



West Bletchley Council

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy

2014

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Introduction

West Bletchley Parish Council, as part of its Neighbourhood Plan is assessing the current and future needs for open space, sport and recreation in the Parish. This document comprises a summary of the main findings.

1) The profile of West Bletchley Parish

Location: The parish of West Bletchley covers 600 hectares with Milton Keynes Council (MKC) being the principal authority. It is located to the south of Milton Keynes with a part of Watling Street running parallel to its boundary.

Population: According to the 2011 Census, West Bletchley has a population of 22,212 living in approximately 9000 dwellings. This represents an increase of 1,231 people (or 5.9%) since the 2001 Census. The parish has more than the average number (for Milton Keynes) of residents who are aged 45 or older (9730). This perhaps needs to be taken into consideration when looking at sports, activities, allotments etc.

Income: West Bletchley is acknowledged as having “pockets of high deprivation” where more than the average (for Milton Keynes) claim Housing/ Council tax benefits.

Education: West Bletchley school children are below the average for Milton Keynes for attaining Key stage 2 level 4 in English and attaining 5+ A*-C in Maths and English GCSEs.

Health: 2013 data from Milton Keynes Intelligence Observatory indicates that West Bletchley has higher than average numbers of teenage pregnancies, more people using disabled services, hospital admissions- emergency and non-emergency- are higher than the average across the borough.

2) Context

The following section summarises the key strategic documents relevant to this Strategy and links, where appropriate, to the aims and objectives set out later.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the reformed planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

The NPPF states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It establishes the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision- taking processes. In relation to plan making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

Under the promoting healthy communities theme, it is set out that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.

Specific needs and quantitative and qualitative deficiencies and surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required

in an area. As a prerequisite the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation sites, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown the site to be surplus to requirements;

Or.

The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location;

Or.

The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss (paragraph 74).

3) The prime objectives of the Assessment and Strategy are to:

- Provide a comprehensive assessment, strategy and action plan for existing open space, sport and recreation facilities across West Bletchley.
- Identify local needs and aspirations through consultation, a strategic review and a review of existing provision standards.
- Recommend standards of provision (quantity, quality and accessibility) in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance (PPG17).
- Investigate the impact of development on open space, sport and recreation facilities in determining planning applications and negotiating developer contributions through Section 106 legal agreements (possibly on behalf of MKC)

4) The aims of the study:

Based upon the above needs, the aims of the study are to:

- a) Carry out a Parish wide assessment of open space and sports facilities.
- b) Ensure the audit provides an up-to-date qualitative and quantitative assessment of local demand/need for open space and sports facilities in the Parish and is comprehensive and objective.
- c) Provide strategic options on open space, recreation and sport facilities that can be used in the neighbourhood planning process.

5) The scope of the study:

Based upon the above aims, the scope of the study is to identify:

- a) Current provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities.
- b) Identified distance thresholds, levels and types of use, the quality and value of provision, the quantity of provision and local opportunities.
- c) Strategic options for future provision of open space and sports facilities in the Parish.

6) Existing needs in West Bletchley Parish

Standards of provision:

Standards of provision for open space, sport and recreation in Milton Keynes are proposed in 'Milton Keynes local plan standards for leisure and recreation' Paper'

Applying the standards:

Applying the Milton Keynes standards to West Bletchley parish and its current population of 22,212 provides a preliminary means of assessing the adequacy of existing provision. The following process has been applied:

- 1) Where there is a specific borough wide standard for the quantity, quality and accessibility of specific types of open space, sport and recreation, this has been applied.
- 2) For playing pitches, Sport England's Playing Pitch Model, which compares pitch supply and demand to identify shortfalls, has been applied.

7) Playing fields and open space standards and figures

National Playing Fields Association standards (The NPFA six acre standard) are 2.4 hectares per 1000 population for outdoor playing space.

Milton Keynes Council has the same standards (Milton Keynes council Sport and Leisure strategy)

West Bletchley has a population of roughly 22000. This should equate to 52.8 hectares for the parish.

