

# Draft SPG: Recreational Public Open Space

## Wellbeing Impact Assessment Report

This report summarises the likely impact of a proposal on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

Assessment Number:	83
Brief description:	An updated Draft SPG on Recreational Open Space looking at the thresholds for onsite provision in the County in ensuring the design and layout of types of open space considered by developers onsite is of excellent quality. Where open space can not be provided for onsite, a commuted sum is required to improve off- site areas of open space in order for the community to receive the maximum benefit from the new development to mitigate the increased usage from residents of the new development.
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Completed By:	Luci Duncalf
Responsible Service:	Planning & Public Protection
Localities affected by the proposal:	Whole County,

# IMPACT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Before we look in detail at the contribution and impact of the proposal, it is important to consider how the proposal is applying the sustainable development principle. This means that we must act "in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

## Score for the sustainability of the approach

Could some small changes in your thinking produce a better result?

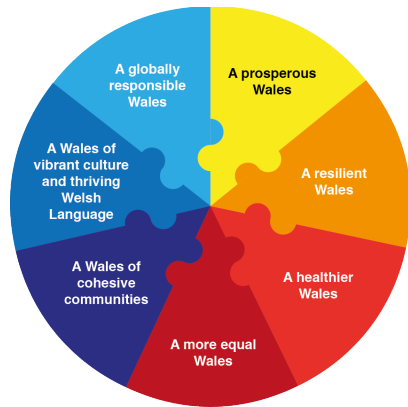
(3 out of 4 stars)



Actual score: 18/ 24.

## Summary of impact

Wellbeing Goals



A prosperous Denbighshire	Positive
A resilient Denbighshire	Positive
A healthier Denbighshire	Neutral
A more equal Denbighshire	Positive
A Denbighshire of cohesive communities	Positive
A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Positive
A globally responsible Denbighshire	Neutral

## Main conclusions

Open space areas promote healthy lifestyles and encourage people to get out and enjoy the natural environment. The more accessible areas are to the population the more likely they are to use them which is upheld by the SPG stating that open space must directly benefit the residents of new development. However, a potential negative consequence could be that if money is invested in off-site facilities which still must be directly linked to the new development, they may encourage more car use in order to access these areas if they are deemed too far to walk or cycle to. Nevertheless, open space also enhances the attractiveness of areas and therefore raises the economic value of towns. This is important as maintaining good quality open spaces will help to ensure that Denbighshire remains an attractive place to live and work.

The design of open spaces is encouraged to protect and enhance the natural environment. Wildflower planting on areas that were previously maintained such as amenity green spaces could improve the local species diversity that are right on people's doorsteps, however, if information boards are to be provided, there may be additional costs associated. Encouragement of improvements to the natural green spaces as an option for enhancing off-site facilities will impact a large proportion of the population who use these sites on a regular basis. Encouraging low carbon methods of transport and location of open space areas with good accessibility to local people- within walking/cycling distance. Encourages people to access their natural environment more if it is on their door step. Contributions can help to maintain larger conservation sites and raise peoples awareness of the environment and

biodiversity in the location. Improvements to the active travel networks that link open spaces and residential areas together will encourage their use. However, may increase car use if there happens to be a particularly good provision of open space with a multitude of different facilities that people can access in a location away from the new development (it must still be linked to the new development) if it was felt developer contribution money would be better spent on an off-site facility such as this for example. Open space areas can be built with flood management in mind for example grassed sports pitches that can absorb the excess flood water through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). Open space contributions can help with the mitigation of such areas and include Green Infrastructure in the design of new open spaces. The open space of this type may be unusable for a period of time following a flood event. This may limit access if that is the only provision in an area, therefore ensure there are multiple forms of provision dispersed around the settlement will ensure people always have access to open space and can benefit from the positive impacts that it creates to their lives.

Well designed open space will encourage frequent use and people to get together and socialise and encourage people to get in touch with nature which has been proven to improve people's mental health and well-being. Walking and cycling are encouraged and improvements can be made to the active travel network with developer contributions which will improve people's health. Improvements to off-site natural green space areas may be more beneficial and used by a wider proportion of the population than small patches of maintained green space near to a new development that offer little amenity value. Evidence has shown that more trees and vegetation cover can reduce the occurrence of crimes in that area. However, if a site is located adjacent to a residential development there may be geographical issues such as noise and disturbance created by children playing for example. There is also an opportunity to promote community growing initiatives that encourage a wider group of the population of an area to participate in. An alternative could be for contributions from developers to go towards larger off-site open space facilities and help to improve them and encourage more frequent participation. However, these more 'formal' provisions of open space may incur a cost to use or hire the facilities. This may be unaffordable to a proportion of the population and result in them not having the opportunity to access these type of facilities at all. Well designed open space will encourage frequent use and people to get together and socialise and encourage people to get in touch with nature which has been proven to improve people's mental health and well-being. Design guidance provides information on accessibility for people with disabilities and considers everyone's needs. However, some people may not be able to afford a bike and are limited to accessing open space on foot. This may be an issue if the open space site is located too far away.

