

Open Space, Sport and Recreation





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9. Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Introduction

- 9.1. Open spaces, sports facilities, and recreational areas are vital components of any community, contributing not only to the physical health and well-being of individuals but also to the social fabric and environmental quality of Trafford.
- 9.2. The value of open space and recreational facilities also extend beyond leisure, providing essential opportunities for exercise, relaxation, and social interaction, fostering healthier, more vibrant communities. They also play a crucial role in supporting biodiversity, mitigating the impacts of climate change, and enhancing the overall quality of life for residents.
- 9.3. With an aging population and an increase in avoidable health-related illnesses in the borough, sports and recreational areas, in particular, are central to enabling residents to improve their physical health; offering spaces for people of all ages and abilities to engage in active pursuits.
- 9.4. Alongside planned growth and, it is important to ensure that these spaces are protected and promoted spaces to ensure they remain accessible both now and in the future.
- 9.5. Consequently, this chapter sets out the policies that will guide the protection, provision and enhancement of open space, sport, and recreation facilities within Trafford, ensuring that such spaces are able to meet the needs of a diverse population, contributing to a healthier, more sustainable environment for all.

Corporate Plan Priorities





Policy Exclusions from the Local Plan

- 9.6. The Local Plan needs to be read alongside Places for Everyone (PfE) and national policy / guidance. Policy requirements which are adequately covered by other existing policies have, where possible, not been duplicated in the Local Plan. This includes policies in the Greener Places chapter and Places for People chapter.



Trafford's Open Spaces

Policy OS1: Open Space

A. The Council will:

- i. Provide and connect a high-quality, multi-functional network of open spaces across Trafford.
- ii. Protect, enhance and make the most of existing parks, gardens and open spaces, and
- iii. Require new high-quality outdoor spaces to be provided.

Existing Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces

B. The following open spaces will be protected, and any loss will be resisted:

- i. Parks, gardens and recreation grounds including provision for children and teenagers
- ii. Natural and semi-natural greenspace
- iii. Amenity greenspace
- iv. Allotments
- v. Cemeteries and churchyards
- vi. Private communal space
- vii. Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

C. Within existing spaces, supporting and/or ancillary development which does not have an adverse effect on the environmental and open character, appearance and function of protected open spaces listed under criterion B will be supported.

Access to Open Space

D. All major developments must ensure their occupants are able to access relevant and appropriate high-quality open space(s) in accordance with the following walkable accessibility standards:

- i. Minimum 0.5ha of doorstep access open space within 200m
- ii. Minimum 2ha of local access open space within 300m
- iii. Minimum 10ha of neighbourhood access open space within 1km
- iv. Minimum 20ha of wider neighbourhood access open space within 2km



- v. Minimum 100ha of district access open space within 5km
 - vi. LAP greater than 0.01ha within 100m
 - vii. LEAP greater than 0.04ha within 400m
 - viii. NEAP greater than 0.1ha within 1km
 - ix. MUGA within 800m
 - x. Allotments within 1.2km
- E. Major developments that are not able to ensure access to relevant and appropriate high-quality open space(s) access in accordance with criterion D, will be required to make on-site provision as required by criterion F(i) – (v) and/or contribute to an existing open space in need of improvement or enhancement.

Provision of Open Space in Developments

- F. Residential development over 50 homes will be required to provide a minimum of 3ha of new accessible public open space per 1,000 population (i – iii) and other open space (iv – v) on-site including:
- i. Minimum 1ha of parks, gardens and recreation grounds per 1,000 population
 - ii. Minimum 1ha of natural and semi-natural greenspace per 1,000 population
 - iii. Amenity greenspace
 - iv. At least 0.25ha provision for children and teenagers per 1,000 population
 - v. At least 0.25ha of allotments per 1,000 population
- A. The provision of new, additional open space for children and teenagers is a priority in Trafford and must be provided on-site, which may include incorporating playable space within greenspaces and/or within the public realm.

Policy OS1N: Open Space in Trafford North

- A. New open space provision within the locality will be focused in the first instance within Trafford Park, Humphrey Park and Old Trafford.



