South Downs National Park Authority
Open Space Assessment 2023

Open Space (OS) Form – Guidance Note

Introduction & Context

The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has recently commenced its Local Plan Review (LPR). As part of the LPR, the SDNPA is carrying out an Open Space (OS) Assessment to inform the review of the following policies in the Adopted South Downs Local Plan (SDLP):

- **SD45** – Green Infrastructure; and
- **SD46** - Provision and protection of open space, sports and recreational facilities and burial grounds/cemeteries.

As part of the above, the OS Assessment aims to:

- Identify the current (and any shortfalls in) publicly accessible OS provision for the SDNP[1];
- Provide evidence of OS quality to inform s106 agreements, CIL and other funding bids; and
- Protect existing, and provide new, publicly accessible OS through Policy SD45, Policy SD46, and/or (if appropriate) any potential development site allocations.

Please note:

- The inclusion, and "quality assessment", of Open Spaces (OS) in the OS Assessment will be determined through proforma responses, and follow-up officer site visits (as appropriate).
- In terms of Local Green Spaces (LGS) [Policy SD47], a call-for-sites was carried out in Summer 2022, and the LGS Assessment 2017 will be updated in due course.

The following information has been prepared to help you complete the Open Space (OS) Form for each of OS in your parish/town.

Maps of Open Spaces (OS)

If possible – and to ensure that we have the correct understanding of the location, area, and extent of the Open Spaces (OS) – please could you also include **a map of each Open Space (OS) in your parish/town** (with any annotations you deem necessary). To do this, there are a few mapping tools available to Town and Parish Councils at no cost. These are:

- The Parish Online Digital Mapping Software: https://www.parish-online.co.uk/; and
- The PSGA (Ordnance Survey): https://beta.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/customers/public-sector/public-sector-geospatial-agreement#public-sector-how-do-i-access-os-data.

Alternatively, you are welcome to send us your own site plan - showing the OS boundary as a red line – at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100. If you have any problems creating a map for the OS Assessment, then please contact planningpolicy@southdowns.gov.uk to discuss how we may be able to assist

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[1] This includes Open Space (OS) both within, and in proximity to, the National Park.

<u>**Section 2 of Open Space (OS) Form - Site Details**</u>
The Open Space (OS) Assessment will consider the existing and future needs of communities for the following types of publicly accessible Open Spaces (OS):

- **Allotments, Community Gardens/Orchards and/or Community Growing** –
  - <u>Allotments</u> are (generally) used for the growing of food crops, and a statutory allotment site is defined as having an area not exceeding 1,000sqm.
  - <u>Community Gardens/Orchards</u> are (primarily) used for the growing of food crops; however, they are generally more informal and may include "green" landscapes for outdoor relaxation.

- **Amenity Greenspaces** – These include informal green and recreational spaces and tend to be located in and around housing and other forms of development. This typology can include village greens, and can also include 'children and young people' playing equipment. In some instances, amenity greenspace may also include playing fields / playing pitches whose primary function is for sport but is also used for other informal activities such as dog walking, picnics, and relaxing etc.

- **Cemeteries and Churchyards** – These tend to take the form of formal cemeteries or graveyards around churches. They are areas of quiet contemplation and for the burial of those who have passed on. This typology is often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

- **Children and Young People's Playing Equipment** – These include play areas, outdoor "kick about" areas, "areas for wheeled play" (i.e., skateboarding), and "hanging out" areas / teenage shelters. As part of the above, this typology may include different aspects of play such as natural of "green" play, or "iplay", to incorporate information technology. This typology can be broken down further into:
  - <u>Local Areas of Play (LAPs)</u> – This is a play area designed and laid out for younger children (6 years and younger), and so includes low-level equipment. A LAP has a minimum activity zone of 100sqm and should include seating for parents.
  - <u>Local Equipment Areas for Play (LEAPs)</u> – This is a play area designed and laid out for children who are beginning to go outside and play independently (6-11 years). A LEAP has a minimum activity zone of 400sqm, and tends to include 6 play experiences over 3 individual play items. The increase in space is to accommodate space for "active play" (i.e. tag etc.).
  - <u>Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAP)</u> – This is a play area designed and laid out for older children (11 years+), whilst also still containing an area for younger users. A NEAP has a minimum activity zone of 1,000sqm (incl. 465sqm of hard surface for "kick around"), and tends to include 8-9 play experiences over 5 individual play items.

- **Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces** – These include woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (i.e., downlands, commons, and meadows), open access lands, wetlands, open and running water, and derelict open land and rock areas. In general, maintenance is informal and may include elements of intervention such as, but not limited to; coppicing for the long-term health and natural balance of woodland; flail cutting of meadow to increase biodiversity; and clearance of water habitats.

- **Parks and Gardens** – These include urban parks, country parks, and formal gardens. This typology usually includes formal elements – i.e., ornamental lawn, herbaceous borders, or rose gardens – and a wide range of activities – i.e., children and young people's play equipment, and natural and semi-natural greenspaces.

Sections 3 and 5 of Open Space (OS) Form – Access, Quality & Additional Information

We have provided a summary below of the aspects/elements that the SDNPA will consider as part of its "quality assessment" of OS. Please note, the below broadly aligns with the standards used for the Green Flag Award which is a benchmark national standard for publicly accessible greenspaces.

- **Access/Transport**: i.e., cycle, disabled, footpath, and road access.
- **Ancillary Facilities**: i.e., bins, catering, changing places (CP), changing rooms, footpaths, parking, seating, and toilets.
- **Cleanliness/Maintenance**: i.e., graffiti/vandalism, dog fouling, litter, noise and equipment.
- **Climate Change Adaptation**: i.e., biodiversity, green corridors, natural drainage, & shade.
- **Information/Signage**: i.e., clear, appropriate, and adequate.
- **Landscape**: i.e., grass areas, habitats, planting, and tree cover.
- **Security/Safety**: i.e., boundaries, buildings, equipment, roads/footpaths, surfaces, and trees.
- **Welcome**: i.e., entrances, heritage/history, landscaping, and lighting.

For further (more detailed) information about the criteria for assessing the quality of Open Spaces (OS), please visit the Green Flag Award website: https://greenflagaward.org/how-it-works/judging-criteria/