



Caerphilly County Borough
2nd Replacement Local Development Plan 2020-2035

EB18: Leisure and Recreation Evidence Paper

October 2026



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EB18
Leisure and Recreation
Evidence Base Paper

Introduction

This background paper will look at informal open space in defined settlements and formal leisure facilities across the county borough.

It will consider what the county borough has now, measured against national standards, and what it may want in the future (until the end of the 2RLDP).

In broad terms, informal open space includes:

- Amenity greenspace
- Cemeteries and churchyards
- Green corridors (river and canal banks, footpaths, cycleways, bridleways, disused railway land, rights of way)
- Natural and semi-natural greenspaces (including bodies of water)
- Water (including open air tidal and freshwater pools, ponds, rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, docks, and harbours)

Also in broad terms, formal leisure facilities include:

- Allotments, city gardens and urban farms
- (Notable) indoor sports facilities (leisure centres and large commercial gyms)
- Other (notable) indoor facilities (cinemas, arts/entertainment venues, bowling alleys, and so on)
- Outdoor sports (football and rugby pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens, cricket pitches, golf courses)
- 'Provision for children and young people' (playgrounds, MUGAs, LEAPs, LAPs, skateparks)
- Public parks and gardens

National planning policy does not set minimum numbers or space standards for all these types of facilities, just as it does not cover the county borough's six country parks. This paper will focus on the categories that do have standards to meet, summarising the situation in each electoral ward, but it will recommend policies that cover some other types of leisure spaces and facilities too.

The first policy is about leisure facilities for new housing. The second protects existing open space, releasing it for other uses only in certain circumstances. The third and fourth protect formal leisure facilities and country parks, respectively, and the fifth allocates the former Markham Colliery for a mix of leisure, education and renewable energy.

Background

The following development plans and policy documents are relevant to this background paper.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This law sets out seven well-being goals, one of which is a 'healthier Wales'.

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Welsh Government, 2021)

Outcome 1: 'A Wales where people live and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places.'

'Our cities, towns and villages will be physically and digitally well connected places, offering good quality of life to their residents. High quality homes meeting the needs of society will be well located in relation to jobs, services and accessible green and open spaces. Places will meet and suit the needs of a diverse population, with accessible community facilities and services.'

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Welsh Government, Edition 12, February 2024)

Section 4.5: Recreational Spaces.

Paragraph 4.5.2: 'Planning authorities should provide a framework for well-located, good quality sport, recreational and leisure facilities, and develop clear policies for the provision, protection and enhancement of sport, recreation and leisure facilities. These policies should set standards of provision, so that local deficiencies can be identified and met through the planning process, and set out policies to avoid or resolve conflict between different activities.'

Paragraph 4.5.3: 'Formal and informal open green spaces should be protected from development, particularly in urban areas where they fulfil multiple purposes.'

Paragraph 4.5.4: 'All playing fields whether owned by public, private or voluntary organisations, should be protected from development except where:

- facilities can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site;
- alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available locally, avoiding any temporary loss of provision; or
- there is an excess of such provision in the area.'

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space

Paragraph 2.1: 'PPW requires local planning authorities to provide a framework for well-located sport, recreation and leisure facilities which should be sensitive to the needs of users, attractive, well designed, well maintained, safe and accessible to all. PPW also refers to the need for the planning system to ensure that adequate land and water resources are allocated for formal and informal sport and recreation.'

Paragraph 2.2: 'The objectives set out in PPW can best be achieved by undertaking local assessments of need and audits of existing provision. These assessments, taken together, form an Open Space Assessment which, among other things, should be used to inform the preparation, monitoring and review of LDP policies. Information from such assessments may also be useful for the preparation of corporate Open Space Strategies and Community Strategies in which broader environmental, social and health issues can be addressed.'

Fields in Trust Standards: Creating Great Spaces for All (2024)

This document is a 'set of guidelines for the amount of open space that should be available for communities and includes a minimum amount of green space per 1,000 people, as well as standards on accessibility, quality and delivery'.