Policy OS1S: Open Space in Trafford South

A. New provision of and/or improvements and enhancements to open space will be focused on natural and semi-natural greenspaces and allotments.

Policy OS1C: Open Space in Trafford Central

A. New provision of and/or improvements and enhancements to open space will be focused on neighbourhood, wider neighbourhood and district level accessible greenspaces and allotments.

Policy OS1W: Open Space in Trafford West

A. To the southern half of the Trafford West locality, new provision of and/or improvements and enhancements to open space will be focused on natural and semi-natural greenspaces.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-G2; JP-G6; JP-P6; and JP-P7.

Relevant Strategic Objectives

SO2, SO3, SO7 and SO9

- 9.7. Providing access to a range of high-quality, multi-functional, connected open spaces is important for the physical, mental and emotional well-being of Trafford's residents, as well as providing the setting for formal and informal recreation and physical activity, supporting housing and economic growth, helping to achieve inclusive neighbourhoods.
- 9.8. National planning policy places a strong emphasis on the importance of open space for sport and physical activity and for the health and well-being of communities by enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles.
- 9.9. The Council's Open Space Assessment (April 2024), provides an up to date picture of open space across the borough, advises on quantity and accessibility standards for open space provision, and establishes criteria



for quality and value standards and has been used to inform the overarching strategic and locality policies.

9.10. Across the borough, the assessment identified a need for additional open space for children and teenagers, and this has been incorporated into the strategic policy as a borough-wide area of focus.

9.11. The assessment also considered each of the localities and identified deficiencies across the various typologies of open space, concluding (among other things) that:

- Trafford North has the lowest quantity of open space compared to any of the other localities in the borough, accordingly development in Trafford Park, the Civic Quarter, Wharfside, and Trafford Waters should ensure that residents and workers are able to access quality natural, semi-natural, and recreational open space.
- Trafford South is well served by parks, gardens and recreation grounds. However, natural and semi-natural greenspace and allotments do not meet the standards and additional provision is required.
- Trafford Central is well served by parks, gardens, recreation grounds and natural and semi-natural greenspaces, however accessible greenspace falls below the 3ha per 1,000 of the population standard and additional provision of allotments is also needed.
- Trafford West has the highest overall provision of open space in the borough at 8.30ha per 1,000 of the population. It is primarily located along the Mersey Valley, resulting in less being available in the southern half of the locality. Longer term, the assessment also concluded that it is likely the provision of allotments will also fall below the standard.

9.12. Given the scale of proposed and potential growth in Trafford's urban areas over the plan period, there is a need to provide corresponding new and improved open spaces and recreational facilities whilst providing further



opportunities to remedy deficiencies in the quantity of provision apparent through the open space assessment and greenspace strategy.

- 9.13. An updated Greenspace Strategy will highlight priorities for investment in the context of the open space hierarchy, including information relating to the quality of parks and open spaces and facilities under the Council's management.
- 9.14. Further technical detail and costs relating to open space will be set out in the Planning Obligations SPD.

Consultation Question 9-1

Do you support Policy OS1? Are there any changes required which would improve the policy? Please provide any supporting evidence which you think is relevant.



Trafford's Outdoor Sports and Recreation Offer

Policy OS2: Outdoor Sports and Recreation Facilities and Provision

A. The Council will:

- i. Provide and connect a high-quality network of outdoor playing pitches, sport and recreation facilities.
- ii. Protect, enhance and make the most use of existing sport and recreation facilities; and
- iii. Require and support new and/or expanded high-quality outdoor sport and recreation facilities to be provided.

Existing Outdoor Facilities

B. The following pitches and facilities (both public and private) will be protected, and any loss will be resisted:

- i. Grass sports pitches for football, cricket, rugby league, rugby union pitches, lacrosse, Gaelic football
- ii. Artificial grass pitches (AGPs) including hockey
- iii. Bowling greens
- iv. Tennis courts
- v. Athletics tracks and stadia
- vi. Sale Water Park
- vii. Golf courses

C. Within existing facilities, supporting and/or ancillary outdoor sports or recreation development which does not have an adverse effect on the environmental and open character, appearance and function of protected sports pitches and facilities listed under criterion B, will be supported.

