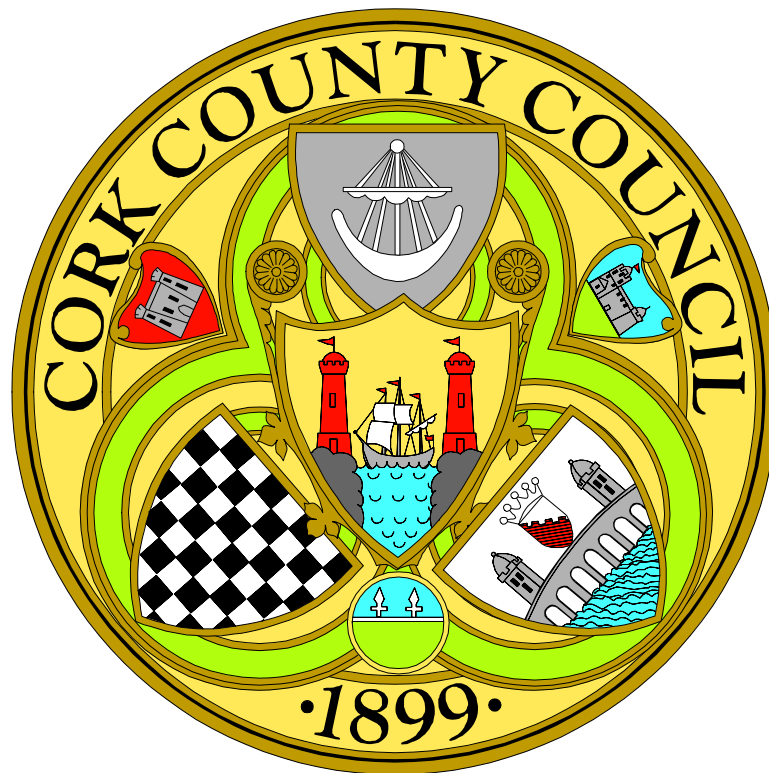


Cork County Council

Recreation and Amenity Policy



24th July 2006

Cork County Council **Recreation and Amenity Policy**

Policy Objective

“Cork County Council commits itself to the provision of Recreation and Amenity facilities, including sports and arts/culture facilities, to serve, so far as is possible, the recreational needs of the population it serves. This will include direct provision of facilities by the Council and the facilitation of other providers, whether community groups or sports clubs, in their efforts to provide recreation and amenity projects.

The Council will, in the first instance, ensure that all existing recreational land and facilities, irrespective of the current ownership, are retained in their present use. The Council will support the enhancement of existing facilities to encourage their better use through improved accessibility and capacity.

The Council will also ensure that all new developments make adequate provision for the full range of recreational and amenity activities, sufficient to meet the needs of the development, and that such facilities are maintained in perpetuity for the benefit of the development.

The Council will endeavour, so far as is practicable, to support the provision recreational facilities which serve the needs of the entire community.

The Council will promote and encourage local community involvement in Amenity and Recreational Facilities through community liaison and community partnership.

Policy Statement

1. The development of existing public or private open space, including sports grounds, or other recreation facilities, for other purposes will not be permitted unless a suitable alternative open space or the enhancement/upgrading of an existing facility, can be achieved as a replacement in the same area.
2. Development involving the loss of built leisure facilities will not be permitted unless suitable alternative facilities can be provided as a replacement. Accessibility of the new facilities by the community being served shall be a pre-requisite for permitting any relocation of recreation facilities
3. The Council will promote and encourage Community liaison and Community partnership in relation to the development of amenity and recreational facilities as well as in their ongoing management.
4. The Council will investigate ways to improve the quality and capacity of existing facilities and ways to develop new recreational and amenity facilities through initiatives in both the public and private sector. Sources of funding will be investigated and pursued to achieve this at government level, with the sports governing bodies, through local community partnership and through private development proposals.
5. Management of the Recreation and Amenity function shall be at Divisional level within the Council. All forms of funding being provided by the Council to outside groups for recreation and amenity purposes shall be co-ordinated.
6. The Council will continue to use its powers under Section 48 of the Local Government Planning and Development Act 2000 to impose development charges for Recreation and Amenity purposes. It is intended that the spending of funds raised in this way will be used to achieve both the enhancement of existing facilities and for the provision of new facilities as appropriate. Under Section 109 of the Local Government Act, 2001 the Council may also use its powers to set up a community fund.
7. Developers of new housing developments will be required to make provision for sport and recreational infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the development, as an integral element of their proposal. Such provision shall include direct provision of facilities on or off site, or, in exceptional circumstances, a financial contribution in lieu of provision shall be made to the Council to enable it to make appropriate alternative provision. The minimum standards for the provision of leisure facilities as part of new housing developments are detailed in Appendix A below.
8. The Council will engage with the process of developing a County Recreational Trails Policy and will support such facilities in line with the recommendations of the policy.