Design guidance provides information on location and design of open space in new developments for natural surveillance and also the contributions to the improvements of off-site facilities. This enhances the economic value of the area and will encourage people to want to live there. Evidence has shown that more trees and vegetation cover can reduce the occurrence of crimes in that area. However, existing open space that is poorly located within housing estates can attract anti social behaviour problems and create a sense of fear in the community and therefore reduce the overall attractiveness of the area.

The guidance mentions the use of the Welsh language and incorporating it into children's play areas. This will help to create a stimulating learning environment and help children to retain words and phrases much better, often without them feeling like they are learning. This is compliant with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Act (1993).

# THE LIKELY IMPACT ON DENBIGHSHIRE, WALES AND THE WORLD

## A prosperous Denbighshire

Overall Impact:	Positive
Justification for Impact:	I think the impact is positive overall. This is because the open space areas promote healthy lifestyles and encourage people to get out and enjoy the natural environment. The more accessible areas are to the population the more likely they are to use them. However, a potential negative consequence could be that if money is invested in off-site facilities, this may encourage more car use in order to access these areas if they are not on people's doorsteps, however the site must be directly linked to the development. Nevertheless, open space also enhances the attractiveness of areas and therefore raises the economic value of towns. This is important as maintaining good quality open spaces will help to ensure that Denbighshire remains an attractive place to live and work.

### **Positive consequences identified:**

Open space accessible to people on foot, promotes walking and healthy lifestyles through encouraging physical activity and the associated health benefits that come with this such as improvements to mental and physical well being.

Well designed public open space raises the economic value through attractiveness of an area. Maintaining the quality of open spaces in our towns will help to ensure that Denbighshire remains an attractive place to live and work. Improvements to the active travel networks that link open spaces and residential areas could be an attractive motivator for environmentally conscious people to move to the area.

Open space areas can be used to encourage educational tours and the enjoyment of the natural environment. Wildflower planting on areas that were previously maintained such as amenity greenspaces could provide information boards on the local species that are right on people's doorsteps.

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

May increase car use if there happens to be a particularly good provision of open space with a multitude of different facilities that people can access in a location away from the new development if it was felt developer contribution money would be better spent on an off-site facility such as this for example. However, the off site facility must still be linked to the new development.

Increase in car/bus or coach use to access these areas if they are a distance away from schools/ residential areas. Lowered maintenance costs with natural greenspace sites however, may have increased costs to provide information boards at these areas.

### **Mitigating actions:**

To ensure the availability of open space areas within walking distance of the population to encourage use and promote healthy lifestyles. The closer they are to people's homes, the more likely they are to use them and access them by sustainable means of transport such as by bike or on foot. Open spaces also need to retain their attractiveness and be multifunctional such as flood drainage storage as well as a sports pitch or to increase the biodiversity of an area by having wildflowers planted on amenity greenspaces. These will reduce maintenance costs and increase the attractiveness of the area whilst adding an educational element to the sites.

## A resilient Denbighshire

Overall Impact:	Positive
Justification for Impact:	<p>The design of open spaces is encouraged to protect and enhance the natural environment. Wildflower planting on areas that were previously maintained such as amenity green spaces could improve the local species diversity that are right on people's doorsteps, however, if information boards are to be provided, there may be additional costs associated. Encouragement of improvements to the natural green spaces as an option for enhancing off-site facilities will impact a large proportion of the population who use these sites on a regular basis. Encouraging low carbon methods of transport and location of open space areas with good accessibility to local people- within walking distance. Encourages people to access their natural environment more if it is on their door step. Contributions can help to maintain larger conservation sites and raise peoples awareness of the environment and biodiversity in the location. Improvements to the active travel networks that link open spaces and residential areas together will encourage their use. However, an offsite facility may increase car use if there the off site facility is a location away from the new development - it must still be directly linked to the new development. Open space areas can be built with flood management in mind for example grassed sports pitches that can absorb the excess flood water through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). Open space contributions can help with the mitigation of such areas and include Green Infrastructure in the design of new open spaces. The open space of this type may be unusable for a period of time following a flood event. This may limit access if that is the only provision in an area, therefore ensure there are multiple forms of provision dispersed around the settlement will ensure people always have access to open space and can benefit from the positive impacts that it creates to their lives.</p>

### Positive consequences identified:

The design of open spaces is encouraged to protect and enhance the natural environment. Wildflower planting on areas that were previously maintained such as amenity greenspaces could improve the local species diversity that are right on people's doorsteps. Encouragement of improvements to the natural green spaces as an option for enhancing off-site facilities will impact a large proportion of the population who use these sites on a regular basis. Encouraging low carbon methods of transport and location of open space areas with good accessibility to local people- within walking distance. Improvements to the active travel networks that link open spaces and residential areas together will encourage their use.