Access to Outdoor Facilities

D. All major residential developments must ensure their occupants are able to access at least one type of outdoor sports provision within a repeating radius of 1.2km, starting at the site's centre point, as listed under criterion B.

Provision of Outdoor Pitches and Facilities



- E. Major developments that are not able to ensure access to outdoor sports provision in accordance with criterion D, will be required to provide and/or contribute towards new outdoor sports provision and/or improvement or enhancement of appropriate existing facilities.
- F. All new facilities shall be designed to simultaneously serve other green and blue infrastructure functions (see Policy GI2), linking into the wider natural infrastructure network.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-G2; JP-G6; JP-P6 and JP-P7.

Relevant Strategic Objectives

SO2, SO3, SO7 and SO9

- 9.15. The importance of access to high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation that can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities is emphasised in national policy.
- 9.16. Correspondingly, the need to increase provision and invest in existing outdoor sports and recreation is recognised at both a national and local level, through the Department of Media Culture and Sport Get Active: A Strategy for the Future of Sport and Physical Activity) August 2023 and the Trafford Moving Partnership.
- 9.17. It is appropriate therefore, to ensure that outdoor sports and recreation facilities and access to them is both protected and enhanced wherever possible.
- 9.18. In doing so, Sport England's approach to planning for outdoor sport is embedded in the Council's, which is underpinned by a detailed understanding of existing provision, condition and capacity across the borough to respond effectively to development proposals that create significant potential levels of demand in terms of outdoor sports facilities.
- 9.19. As such, the Council will use Sport England's most up to date Facilities Costs to determine the amount, type and cost of new and/or improved



sport and recreation facilities required by new development, with further detail and guidance set out in the Planning Obligations SPD.

- 9.20. Requirements and calculations will be informed by the most recent playing pitch strategy, or any subsequent updated playing pitch and outdoor sports strategy.
- 9.21. As well as providing opportunities for sport and promoting opportunities for healthy life styles, many outdoor sport and recreation facilities have an important function as green infrastructure, providing valuable habitats, landscape and routes for walking and cycling. Often situated on the edge of the urban areas or in the Green Belt, they connect to the wider countryside and provide opportunities to support and accommodate dual-uses within the green and blue infrastructure networks, whilst also relieving pressure on other natural and human-made infrastructures.

Consultation Question 9-2

Do you support Policy OS2? Are there any changes required which would improve the policy? Please provide any supporting evidence which you think is relevant.



Trafford's Indoor Sports and Recreation

Policy OS3: Indoor Sports and Recreation Provision

A. The Council will:

- i. Protect, enhance and make the most of existing indoor sports and recreation facilities, in particular:
 - Stretford Leisure Centre
 - Altrincham Leisure Centre
 - Sale Leisure Centre; and
 - Partington Leisure Centre
- ii. Support proposals to expand and enhance the range of indoor sports and recreation facilities; and
- iii. Require new high-quality indoor sports and recreation facilities to be provided to meet identified needs.

Existing Indoor Sports Facilities and Provision

B. The following indoor sports and recreation facilities will be protected, and any loss will be resisted:

- i. Leisure centres
- ii. Sports halls
- iii. Swimming pools
- iv. Fitness centres and gyms; and
- v. Other specialist indoor facilities including those for bowls, combat sports, gymnastics, squash and tennis

Access to Indoor Sports

C. All major residential developments must ensure their occupants are able to access at least one type of indoor sports and recreation provision within a repeating radius of 1.2km, starting at the site's centre point, as listed under criterion B.

