

Open Space Development Plan

2007 - 2010

**South Derbyshire District Council
Leisure & Community Development
October 2007**

Purpose and Scope

This plan will enable SDDC to work with partners and communities to ensure residents and visitors have access to high quality public open space across South Derbyshire.

All forms of Open Space are included for, from Formal Parks and Gardens to Play & Recreation areas, Allotments, Cemeteries and Nature areas/Wildspaces.

Context

The role of development, promotion and management of Open Space sits within the Leisure & Community Development Division of South Derbyshire District Council. The aim of the service is to improve the quality of people's lives by providing opportunities to live in a safe, healthy, active and sustainable environment.

Open Space development and management is a cross-cutting work area and has direct links to the following documents and strategies: SDDC Corporate Plan, South Derbyshire Community Strategy, SDDC Consultation Strategy, PPG17 Strategy & Action Plan, Leisure & Community Development Service Plan, Crime & Disorder Strategy, Sport Recreation & Physical Activity Strategy, Play Strategy, Play & Youth Facilities Plan, Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan, Maurice Lea Park Management Plan, Performance & Marketing Plan, National Forest Strategy, South Derbyshire Greenways Strategy, South Derbyshire Environmental Audit (DWT for the LSP).

Background

In January 2001 the Government established The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce to advise on proposals for improving the quality of urban parks, play areas and open spaces. Emphasis was placed on the need for strategic planning for such areas to take place alongside other strategies such as community development, community safety and economic regeneration. (*Source: Wasted Space, CABE, 2003*)

Open spaces can deliver a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits. Good parks and open space provision contributes to the following themes:

- Recreation
- Physical and mental health
- The quality and liveability of built areas
- Community safety
- Urban regeneration
- Children and Young people's development
- Social inclusion
- Vehicular transport and air pollution
- Economic development and tourism
- Environmental sustainability and biodiversity.

The scope of the role also fits comfortably within the framework of the Community Strategy, under the Sustainable Environment theme group, with links to the Lifelong Learning and Culture and Vibrant Economy themes.

The Council's Corporate Plan 2007–2010 contains actions that are reliant on the development of Open Space, such as promoting healthier lifestyles, reducing fear of crime, improving the quality of the environment, helping communities to improve their areas and investing in recreation and leisure facilities.

Delivery

The development and management of Open Space operates within a partnership setting, working to achieve 4 strategic aims:

- Improve the quality of open space across South Derbyshire
- Increase use, awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of Open Spaces within the District
- Create Safe Spaces through increased Community Engagement and Ownership
- Ensure new provision for open space meets the economic, social and environmental needs of the District

The broad objectives of this Plan are to:

- develop a vision shared by Members, officers, key partners, stakeholders and communities;
- generate political and inter-departmental support for parks and open spaces;
- define the value and role of parks and open spaces in meeting corporate and community aims;
- ensure that the open space network meets the needs of local people, now and in the future;
- make sure that open spaces enhance the quality and diversity of the environment, the life of local communities and promote civic pride and social inclusion;
- create a framework for voluntary and community groups to participate in green space provision and long term management;
- provide a framework for resource allocation that maximises funding to support improvements(internal budgets/external funding opportunities)
- provide quality and management targets (e.g Green Flag) for all types of open space

The Plan is co-ordinated by the Open Space Development Officer (OSDO), with key links to the Grounds Maintenance Team and Planning, and connecting to other SDDC departments. External partners have responsibility for areas of public open space across the District. Strong partnerships exist with Derbyshire County Council, the National Forest Company, Forestry Commission, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), and Parish Councils, which will be further developed and enhanced through the delivery of the Plan.

Planning for new Open Space

The remit for the provision of new open space in proposed developments lies with the Local Planning Authority, and is concerned with ensuring there is adequate provision for the number of new and existing residents across the District. Mapping of open space has been carried out, which highlights areas of deficiency, which can be provided for when new developments come on line.

The key document which underpins this is the PPG17 Open Spaces Action Plan, which enables SDDC to benefit from appropriate planning obligations from new residential developments within the District. This guidance is supplemented by the open space assessment, which justifies demand for provision and improvements in its quality.

A key role of the Open Space Development Officer will be to strengthen links between the Leisure & Community Development and Planning Divisions, and ensure that obligations are met by developers when providing for open space related to new residential developments, in order to improve the quality of open space provision in the District.

ACTION PLAN 2007 - 2010

Key to Abbreviations:

OSDO – Open Space Development Officer
 SM – Service Manager (Grounds & Facilities)
 PO – Policy Officer (Consultation)
 EDM – Environmental Development Manager
 HLO – Healthy Lifestyle Officer
 DDA – Disability Discrimination Act
 ASB – Anti-Social Behaviour
 LBAP – Local Biodiversity Action Plan

LSM – Leisure Services Manager
 SSDP – Safer South Derbyshire Partnership
 FDO – Facilities Development Officer
 PPO – Planning Policy Officers
 DCO – Development Control Officers
 SLA – Service Level Agreement
 PPG17 – Planning Policy Guidance 17

DEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING OPEN SPACES					
Theme	Action	Resources	Responsibility	Timescale	Status
Community Engagement	Re-form Friends Of Groups on all parks and other identified key sites and seek to establish sustainability of groups.	Existing resources	OSDO SM	March 2009	
	Facilitate community consultation on proposed improvements to Open Spaces, using Consultation Toolkit.	Existing resources/ partners	OSDO PO	Ongoing	
	Deliver community engagement programmes on identified parks in line with funding bids	Existing resources/SLA partners	OSDO	December 08	
	Work with partners to deliver opportunities for participation in activities on Open Spaces e.g. physical/cultural activities/walking festival/arts events	Existing resources/ Partners	OSDO HLO LSM	Ongoing	
Community Safety	Work with multi-agency group to address ASB issues relating to Parks & Open Space	Existing resources/ partners	SSDP OSDO	Quarterly meetings	
	Deliver projects (e.g. target hardening, diversionary activities, education projects) on affected sites with partners	Existing resources/ partners	SSDP OSDO	Ongoing	

Promotion/ Marketing	Develop 'Open Spaces' section of SDDC Website as portal for site-based information, events listings and latest news, and update regularly.	Existing resources	OSDO	December 08	
	Undertake Interpretation projects on identified sites to improve public awareness of heritage/history & wildlife.	Existing resources/ partners	OSDO	March 2009	
	Promote Open Spaces as a venue to other officers/partners (e.g. activities, events, displays) to increase usage	Existing resources	OSDO	Ongoing	
	Promote Allotments to increase uptake of vacant plots to 100%	Existing resources	OSDO	Ongoing	
Infrastructure/ Capital works	Carry out Access Audit to all SDDC parks to assess accessibility for disabled users in line with DDA legislation. Develop and implement improvement plans as required under statute.	Disability Access Group/Existing staff/External funding	OSDO	Jan 08 - audit March 2010 - works	
	Deliver programme of Capital improvements to SDDC sites and facilitate improvements to partners' sites as identified through consultation, design and working with partners	External fundraising/ s106/ Sponsorship/ partners	OSDO FDO	Ongoing	
Play/ Recreation	Deliver improvements to SDDC Play sites and Youth Facilities sites as identified in Play/Youth Facilities Improvement Plan, Big Lottery 'Get Playing' programme and Youth Opportunities projects.	SDDC Capital/ External funding/ partners	LSM OSDO	Annual programme	
	Provide support and advice to Parish Councils and Community Groups for upgrading facilities	Existing resources	OSDO	Ongoing	
Quality Standards/ Evaluation	Use Green Flag Assessment as guidance for improving quality standards on Open Spaces	Existing resources	OSDO SM	Ongoing	
	Develop written Service Standards for Parish owned/leased play sites maintained by SDDC	Existing resources	OSDO	June 08	
	Use Citizen's Panel and focus groups to carry out user surveys and monitor satisfaction levels	Existing resources	OSDO PO	Annual review & monitoring	

MANAGEMENT OF OPEN SPACES

Theme	Action	Resources	Responsibility	Timescale	Status
Community Engagement	Deliver Community Action Days with e.g. schools/Friends Of groups/community groups to carry out practical conservation tasks on identified sites.	Existing resources/ Partners	OSDO EDM	Ongoing	
	Explore options for development of Community Gardens/Schools' plots on Allotment sites with unused capacity with links to Healthy Eating/Lifestyle agenda	Existing resources	OSDO EDM HLO	Ongoing	
Habitat creation/Site Management	Work with partners to manage sites for Biodiversity, and develop management plans for 'Wildspace' sites in line with LBAP targets & PPG17	Existing resources/ partners	OSDO	By March 2010	
	Develop 5 year Management and Development Plans to ensure appropriate provisions are in place for future management, maintenance and development of key sites, including options for private/community sector management arrangements where appropriate	Existing resources/ Partners	OSDO LSM SM	By March 2010	
Quality Standards/ status	Achieve Local Nature Reserve designation of identified sites across the District in line with national biodiversity targets	Existing resources/ partners	OSDO	By March 2010	
	Retain/attain Green Flag status on key parks, as a recognised quality standard	Existing resources/ partners	LSM SM	Annual application	
Allotments	Re-establish Allotments forum and consult with members to produce Action plan. Identified infrastructure works to be funded by external grants and reinvestment of rents	Existing resources/ external funding	OSDO	Ongoing	
	Provide assistance for Associations to become Self-Managed including guidance through ratification of lease agreement and retention/reinvestment of rents	Existing resources	OSDO	By March 2010	

PROVISION OF NEW OPEN SPACE

Theme	Action	Resources	Responsibility	Timescale	Status
Planning Policy	Work with Planning Policy officers to produce 'Guidelines for Development' document, establishing principles of landscape design in new development	Existing resources	OSDO PPO	March 2008	
	Provide expertise and undertake work on Local Development Framework and subsequent Core Strategy documents (as replacement for Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance)	Existing resources	OSDO PPO	March 2009	
Development Control	Engage in pre-planning discussions with developers to raise quality of new open space provision, play sites and landscaping and ensure consistency of design	Existing resources	OSDO DCO	Ongoing	
	Provide support and professional expertise in relation to planning appeals and planning enquiries where required	Existing resources	OSDO	Ongoing	
	Comment on Planning applications (Landscape/Play/Open Space) as internal consultee	Existing resources	OSDO LSM SM	Ongoing	
	Seek to increase biodiversity by designation of Local Sites through Planning process (e.g. Local Nature Reserves/Wildlife Sites)	Existing resources/ Partners	OSDO DCO PPO	Ongoing	
	Work with Developers throughout construction phase to ensure sites identified for adoption are released in suitable condition at handover stage	Existing resources	OSDO SM	Ongoing	