It says:

'The Standards are aimed at local authorities, developers, planners, urban designers and landscape architects for all stages of the planning, design and management of multifunctional green spaces.'

And:

‘The Standards may change to reflect wider shifts, but Fields in Trust’s mission remains the same: to raise awareness of the value of our green spaces, drive systemic change, partner with others and champion the best ways to protect them and the joy they bring for the next century and beyond.’

The Greenspace Toolkit (Natural Resources Wales, updated in 2022)

This document says:

‘Everyone should live within 300m of their nearest natural greenspace. This is about a six-minute walk. Ideally green spaces should be 0.25 ha or larger. Provision should be made for at least 2 ha of accessible natural greenspace per 1000 population.’

And:

‘Natural areas are places where greenspace structure and quality of management combine to support a diverse or distinctive flora and fauna which otherwise might not be encountered in the built environment. Here ‘natural processes’ (growth, reproduction and mortality) are dominant and the visitor can enjoy a distinctive sense of place.’

Caerphilly County Borough Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives 2023-2028

The following well-being objectives are relevant to this background paper:

- WBO2 - Enabling our Residents to Thrive
- WBO3 - Enabling our Communities to Thrive

Caerphilly County Borough Council Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019-2029

This strategy has the following ‘vision’:

Our vision for sport and active recreation is to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be more active, more often.

It says that the council will 'support others and only directly provide where the need is clearly identified and no others have the [necessary] expertise or capacity'.

This strategy identifies the following major challenges:

- Poor levels of health particularly in certain areas of the county
- Reducing budgets
- The large number of facilities across the County and the deteriorating quality of our older buildings
- Increasing population and consumer demand

In a section titled 'What Needs to Be Done', it then says how CCBC, working with other organisations, will try to provide (not always directly) and maintain the leisure facilities the local population wants.

Caerphilly County Borough Council Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) 2025

The 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) is a 'comprehensive review of the current state of play provision across the borough'. It highlighted 'significant strengths' but found 'areas for improvement' too.

Standards

The following documents set out standards for leisure facilities:

- TAN 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space
- Fields in Trust Standards: Creating Great Spaces for All (2024)
- The Greenspace Toolkit

This background paper uses the 'Fields in Trust' standards:

Category	Subcategory	LE2 or LE3	Standard	Total target
Open space	Parks and gardens	LE3	At least 0.8 of hectare for every 1,000 people	3.2 hectares for every 1,000 people
	Amenity greenspace	LE2	At least 0.6 of hectare for every 1,000 people	
	Natural and semi-natural	LE2	At least 1.8 hectares for every 1,000 people	
Outdoor sports		LE3	At least 1.6 of hectare for every 1,000 people (1.2 hectares of sport pitches and 0.4 of a hectare of courts, greens, tracks, trails or sports equipment)	1.6 hectares for every 1,000 people
Play space	Equipped designated play areas	LE3	At least 0.25 of a hectare for every 1,000 people	0.55 of a hectare for every 1,000 people
	Informal play provision	LE3	At least 0.3 of a hectare for every 1,000 people	
TOTAL (combined)	n/a	Both	n/a	5.35 hectares for every 1,000 people

These standards allow the council to judge – in quite a crude way – the situation in each electoral ward. The planning department does not propose to apply them rigidly or unthinkingly to real places. The standards will reveal surpluses and shortfalls, but they should be no more than a starting point for a 'real world' assessment. When discussing planning obligations with developers, or when considering how best to spend CIL funds, the planning department will take advice from the Sport and Community Leisure department and the Parks and Countryside department. This approach should help the council to provide (whether directly or indirectly) the leisure facilities that people really want.