Provision of New Indoor Facilities



- D. Major developments that are not able to ensure access to indoor sports and recreation provision in accordance with criterion C, will be required to contribute towards new indoor sports and recreation provision and/or existing the improvement or enhancement of appropriate existing facilities.
- E. The Council will support proposals that enable community use of school facilities, particularly where they help to meet indoor sport needs of local communities.
- F. The Council will support innovative proposals within existing and new indoor sports facilities, that create flexible spaces to encourage physical activity and well-being activities alongside traditional sports

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-P6; and JP-P7.

Relevant Strategic Objectives

SO2 and SO9

- 9.22. Physical exercise plays an important part in improving the health and wellbeing of Trafford's residents, supporting them to live and remain independent for longer, and in better health.
- 9.23. It is recognised nationally and locally that the impact of sport and leisure is not simply for fitness's sake, and that strategically direct services and facilities can have a significant impact on physical and mental health, educational attainment and reduce health inequalities. Traditionally, the role of leisure centres has been to support fitness and provide access to sporting opportunities. Post pandemic, there is a greater public awareness of the value of physical activity and the role in improving health and wellbeing.
- 9.24. This is underpinned by a change in policy at a national and regional level with a clear shift from delivering fitness to wellness. Equally, there is a growing recognition from health and social care commissioners in the



potential for leisure centres to reduce health inequalities in local communities.

- 9.25. It is therefore appropriate to protect existing and encourage the provision of new indoor sports facilities that cater for a variety sports and needs of a range of residents.
- 9.26. As such, the Council will use Sport England's most up to date Facilities Costs to determine the amount, type and cost of new and/or improved indoor sports facilities required, with further detail and guidance set out in the Planning Obligations SPD.
- 9.27. Requirements and calculations will be informed by the most recent indoor sports assessment or any subsequent updated indoor sports strategy.

Consultation Question 9-3

Do you support Policy OS3? Are there any changes required which would improve the policy? Please provide any supporting evidence which you think is relevant.



Protection of Sport and Recreation Land and Facilities

Policy OS4: Loss of Sport and Recreation Land or Facilities

- A. The development of existing sport or recreation land or facilities for non-recreation or non-sport purposes will only be permitted where:
 - i. It is ancillary to the sport or recreation use and does not reduce the overall sport or recreation function of the site;
 - ii. Replacement recreation provision of at least the same quantity, quality, accessibility to its catchment population, community benefit and management level is made in a suitable location; and
 - iii. It has been clearly demonstrated that the site is surplus to sport and/or recreational requirements and is not capable of helping to meet any of Trafford's sport or recreation standards; or
 - iv. The site has been allocated for alternative purposes in the development plan, and development will deliver a net improvement in the boroughs' sport or recreation resources.
- B. Wherever practicable, replacement provision shall be made directly by the developer and shall be available for use before the existing sport or recreation facility is lost.
- C. This policy applies to all existing sites and facilities that have a sport and/or recreation use or value, irrespective of whether they are owned or managed by the public, private or voluntary sectors.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-P6; and JP-P7.

Relevant Strategic Objectives

SO2 and SO9

- 9.28. The benefits of sport and recreation to physical and mental health and well-being are well established and have the ability to significantly reduce health inequalities and burdens on the health system in the long-run.



- 9.29. Access to all types of sport and recreation facilities is therefore of paramount importance in enabling communities to easily and effectively choose to make be more active, this is particularly critical for younger and older residents who are often not able to access facilities independently.
- 9.30. It is therefore important to resist the unnecessary loss of sport and recreation land and facilities to other uses, especially at the local/ neighbourhood level.

Consultation Question 9-4

Do you support Policy OS4? Are there any changes required which would improve the policy? Please provide any supporting evidence which you think is relevant.

Places to Grow

Policy OS5: Allotments and Growing Space

- A. The Council will maintain and protect an adequate supply of allotment provision to meet existing and future needs, wherever possible.
- B. Allotment sites and identified community food growing gardens in Trafford will be protected from development unless:
- i. They are proven to be surplus to community requirements.
 - ii. They cannot serve an alternative open space use; or
 - iii. Alternative provision of equal or better size and quality is made.
- C. Opportunities for the establishment of new allotments and food growing areas, along with appropriate expansions of existing allotment sites, will be supported.
- D. Major residential development over 50 homes must provide opportunities to incorporate food growing areas such as allotments, community gardens, roof gardens and/or temporary use of vacant land.

