

Formal Green Space

Urban Parks

The city has identified a hierarchy of provision for its parks and open spaces. Within that hierarchy the sites defined as parks and open space (Premier Park, Area Park, Neighbourhood Park, Country Park, Principal Open Space, Incidental Open Space and Ornamental Areas) are important elements of the city's green space and are shown on the Policies Map. They provide a sense of place for the local community and provide landscape quality to particular densely populated urban areas of the city.

Outdoor Sports Facilities

Outdoor sports provision considers grass pitches across the city, both public and private on dedicated sites or in other open spaces such as parks. It also considers other sports provision such as bowls, tennis and athletics that may also be on specific sites or in other spaces. There is a good distribution of sports pitches across the city and the level of community use needs to be monitored to enable on-going supply and demand calculations to be established in accordance with the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy. The way in which sports pitches are provided and maintained is changing, especially those in public ownership. In this context, opportunities to create 'hub sites' will be supported where a grouping of pitches can be provided in a single location to meet the needs of a range of sports and teams.

Informal Green Space

Natural and Semi Natural Spaces

It is widely understood that sites of natural or semi-natural green space, that are accessible, enhance the quality of life for people. The wildlife and biodiversity benefits that these sites also contribute are often neglected. Biodiversity is important to the quality of the air that people breathe, to the richness in variety of species in an area and as an indicator of the health and quality of a local environment. These areas not only have benefits in terms of biodiversity, they can also be valuable to local economies and as a tourism asset. It is important to recognise that the public rights of way network may serve to provide people in the area with access to the wider countryside.

Play Areas

For the purposes of developing the Green Space Strategy, provision for children and young people has concentrated on the fixed play provision within the city and consists of equipped play areas and other specialist provision, such as multi-use games areas and wheeled play provision or skate parks. However, children play in a wide variety of other places as well.

Coventry also has a Play Pitch Strategy to improve play opportunities for children and young people entitled 'Something to do' developed by a range of Council services in partnership with the voluntary sector. The Play Pitch Strategy will be used to help the Council and its partners:

- Develop better and more local and inclusive play spaces and opportunities;
- Create a more child-friendly public realm;
- Ensure that neighbourhood play areas that are safely accessible by young children are provided in all new residential developments;
- Improve understanding of the importance of children's play across the range of policy areas that have an impact on children's lives;
- Embed play within key strategic plans and initiatives.

This Strategy will be regularly monitored to reflect any changes in policy, funding, legislation, other strategies or plans. Local consultation with communities will also be fed back into the Strategy. It will also be used to help inform planning decisions about play, including developer contributions, with particular reference to natural and informal play opportunities for children and young people. As such it supports the development of the IDP. The Council will seek to protect open space of value to the community and provide accessibility to a sufficient quantity and quality, including the provision of parks and open spaces, natural green space, provision for children and young people, outdoor sports and allotments. In order to achieve this, the Council will seek to enhance and improve areas of existing open space, and to provide new types of open space where there is a deficiency in quantity, quality or accessibility. In seeking to improve play opportunities for children and young people, the strategy will be supported, with particular reference to promoting natural and informal play opportunities.

Functional Green Space

Allotments and Community Gardens

Allotments provide a key type of provision within the overall portfolio of open space and recreation facilities, whilst also making a valuable contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of local people. As such, the value of allotments is significant, providing facilities for physical activity in addition to the promotion of healthy eating and educational value. The provision of allotments is a statutory function for local authorities under a number of acts including the 1950 Allotment Act. There is some indication that waiting lists are increasing and that allotments are becoming more popular. Over recent years there has been a growing interest in the development and establishment of community gardens which are similar to the more traditional allotment provision but offer an alternative that is less formal and potentially easier to integrate within urban environments.

Churchyards and Cemeteries

Cemeteries and closed churchyards can provide a valuable contribution to the portfolio of open space provision within an area. For many, they can provide a place for quiet contemplation in addition to their primary purpose as a final resting place. They often have wildlife conservation and biodiversity value also.

Policy GE2: Green Space

1. Development involving the loss of green space that is of value for amenity, recreational, outdoor sports and/or community use will not be permitted unless specifically identified as part of a strategic land use allocation, or it can be demonstrated that:
 - a) An assessment showing there is no longer a demand, or prospect of demand, for the recreational use of the site or any other green space use; or
 - b) A deficiency would not be created through its loss, measured against the most up-to-date Coventry Green Space standards; or
 - c) The loss resulting from any proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location of the city.
2. To support the proposed allocations at H2:19 and JE2:4 the following sites are allocated for the provision of new replacement sports pitches:
 - a) Land at Charter Avenue (former Alderman Harris School site).
 - b) Land east of Coundon Wedge Road.

In order to address health inequalities and to promote healthier lifestyles, people need to have good access to a range of parks, open spaces, indoor and outdoor sports and recreational facilities. These spaces also add to the quality of the environment. This includes formal sports provision such as playing fields and play areas, as well as more informal areas of open space suitable for general relaxation, children's play, walking and cycling.

An extensive audit and needs assessment of recreational open spaces and outdoor sports facilities in the city was undertaken in consultation with the local community during 2007 (PPG17 Audit), which will be monitored and kept up-to-date during the plan period. This audit has informed the review and replacement of the Coventry Green Space Strategy and examines the quantity, quality and accessibility of green space provision within the city.

The Council has adopted a Green Space Strategy, which sets out minimum local standards for green space provision. It sets out the provision standards for the various categories of open space looking at quantity, quality and accessibility. There is also a set of quality standards for each of the provision standard categories. The same green space can sometimes contribute to more than one category in the standards. The standards reflect the information received from the various need surveys and audit information and any new development will be required to meet these minimum standards.

The sites allocated for replacement sports pitch provision are situated within a new area of Local Green Space and the Green Belt respectively. The NPPF is clear that the provision of sports pitches will be appropriate within both designated areas so long as it does not impact on the purposes of the designation. In both cases the creation of new

sports pitches is not expected to impact upon the purposes of Green Belt or Local Green Space and will support the sustainable provision of high-quality sports and recreation facilities within the respective areas.