement / provision of nearby play areas.

- 4.3 Because the provision must be directly related to the development, such contributions will be used to improve or provide play facilities in a location(s) which serve and benefit occupants of the new development, in accordance with the distance criteria set out in Section 7. The exact proposals will be dependent on individual site circumstances in the light of the key principles behind this guidance note and the 'best fit' of the principles to the individual site circumstances.

5 What type of play space will the Council require ?

- 5.1 To meet the play needs of children in a new housing development the Council will require the provision of a range of play opportunities to allow for informal play close to home in the form of casual play space and more formal play opportunities in equipped play areas. This section also considers Amenity Open Space (which will be covered in more detail in the proposed Planning Guidance Note on Residential Development) recognising that such space can, in some circumstances, contribute to casual play space needs. Finally, this section also looks at alternative play provision that might be provided in less usual circumstances, in place of the formal equipped play space element.

Casual Play Space

- 5.2 Casual play spaces are areas within housing developments where informal children's play can take place. They should be appropriate, in terms of, design and safety to accommodate such activities as small scale 'kickabouts', 'tag' and impromptu informal play opportunities. Locations typically set aside within housing developments and which can not be classified as casual play space include; private gardens, narrow grass verges adjacent to 'un-calmed' roads and ornamental gardens/landscaping. In addition, playing fields appropriate for organised sporting activities do not come within this category. Creative estate design can readily accommodate casual play in areas such as; streets in front of housing (where there is appropriate traffic calming), around retained natural features and in the footpath network which should link LAPs or existing/ new open spaces, further information on the integration of casual play into estate design can be found in the additional information sheets, Section 12.
- 5.3 Some casual play space should, where practicable, be in the form of 'Local Areas for Play' (LAPs). These are essentially play areas without equipment, designed to meet the needs of mainly children aged 4 - 6 and their carers. Such areas should normally be fenced and around 100 sq metres in area and have a 5 metre buffer zone to the nearest dwelling. They should be appropriate for low key games such as hop scotch, or play with toys. Additional details on such sites can be found in the additional information sheets, Section 12..
- 5.4 In this category the Council will, where practicable, require an appropriate level of LAP provision, see distance criteria. Any remaining casual play space requirement can be made up with more informal space. This may include 'double counted' amenity open space where acceptable. Where a development is large enough the ideal provision will consist of a network of LAPs, connected by safe pedestrian routes that are appropriate for use as 'routes of play' and such routes will then contribute to the amount of casual play space required.
- 5.5 The design of LAPs will be such that older children, particularly teenagers, should not be attracted to congregating on them. This means they should be designed specifically for young children, have sufficient buffer zones and not include any active equipment. Any static equipment on them should be small scale to suit the needs of 4 - 6 year olds.
- 5.6 The challenge is put to developers and architects, to use their imagination, design skills and flair to integrate opportunities for childrens play into the wider residential environment, and to demonstrate, on drawings, where such space is proposed and that it is appropriate to meet the informal play needs of children.

Equipped Play Areas

- 5.7 Equipped play areas are areas set aside for children's play which contain equipment specifically for that purpose. The nature of play equipment will be dependent on the area's size and the age group which it intends to serve.
- 5.8 There are two main types of equipped play area which the Council promotes:

(i) **Locally Equipped Areas for Play**

Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) are unsupervised play areas which cater for children in the 4 - 8 years age range. They should provide a minimum of 5 types of play equipment and be surrounded by a dog proof barrier. They should normally be in the region of 400 sq metres in size and be surrounded by a buffer zone of 20 metres to the nearest dwelling.

(ii) **Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play**

Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs) are unsupervised play areas which cater for children in the 8 - 14 age range. A minimum of 8 types of play equipment should be provided and as with Locally Equipped Areas for Play a dog proof barrier should be installed around the whole area. Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play should normally be in the region of 1,000 sq metres in size and have a buffer zone of at least 30 metres in distance to any surrounding properties. Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play should also where possible provide some play equipment for younger children. This can help deter children from using equipment beyond their capacity and enable families to play together.

- 5.9 Important further information which should be adhered to when designing and locating both Locally Equipped Areas for Play and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play can be found in the additional information sheets, see section 12.

