

Allotments

■ OBJECTIVE

This guideline is supplementary to the policies on open space contained within the local plans and relates to proposals for the development of allotment sites.

■ POLICY CONTEXT

NPPG 3 “Land for Housing” stresses the importance of retaining open space areas, including allotments.

NPPG 11 “Sport, Physical Recreation and Open Space” encourages the protection of existing open space, including public parks and playing fields and other land of recreational, amenity or wildlife value.

Policies to protect areas of open space of amenity, wildlife, social and recreational value are contained within the structure plan and all local plans.

■ SCOPE OF GUIDANCE

This guideline applies on a city-wide basis to areas of allotment land, either public or private.

POLICYGUIDANCE

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Planning applications for development on allotment sites will be considered as follows:

1. Allotments should be protected from development within the terms of open space policies in local plans; and
2. Where development is deemed on balance to be beneficial, the prospective developer will be required to provide a suitable alternative allotment facility in the near vicinity.

■ REASONED JUSTIFICATION

This guideline seeks to clarify the status of allotments within the context of local plan open space policies and to ensure that, where development of a site is permitted, an alternative facility is provided by the developer.

Since the early post-war years, the amount of land in use as allotments has declined considerably, with the loss of Council owned allotments mainly resulting from transfer to other open space uses, while privately owned sites have largely been lost to development. In 1997, there was an average three-year waiting list for allotments.

For planning purposes, an allotment use is not a specifically identifiable use in policy terms and has to be regarded as a form of open space use. Through its local plans the policy of the Council is to protect open space of demonstrable amenity or recreational value from development, whether it is in public ownership or private. Some of these areas are defined on local plans proposals maps, although policies on the protection of open space may be applied to all areas regardless of size. For practical purposes it tends to be only the larger areas of open space which are identified on Proposals Maps, as smaller areas are subsumed in a generalised 'housing and compatible uses' or other local plan policy designation.

Allotment gardening provides a useful and healthy form of recreation as well as an economic way of producing crops using the most environmentally friendly methods, thereby contributing to sustainability, the city's natural environment, and habitats for wildlife and plant species.

The loss of allotment sites in recent years, the development pressures on these sites and the resultant shortage of sites (leading to long waiting lists), has meant that supplementary guidance is required to clarify the 'open space' designation of the sites and to help safeguard the remaining sites.

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