

Open Space Study St Blazey, Par, Tywardreath & Tregrehan Mills

1. Introduction

Attractive, safe & accessible parks and other open spaces contribute positive social, economic and environmental benefits. Open spaces including play areas are valued community assets improving public health, well-being and quality of life, and bringing regeneration benefits to an area. As part of the preparation of the Cornwall Local Plan, Cornwall Council must ensure appropriate protection of open space, as well as the creation of new provision where necessary, as part of the development proposals.

In July 2014 Cornwall Council adopted the [Open Space Strategy for Larger Towns in Cornwall](#) as interim planning guidance pending adoption of the Cornwall Local Plan, when it will follow the process to become a Supplementary Planning Document. A follow up study has now been completed for the remaining 17 settlement areas containing more than 1000 dwellings, which rolls out the same methodology. This document summarises an assessment for St Blazey, Par, Tywardreath & Tregrehan Mills, which analyses the existing level of different types of open space in the study area and recommends provision standards that will govern the levels & type of provision required of developments in the future. The standards can inform neighbourhood planning, and will also help in prioritising investment in the open spaces, and identify opportunities for revenue savings, capital income and improving management practices.

2. Existing standards

There are 8 types of green space included in this strategy, which are as follows: -

1. Parks and gardens; Amenity green space; Civic spaces
2. Natural and semi-natural green spaces, Green corridors, accessible countryside in urban fringe areas
3. Public access sports facilities (outdoor): available for community games
4. Children's play area – equipped
5. Provision for teenagers– equipped facilities
6. Allotments, community gardens, and city (urban) farms
7. Cemeteries and churchyards
8. School pitches and outdoor sports club facilities (No or limited public access)

For further information see Appendix 1

The provision standards set cover the following: -

- o **Quantity** – m² of each type per local resident
- o **Accessibility** – this is the maximum distance that a resident should be expected to have to walk (radial measurement).

Consideration is given to barriers to access such as waterways, main roads and rail lines.

- **Quality** – derived from a quality audit to influence both the management of open spaces, as well as the type and level of provision & features required on new or enhanced spaces.

3. Existing provision

All spaces as described were identified and mapped – see **Map1 [A3]**. Minimum sizes apply, which in most cases is 1000m². The existing level of provision as shown in table 1 (column 2) provides a comparable value by dividing the total area of each type by the existing population (estimated at 10,776), which is then compared with the averages for Cornwall's 16 larger town areas and the 17 smaller settlements (column 3).

The key observations of the existing provision as shown in table 1 are as follows: -

- The level (per person) of parks & amenity (**type 1 open space**) is **above average**, and 2nd highest of the smaller settlements.
- The **level of natural open space (2) is high**. Although it is close to the average for smaller settlements, this average is distorted significantly by an unrepresentative few with an abundance of land with a right to roam locally. The level is double what might be considered typical (median) on account of the availability of Par Beach and other nature reserves to the north.
- The level of outdoor sports when combined (public (3) and private sports space (8)) appears to be quite high, but when the golf course & running track are discounted, the **analysis of sports pitches alone indicates a level below the recommended standard**.
- **High level of equipped children's play** (4) although some sites will now have less equipment than shown.
- **Reasonable level of youth provision** (5), although to some extent the beach offers some alternative.
- There is a **lower level of allotment (6) provision**, 40% lower than the average.

Overall the area benefits from more than double the average level of open space per person found in the larger towns in Cornwall.

The table also proposes future quantity standards for the area as a whole (column 4), based upon an estimated increased population of 12,156 (by 2030) and associated spatial contributions required from future developments (column 6).

Table 1. Existing & proposed provision of all open space in St Blazey, Par, Tywardreath & Tregrehan Mills

Typology	Existing provision (m ² /person)	Average /median for smaller Cornish settlements -m ² /person	Future quantity provision standard - m ² /person	Existing requirement based upon distribution	Minimum quantity needed for new housing (m ² per dwelling)
1. Parks, amenity	9.55	6.48	7.42	Good existing distribution	0
2. Natural space	80.74	40.00 (median) (79.77 = average)	71.84	Good existing distribution	5.26
3. Public sport	2.41	2.80	12.3-ty8	Investment in capacity	33.95
4. Children's Equipped Play	0.83	0.64	0.66	Good existing distribution. Investment in Poldrea/Par Track play areas	1.53
5. Teen provision	0.23	0.19	0.21	Good, if new created in east St Austell	0.15
6. Allotments	0.71	1.17	1.00	One minimum size facility in St Blazey	2.30
7. Cemeteries	3.14	3.93	Assumes no increase within town boundary		
8. School pitches & clubs	49.68	28.41	Requires increased availability to community.		
Total	147.30	83.62			
Total for 1 – 6 (standards apply)	94.48	51.28			

