

## **7.1 Spatial Standards**

7.1.1 It is clear from the analysis and studies carried out for this Strategy that the provision of public open space in residential areas on the whole is good and that the Council should in the future seek to achieve the level of provision commensurate with what the citizens of the County enjoy today.

7.1.2 However because of the propensity toward higher density development and in particular apartment complexes over the last 7 years, much of the public open space created has been fragmented and of little value for active recreation. It is considered that this situation has been addressed in the current County Development Plan (2010-2016) which provides greater clarity in relation to Class 1 Open Space (active recreational space) requirements and the protection of lands where existing playing pitches are in place.

7.1.3 The Strategy has also highlighted the need for the Council to plan for the creation of Flagship Parks which by their nature are designed landscapes or areas of significant natural beauty which have unique heritage value. These would not otherwise have come into the Council's stewardship other than for the foresight of public officials who identified the need to protect such lands for future generations. In this regard the County Development plan does refer to the need to acquire lands in the south west of the County and this would also provide the opportunity to protect further heritage assets and develop a Flagship park in this area.

7.1.4 There are two criteria by which spatial standards are measured-- quantity and accessibility. The accessibility standard is a measure of the

distance thresholds (metres) people should be expected to travel locally to avail of space for recreation.

7.1.5 The distance thresholds have been established based on the research undertaken into the distances which people are happy to travel to the different types of provision.

### **Accessibility Standards for Parks (Class 1 Open Space)**

**To ensure that all residents have access to good quality parks within 600m of their place of residence.**

### **Accessibility Standard for Open Space (Class 2)**

**To ensure that all residents have access to a good quality open space within 400m of their place of residence.**

7.1.6 People identified that they expect to be able to walk to their local greenspace and that they are prepared to walk up to 6 minutes or a distance close to 400metres to amenity open space and 8 minutes or 600m to a park. In a more rural context, however with lower density populations, public open space will be more widely distributed and the distances travelled will not be comparable to an urban area. For example the Glencullen Electoral Area has the biggest deficiency with 43% of households outside the threshold for Parks.

7.1.7 The County Development Plan 2010-2016 has set standards of provision for new developments based on two classes of open space (Class 1 and Class 2):

- **Class 1** open space is normally constituted as a significant local park which provides inter alia for active recreation in the form of playing fields.
- **Class 2** public open space is more numerous and located in and around residential areas, providing opportunities for informal recreation and play.

**Quantity Standard for Parks (Class 1)**

**The quantity standard for parks should be no less than the current provision of 2.06 hectares per 1,000 population**

7.1.8 The quantity standard for parks in new developments is based a ratio of 'Parks' to population. In calculating the standard, the Flagship Parks have been excluded, as they are an historic legacy, and their inclusion would distort a proper analysis of the situation. For instance, Marlay Demesne was planned as a 'regional park' for the former Dublin County Council which included South Dublin and Fingal County Councils administrative areas and as such has a sub-regional status. A high proportion of the users of this Park are from South County Dublin and Dublin City Councils administrative areas. Killiney Hill Park and Blackrock Park also are in public ownership as a result of different historical legacies.

7.1.9 There are other sites that could not be considered for building development because they are former landfills (Kilbogget and Jamestown Parks). Fortunately, their development as public parks is a suitable use after appropriate reclamation. These have been included in the calculations.

7.1.10 Where the standard for Parks (Class 1 Open Space) cannot be achieved, developers may be required to make a contribution in lieu of provision, towards the costs of off-site provision and/ or the up-grading of facilities in a nearby park, including the cost of land acquisition by DLR. If

such requirement shall arise, it shall be exercised in compliance with the provisions of the County Development Plan 2010-2016 (Policy DM2).

**Quantity Standards for Amenity Open Space (Class 2)**

- **The quantity standard for amenity open space should be no less than 1.06 ha per 1,000 population**
- **The minimum size threshold for amenity open space provision is 0.2 ha.**

7.1.11 The quantity standard for Amenity Open Space (Class 2) in new developments is based on the current ratio of such open space to population. The 'Civic Spaces' identified at Dún Laoghaire Harbour have been excluded from the ratio as they have a unique heritage with a sub-regional rather than local or county significance which is very different to an amenity open space.

7.1.12 The minimum size threshold (0.2 ha.) for an amenity open space is based on the need to provide sufficient area to accommodate informal recreation and play as well as tree planting, earth-mounding and park furniture. Amenity Open Space is particularly important for the establishment of large canopy trees close to where people live.