Notes:

- 'LE2' refers to 2RLDP policy LE2, which covers areas of open space less formal in nature than public parks and sports pitches.
- 'LE3' refers to 2RLDP policy LE3, which covers community and leisure facilities, such as community centres, public parks and sports pitches.
- When a development proposal involves a loss of open space (LE2 land), the planning department carries out an assessment and considers two things. The first is whether the local area already has too little informal open space. The second is whether the open space is too attractive or too valuable as a recreation area to lose. An open-space assessment covers LE2 land in defined settlements only. Beyond settlement boundaries, the countryside and some 'LE3 land' act as public open spaces.
- Fields in Trust puts 'parks and gardens', 'amenity greenspace' and 'natural and semi-natural greenspace' in one broad 'open space' category. Like the adopted LDP, however, the 2RDLP will treat 'parks and gardens' as formal leisure facilities, so this background paper will put 'parks and gardens' in policy LE3 and the other two types in policy LE2. This will ensure that calculations and assessments follow a single method.

Current situation and future requirements (all wards)

Leisure facilities in the county borough

Indoors/outdoors	Type	Number
Indoors	Sports halls	15
Indoors	Cinemas	1
Indoors	Swimming pools	7
Indoors	Primary schools (halls, for example)	80
Outdoors	Type 1 (sand-based) artificial-turf pitches (ATPs)	1
Outdoors	Type 2 (3G) ATPs	19
Outdoors	Country parks (Bryn Bach Park (half-owned), Parc Cwm Darran, Parc Coetir Bargoed, Pen Y Fan Pond, Parc Penallta, Sirhowy Valley Country Park)	6
Outdoors	Youth shelters	14
Outdoors	Playgrounds (excluding primary school playgrounds)	113
Outdoors	Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs)	32
Outdoors	Skateparks	17
Outdoors	Kick walls	10
Outdoors	Grass pitches (football and rugby – excluding school pitches)	122 (114 owned and 8 leased)
Outdoors	Bowling greens	20
Outdoors	Cricket wickets	6 (5 owned and 1 leased)
Outdoor	Tennis court	21
Outdoors	Allotments	About 80 (more than 2,000 plots under cultivation)

Source: Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019-2029 (Caerphilly CBC, 2019) and CCBC leisure department (February 2026)

Population by electoral ward in 2024 and 2035

Ward	Ward population (2024 ONS estimate)	Future ward population (2035)
Aber Valley	6,386.0	6,705.3
Aberbargoed & Bargoed	10,078.0	10,581.9
Abercarn	5,441.0	5,713.1
Argoed	2,790.0	2,929.5

Bedwas & Trethomas	6,698.0	7,032.9
Blackwood	8,135.0	8,541.8
Cefn Fforest & Pengam	7,401.0	7,771.1
Crosskeys	3,166.0	3,324.3
Crumlin	5,810.0	6,100.5
Darran Valley	2,485.0	2,609.3
Gilfach	2,017.0	2,117.9
Hengoed	5,579.0	5,858.0
Llanbradach	4,017.0	4,217.9
Machen & Rudry	5,099.0	5,354.0
Maesycwmmmer	2,649.0	2,781.5
Morgan Jones	7,711.0	8,096.6
Moriah & Pontlottyn	5,451.0	5,723.6
Nelson	4,375.0	4,593.8
New Tredegar	4,639.0	4,871.0
Newbridge	6,262.0	6,575.1
Penmaen	5,711.0	5,996.6
Penyrheol	12,249.0	12,861.5
Pontllanfraith	8,325.0	8,741.3
Risca East	6,156.0	6,463.8
Risca West	5,064.0	5,317.2
St Cattwg	7,335.0	7,701.8
St Martins	8,528.0	8,954.4
Twyn Carno	3,071.0	3,224.6
Van	4,609.0	4,839.5
Ynysddu	3,992.0	4,191.6
Ystrad Mynach	5,636.0	5,917.8

Note: 2035 population forecasts for wards must assume an even distribution of additional people (the original forecast is available for the county borough only).

Amenity greenspace

The table below shows whether each ward has, or will have, a shortfall in or a surplus of amenity greenspace in 2024 and 2035 (based on a population forecast).

