

ALNWICK AND DENWICK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Topic chapter – Sport and Recreation

1. Context

1.1 Background

Alnwick in the centre for a wide range of sporting facilities and clubs which serve the town and the wider area. Many of these sports have club facilities based to the south of the town. These include Alnwick Rugby Football Club (established in 1880) Alnwick Cricket Club (established in 1837), Alnwick Town Football Club (established in 1879) and Alnwick Town Juniors, who play at Greensfield. All these clubs are thriving and have strong adult and junior set up's. To the south of the town, on Willowburn Avenue is this Willowburn Sports and Leisure Centre, built in 2003 at a cost of £7million to serve the former Alnwick District. This comprises of a 25m swimming pool, teaching pool, sports halls, fitness gym and bouldering wall. The Alnwick Dolphins Club and Alnwick Swimming Club operate from the Willowburn swimming pool. The local running club (Alnwick Harriers) also use the centre as a base for activities as they have no permanent base). To the west of the town is the 18 hole Alnwick Castle Golf Club. The town has one Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) which is adjacent to the Alnwick North Community Centre and has 5 a side football as a main use. A private squash club (with 2 courts) is located in the town centre, as is the Tennis Club (with 3 outdoor courts). The Alnwick Bowls club is also located to the North of the Town Centre

To supplement the indoor sports facilities, the Lindisfarne Sports Centre (part of the school complex) is used by many local sporting groups and teams, the Alnwick TA centre is used by the local Table Tennis Club and a new Boxing Club operates out of St Thomas's Close Workshops. Private gyms are located in the Town Centre on Fenkle Street and at the Squash Club.

There are 7 outdoor children's play areas in the town. The newest of these is at Swansfield Park (1.38 hectares) which was created in 2007 and contains toddler and junior equipment. Other provision is adjacent to the Alnwick North Community Centre (toddler and junior equipment), Allerburn Lea (toddler equipment) plus four separate locations in the housing estates of Cawledge View and Glovers Green which contain one or two pieces of very dated equipment. With the exception of Swansfield Park which is owned by Northumberland County Council, all the other play areas are run by Alnwick Town Council.

A number of the schools in the town have significant areas of playing fields which are used for school sport and recreation (Duchess's High School, Dukes Middle School, Lindisfarne Middle School, St Paul's School and to a lesser degree the first schools).

Swansfield Park is set out as a formal town park, this was established to help address the under-provision of parks in the town. The other park and garden area in the town is the Column Field which is owned by Northumberland County Council, Other large areas of open space areas are the Alnwick North Playing Field (adjacent to the Community Centre) and also to the north, the Recreation Field and the area adjacent to Chapel Lands.

On the edge of the town is 1200 hectare Hulne Park which is open to the public for walking, on many days of the year without charge, (Oct – Jan incl. closed 36 days). Hulne Park and The Alnwick Garden both make a significant contribution to the recreation offer and green infrastructure in Alnwick & Denwick, but are excluded from this topic paper as they are not freely available.

Alnwick is located within 5 miles of the Northumberland Heritage Coastline and about 8 miles of the

Simonside Hills.

The Gallery Youth project, which was set up in 1996, organises some activities for young people and provides a meeting place for young people as does the Alnwick North Community Centre.

There are 11 allotment sites in the town, covering a total of 7.86 hectares. Four of the sites are in council ownership. There is a small waiting list for allotments but turn-over is slow.

The Alnwick Sporting Club obtained planning permission in March 2012 for an outdoor playing pitch development at Greensfield Alnwick which includes 7 football pitches for Alnwick Town Juniors, an all-weather multi-sports synthetic pitch primarily for Alnwick Hockey Club but capable of being used for other sports and 4 floodlit tennis courts for Alnwick Tennis Club together with changing facilities. It is hoped that once funding is in place to deliver this first phase, then there will be other multi-sports opportunities on this site. The project is expected to improve the quality and standards of sport for local people.