We have approximately 36 hectares of open space / play areas plus the golf course which is 46 hectares.

What is a hectare?

Hectare	Acre	Square meter
1	2.47	10,000
36	88.9	360,000
82	203	820,000

The assessed position is as follows:

Sport England playing pitch standard	MKC Standards for Leisure and Recreation	West Bletchley Council: Facilities	More / Less	Per 1000 West Bletchley population
<p>Playing Fields: 1.1hectare (ha) per 1,000 people All 'high' quality Within 10 minutes walk/drive of all residents</p>	1 hectare per 1000 people	19 hectares Tattenhoe Lane Selbourne Avenue Rickley Park Lord Grey School Sherwood Drive	-3	0.86
<p>Amenity greenspace (Local parks): 0.98ha per 1,000 people All 'high' quality Within 10 minutes walk/drive of all residents</p>	0.6 hectares per 1000 population	24 hectares Tattenhoe Lane The Leys Park Rickley Park Chepstow Park	+10.8	1.08
<p>Allotments: 0.25ha per 1,000 people All 'high' quality. Within 10 minutes walk/drive of all residents</p>	0.25 hectares per 1000 population	1.2 hectares	-4.3	0.22
<p>Play Provision for children/young people: 0.25ha per 1,000 people All 'high' quality A Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play(NEAP) within 10 minutes' walk of all major settlements A Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) within 10 minutes' walk of all modest settlements All other settlements to have access to at least informal play provision</p>	0.35 hectares per 1000 population	10.1 hectares	+2.4	1.3

8) **Sports facilities:** The assessed position is as follows:

Facility and standard	MKC Standards for Leisure and Recreation	West Bletchley Council: Facilities	More / Less p	Per 1000 West Bletchley population
Grass football pitches:	1: 1,840	15	+3	1.25
Ratio of football Pitches to Adults in England1: 1,840				
Bowls greens:				1 per 11,000
One green per 15,913 people All 'high' quality Within 30 minutes drive of all residents	1: 0.07	2		
Golf courses:				1 per 22.000
One course per 17,682 people	?	1		

Standards compared with Milton Keynes Council for Leisure and Recreation

Playing fields 1 hectare per 1,000 population =22

Tattenhoe lane	8
Rickly Park	4
Selbourne Ave	4
Lord Grey School	1.5
Sherwood Drive	1.5
Total = 19	

Local Parks 0.6 hectare per 1000 population = 13.2

Tattenhoe Lane	8
The Leys Park	8
Rickley Park	4
Chepstow Drive Local Park	4
Total = 24	

Local Play areas .35 hectare per 1000 population = 7.7

Avon Grove Local Park	0.7
Buckfast Avenue Local Park	2
Chepstow Drive Local Park (St Johns end)	0.1
Chester Close	0.1
Downing Close	0.4
Dunbar Close	0.2
Hunstanton Way	0.7
Otter Close	0.1
Eight Belles, Buckingham Road Local Park	2
St Clements Drive Pocket Park	0.5
Trafalgar Avenue Barleyhurst Park	1.5
Whiteley Crescent Recreation Ground	0.4
Yorkshire Close	0.4
Rec Ground, Church Green Road, Bletchley	1

Total = 10.1

Allotments 0.25 hectares per 1000 population = 5.5

Tattenhoe Lane	0.1
Selbourne Avenue	0.2
Chepstow	0.7
Yorkshire Close	0.2

Total = 1.2

(Please note all area sizes are approximate)

9) *Other influences on pitch supply:*

Pitch supply issues are also influenced by the following factors:

- a) Scots Club have a long-term lease on 2 football pitches with Milton Keynes Council.
- b) MK City has a long term lease on 4 football pitches at Tattenhoe Lane with Milton Keynes Council.