Ward	2024: Shortfall or surplus?	2024: Size of shortfall (ha)	2035: Shortfall or surplus?	2035: Size of shortfall (ha)
Aber Valley	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Aberbargoed & Bargoed	Surplus	n/a	Shortfall	0.2
Abercarn	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Argoed	Shortfall	0.6	Shortfall	0.7
Bedwas & Trethomas	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Blackwood	Shortfall	1.6	Shortfall	1.8
Cefn Fforest & Pengam	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Crosskeys	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Crumlin	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Darran Valley	Shortfall	0.4	Shortfall	0.5
Gilfach	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Hengoed	Surplus	n/a	Shortfall	0
Llanbradach	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Machen & Rudry	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Maesycwmmmer	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Morgan Jones	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Moriah & Pontlottyn	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Nelson	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
New Tredegar	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Newbridge	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a

Penmaen	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Penyrheol	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Pontllanfraith	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Risca East	Surplus	n/a	Shortfall	0.2
Risca West	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
St Cattwg	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
St Martins	Surplus	n/a	Shortfall	0.2
Twyn Carno	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Van	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Ynysddu	Shortfall	0.5	Shortfall	0.6
Ystrad Mynach	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a

In 2024 four wards had a shortfall in amenity greenspace. In 2035 eight wards may have a shortfall.

Natural and semi-natural open space

The table below shows whether each ward has, or will have, a shortfall in or a surplus of natural and semi-natural open space in 2024 and 2035 (based on a population forecast).

Ward	2024: Shortfall or surplus?	2035: Shortfall or surplus?
Aber Valley	Surplus	Surplus
Aberbargoed & Bargoed	Surplus	Surplus
Abercarn	Surplus	Surplus
Argoed	Surplus	Surplus
Bedwas & Trethomas	Surplus	Surplus
Blackwood	Surplus	Surplus
Cefn Fforest & Pengam	Surplus	Surplus
Crosskeys	Surplus	Surplus
Crumlin	Surplus	Surplus

Darran Valley	Surplus	Surplus
Gilfach	Surplus	Surplus
Hengoed	Surplus	Surplus
Llanbradach	Surplus	Surplus
Machen & Rudry	Surplus	Surplus
Maesycwmmmer	Surplus	Surplus
Morgan Jones	Surplus	Surplus
Moriah & Pontlloftyn	Surplus	Surplus
Nelson	Surplus	Surplus
New Tredegar	Surplus	Surplus
Newbridge	Surplus	Surplus
Penmaen	Surplus	Surplus
Penyrheol	Surplus	Surplus
Pontllanfraith	Surplus	Surplus
Risca East	Surplus	Surplus
Risca West	Surplus	Surplus
St Cattwg	Surplus	Surplus
St Martins	Surplus	Surplus
Twyn Carno	Surplus	Surplus
Van	Surplus	Surplus
Ynysddu	Surplus	Surplus
Ystrad Mynach	Surplus	Surplus

In 2024 every ward had a surplus of natural and semi-natural open space, and the situation seems unlikely to change before 2035.

Outdoor sports

The table below shows whether each ward has, or will have, a shortfall in or a surplus of outdoor-sports facilities in 2024 and 2035 (based on a population forecast).

Ward	2024: Shortfall or surplus?	2024: Size of shortfall (ha)	2035: Shortfall or surplus?	2035: Size of shortfall (ha)
Aber Valley	Shortfall	5.52	Shortfall	6.03
Aberbargoed & Bargoed	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Abercarn	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Argoed	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Bedwas & Trethomas	Shortfall	2.02	Shortfall	2.55
Blackwood	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Cefn Fforest & Pengam	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Crosskeys	Shortfall	0.97	Shortfall	1.22
Crumlin	Shortfall	3.50	Shortfall	3.96
Darran Valley	Shortfall	0.48	Shortfall	0.67
Gilfach	Shortfall	0.63	Shortfall	0.79
Hengoed	Shortfall	7.93	Shortfall	8.37
Llanbradach	Shortfall	4.03	Shortfall	4.35
Machen & Rudry	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Maesycwmmmer	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Morgan Jones	Shortfall	1.34	Shortfall	1.95
Moriah & Pontlottyn	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Nelson	Shortfall	3.10	Shortfall	3.45
New Tredegar	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Newbridge	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Penmaen	Shortfall	6.94	Shortfall	7.39
Penyrheol	Shortfall	12.60	Shortfall	13.58
Pontllanfraith	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Risca East	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Risca West	Shortfall	3.30	Shortfall	3.71
St Cattwg	Shortfall	4.04	Shortfall	4.62
St Martins	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a