4. Community consultation

Consultations on open space provision were included with the Core Strategy Surveys (Jan 2012) and a countywide survey was undertaken through the Cornwall Conversation later in the same year. The feedback has contributed to the understanding of future needs. In line with the studies undertaken elsewhere in the county, local stakeholder consultation forms an important component of the evaluation. This allows the incorporation of a level of technical detail not possible with general public consultation, whilst ensuring the feedback can be fed directly into the conclusions and standards setting. These consultations have now been carried out with Cornwall Council's divisional members and the relevant parish councils. Priorities include: -

- Par Running Track & pitches
- Par skate park
- Allotment provision
- Poldrea Play Area
- King Edward Gardens, Station Rd

An assessment of sports pitch provision in 2009 was based upon consultations with sports clubs, schools and other leisure stakeholders on current trends in demand. It predicted shortfalls in some sports and recommended improvements to increase capacity and an increased community use of pitches on education sites. It proposed varying standards for each of the community network areas, but remains un-adopted due to subsequent revisions to the methodology required by Sport England. Due to the age and status of the data a single generic quantity standard is proposed for all settlement areas exceeding 1000 dwellings. This is based upon the average standard for grass playing pitches by 2009 demand, which equates to 12.3m² per person. A review of the playing pitch study is proposed in the future. Any new conclusions will be fed into the open space standards when available.

5. Accessibility & quality provision

Accessibility and quality provision standards (as defined in sect 2) were adopted for the larger towns (see table 2), using a hierarchy that relates to the strategic significance of the space – i.e. the size of community the open space would potentially serve. Further evaluation with consultation is needed to determine if this is still applicable & realistic at this scale of settlement. This aligns with the Council's method of determining the risk and level of service standards for its own environmental assets, and can be defined as follows: -

- *Regional significant* sites are usually the largest or contain the best facilities, and will attract visitors from other towns and communities well outside of the area, such as Par Beach.

- *Town/parish significant* sites such as Par Playing Field, have strategic importance within the area and contain sufficient facility to potentially attract visitors from outside the immediate community.
- *Neighbourhood 1* sites have local importance and contain sufficient provision to meet the needs of the local community, whilst *Neighbourhood 2* sites are the least equipped or most basic amenity, and merely serve residents from the immediate area.

Table 2. Adopted open space provision standards for larger towns in Cornwall.

Type of open space	Proposed accessibility standard ('as crow flies') depending on open space hierarchy				Min size new (m ²)
	Regional significant	Town significant	Neighbourhood1	Neighbourhood 2	
1. Parks, amenity	1000m	800m	600m	400m	1000
2. Natural space	1400m	1100m	800m	600m	1000
3. Public sport	No limit	No limit	960m	NA	10000 (1Ha)
4. Children's Equipped Play	1000m	750m	600m	450m	500
'Playable space' of any of the above types	All housing to be no further than <u>330m</u> from at least one open space suitable for children's informal play				500
5. Teen provision	1200m	1000m	800m	620m	500
6. Allotments	NA	No limit	800m	NA	2500
Proposed quality standard	Excellent	Good	Fair/good	Fair	

An appraisal of the accessibility of equipped play areas (4) indicates that investment should be prioritised in improving facilities at Par Track & Playing Fields and Poldrea play area (Tywardreath), whilst some smaller, low value sites in St Blazey area could be phased out – see (Map2 [A4]).

6. Design principles for new open space as part of developments

The standards in table 1 will apply to St Blazey, Par, Tywardreath & Tregrehan Mills as a whole, new development should be assessed for its proportional impact and the on-site requirement based on local future needs. In some cases new provision may not be viable or necessary within the development boundary, but an improvement in quality will be needed to mitigate for the additional population. Developments will be required to meet their share of the costs with off-site contributions (through Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payment), which will be required for investment in local open space improvements, such as play enhancements.

Further investment through local partnerships will be required to supplement the increases required in outdoor sports and allotments.

The green infrastructure network, of which open space is a part, should be designed at the outset, and where possible should promote sustainable access to key local open spaces. Equally open space must in the future provide a greater degree of multifunction with regards to biodiversity, connectivity and hydrology. The Open Space Strategy for Larger Towns in Cornwall contains a set of design principles that relate primarily to the open space function and it is recommended that their use be extended to the rest of the county.

7 Open space provision summary

Through an evaluation of existing open space provision in St Blazey, Par, Tywardreath & Tregrehan Mills, provision standards have been developed for the quantity, accessibility and quality of six different types of open space required as part of any town or neighbourhood plan. Locations, design principles and types of provision are identified, along with the means of delivering these standards through new development and local partnerships. The work will be finalised in spring 2017 as part of a new open space supplementary planning document, after which it should be updated and reviewed every three years.