Amenity Open Space

- 5.10 There is no standard for the provision of amenity open space. Each site shall be treated on its merits, in relation to site circumstances and urban design considerations. Amenity open space will always be provided on the development site.
- 5.11 Amenity open space is space which allows occupiers of housing developments to enjoy visual and physical open space in the development by way of relief from enclosed space and bricks and mortar. It can be private or public, more often than not a combination of both. The provision of amenity open space is additional to the requirement to provide for childrens play space.
- 5.12 Amenity open space will often be provided for by elements of the following:
- Private gardens.*
 - Communal gardens or court yards.*
 - Incidental green breaks (open space); between houses, around protected trees or around protected nature conservation features.*
 - Soft landscaping.*
 - Grass verges, edging roads and footpaths.*
 - Recreational or public open space (formal or informal).*
 - Hard landscaping with seating and planters.*
 - Trees.*
- This list is illustrative, not exhaustive.
- 5.13 Purpose designed childrens play space can contribute towards amenity open space provision, but it will not provide for all the amenity open space necessary in a development.
- 5.14 In the main, it would be expected that amenity open space, particularly at the 'lower level' e.g. grass verges, private/ communal gardens, will not contribute towards the childrens play space

requirement. However, in some cases it may be appropriate to 'double count' amenity open space as childrens casual play space, or visa-versa, where the on site amenity open space is large enough and of appropriate design to safely accommodate casual childrens play space. Amenity open space will never contribute towards equipped childrens play space requirements.

Alternative Play Areas

- 5.15 In some circumstance the provision of formal equipped play areas (LEAPs or NEAPs) may be less desirable than an alternative form of childrens play. This might occur where there is already acceptable access to equipped play areas or where the site circumstances lend themselves to providing alternative facilities. Developments in some parts of the City occur on land in close proximity to natural areas, and it might be possible to make use of such areas for childrens play, where there would be no unacceptable conflicts with other interests such as nature conservation. The provision of alternative play facilities is likely to be rare and it is expected that the vast majority of cases will make use of the normal equipped play areas.
- 5.16 Alternative forms of children's play facilities might include the provision of facilities such as; skateboarding, junior trim trail, small scale multi-purpose courts, basket ball or adventure play areas. The essence is that such alternative facilities should be ones that will benefit children up to the age of 15 and provide opportunity for play and social contact in a reasonably unrestricted way. Alternative facilities which would not fall under this category are ones which are specifically intended to provide for organised sport where there might be a hierarchy of access, administration and management of the facility, charges for its use and restricted access by booking.

6 Will the type of play space required on my site be effected by the size of my development proposal ?

- 6.1 Yes, in the case of equipped play areas. Equipped play areas (LEAPs and NEAPs) should only be provided on development sites that are large enough to satisfactorily accommodate both the activity zone of the equipped area and buffer zone around it. To this end development sites consisting of less than 50 dwellings are unlikely to be large enough to provide LEAPs on site.
- 6.2 Where a development site is too small to satisfactorily accommodate an equipped play area and possibly and the full casual play space requirement, it is expected that the remainder of the play provision is provided for off-site via a financial contribution to the Council. The Council will then provide a new or improve an existing LEAP or NEAP (subject to the distance criteria and which ever is the nearer) in the reasonable proximity of the development. Where no such LEAP/ NEAP provision is possible within reasonable access to the development to serve its occupants or the remaining financial contribution is too small in itself to make new provision or improved provision, the City Council will hold any financial contribution for a period of 5 years from completion of the development and if no additional money or site can be found in that time the original contribution will be returned.
- 6.3 In the past relatively small development sites have been required to provide small equipped play areas on site (effectively mini LEAPs). Such play areas have on occasions acted as magnets for groups of older children and teenagers to meet and socialise in the evenings. Due to the proximity of these play areas to dwellings, on the smaller sites, the level of noise and disturbance, some times at unsociable hours, has had undesirable effects on the amenities of occupants of nearby dwellings.
- 6.4 However, there is still an essential need to make adequate provision for younger children's informal play on site, where they can play with the active or passive supervision of parents and the community close to home. To achieve provision which is necessary for young children, whilst