Places for Everyone Links



Policy JP-G2; JP-G6; and JP-P6.

Relevant Strategic Objectives

SO2, SO3, SO7 and SO9

- 9.31. Allotments and community gardens create potential for local food production, healthy lifestyles, physical activity and social interaction, whilst also forming an important part of Trafford's green infrastructure and nature network.
- 9.32. National planning policy, recognises this and advises that planning policies should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which (among other things) provide access to healthier food and allotments.
- 9.33. Trafford's provision of allotments amounts to approximately 1,500 plots across 37 sites, equal to provision of approximately 7 plots per 1,000 population, and many of them have waiting lists.
- 9.34. Provision of additional areas for recreational food production is therefore both encouraged and desired and opportunities to meet as much of that need as possible supported.

Consultation Question 9-5

Do you support Policy OS5? Are there any changes required which would improve the policy? Please provide any supporting evidence which you think is relevant.



Places for Remembering

Policy OS6: Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

- A. Trafford's existing cemeteries and crematoria will be protected as open spaces for burial and memorial use.
- B. Proposals for new/additional burial space will be supported where they are not located in a flood zone and are located outside of a groundwater source protection zone.
- C. Opportunities to enhance the biodiversity value of cemeteries and burial spaces will be encouraged and supported.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-G2; JP-G6; and JP-P6

Relevant Strategic Objectives

SO2, SO3 and SO7

- 9.35. Cemeteries and burial space including churchyards represent an important but often overlooked open space resource that provide important benefits and services in terms of access to greenspace, biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- 9.36. However, cemeteries and burial grounds are particularly adversely affected by flooding and as such must not be located in areas of flood risk (from any source of flooding).
- 9.37. Similarly, these sites have the potential to contaminate groundwater supplies and are therefore the subject of rigorous regulations from the Environment Agency to ensure that there are no adverse impacts for identified Groundwater Source Protection Zones, which are available as open-source data.
- 9.38. Increased need for cemeteries and crematoria that meet the needs of a wide range of faiths and religions, means that additional land will need to be made available to ensure that their essential functions can continue.



Consultation Question 9-6

Do you support Policy OS6? Are there any changes required which would improve the policy? Please provide any supporting evidence which you think is relevant.

Monitoring

- 9.39. Table 12.4 of Places for Everyone (PfE) sets out a monitoring framework for the open space, sport and recreation related policies within that plan. Key indicators include the following:
- Number of hectares of green infrastructure.
- 9.40. The Local Plan will not replicate the above PfE monitoring indicators. The following additional indicators have been identified to monitor the delivery of the Local Plan Open Space, Sport and Recreation policies.

Indicator	Target
Number of planning applications that result in the gain of identified open space (in total and by locality).	Increase.
Number of planning applications that results in the loss of identified open space (in total and by locality).	Decrease.
Number of major developments that are able to access relevant and appropriate high-quality open space(s) in accordance with walkable accessibility standards.	Increase.
Number of major planning applications that have provide identified open space per 1,000 population.	Increase.
Number of Green Flag awards.	Increase.
Number of planning applications that result in the gain of outdoor facilities (in total and by locality).	Increase.
Number of planning applications that result in the loss of existing outdoor facilities.	Decrease.



Indicator	Target
Number of planning applications that result in the gain of indoor sports and recreation provision (in total and by locality).	Increase.
Number of planning applications that results in the loss of existing indoor sports and recreation provision.	Decrease.
Number of allotment plots available.	Increase.
Number of applications for cemeteries and burial grounds.	Increase.

Consultation Question 9-7

The Local Plan should be read alongside the Places for Everyone Plan and national policy / guidance. Where possible, the Local Plan has not repeated or duplicated policy.

However, are there any policy areas related to this chapter which you consider are missing and which should be included in the Local Plan?