

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE PROVISION NOTE

TO:	Sophie Horsley – David Wilson Homes Southern				
FROM: (HDA)	Christine Marsh – Associate Landscape Architect				
DATE:	15 September 2023	REF:	22/03063/F	HDA REF:	2099.16 v2
SUBJECT:	Letchmere Farm, Upper Heyford				
PROPOSAL:	126 dwellings				
PURPOSE OF REPORT	Note explaining provision of Public Open Space (POS) within the site compared with the original permission (Pye Scheme) and existing facilities in the surrounding area				

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This note sets out the provision of POS as approved (planning reference 15/01357/F and 21/03523/OUT, granted on 14 September 2023) for the Pye scheme for 120 dwellings (total combined units of two separate applications), and what the equivalent area would be for the revised scheme (planning reference 22/03063/F, validated on 6 October 2022) for 126 dwellings.
- 1.2 It also sets out what a policy compliant would need to provide for 126 dwellings and how this compares with what is proposed within the revised scheme. Any deficiency can be accommodated off-site, and this note summarises what other facilities are provided within the wider Heyford Park strategic development area.
- 1.3 In summary, the Pye scheme provided 0.681ha for 120 units and the revised scheme for 126 units can provide 0.712ha of POS (including the frontage hedgerow and the grass verge to the east of the main access road) (refer to HDA Dwg 2099.16/01F).
- 1.4 The population of the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Area (comprising 12 parishes) as taken from the 2021 census, was 8,224 people, and the number of dwellings is about 3,561 units (ref: draft Housing Needs Assessment for the MCNP). The resultant people per dwelling (ppd) based upon these figures is thus 2.31. Council officers have used the figure of 2.49ppd, but this is not representative of the local population. The resultant population from the 120 units on the Pye scheme, based on 2.31ppd, is 277 people. The standard of POS provision on the Pye scheme is therefore 2.46ha per 1,000 people (0.681 x 1,000 divided by 277 = 2.46ha). Applying the same POS provision rate to the 126-unit scheme would require 0.7158ha of POS (126 units x 2.31ppd = 291 population, thus 2.46ha x 291 divided by 1,000 = 0.7158ha). Whilst this quantum of POS would not be compliant with the latest policy, it would match the provision in the Pye scheme.

2. Provision of POS on the Site

- 2.1 The Pye scheme provided 0.68ha of POS, split between 0.17ha of play and 0.51ha of amenity. The provision of POS can vary markedly depending on the rate used to express the number of 'people per dwelling' to apply. Based upon a ppd rate of 2.49 (as suggested by Tim Screen in his consultation response – dated 25 November 2022 included at Appendix A), 126 units would generate an average population of 314 people, but if the rate of 2.31ppd is used (as indicated above), then the resultant population reduces to 291.
- 2.2 The adopted policy within the Cherwell District Council Local Plan Part 1 (adopted 20 July 2015), states at Policy BSC 11: 'Local Standards of Provision - Outdoor Recreation', the following provision of open space (Table 7, pages 76-78) 0.78ha per 1,000 people of play space and 2.4ha or 2.74ha per 1,000 people of general green space. The two quantities for amenity space differentiate between urban dwellers (2.4ha/1,000) and the rural/urban edge dwellers (2.74ha/1,000). Therefore, the following calculations for the provision of policy-compliant POS, as required for the 126 units within this application, compares both scenarios:
- i. 126 units based upon 2.31ppd would total = 291 population;
 - ii. 0.78ha per 1,000 people of play space ($0.78 \times 291/1,000$) = 0.227ha;
 - iii. 2.4ha per 1,000 people of amenity space (urban) ($2.4 \times 291/1,000$) = 0.698ha; or
 - iv. 2.74ha per 1,000 people of amenity space (rural) ($2.74 \times 291/1,000$) = 0.797ha;
 - v. Total open space required = 0.925ha or 1.024ha
- 2.3 The provision of open space for 120 units, being the number of houses provided by the Pye scheme, would, using the same basis as that set out above, would be:
- i. 120 units based upon 2.31ppd would total = 277 population
 - ii. 0.78ha per 1,000 people of play space ($0.78 \times 277/1,000$) = 0.216ha
 - iii. 2.4ha per 1,000 people of amenity space (urban) ($2.4 \times 277/1,000$) = 0.665ha or
 - iv. 2.74ha per 1,000 people of amenity space (rural) ($2.74 \times 277/1,000$) = 0.759ha
 - v. Total open space required = 0.881ha or 0.975ha
- 2.4 The Pye scheme provided 0.681ha of POS for 120 units and thus, based upon the above calculations, would not be compliant with current policy (a deficit of either 0.2ha or 0.294ha).
- 2.5 The provision of POS proposed for the 126 units within this application is proportionate to that provided in the approved Pye scheme, as is demonstrated below:
- i. The Pye scheme provided 0.681ha for 120 units (277 population based on 2.31ppd);
 - ii. Pye provided 0.17ha of play space for a population of 277 – thus equivalent to a standard of 0.614ha per 1,000;
 - iii. Pye provided 0.51ha of amenity space for a population of 277 – thus equivalent to 1.84ha per 1,000;
 - iv. The total requirement based upon the provision in the Pye scheme = 0.614ha + 1.84ha = 2.454ha/1,000.