Appendix1 - Open space type definitions

Open Space Type & Ref No.	Planning Policy Guidance PPG17 typology	Category descriptions likely to be found in Cornwall	Unless adjacent other OS, min. size of space (m ²)
1. Parks and gardens; Amenity green space; Civic spaces	Parks Amenity green space Civic Spaces Public gardens.	Urban parks, 'recreation grounds', 'King George V playing fields' or any decent 'playing fields' with multiple formal uses other than sport. Could contain equipped play areas. Millennium Greens. Informal recreation spaces, landscaped & managed (formally rather than natural) green spaces in and around housing, hospitals, colleges & public buildings. Village greens. Civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians. Highly formalized public gardens, comprising floral displays, seating.	>1000 >1000 >500 These are sometimes relatively small, but highly strategic
2. Natural and semi-natural green spaces, Green corridors, accessible countryside in urban fringe areas	Natural and semi-natural green spaces	Land that is open to the public that is predominantly managed for nature conservation. Publically accessible nature reserves, woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, heath, grasslands (e.g. commons and coastal), wetlands, open and running water, reservoirs, heritage mine workings and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits). Country Parks – Tehidy & Kitt Hill. Accessible beaches down to Mean Sea Level. Unlike other typologies the majority of the space will not receive regular short grass mowing. Long established & permanent grasslands managed for meadow flora through one or two crops per year or by natural or livestock grazing, accessible beyond any PROW.	>1000

	<p>Green Corridors</p> <p>Accessible countryside in urban fringe areas</p>	<p>Riverside and other narrow strips of land associated with public access, bridleways, cycle ways, national trails, former tramways and rights of way.</p> <p>Generally agricultural or private natural space adjoining housing areas where informal recreation has been established and permitted for at least five years. This is more than a mere public right of way across land, and implies that the public may roam & play throughout the land as long as they adhere to the Countryside Code.</p>	<p>>500</p> <p>>1000</p>
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Open Space Type & Ref No.	Planning Policy Guidance PPG17 typology	Category descriptions likely to be found in Cornwall	Unless adjacent other OS, min. size of space (m ²)
3. Public access sports facilities (outdoor): available for community games	<p>Outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned)</p> <p>* Here separated based upon accessibility for general public</p>	<p>Seasonal and fixed spaces that are formally used for junior or adult sports leagues and are openly accessible to the public (fees may apply). Outdoor gym equipment. Natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned - including tennis courts, sports pitches, athletics tracks and other outdoor sports areas, which may be used for informal recreation when not in sporting use. Public access should be interpreted as available for community use for appropriate sports matches. It might not necessarily mean that the sports ground can be accessed by others for informal uses e.g. dog walking.</p> <p>Very often these facilities are located within parks or recreation grounds (typology 1), in which case only the formal pitch should be distinguished in this category.</p>	>500
4. Children's play area – equipped	Provision for children	Public areas specifically laid out for children's play either comprising landscaping or equipment to provide a range of play opportunities. Free access playgrounds and Adventure Playgrounds (e.g. Gwel-An-Top, Redruth).	No minimum for existing. Usually, but not always, part of other open space. In future minimum of 500m ²
5. Provision for teenagers– equipped facilities	Provision for teenagers	Public areas specifically laid out for young people such as multi-use games areas (MUGA), wheeled sports & skate parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and informal 'hanging out' areas or teenage shelters. Extreme play equipment aimed primarily at 12-17yrs age group.	No minimum for existing. Usually, but not always, part of other open space. In future minimum of 500m ²
6. Allotments, community gardens, and city (urban) farms	Allotments, community gardens, and city (urban) farms	Local authority or privately operated allotments, community orchards. Permaculture and community food growing initiatives.	<p>Non standard small plots & access: >300m²</p> <p>In future minimum of 2500m²</p>

Open Space Type & Ref No.	Planning Policy Guidance PPG17 typology	Category descriptions likely to be found in Cornwall	Suggested size threshold. Unless strategically significant the minimum size of space (m ²).
7. Cemeteries and churchyards	Cemeteries and churchyards	Operating & closed graveyards, cemeteries, gardens of remembrance, church grounds, woodland burial land.	>1000
8. School pitches and outdoor sports club facilities (No or limited public access)	<p>Outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned)</p> <p>* Here separated based upon accessibility for general public</p>	School playing fields, golf courses, bowling greens and private sports clubs with limited public (non-member) access. Includes facilities on military bases, college campuses and private institutions. Any land or portions of land associated with a school used for the provision of sporting, academic or extracurricular programs outdoors, which often includes other facilities, including playgrounds and recreational places.	>1000