

## Policy CS31 – Recreational Land and Buildings

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The Council will regulate the provision of recreational open space on the basis of the following minimum standards:

- publicly accessible open space - 2.40 hectares for every thousand people
- public and private sports pitches and playing fields (including artificial turf pitches) - 1.00 hectare for every thousand people
- other public and private outdoor sports facilities (excluding golf courses) - 0.10 hectares for every thousand people
- public and private allotments - 0.22 hectares for every thousand people

No residential household should be further than 400 metres walking distance from a larger publicly accessible open space of 1.5 hectares or above. Smaller publicly accessible open spaces will be retained to serve areas falling outside the catchment of a larger publicly accessible open space, to ensure that no residential household is further than 200 metres walking distance from a publicly accessible open space.

Land and buildings used for sport and recreation will be protected from incompatible development unless it can be demonstrated that:

1. the site is genuinely surplus and is not required for any other recreational purpose; and
2. the site has been continuously marketed for recreational uses at realistic prices for a period of at least 12 months and there is no reasonable prospect that the site will be re-used for recreational use; and
3. the site does not need to be retained undeveloped for any other intrinsic or designated value, including landscape character, heritage, biodiversity, drainage requirements or flood defence; or
4. the facility will be replaced with an equivalent or better facility, capable of serving the same local community and criterion 3 above would also be met.

Replacement facilities will be secured by an appropriate planning condition and/or legal agreement, including provision for ongoing maintenance.

Sites for specific protection will be identified in a site-specific Local Plan.

- 22.10 Policy CS31 continues to apply the standards set out in the existing Unitary Development Plan for Wirral, which were adopted in February 2000, pending further research on local standards to be undertaken as part of an ongoing review of the Council's Parks and Countryside service. A formal update of the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy and a revised Built Facilities Strategy will be completed before a site-specific Local Plan is prepared. Policy CS31 therefore provides for the continued protection of recreational land and buildings, subject to the latest evidence of need.