1.2 Open Space Provision

The Northumberland Core Strategy Consultation Document proposes open spaces standards as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
Parks & Gardens	At or above current level of 2.14 hectares per 1,000 population
Natural & Semi-natural greenspace	At or above current level of 7.55 hectares per 1,000 population
Amenity Greenspace	At or above current level of 1.09 hectares per 1,000 population
Outdoor sports facilities	At or above the current level of 1.69 hectares per 1,000 population
Provision for children & young people	At or above current level of 0.50 hectares per 1,000 children aged 0-15
Allotments	At or above current level of 0.51 hectares per 1,000 population

These are based on the existing county –wide provision and in some cases fall below the levels recommended by other organisations. The approach proposed by NCC is to at least retain the level that already exists.

The Population of Alnwick and Denwick has been taken as 8,000, using this, the provision in Alnwick & Denwick equates to

Category	Quantity	Are Alnwick & Denwick Above/ Below Standard?
Parks & Gardens	0.33 hectares per 1,000 population	Below
Natural & Semi-natural greenspace	0.29 hectares per 1,000 population	Below
Amenity Greenspace	0.52 hectares per 1,000 population	Below
Outdoor sports facilities	4.47 hectares per 1,000 population	Above
Provision for children & young people	0.04 hectares per 1,000 children aged 0-15	Below
Allotments	0.8 hectares per 1,000 population	Above

Note it would be helpful to have a detailed map plotting the individual sites as from my knowledge there does appear to be some anomalies in the NCC data.

2. Objectives

To be completed

3. What are the Sport and Recreation Issues?

The Willowburn Sports and Leisure Centre is a quality venue with high levels of satisfaction. Some residents feel the cost of activities restricts use.

Many of the existing outdoor sports pitches are of poor quality with inadequate changing facilities. These include the junior football pitches at Greensfield and the tennis courts at Prudhoe Street. There is support for a new outdoor sports centre and improved playing pitches. There is no full size artificial grass pitch (AGP) in Alnwick. There is no playing surface for Hockey in the town or area, with Alnwick teams having to travel to Morpeth to play and train. Some of these issues will be addressed through the delivery of the Alnwick Sporting Club proposal.

Some of the existing children's play areas are of poor quality and need to be replaced or upgraded.

Alnwick is well below the national standards for community open space, in particular parks and gardens, natural & semi-natural greenspace and amenity green space.

School playing fields provide some areas of outdoor sports facility provision (9.73 hectares), but these have little community use and there is concern that some of these areas could be lost as existing school sites are redeveloped.

There is a need to improve the recreation provision for young people e.g. bike track, skate park, full size astro turf pitch, places for young people to meet.

Whilst the space allocated for allotments is above the county average some of these are badly maintained and poor quality.

Conclusions and possible questions

There is a need to protect existing and provide new and enhanced and improved open space, in the town. Open space provision needs to be incorporated into any new development.

New Developments could contribute towards the provision and maintenance of open space, sporting facilities and recreational provision.

Question: Should we improve and enhance the provision of open space in the town and aim to achieve minimum requirements consistent with the proposed Core Strategy.

Outdoor playing pitch provision needs to be improved, this could be through the delivery of the March 2012 Greensfield Planning application.

School playing fields could facilitate dual use by the community.

Question: Should outdoor playing pitches be improved and greater use is made of education pitches

Improving the quality of the existing play area provision particularly to the south of the town.

Question: Does the quality of children's play areas need to be improved and enhanced particularly to the

south of Alnwick.

The quality of allotments needs to be improved and the provision should not fall below the current level.

Question: Does that the quality of allotments need to be improved and the provision retained at the current level as a minimum.

Question: Do you agree that more recreational facilities are required for young people

4. Evidence Reviewed

- Northumberland Annual Monitoring Report
- North Northumberland Pitches Strategy 2005
- Alnwick District and Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council - Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Study (2006)
- Alnwick LDF/Local Plan – Policy S14, S18 and S20. Saved policy -CD18 Children’s play space and CD19 Securing on or off site recreation and open space facilities through S106.
- North Northumberland Pitches strategy 2005
- Alnwick District and Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council - Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Study (2006)
- PPG 17 open space, sport and recreation assessment, May 2011
- Northumberland Local Development Plan Core Strategy Issues and Options, Consultation Document May 2012
- Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire results and consultation events 2012