Also, planning policy should promote the consolidation of open spaces within proposed development(s), rather than allow the often fragmented smaller spaces that serve little useful purpose.

**7.2 Quality Standard**

7.2.1 The audit identified that quality varies significantly across the county, with less than 20% of sites rated at 61% (Good) or above.

**Quality Standard for Parks (Class 1)**

- **To achieve and maintain the highest Quality Standard for all the Flagship Parks.**
- **To bring all Major and Local Parks to a 'Good' quality standard.**



Lavender border in walled garden, Marlay Park

7.2.3 The Flagship Parks scored reasonably well, however, at present only Marlay Park achieved the 'Green Flag Award' standard of 'Excellent' (76%), although Blackrock, Cabinteely and Killiney came close to this standard. The audit identified signage, improved maintenance and additional infrastructure as the key factors to be addressed in terms of qualitative improvements.

7.2.4 The task of raising the quality standard to meet local people's aspirations cannot be achieved overnight. Nevertheless, the Council will aim to bring all its Major Local and Local Parks up to a 'Good' standard over the next four years by prioritising improvements in consultation with local communities.

**Quality Standards for Amenity Open Space (Class 2 Open Space)**

**To bring all Amenity Open Spaces up to the 'Average' quality rating.**

7.2.5 While the audit revealed that less than 16% of Amenity Open Spaces achieved a rating of 'Average' or above, local people are mainly satisfied with the quality of space although the consultation does indicate some concerns with regard to maintenance.

7.2.6 The key electoral areas for improvement are Ballybrack, Blackrock and Glencullen, where none of the sites audited achieved a rating of 'Good' or above.

**7.3 Play Facilities**

7.3.1 Opportunities for play and physical activity are important in the development of physical and social skills. It is recognised that 'play' is greater than just fixed equipment, MUGAs and skateboard parks. Informal play is also facilitated in well designed open spaces and where there are organised play activities. The audit only examined fixed play facilities.

7.3.2 The public consultation revealed that people want play provision that is local and easily accessible. There is a perceived lack of play facilities especially those for toddlers and teenagers.

**Accessibility Standard for fixed Play Facilities**

**DLR will continue to implement its Play Policy (2003) which seeks to provide fixed play facilities within a 1.2km threshold of every residence.**

7.3.3 DLR will undertake a review of the *Play Policy (2003)* in the light of the audit findings in this Strategy before setting specific local standards. The review will take account of the guidance on benchmark standards for quality, quantity and accessibility, as recommended in the Fields in Trust's *'Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play'* and other relevant guidance.

**Outdoor Recreational Facilities**

7.3.4 Communities want provision that is local and easily accessible. They have expressed concern at the apparent lack of outdoor facilities, especially those for young people. However, findings in The Irish Sports Monitor, Second Annual Report by The Economic and Social Research Institute (2008) found that *"People in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown (in particular).....are more likely to play sport"* than any in other county.

7.3.5 The quantitative standard for the provision of outdoor recreation facilities is based on 1.15 hectares per 1,000 population as recommended in best practice guidance by the Fields in Trust (*'Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play'*). The standard is applicable to the following facilities:

- Facilities such as pitches, greens, courts, athletics tracks and training areas owned by local authorities.
- Facilities described above within the education sector which are available for public use by written agreement

- Facilities described above within the voluntary, private, industrial and commercial sectors which serve the leisure time needs for outdoor recreation of their members or the public.



Golf course in Marlay Park, Rathfarnham

7.3.6 A study of outdoor recreational facilities was carried out in this Strategy and this indicates that the current provision of all public, private and institutional facilities for GAA, soccer, rugby, tennis and bowling is 0.85 ha./1,000. A more in-depth study of facilities is required to assist in recommending standards for the provision of these facilities.

7.3.7 Such a study would provide a basis for a Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy which would guide future provision based on hectares/1,000 population. This would be a useful exercise to be carried out in the Dublin region to enable regional comparisons and to establish best practice. An

audit of pitches in public parks will be undertaken to ensure that facilities are adequately maintained to achieve a Performance Quality Standard.

**Standard for Outdoor Recreational Facilities**

**In order to establish standards, the Council will set up an interdepartmental team to assess the provision and demand for facilities for all sports including minority sports. This will consider the availability of private facilities for community access.**



Junior soccer at Deerpark, Mount Merrion