Encourages people to access their natural environment more if it is on their door step. Contributions can help to maintain larger conservation sites and raise peoples awareness of the environment and biodiversity in the location.

Open space areas can be built with flood management in mind for example grassed sports pitches that can absorb the excess flood water through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). Open space contributions can help with the mitigation of such areas and include Green Infrastructure in the design of new open spaces.

### Unintended negative consequences identified:

Costs associated with the provision of information boards.

May increase car use if there is a good off site provision of open people can access in a location away from the new development- it must still be directly linked to the new development.

Costs associated with the provision of information boards.

Open space may be unusable for a period of time following a flood event. This may limit access if that is the only provision in an area.

**Mitigating actions:**

Open space contributions can help with the mitigation of areas susceptible to flooding and include Green Infrastructure in the design of new open spaces. It is important to maintain access arrangements for Denbigh Flood Risk Management Scheme when designing new open space sites near to flood risk areas. A mitigating action could be to ensure there are multiple forms of provision dispersed around the settlement to ensure people always have access to open space and can benefit from the positive impacts that it creates to their lives.

## A healthier Denbighshire

Overall Impact:	Neutral
Justification for Impact:	Well designed open space will encourage frequent use and people to get together and socialise and encourage people to get in touch with nature which has been proven to improve people's mental health and well-being. Walking and cycling are encouraged and improvements can be made to the active travel network with developer contributions which will improve people's health. Improvements to off-site natural green space areas may be more beneficial and used by a wider proportion of the population than small patches of maintained green space near to a new development that offer little amenity value. Evidence has shown that more trees and vegetation cover can reduce the occurrence of crimes in that area. However, if a site is located adjacent to a residential development there may be geographical issues such as noise and disturbance created by children playing for example. There is an opportunity to promote community growing initiatives that encourage a wider group of the population of an area to participate in. An alternative could be for contributions from developers to go towards larger off-site open space facilities and help to improve them and encourage more frequent participation. However, these more 'formal' provisions of open space may incur a cost to use or hire the facilities. This may be unaffordable to a proportion of the population and result in them not having the opportunity to access these type of facilities at all.

### **Positive consequences identified:**

Well designed open space will encourage frequent use and people to get together and socialise and encourage people to get in touch with nature which has been proven to improve people's mental health and well-being. Walking and cycling are encouraged and improvements can be made to the active travel network with developer contributions which will improve people's health.

Contributions from developers could go towards larger off-site open space facilities and help to improve them and encourage more frequent participation. There is an opportunity to promote community growing initiatives that encourage a wider group of the population of an area to participate in.

Well designed open space will encourage frequent use and encourage people to get in touch with nature which has been proven to improve people's mental health and well-being. Improvements to off-site natural green space areas may be more beneficial and used by a wider proportion of the population than small patches of maintained green space near to a new development that offers little amenity value. Evidence has shown that more trees and vegetation cover can reduce the occurrence of crimes in that area. Walking and cycling are encouraged and improvements can be made to the active travel network with developer contributions which will improve people's mental and physical health.

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

If a site is located adjacent to a residential development there may be geographical issues such as noise and disturbance created by children playing for example.

More 'formal' provision of open space may incur a cost to use or hire the facilities. This may be unaffordable to a proportion of the population and result in them not having the opportunity to access these type of facilities at all.

### **Mitigating actions:**

Where improvements are to be made or enhancing the provision of more 'formal' provisions of open space, for

example, sports pitches, artificial turf pitches (ATPs), Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) etc there needs to be a consideration for the costs to hire and use these facilities so that it does not discriminate against a proportion of the population who may not be able to afford to use these facilities. Improving larger sites can encourage people to access these sites if there is a range of facilities there and participate in leisure opportunities rather than potentially creating a disturbance to neighbours by playing ball games close to people's houses who may get annoyed by this type of activity playing on their doorstep.