Twyn Carno	Shortfall	0.71	Shortfall	0.96
Van	Shortfall	5.87	Shortfall	6.24
Ynysddu	Shortfall	3.09	Shortfall	3.41
Ystrad Mynach	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a

In 2024 17 wards had a shortfall in outdoor-sports facilities. The same wards are likely to have shortfalls in 2035.

Parks and gardens

The table below shows whether each ward has, or will have, a shortfall in or a surplus of public parks and gardens in 2024 and 2035 (based on a population forecast).

Ward	2024: Shortfall or surplus?	2024: Size of shortfall (ha)	2035: Shortfall or surplus?	2035: Size of shortfall (ha)
Aber Valley	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Aberbargoed & Bargoed	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Abercarn	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Argoed	Shortfall	0.03	Shortfall	0.14
Bedwas & Trethomas	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Blackwood	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Cefn Fforest & Pengam	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Crosskeys	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Crumlin	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Darran Valley	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Gilfach	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Hengoed	Shortfall	1.76	Shortfall	1.99
Llanbradach	Surplus	n/a	Shortfall	0.07
Machen & Rudry	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Maesycwmmmer	Shortfall	1.62	Shortfall	1.73
Morgan Jones	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a

Moriah & Pontlottyn	Shortfall	3.76	Shortfall	3.98
Nelson	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
New Tredegar	Shortfall	3.31	Shortfall	3.50
Newbridge	Shortfall	0.01	Shortfall	0.26
Penmaen	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Penyrheol	Shortfall	2.40	Shortfall	2.89
Pontllanfraith	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Risca East	Shortfall	2.42	Shortfall	2.67
Risca West	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
St Cattwg	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
St Martins	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Twyn Carno	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Van	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Ynysddu	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a
Ystrad Mynach	Surplus	n/a	Surplus	n/a

In 2024 eight wards had a shortfall in public parks and gardens. In 2035 nine wards, including the eight from 2024, may have shortfalls.

Play space

The table below shows whether each ward has, or will have, a shortfall in or a surplus of play space in 2024 and 2035 (based on a population forecast).

Ward	2024: Shortfall or surplus?	2024: Size of shortfall (ha)	2035: Shortfall or surplus?	2035: Size of shortfall (ha)
Aber Valley	Shortfall	3.11	Shortfall	3.29
Aberbargoed & Bargoed	Shortfall	4.64	Shortfall	4.92
Abercarn	Shortfall	2.69	Shortfall	2.84
Argoed	Shortfall	1.23	Shortfall	1.31

Bedwas & Trethomas	Shortfall	3.48	Shortfall	3.67
Blackwood	Shortfall	3.97	Shortfall	4.20
Cefn Fforest & Pengam	Shortfall	3.77	Shortfall	3.97
Crosskeys	Shortfall	1.34	Shortfall	1.43
Crumlin	Shortfall	2.60	Shortfall	2.76
Darran Valley	Shortfall	1.07	Shortfall	1.14
Gilfach	Shortfall	0.91	Shortfall	0.96
Hengoed	Shortfall	2.87	Shortfall	3.02
Llanbradach	Shortfall	2.01	Shortfall	2.12
Machen & Rudry	Shortfall	2.30	Shortfall	2.44
Maesycwmmmer	Shortfall	1.26	Shortfall	1.33
Morgan Jones	Shortfall	3.84	Shortfall	4.05
Moriah & Pontlottyn	Shortfall	2.60	Shortfall	2.75
Nelson	Shortfall	2.21	Shortfall	2.33
New Tredegar	Shortfall	2.35	Shortfall	2.48
Newbridge	Shortfall	3.14	Shortfall	3.32
Penmaen	Shortfall	2.64	Shortfall	2.80
Penyrheol	Shortfall	6.44	Shortfall	6.77
Pontllanfraith	Shortfall	4.38	Shortfall	4.61
Risca East	Shortfall	3.19	Shortfall	3.36
Risca West	Shortfall	2.39	Shortfall	2.52
St Cattwg	Shortfall	3.73	Shortfall	3.94
St Martins	Shortfall	4.39	Shortfall	4.62
Twyn Carno	Shortfall	1.39	Shortfall	1.47
Van	Shortfall	2.13	Shortfall	2.26
Ynysddu	Shortfall	1.90	Shortfall	2.01
Ystrad Mynach	Shortfall	0.80	Shortfall	0.95