- v. For the current scheme to provide an equivalent quantum of play space to that on the Pye scheme, it would need to provide 0.179ha ($0.614 \times 291/1,000 = 0.179$), however, the current scheme provides 0.24ha, thus 0.061ha more than the requirement derived from provision on the Pye scheme;
 - vi. For the current scheme to provide an equivalent quantum of amenity space to that on the Pye scheme, it would need to provide 0.535ha ($1.84 \times 291/1,000 = 0.535$), however the current scheme provides 0.472ha, thus a deficit of 0.063ha, but this can be offset against the overprovision of 0.061ha on the area of play space;
 - vii. Thus, to compare, the Pye scheme provides a total of 0.681ha of POS ($277 \times 2.46/1,000 = 0.681$) and this application should provide a total of 0.716ha of POS ($291 \times 2.46/1,000 = 0.716$), however, is marginally short, providing 0.004ha less (0.716 less provision of 0.712ha (made up of 0.24ha of play + 0.472ha of amenity)).
- 2.6 The total POS provision of 0.712ha within this application is thus equivalent to the provision in the Pye scheme, however, if compared with current policy, would be by deficit by 0.213ha (0.925ha less 0.712ha). Given the close proximity of other facilities within the wider development of Heyford Park, this deficit is not considered to be a problem.
- 2.7 In terms of play space provision, current policy requires 0.227ha for 126 units, thus as this application shows a provision of 0.24ha of play space, this would be in excess of policy requirements. The previous Pye scheme provided a total of 0.17ha of play space, but that was split between two smaller play areas. It is now proposed to amalgamate the play space into one, centrally-located area (comprising a LAP (Local Area for Play) and a LEAP Local Equipped Area for Play), which would be more easily accessible, and better designed to create a multi-functional useable space. Within Table 7 of the accompanying text to Policy BSC 11, it states that the minimum size for a LEAP is 3,600m² including buffer. This application provides an area for play of 2,400m², thus whilst below the minimum size for a LEAP, it is intended that the play spaces will be equipped to the standards of a LAP and a LEAP, with the requisite offsets to habitable room facades. In providing both a LAP and a LEAP, provision for different age ranges can be separately accommodated. The play spaces will be edged with trees and low hedges so there can still be natural surveillance from the surrounding roads, as well as providing benches and other seating areas for the comfort of parents supervising their children. As the minimum size of a NEAP is 8,500m², the space available on the site would not be suitable for a NEAP.
- 2.8 In terms of the amenity space, a large swathe of land has been provided along the eastern site boundary to make a more useful and functional space incorporating SuDS features and facilities for dog walking.