## A more equal Denbighshire

Overall Impact:	Positive
Justification for Impact:	Well designed open space will encourage frequent use and people to get together and socialise and encourage people to get in touch with nature which has been proven to improve people's mental health and well-being. Design guidance provides information on accessibility for people with disabilities and considers everyone's needs. Walking and cycling are encouraged and improvements can be made to the active travel network with developer contributions which will improve people's physical and mental health. However, some people may not be able to afford a bike and are limited to accessing open space on foot. This may be an issue if the open space site is located too far away.

### **Positive consequences identified:**

Well designed open space will encourage frequent use and people to get together and socialise and encourage people to get in touch with nature which has been proven to improve people's mental health and well-being. Design guidance provides information on accessibility for people with disabilities and considers everyone's needs. Well designed open space will encourage frequent use and people to get together and socialise and encourage people to get in touch with nature which has been proven to improve people's mental health and well-being. Walking and cycling are encouraged and improvements can be made to the active travel network with developer contributions which will improve people's physical and mental health.

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

Some people may not be able to afford a bike and are limited to accessing open space on foot. This may be an issue if the open space site is located too far away.

### **Mitigating actions:**

It must be ensured that open space is situated near to developments. An option could be to provide free hire bikes in certain areas which will encourage people to access areas further away than they would normally. Organised groups for walking and cycling will help to encourage people to access local open spaces in their area and so developer contribution money could go towards these types of provisions rather than physical piece of open space or improving access of circular routes that are on the Public Rights Of Way network through the removal of stiles and providing wheelchair accessible kissing gates for example.

## A Denbighshire of cohesive communities

Overall Impact:	Positive
Justification for Impact:	Design guidance provides information on location and design of open space in new developments for natural surveillance and also the contributions to the improvements of off-site facilities. This enhances the economic value of the area and will encourage people to want to live there. Evidence has shown that more trees and vegetation cover can reduce the occurrence of crimes in that area. Walking and cycling are encouraged and improvements can be made to the active travel network with developer contributions to make these networks safer to use which will also improve people's mental and physical health. However, existing open space that is poorly located within housing estates can attract anti social behaviour problems and create a sense of fear in the community and therefore reduce the overall attractiveness of the area.

### **Positive consequences identified:**

Design guidance provides information on location and design of open space in new developments for natural surveillance and also the contributions to the improvements of off-site facilities. Evidence has shown that more trees and vegetation cover can reduce the occurrence of crimes in that area. Walking and cycling are encouraged and improvements can be made to the active travel network with developer contributions to make these networks safer to use which will also improve people's mental and physical health.

Design guidance provides information on location and design of open space in new developments and also the contributions to the improvements of off-site facilities. This enhances the economic value of the area and will encourage people to want to live there.

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

Existing open space that is poorly located within housing estates can attract anti social behaviour problems. Poorly maintained open space sites can attract anti social behaviour problems and create a sense of fear in the community and therefore reduce the overall attractiveness of the area.

### **Mitigating actions:**

The SPG provides guidance on the types of off-site open space facilities that developer contributions can go towards. There is also guidance on the location of open space on-site too which will reduce the chances of attracting anti social behaviour issues to new areas. This will help to reduce any sense of fear that can be associated with poorly located open space sites and help to maintain the overall attractiveness of the area.

## A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Overall Impact:	Positive
Justification for Impact:	The guidance mentions the use of the Welsh language and incorporating it into children's play areas. This will help to create a stimulating learning environment and help children to retain words and phrases much better, often without them feeling like they are learning. This is compliant with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Act (1993).

### **Positive consequences identified:**

The guidance mentions the use of the Welsh language and incorporating it into children's play areas. This will help to create a stimulating learning environment and help children to retain words and phrases much better, often without them feeling like they are learning.

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

### **Mitigating actions:**

## A globally responsible Denbighshire

Overall Impact:	Neutral
Justification for Impact:	I think the impact is neutral overall because whilst the provision of open space and the maintenance of sites could be carried out by local labour forces and companies, specialised play equipment may not be available locally and from local suppliers. A transition to more naturalistic play areas may reduce the overall maintenance costs, however, if proper maintenance isn't carried out then this responsibility may fall to the Council.

### **Positive consequences identified:**

Provision of new open space and maintenance of sites by commuted sums could be carried out by local labour forces and companies.

Transition to more naturalistic play areas for example may reduce the burden of maintenance costs as they may require less.

### **Unintended negative consequences identified:**

Specialised play equipment may not be available locally or from local suppliers.

If proper maintenance isn't carried out then this responsibility may fall to the Council

### **Mitigating actions:**

The SPG requires a adequate maintenance arrangements put in place as a condition of planning permission.

Bonds are also required to secure adequate completion of the site.