In 2024 every ward had a shortfall in play space, and current evidence suggests this situation will not change before 2035.

Policy areas

This paper has applied national standards to every electoral ward in the county borough, identifying surpluses and shortfalls in open space and leisure facilities. Now it will look at ways of protecting land and facilities and, where possible, making up shortfalls. It will do so in five policy areas:

- Open space and leisure facilities in new housing
- Protection of open space
- Protection of formal leisure facilities
- Protection of country parks
- Former Markham Colliery

Open space and leisure facilities in new housing

The design and layout of new residential development should incorporate adequate areas of useable public open space, natural play areas, woodland play, habitat-rich spaces for informal recreation as an integral part of the development. Care should be taken to ensure that where amenity open space is incorporated into the layout of the site it should be designed in such a way as to exploit site topography, create open views and avoid incidental areas of unusable space. Where sufficient open space exists adjacent to the development site, developers will need to consider how to exploit this resource and thus provide well-designed public links within the development to these areas of land through a new footpath and/or cycle path provision.

The amount of land required for children's play and outdoor sport provision is based on the Fields in Trust (FIT) standards (updated in 2024):

- Total open space (parks and gardens, amenity green space, natural and semi-natural spaces): minimum of 3.2 hectares per 1000 people (32 metres squared per person);
- Total outdoor sports: minimum of 1.6 hectares per 1000 people (16 metres squared per person); and
- Total play space (equipped designated play and areas and informal play provision): minimum of 0.55 hectares per 1000 people (5.5 metres squared per person).

Precise requirements for each site will need to be agreed with the Council as local factors may require amendment to these standards, for example the location and quality of existing provision. Where necessary the Council will seek to enter into planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) in order to secure the appropriate provision of such facilities. Details in respect of the future maintenance and, where appropriate, management of facilities should be submitted as part of any application.

Protection of open space

Open spaces are essential to creating active and social places and promoting healthier environments. Protecting open space ensures communities retain access to vital recreational, social, and environmental resources that directly support physical and mental well-being. Open spaces include public parks, amenity greenspace, outdoor sports facilities and children's play areas.

Development proposals that would lead the loss of some, or all, of an open space will need to demonstrate that there is sufficient remaining open space in the area to meet the needs of the local community. To do that a robust open space assessment must be submitted as part of a planning application that identifies the loss of the open space does not result in a, or exacerbate an existing, shortfall in provision.

[The 2RLDP will seek] to retain areas of open space that are designed as part of a wider area or development, as these are designed elements within the streetscape that have significant amenity value, whether that be as informal space or due to landscape value. This policy does not seek to protect against the loss of incidental open space (space left after development has taken account, unless it results in a shortfall of provision.

Where alternative provision is made, this should be of an equivalent or higher quality provision when compared to the area that is lost. This is considered in terms of the replacement provisions size, function, accessibility and environmental value.

Protection of formal leisure facilities

Local leisure facilities are important to the health and community well-being of the county borough. In addition, these facilities often provide the key elements to achieving more sustainable settlements by providing facilities within easy reach of people by foot or bicycle, creating sustainable, active, inclusive and socially connected places. This policy seeks to retain such facilities to ensure facilities remain accessible and well-distributed within settlements.