10) *Consultation with local stakeholders:*

In addition to the application of planning standards to assess the adequacy of provision locally, consultation was initiated with a range of local stakeholders with an interest in open space, sport and recreation in West Bletchley Parish, to obtain additional perspectives on the

local situation. Please see Summary of Conclusions and Actions below from the Neighbourhood Planning Open Space Workshop:

Key Points recorded

- We should identify areas of amenity land and investigate whether they can be designated as open space.
- Community Foundation land should be added to our list of open spaces.
- It is important to identify links to areas outside of the parish and see if we can comment on other parishes’ plans.
- In respect of Standards relating to Open Space, West Bletchley has:
 - a fair number of playing fields
 - over 50% more play areas than standard
 - nearly double the number of Parks recommended
 - less than 25% of the recommended number of Allotments (although West Bletchley does have a high number of homes with larger gardens)
- We agree that the principle of consolidating and disposing of some play sites should be looked at.
- We need to identify a ‘viable’ cycle route (possibly south and west of parish)
- We wish to see the Golf Course remain, protect access and rights of way but understand that there is a need to look at future viability issues

11) *Open space needs:*

Existing and future needs are as follows:

Description	Existing needs	Future needs
Parks	See 7) and 8) above	To be determined by Neighbourhood Plan
Play areas	See 7) and 8) above	Subject to a detailed review of play area provision
Amenity green space (sports)	See 7) and 8) above	To be determined by Neighbourhood Plan
Allotments	See 7) and 8) above	To be determined by Neighbourhood Plan

Sample surveys sent to local residents have confirmed how important parks and open space are to them. 83% of those who responded make use of local parks, 90% say they are suitable for purpose, although only 58% make use of the local play facilities.

The Neighbourhood plan will help to determine future needs. By consulting with stakeholders as part of the key actions of the Neighbourhood plan have already been identified including consolidating play equipment.

12) *Capital cost implications?*

There will undoubtedly be requirements for commitment to capital funding, following completion and publication of the Neighbourhood Plan. Detailed requirements cannot be

considered until the outcome of the Neighbourhood Planning process is complete and will be considered at that time, against other issues and priorities.

13) **Capital funding sources:**

The following sources of funding are available to contribute towards the capital costs:

a) **Developer contributions:** The main source of funding will be developer contributions relating to new developments in the parish. Section 106 funding relating to developments previously undertaken in the parish should also be available for sports projects.

b) **Sport England:**

Sport England's Improvement Fund is being distributed via five funding rounds of £9m per annum and is part of Sport England's strategy which is focused on helping more people acquire lifelong sporting habits. The Improvement Fund will award grants worth £150,000 to £500,000 into sustainable projects with a clear local need. The Fund will support projects that deliver capital improvements through new build, modernisation or refurbishment.

14) List of parks West Bletchley

1. Avon Grove Local Park	Local Play Area
2. Buckfast Avenue Local Park	Local Play Area
3. Chepstow Drive Local Park (allotments end)	Local Park
4. Chepstow Drive Local Park (Middle park)	Local Park
5. Chepstow Drive Local Park (St Johns end)	Local Play Area
6. Chester Close	Local Play Area
7. Downing Close	Local Play Area
8. Dunbar Close	Local Play Area
9. Hunstanton Way	Local Play Area
10. Otter Close	Local Play Area
11. St Johns rd	Local Play Area
12. Recreation Ground, Church Green Road	Local Play Area
13. Eight Belles, Buckingham Road	Local Play Area
14. Rickley Park, Bletchley	Local Park
15. St Clements Drive Pocket Park	Local Play Area
16. Trafalgar Avenue Barleyhurst Park	Local Play Area
17. The Leys Park (School end)	Local Park
18. The Leys Park (Whalley Drive end)	Local Park
19. Whiteley Crescent Recreation Ground	Local Play Area
20. Tattenhoe Lane	Local Park
21. Yorkshire Close	Local Play Area

Although we have looked primarily at football other sports like for example cricket, tennis and rugby will be investigated if future needs dictate as this Open Space, Sport and Recreation strategy is an ongoing live document.