Policy Implementation

Policy Objectives 1 and 2

The Council will zone all existing public and private open space, including sports facilities, as “Open Space/Sports”

Policy Objective 3

- a) The Council will consult with the local community so as to ascertain the demand for various facilities. Public consultation shall be an integral part of the Council’s provision of recreation and amenity facilities.
- b) In pursuing this policy, the level of interest and commitment from the local community and/or local sporting organisations will be a key determining factor in prioritising the areas, the level and type of facility to be provided. The level, or lack of, existing facilities in the area will also be a determining factor.
- c) Where the Council retains management of a facility then local community access to the facility will be prioritised.

Policy Objective 4

- a) The Council will use the following factors for the prioritisation of projects, for the enhancement of existing facilities and the development of new facilities: -
 - 1. The funding available to the Council for recreation and amenity development.
 - 2. The demand and need for facilities in the area having regard to: -
 - a) the lack of such facilities and/or
 - b) the inadequacies of the existing facilities.
 - 3. The amount of complementary funding being provided for the development of the facility by the local community and/or local sporting organisations.
 - 4. The level of Government or other national funding, e.g. Lottery grants, that the scheme attracts.
 - 5. The level of local voluntary support in the area.

- b) The most appropriate method of managing facilities will be considered taking into account: -
 - 1) The needs of the different sporting and leisure organisations in the area
 - 2) The needs of non-organised groups, i.e. individuals/groups wishing to book facilities for use on an informal basis.
 - 3) The most economically advantageous method, which will not have a detrimental effect on the proper management of the facility, and its benefit to the community.

As a general principle the Council's ownership/management structure for Recreational and Amenity facilities to achieve the objectives of this policy and to ensure a broad base of access to the facilities is: -

- a) Council ownership and management
- b) Council ownership and community management on short term lease
- c) Council ownership and multi sports club management on short term lease
- d) Council ownership and Individual sports club management on short term lease (less than 5 years and re-assessment of allocation of facility at end of lease)
- e) Individual sports club ownership and management
- f) Council ownership and Individual sports club management on long term lease

All proposed developments will be assessed on a case by case basis to determine the most appropriate and economically sustainable form of ownership/management.

- c) Where lands are being leased, conditions will be attached to strictly enforce and monitor the lease's maintenance and development responsibilities.
- d) The Council will liaise with and encourage sporting bodies to extend playing seasons and re-organise playing schedules, e.g. vary start times and playing days, to ensure maximum sustainable use of pitches.

Policy Objective 5

- a) The recreation and amenity function shall be assigned to a particular Section within each Division of the Council and responsibility for this function shall rest primarily with the Head of that particular Section.
- b) All grants which the Council may offer for recreation and amenity purposes shall be co-ordinated by consolidation of the application procedure in the first instance, ideally by the use of a single application form for all grants, with a single annual closing date, for each grant.
- c) At the beginning of each year a spending programme for the monies raised under the Development Contribution Scheme will be submitted to the Council for consideration and approval. The Council in deciding on a spending programme will take into account approved plans.
- d) The acquisition of lands for Amenity and Recreation facilities, including lands from other departments within the Council, will be funded from the Development Charges Scheme.

Policy Objective 6

- a) Residential developments shall be levied in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme adopted by the Council.
- b) Industrial and commercial developments shall be levied in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme adopted by the Council.
- c) Where the Council propose the setting up of a “Community Fund”, as set out in Section 109 of the Local Government Act 2001, for the purposes of supporting community initiatives, the Council will liaise with local communities to determine the level of interest and the projects of interest which may be included as schemes under this fund, and the scale and duration of levy. The levy is the annual contribution that the occupier of each dwelling in the specified area, to which the scheme applies, must pay to fund the scheme.
- d) Any new funding generated by these means will be complementary to the existing Council Recreation and Amenity funds and not as a substitute for existing Council funds.