For the purposes of this policy, formal leisure facilities include, but are not limited to:

- Allotments
- Land associated with community facilities;
- Other outdoor sports facilities (tennis courts, bowling greens, cricket pitches, golf courses etc.);
- 'Provision for children and young people' (playgrounds, MUGAs, LEAPs, LAPs, skateparks etc.);
- Public parks and gardens;
- Sports pitches (designated).

Formal parks and gardens are essential components of high-quality, sustainable places that support physical and mental well-being, social interaction, and community cohesion. Incremental reductions in their boundaries in favour of built development should be avoided in order that they are present for future generations to experience.

Many parks are laid out with attractions such as floral displays, plant growing, sports pitches, children's playgrounds and ornamental water features. Whilst it is important to incorporate some flexibility for selective development that will consolidate these uses such as shelters, pavilions and storage buildings, it is vital that the leisure aspect is protected and enhanced for the benefit of community well-being.

Protection of country parks

Country parks are large-scale, less formal facilities that offer a valuable resource for recreational and tourism activities within a rural setting, close to the County Borough's main centres of population. In order to recognise their contribution to the landscape as tourism attractions in their own right and to ensure that they continue to serve this purpose, the Plan defines their boundaries.

Country Parks should be protected from any inappropriate development, and new development proposals should contribute towards enhancing the recreational, ecological and tourism function of country parks.

A number have been developed on land that was once covered by heavy industry but now reclaimed, with all offering a range of recreational activities. Already there are cycle routes identified in the County Borough, and the varied parks along the Rhymney, Sirhowy and Ebbw Valleys appear to offer potential for linking these. This will feed into the loops and links network that will in turn form part of the Valleys Regional Park.

Former Markham Colliery

This five-hectare site is an overgrown part of the old Markham Colliery. The development proposal involves a leisure area, renewable-energy technology and a training centre.

To create a leisure area, Woodland Cottages Pond will be dredged in order to let nature return to it. New shrubs and trees will promote biodiversity and make the area more attractive. This project will promote the use of public rights of way between the pond and Markham village. It will also encourage people to take an interest in nature while they exercise.

The renewable-energy project involves wind turbines, solar panels and thermal energy. It will supply 'green' energy to local people while respecting nature and the landscape.

At the training centre, people will learn vocational skills and be able to enrol on courses at local colleges. The staff will help people to find work too.

This mixed-use allocation tallies with the plan's vision and with objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8.

Summary and conclusion

The county borough has a mix of rural and urban areas, and those urban areas vary in size, so it isn't surprising some wards have more open space and leisure facilities than others.

After adopting the 2RLDP the council may publish supplementary planning guidance (SPG) on open space and leisure facilities. The SPG would set out the 'Fields in Trust' standards as a *starting point* for 'real world' assessments. After all, a set of standards may suggest that a ward/area has too little 'amenity greenspace', but a different and more popular type of leisure facility may be a better use of land and money. Also, residents may already live near 'amenity greenspace' that just happens to be in a different ward.

The 2RLDP should have five policies on leisure facilities and open space. The first is about the requirements of new housing, and the second protects existing open space, releasing it for other uses only in certain circumstances. The third and fourth protect formal leisure facilities and country parks, respectively, and the fifth allocates the former Markham Colliery for a mix of leisure, education and renewable energy.

Draft 2RLDP policies

LE1: Open Space and Leisure Facilities in New Housing

All housing developments of 10 units or more or greater than 0.3ha in size, should provide leisure facilities to meet the Fields in Trust Standards as part of the proposed development.

This provision should be delivered on-site where possible. Where provision on-site is not possible, off-site provision, or a contribution towards the appropriate upgrading of an existing facility, may be appropriate where:

- A. The location of the provision is within reasonable walking distance of the site; and
- B. The level of provision is suitable for the size of the development.

LE2: Protection of Open Space

Development proposals resulting in the loss, reduction, or deterioration of existing open space will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- A. The amount of open space remaining in the neighbourhood would still be adequate to serve local needs; and
- B. The open space does not have significant amenity value as part of the design and layout of the area; or
- C. Equivalent or better-quality replacement open space, in terms of size, function, accessibility and environmental value, is provided in a suitable location to serve the same community.