3. Other Facilities in Heyford Park

- 3.1 This section lists existing and proposed areas of POS within the Heyford Park development (measured as straight-line distances) (refer to attached map at Appendix B, taken from the Dorchester Living website, showing the locations of play space as indicated in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.4 below):
- 3.2 Existing Public Open Space.
- A. Play area off Soden Road – 215m
 - B. School Tennis Courts – 310m

- C. Play area of E Castle Street – 460m
 - D. Village Green – 570m
 - E. Play area by W Castle Street – 580m.
 - F. Play area by Simpson Drive – 600m.
 - G. Play area and amenity space of Carswell Circle – 780m.
 - H. Amenity space by Carswell Circle (South) – 860m.
 - I. Play area of Roper Road – 930m.
 - J. Play area by Nash Road – 1,020m.
 - K. Heyford Park Football club and play area (School playing field) – 1,160m.
- 3.3 The current open space provision within Heyford Park is connected to the site via roads, footways and publicly accessible footpaths. The average distance of open spaces within the settlement is approximately 688m from the site.
- 3.4 Proposed Public Open Space (Heyford Park Masterplan)
- 1. Future residential development – Play area and amenity space (North) – 400m.
 - 2. Future Sport facilities (South) – 430m
 - 3. Future sport facilities and amenity space (West) – 410m
 - 4. Future residential development - Play area (West) – 1,220m.
 - 5. Future residential development - Play area and amenity space (West) – 1,450m.
 - 6. Future residential development - Play area (West) - 1,735m.
 - 7. Future residential development - Play area (West) - 1,765m.
- 3.5 Alongside the application site's main access to Camp Road, it is proposed to create an easterly permissive footpath connection to provide ease of access between the application site and the open space adjacent to the site's eastern boundary.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 4.1 The development fulfils the play space component to the required standard and complies with current local policy in this respect, providing 0.24ha, where the policy requirement for a population of 291 would be 0.227ha. Therefore, it is not essential for other play spaces to be close to this development.
- 4.2 The amenity space provision is below what is required by local policy, with 0.48ha being provided, whereas 0.698ha is required, and the provision shown on site is marginally lower than that of the Pye Scheme, which provided 0.51ha. The area surrounding the proposed development is well served by current open space provision, with ease of access via roads and footpaths. It is also proposed that an additional footpath access would be provided from the eastern boundary which will aid in connections to adjacent areas of open space that will also serve the application site. Future development within Heyford Park will provide seven new areas of play and amenity space within 2km of the site alongside the current eleven sites.

Appendix A – Council’s Landscape Officer Response (November 2022)

A comprehensively written LVIA and I tend to agree with the conclusion. However my concern is the increased house density, compared to previous proposals, at the expense of minimum area of informal public open space required under Policy BSC 11: Local Standards of Provision - Outdoor Recreation Table 7 (calculations below). Essential informal open space is required to mitigate what would otherwise be an overly developed site, and provide a high value of amenity afforded by open space and trees.

Roadside receptors on the Trenchard Circle route west of the application site will experience a degree of visual harm and therefore the northern site boundary must be planted with mixed native hedgerow and individual trees to provide the require visual mitigation and amenity. This structural vegetation is to be conveyed to the residents and maintained by them as a 1.8 m hedge with individual trees.

Natural and informal Greenspace (minimum 0.857ha) - The minimum standard for POS is 2.74ha per 1,000 urban/rural dwellers, and is in addition to the play area provision. Total no. 313 people (2.49 average household x 126 homes) need 0.857ha of greenspace minimum requirement $((2.74 \times 313) / 1000)$.

We can see from the developer’s POS Plan the total Landscape and POS is 0.852ha, but this total also includes the LAP and LEAP which reduces the amount of viable POS area because the combined LAP and LEAP (Play Activity and Landscape Buffer) is 4,000 sq m - refer to below. The area reduces to 0.452 ha $(0.852 - 0.4)$, but then we add on the attenuation areas 0.034 which equates to 0.486, it is still well below the 0.857ha requirement.

I recommend a wider open space corridor along the eastern boundary: a minimum of 10m wide. Houses should front onto this area to provide surveillance. This will accommodate the swales and a path. The green link between the central play space and the green corridor is required. The revised POS to be measured for the total area is to be confirmed. If the number of homes are reduced to below 100, a combined LAP/ LEAP with be sufficient. If the homes are above 100, the LEAP/NEAP should be combined in a central location with a separate smaller LAP (100 sqm m activity and 300 sq m landscape buffer).

