

Open Space

Supplementary Planning Document
(update)

Scoping Report

June 2025

Open Space SPD (May 2025)

Sefton Council is preparing an update to its Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Once adopted this will replace the existing [Open Space SPD](#). This SPD will provide guidance on the provision of open space in development, enhancement of existing facilities, protection of open space and any compensatory (replacement) provision for open space or outdoor sports facilities, where relevant. This will be consistent with the planning policies in the Sefton Local Plan (www.sefton.gov.uk/localplan), [draft] Bootle Area Action Plan and other national and local planning policy.

We are inviting you to comment at this early stage to help us decide what level of guidance and background information should be contained within the Open Space SPD.

Comments should be made by 14th November 2025

We are seeking views from developers, organisations, individuals and others who are involved in or interested in the planning aspects of open space provision, protection and enhancement in Sefton, and the wider environmental improvement context in Bootle. This scoping report identifies some key issues. Please let us know if you agree with these and whether there are additional issues you would wish the SPD(s) to cover.

What is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)?

SPDs give more detailed guidance to policies in the Adopted Sefton Local Plan, 'made' (i.e. adopted) Neighbourhood Plans in Sefton; and in all likelihood, Bootle Area Action Plan which is currently at Examination stage. SPDs are subject to public consultation under The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Once adopted SPDs are material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

Planning policies for open space

Government planning policy and how it is to be applied is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2). The NPPF requires each council to have robust and comprehensive policies that support the delivery of high-quality sustainable and inclusive development. It recognises the importance of access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity, for the health and well-being of communities and to help deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.

The NPPF's 'Golden Rules' for development in the Green Belt include the provision of new or improved green spaces that are publicly accessible, so that new residents have access to good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home. This should be in line with local or national standards and local nature recovery.

Sefton Local Plan was adopted in April 2017. The Local Plan includes a range of policies, which conform to national planning policy, to shape the future of Sefton. It sets out how new development will be managed in the period from 2015 to 2030, encouraging sustainable development and economic growth, providing a quality, healthy environment, protecting and enhancing natural and heritage assets and giving current and future generations more opportunities to live and work in Sefton's outstanding environment. The SPD will provide updated guidance on how the relevant Local Plan policy framework is applied.

In particular the proposed Open Space SPD will support the following Local Plan policies:

- EQ9 'Provision of public open space, strategic paths and trees'
- NH5 'Protection of open space and Countryside Recreation Areas'
- HC7 'Education and care institutions'.

While these policies are currently applicable across the whole borough, for Bootle all except policy NH1 are due to be supplemented or superseded by policies in Bootle Area Action Plan once it is adopted. These are Bootle Area Action Plan policies:

- BAAP11 Public Green Spaces
- BAAP24 Environmental Improvements.

The SPD may also supplement policies in existing Neighbourhood Plans (www.sefton.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning), notably policies ESD1: Local Green Space, ESD2: High Quality Design and ESD6: Green infrastructure of the 2019 Formby and Little Altcar neighbourhood plan. Policies ESD2 and ESD6 refer to Local Plan policy EQ9.

Lydiate and Maghull Neighbourhood Plans include policies recognising the contribution of open space to residential character and heritage, site-specific policies setting out requirements for [new] public open space) and policy MAG1: Priorities for funding Infrastructure Projects includes provision of a new running track.

Once adopted the SPD or SPDs will replace the existing [Open Space SPD](#) which was adopted in September 2017.

Role of the Open Space SPD

The SPD will provide additional guidance on how Local Plan policies EQ1, EQ9, NH1, NH5 and HC7, Formby Neighbourhood Plan policies ESD1, ESD2 and ESD6 and Bootle Area Action Plan policies BAAP10, BAAP11 and BAAP25 should be interpreted and applied in proposals for housing or other developments. It is particularly aimed at professionals, such as consultants and developers, as well as anyone interested in the protection of or delivery of new or enhancement open space linked to development proposals within Sefton. The SPD is not a wider strategy or management plan for Sefton Council's parks, green spaces and Countryside Recreation Areas.

Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment

National planning policy indicates that a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are not required for an SPD unless it is considered that there are likely to be significant environmental effects or exceptional circumstances.

This SPD builds on policies in the adopted Local Plan, made (adopted) Formby and Little Altcar Neighbourhood Plan and Bootle Area Action Plan, all of which have been subject to SA and SEA and scrutiny at Examinations. Furthermore, the criteria in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 have been taken into consideration and it is the view of Sefton Council that these have not been triggered to the extent that it is necessary to subject this SPD to SEA. The existing Open Space SPD was subject to an SEA and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) [Screening Statement](#) which screened out the SPD from the need for SEA or HRA; and this is still considered to apply.

If you believe SEA or HRA is required, please set out what the exceptional circumstances are requiring one to be undertaken as part of your response.

Key issues for consideration in the SPD:

- Requirements for open space provision, including on sites subject to the NPPF Golden Rules, in Bootle and in Neighbourhood Plan areas, and in relation to open space standards
- Whether a separate SPD would be needed for wider environmental improvements in Bootle
- Design principles for new open space required by policy and/or which is part of wider green and blue infrastructure provision with wider functions and/or benefits
- Enhancement of existing facilities and in Bootle, wider environmental improvements
- Protection and replacement provision of open space and outdoor sports facilities
- Processes and procedures linked to provision and delivery of open space, including commuted sums, and monitoring

How to comment

Comments on whether you agree with the scope of this SPD and/or whether there are other things that should be included should be sent to:

local.plan@sefton.gov.uk

Planning Department
Magdalen House
Trinity Road
Bootle L20 3NJ

What happens next?

An indicative SPD timetable is provided below:

Prepare Draft SPD, taking into account comments made to the scope	To August 2025
Approval from Cabinet Member to publish draft SPD for eight weeks public consultation.	September 2025
Publish draft SPD for eight weeks consultation.	October 2025
Prepare draft SPD for adoption, taking into account comments made	November 2025
Approval from Cabinet to adopt the SPD	December 2025

Data Protection

- All comments, including personal details, received will be logged securely.
- Comments from private individuals will be published online. Names will be published online unless a specific request to remain anonymous is made. However, we may not be able to give the same weight to anonymised comments.
- Comments from groups, organisations and companies will be published online giving name of group, organisation and company only.
- No contact details will be published online, including home address, email or telephone number
- The Council may need to contact you to request further information or clarification in relation to the comment(s) made.
- Personal details will be used for the purposes of SPD production only.

For full data protection rights in planning please see: www.sefton.gov.uk/PlanningGDPR