

Cork County Council Recreation and Amenity Policy

Interim Approach to Implementation - June 2019

Pending a full review of the Recreation and Amenity Policy, the following is proposed as a revised interim approach to the implementation of the policy. This interim approach applies only to provisions of the policy as they relate to the provision of recreational infrastructure within new housing development - Policy Objective 7 and associated Appendix A of the policy.

Usable Open Space:

1. In accordance with the Cork County Development Plan 2014 public open space should generally be at least 12-18% of a site.
2. The Cork County Development Plan 2014 promotes the provision of high quality, accessible and suitably proportioned areas of public open space including linkages to other open spaces. (CDP Objective SC5-2 Quality Provision of Public Open Space)
3. Open spaces within residential areas should in general be suitably overlooked/passively supervised by surrounding residential areas and provide opportunities for informal children's play and passive amenity.

Provision of on-site Recreation Facilities:

4. Recreational facilities shall be provided as part of new housing developments. A statement indicating how the recreational needs of different age groups/users have been taken into account in the design/ layout and provision of open space and recreational facilities shall be submitted by the developer as part of each planning application for residential development for schemes of 25 units or more. The statement should address how it has taken this interim policy into account.
5. **Schemes of less than 25 units:** In general developments of less than 25 units shall be exempt from any requirement to provide specific on site recreational facilities. In these cases normal provision of 12-18% quality landscaped public open space will suffice. Such developments, by virtue of their scale, are more likely to facilitate lower traffic speeds and be of a cul de sac layout, providing enhanced opportunities for shared surface type layouts which integrate with and complement the normal open space requirements.
6. **For schemes of 25 to 99 units :** For schemes of 25-99 units, emphasis should be on the provision of quality landscaped public open space and the provision of accessible hard surfaced fenced neighbourhood/local play areas (100m² - 400m²) catering in particular for the needs of young children.
The size and number of such play areas provided shall be determined by the Planning Authority by reference to the scale of the development, house mix, location, site characteristics etc.
On larger sites recreational walking/jogging routes may also be considered.

7. **For schemes of 100 units and greater:** For these schemes developers will be expected to make greater provision for on-site recreational facilities to cater for the needs of the development including play areas for young children and facilities for older age groups, which may typically include some or all of the following:

- Neighbourhood/Local Play Areas
- District Play Areas/Ball Courts/Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs)
- Recreational walks/jogging routes
- Alternative facilities, other than those outlined, can be considered for substitution for the items listed. The acceptability or otherwise of substitute facilities shall be at the discretion of the Planning Authority.

The size and number of such facilities provided in schemes of 100 units or greater, shall be determined by the Planning Authority by reference to the scale of the development, house mix, location, site characteristics, opportunities to link with other recreational facilities etc. The following table provides an indicative guide on the level of such provision in larger schemes.

Table 1: Indicative thresholds for recreational facilities on schemes of 100 houses or greater	
Type of Facility	Indicative threshold
Neighbourhood play areas	1 per 100 units
Local play areas	1 per 100 units
Recreational walks/jogging routes	May be considered where they can be suitably integrated into the design and are of sufficient length as to provide a useable route, or enhance connectivity to adjoining residential areas/nearby recreational infrastructure/ local services.
District Play Areas/Ball Courts	Suitable in larger schemes / sites where they can be appropriately sited – 250 houses minimum.
Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs)	Suitable in larger schemes / sites where they can be appropriately sited – 250 houses minimum.

Note: In developments where follow on/subsequent phases are proposed, the unit threshold at which this interim policy applies shall be determined based on the totality of the scheme/ cumulatively (calculated from initial phase(s) to current phase). Appropriate infrastructure should be provided in accordance with this calculation.

8. **No on-site provision:** Having considered the extent of community facilities in the area, where deemed appropriate by the Planning Authority, an equivalent financial contribution may be considered as an alternative should there be some reason the

delivery of facilities within the site is not feasible. 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 facilities which could reasonably have been expected to be provided to serve the development. Such funds may be used to provide for or improve capacity in existing facilities in the area capable of serving the needs of the wider local community.

9. **Provision of facilities:**

- (a) The location, design and construction of all facilities shall comply with the **Specification Document** provided as part of the current Recreation and Amenity Policy.
- (b) Play areas should be sited where they will be overlooked, safe, connected and contribute to the amenities of the development. Suitable traffic calming may need to be considered in the vicinity of such features in order to facilitate safe access.
- (c) Recreational walking/jogging routes can be of universal appeal to almost all age categories and will be promoted where they can be suitably integrated into the design and are of sufficient length as to provide a useable route or enhance connectivity to adjoining residential areas/nearby recreational infrastructure.
- (d) Ball courts and MUGAs provided on larger schemes should be sited at sufficient remove from houses to avoid nuisance.
- (e) Recreational facilities shall be integrated both functionally and aesthetically into the overall layout of the open space and the scheme generally and shall be operational before the adjacent housing becomes occupied. The appropriate use of trees, planting and other natural features can add to play areas providing a welcome space for children and carers.