Policy Objective 7

- 1) The standards for provision of recreation and amenity facilities as part of new housing developments are listed below in Appendix A. It is the Council's objective to maximise the use of resources. If there are existing facilities nearby which could be improved then this option will be considered. It is also intended that the characteristics of a development such as site size, relationship to existing development, physical features such as barriers to access be taken into account. It is intended that the standards will be flexibly applied in an effort to maximise the delivery of facilities to the community.
- 2) Lands zoned as open space within privately developed schemes are normally vested in the Council, for that purpose only. Therefore, the Council cannot allocate/lease these lands to third parties, e.g. sports clubs.
- 3) The Council may, where circumstances necessitate, require developers of new residential developments to put in place arrangements for the maintenance of the recreation and amenity facilities. These arrangements will be finalised as part of the Planning Application process.

Additional Matters

- 1) Where playing pitches, or other sports facilities, are being developed within the confines of a public park, these shall be restricted to 20% of the area of the park. This approach is considered reasonable, if a balance is to be achieved between the various uses to which the park is put. In this context the reference to park is intended to refer to public parks, such as Town Parks, whose main purpose is passive recreation
- 2) If the policy adopted by the Council results in a number of parks being managed by the Council, then the creation of a specialised "Parks Department" will become necessary.
- 3) The Council policy, with regard to children's play grounds is:-
 - a) The Council will assess applications for grants by assessing the benefit to the community and the geographical location of the proposed playground in relation to existing playgrounds. Applications will be prioritised, based on the above criteria.
 - b) The community association proposing the playground will be responsible for the design, planning, tendering and construction of the playground.

- c) Plans will have to be approved by Cork Co. Co. and RoSPA and the constructed playground will have to be inspected and approved by RoSPA, in cases where the playground is due to be taken in charge for maintenance by the Council.
- d) Where a Community Association are allocated a Council grant for the development of a children's playground, the grant amount shall be that available under the Playground Grant Scheme. No grant shall exceed 50% of the playground cost.
- e) Playgrounds will be open on a 24 hour per day 7 days per week basis, unless the local community undertakes the role of opening and closing the playground and indemnifies the Council in relation to this.

Appendix A:

Provision of Facilities as part of new housing developments

Usable Open Space:

Usable open space shall be of the order of 12% - 18% of the site area. The percentage shall increase as the density of the development increases.

Location within the site:

In all cases the area of open space shall be reduced and recreational facilities, as detailed below, shall provided in it's place. So far as is practicable, these facilities shall be distributed throughout the development and shall be operational before the adjacent housing becomes occupied.

Provision of Recreation Facilities:

1. Recreation facilities shall be provided as part of the housing development, as detailed below, at a rate of **1 point per 6 housing units**.
2. A **minimum of 30%** of the required points shall be satisfied by the provision of on-site local facilities.
3. The **remainder of the points requirement** shall be satisfied by the provision of facilities, as detailed below, on-site, or off-site at an appropriate agreed location.
4. Where deemed appropriate by the Planning Authority, a **cash equivalent** may be accepted to enable the Local Authority provide some of the recreation facilities. In these circumstances the value of the facilities in question shall be arrived at by reference to the current housing land value and the construction cost of the said facilities. The monies raised in this manner can only be spend on the provision of recreation facilities to serve the development from which the cash equivalent is raised.
5. Alternative facilities other than those outlined below, or of a another nature, i.e. minority sports, arts/culture, can be considered for substitution for those items listed. In these circumstances the facilities to be provided shall be equivalent in recreational and/ or arts or culture value to the item being replaced. The acceptability or otherwise of substitute facilities shall be at the discretion of the Planning Authority and shall be decided as part of the Planning Application process. The Council recognises that the provision of a recreational trail can be considered as a recreational and amenity development.

Appendix A contd:

Points value Table

<u>Point Value of items</u>	
	Points
Neighbourhood Play Area	1
Local Play Area	3
District Play Area	6
Multi- use Games Area	6
Double Tennis Court	7
Grassed Pitch	42
Dressing Rooms	6
Community - 2 badminton	23
Community - 1 basketball	58