

Policy S5

Public open space

Within the parish boundaries of Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton and the parishes containing villages defined in Policy S13, the following standards for the provision of high quality open space will be applied:

Type of open space	Quantity standard (square metres per dwelling)	Access standard
Allotments	6	300 metres or 6-7 minutes' walk time
Amenity green space	23.5	300 metres or 6-7 minutes' walk time
Parks, sport and recreation grounds	35 include both public and private grounds (excluding education sites)	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Play space (children)	1.5	300 metres or 6-7 minutes' walk time
Youth space (teenagers)	0.5	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time

In all other parishes, the following standards for the provision of open space will be applied:

Type of open space	Quantity standard (square metres per dwelling)	Access standard
Allotments	6 (for new provision)	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Recreation space	28 to include both public and private grounds (excluding education sites)	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Play space (children and youth)	1	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time

Developments of 11 or more dwellings within the parishes of Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton, and 6 or more dwellings elsewhere, will provide open space onsite or through offsite financial contributions, as follows:

Type of provision	Up to 49 dwellings	50-199 dwellings	200+ dwellings
Play space	Offsite	Onsite	Onsite
Amenity/natural green space	Offsite	Onsite	Onsite
Allotments	Offsite	Onsite	Onsite

Park, sport and recreation ground	Offsite	Offsite	Onsite
Teenage facilities	Offsite	Offsite	Onsite

2.34 Access to public open space including sports facilities is an essential element of healthy communities and national policy promotes such provision. To this end the Council has undertaken an Open Space and Play Area Study (2014) to identify the level of supply across Mid Devon and the gaps in open space provision. This results in the above standards, which aim to maintain the current level of provision per person as Mid Devon's population increases, and to increase the provision for teenage facilities which has been identified as a particular area of open space deficiency. Teenage facilities might include skateboard parks, basketball courts and 'free access' Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs). In practice, there will always be some flexibility of use where younger children use equipment designed for youths and vice versa.

2.35 The types of applicable public open space are set out in the policy. For the purposes of this policy, other spaces such as grass verges, tree-lined avenues and sustainable urban drainage schemes are not classed as public open space. The standards are applied to development proposals according to the average size of households in Mid Devon (2.35 people).

2.36 Onsite open space will be provided by the developer and designed in such a way as to maximise the attractiveness, safety and overall quality of the development. The provision of larger multi-functional open space 'hubs' is considered preferable to smaller fragmented open spaces across a development. The balance of onsite and offsite provision according to site size is set out in the policy, but the Council will consider on a case-by-case basis any proposals that seek to justify a different solution. A planning obligation will be used to control the long-term maintenance of onsite open space through a management company.

2.37 Smaller developments (fewer than 6 dwellings in rural areas or 11 dwellings in the towns) will not be required to provide a public open space contribution, in accordance with national guidance. Most housing developments increase the demand for open space in the area, but a financial contribution towards a public open space project outside the site (an offsite contribution) will be accepted according to the amount of development being proposed, as set out in the policy. The Open Space and Play Area Strategy describes which types of housing (such as open market, affordable or accommodation for the elderly) will be eligible for offsite provision of public open space. The Council will identify locations across the district that require open space improvement or new provision, and for eligible developments will require a financial contribution through a planning obligation which secures funding for a specific project. The amount required is related to the cost of providing and maintaining open space, expressed as a cost per person as set out in the Open Space and Play Area Strategy. The Council will monitor the use of funds collected in this way to ensure that planning obligations are directly related to the open space needs associated with each development.

2.38 Viability testing undertaken by the Council has demonstrated that not all sites may be able to fund the full cost of the off-site contribution. Therefore, the Council will consider a reduced contribution where it can be demonstrated that payment of the full cost would make the development unviable. Further details on the policy's application, including information on the consideration and submission of viability evidence will be set out in a review of the existing Open Space Supplementary Planning Document, to be undertaken after the adoption of the Local Plan.

2.39 The Council will not use the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to fund open space provision, to avoid illegal double-charging of developers who are required to provide onsite open space as part of well-designed development while also paying CIL. However, at least 15% of CIL receipts will be transferred to the parish council in the area a development takes place, and parish councils may spend this money on any infrastructure in their area which may include the creation, development, repair or maintenance of existing areas of open space.

2.40 Policy DM24 protects existing public open spaces from development, including some identified areas of 'Local Green Space'. Communities may also seek to protect such areas through designation in a neighbourhood plan or by registering sites as Assets of Community Value (as defined in the glossary).