LE3: Protection of Formal Leisure Facilities

Proposals which would adversely affect or result in the loss of existing or proposed recreation or leisure facilities will not be permitted, except where:

- A. A replacement facility of equivalent community benefit is provided by the developer within the community at a sustainable, easily accessible, alternative location; or
- B. It can be demonstrated that the existing facility is no longer required for the current or any other recreation or leisure use; or

C. There is an excess of such provision in the area, and the loss of the facility would not result in a deficit in provision.

LE4: Protection of Public Parks, Gardens and Formal Open Space

Policy LE4 protects the following public parks, gardens and areas of formal open space:

- LE4.1 War Memorial Park, Rhymney
- LE4.2 Wellington Way, Rhymney
- LE4.3 The Green, Abertysswg
- LE4.4 King George's Field, Markham
- LE4.5 Bargoed Park, Bargoed
- LE4.6 Wern Crescent, Nelson
- LE4.7 Institute Field, Hengoed
- LE4.8 Maesycwmmmer Park, Maesycwmmmer
- LE4.9 Ystrad Mynach Park, Ystrad Mynach
- LE4.10 Tir-y-berth Woodland and pond, Tir-y-berth
- LE4.11 Sunflower Field, Hengoed
- LE4.12 Sunflower Field, Ystrad Mynach
- LE4.13 Blackwood Showfield, Blackwood
- LE4.14 The Circle, Oakdale
- LE4.15 Recreation Ground, Oakdale
- LE4.16 Welfare Ground, Cefn Fforest
- LE4.17 Sir Harold Finch Memorial Park, Pontllanfraith
- LE4.18 Libanus Fields, Pontllanfraith
- LE4.19 The Bryn, Pontllanfraith
- LE4.20 Islwyn Park, Pontllanfraith
- LE4.21 Beech Avenue/Treowen Avenue, Penlwyn/Pontllanfraith
- LE4.22 Caetwmpyn Park, Newbridge
- LE4.23 Newbridge Rugby Ground, Newbridge
- LE4.24 Trelyn Park, Fleur De Lys
- LE4.25 Cwmcarn Memorial Green, Cwmcarn
- LE4.26 Waunfawr Park, Crosskeys

- LE4.27 Tredegar Park, Risca
- LE4.28 Ty Isaf Recreation Ground, Pontymister
- LE4.29 Pontymister Athletic Ground, Pontymister
- LE4.30 Abercarn Welfare Ground, Abercarn
- LE4.31 Land south-west of Duffryn Terrace, Wattsville
- LE4.32 Feeder Row Park, Cwmcarn
- LE4.33 Crumlin Park (next to Mining School Hill), Crumlin
- LE4.34 Senghenydd Welfare Park, Senghenydd
- LE4.35 Abertridwr Park, Abertridwr
- LE4.36 Llanbradach Park, Llanbradach
- LE4.37 Aneurin Park / Penyrheol Cemetery, Caerphilly
- LE4.38 Morgan Jones Park, Caerphilly
- LE4.39 Lansbury Park, Caerphilly
- LE4.40 Dafydd Williams / Owain Glyndwr Parks, Caerphilly
- LE4.41 Adjacent to Church and War Memorial, Machen
- LE4.42 Bedwas Community Park, Bedwas
- LE4.43 Bedwas Riverside Park (next to A468), Bedwas

LE5: Protection of Country Parks

Country parks that contribute to the Valleys Regional Park are protected at the following locations:

- LE5.1 Bryn Bach Park, Rhymney/Tredegar
- LE5.2 Parc Cwm Darran, Deri
- LE5.3 Parc Coetir Bargod, Bargoed
- LE5.4 Parc Penallta, Ystrad Mynach
- LE5.5 Penyfan Pond, Croespenmaen
- LE5.6 Sirhowy Valley Country Park, Ynysddu/Crosskeys

LE6: Former Markham Colliery

- LE6.1 Land is allocated for a mixed-use scheme incorporating leisure, renewable energy and rural skills uses.