Play Provision - 126 homes triggers a LAP, LEAP and a NEAP. It is recommended that these facilities are combined and the following requirements are met:

LAP (total area 400 sq m) Minimum 100 sq. m equipped activity zone set within a landscaped area designed to provide a safe area for alternative play for children aged 2 to 6. The size of the landscaped area (incorporating the equipped activity zone) will be informed by the development context (acknowledging activity zone buffer requirements) and local design guidance. The equipped activity zone should be located a minimum of 5m from the nearest dwelling boundary. The landscaped area around the equipped activity zone could be used to incorporate this buffer.

Combined LEAP/NEAP (total area 10,700 sq m) A minimum 1,400 sq. m equipped activity zone comprising an area of play equipment and structures and a hard surfaced area of at least 465 sq. m, set within a landscaped area designed to provide a safe area for alternative play for children aged 4 to 12. The size of the equipped activity zone should be a minimum of 400m² in respect of the LEAP element and 1,000m² in respect of the NEAP element. The size of the landscaped area (incorporating the equipped activity zone) will be informed by the

development context (acknowledging activity zone buffer requirements) and local design guidance. The equipped activity zone within the landscaped area should be located a minimum of 10m from the nearest dwelling boundary AND 20m from the nearest habitable room façade in respect of the LEAP element and a minimum of 30m from the nearest dwelling boundary in respect of the NEAP element. The landscaped area around the equipped activity zone could be used to incorporate this buffer.

OR ALTERNATIVELY Combined LAP/LEAP/NEAP (total area 11,000 sq m) - Minimum 1,500 sq. m equipped activity zone comprising an area of play equipment and structures and a hard surfaced area of at least 465 sq. m, set within a landscaped area designed to provide a safe area for alternative play for children aged 2 to 12. The size of the landscaped area (incorporating the equipped activity zone) will be informed by the development context (acknowledging activity zone buffer requirements) and local design guidance.

The equipped activity zone within the landscaped area should be located a minimum of 5m from the nearest dwelling boundary in respect of the LAP element, 10m from the nearest dwelling boundary AND 20m from the nearest habitable room façade in respect of the LEAP element and a minimum of 30 metres from the nearest dwelling boundary in respect of the NEAP element. The landscaped area around the equipped activity zone could be used to incorporate this buffer.

The Criteria:

- Play areas are to be well overlooked. They should be located within the 400m walking distance of all new homes within the development and close to pedestrian and cycling routes.
- In respect of Health and Safety public play space and play equipment are to be designed to the most current safest, standards possible, to minimise the risks for children. Refer to Play Safety Forum: Managing Risk in Play and RoSPA.
- The location and design of play areas is to consider the risks to children's safety in relation to any areas of water including features forming part of the SuDS system
- All play surfaces, gate openings are to be accessible for disabled children, parents and carers with limited mobility. Each public play space should accommodate play equipment specifically designed for disabled children.

Furthermore

1. Play areas are to be constructed from robust and durable materials to last into the future. Full construction details are required for planning approval under reserved matters. Valid suppliers' guarantees for play equipment, furniture and safer surfaces should be provided.
2. There is to be no underground or above ground utilities for play areas given the potential disruption to children's physical and social development when a play area has to be closed for essential maintenance and refurbishment of such utilities.
3. The public play space locations are not to be used for constructor's compounds, contractor parking, or storage of building materials. This is to prevent the contamination and compaction of topsoil and subsoil, resulting in a health risk for children. The developer must confirm agreement to Items 2 and 3 and ensure this is followed through at (detailed design) reserved matters and the construction phase.

Riparian Ownership - Although the stream is just outside the application site boundary (as confirmed by Land Registry), maintenance access from the adjoining open space corridor will be required to maintain the stream and prevent it from flooding.

Trees - For the streets and open space the 'right tree in the right place' is crucial for urban GI and its success. In this regard the landscape consultant should consider <https://www.tdag.org.uk/tree-species-selection-for-green-infrastructure.html> (Trees Design Action Group's tree species selection). I look forward to considering the future submission of hard and soft landscape proposals/implementation and aftercare, tree pit detail/specification and landscape and ecology management plan.

Appendix B – Heyford Park Masterplan