

Appendix B: Criteria for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs)

The following guidelines have been created to reflect responses to Solent specific research and may further evolve over time as more research is undertaken.

These guidelines are focused towards strategic SANGs, rather than bespoke mitigation packages for individual developments and include locational criteria for siting wholly new sites, and criteria for their design and facilities. The latter criteria are also relevant to projects to enhance existing strategic sites: they set out the priorities for new facilities to be provided, and the improvements to be made to the layout and design. The guidelines take account of the research findings¹³ on the features/facilities which would make an alternative site attractive to people seeking places for recreation. Monitoring is being undertaken at the strategic SANGs which will further inform future SANG design.

Locational criteria

Essential

- a wholly new site or an enhancement of existing public open space if the site is currently underused and has substantial capacity to accommodate additional recreational activity or could be expanded, taking into account the availability of land and its potential for improvement;
- be in a location where it will divert visitors especially dog walkers away from sections of SPA coast which are sensitive to additional human disturbance and where a significant increase in visitors is predicted;
- be located where it will attract visitors who would otherwise have gone to those sections of coast¹;
- be large enough to include a variety of paths which enable at least one circular walk of at least 5 km (approx. a 60 min walk);
- be in a location where a SANG would be acceptable in terms of planning policy and traffic generation, and would not have an unacceptable impact on biodiversity e.g. a nature conservation site protected under a local or national designation;
- be sufficiently large to be perceived as a cohesive semi-natural space, offering tranquility, with little intrusion of artificial structures (except in the immediate vicinity of car parks) and with no unpleasant intrusions of other kinds e.g. wastewater treatment odours;

Desirable

- has views of the sea which are not too distant or includes a sizeable water

¹ Generally, proposals will be within the Partnership area but sites located just outside might be considered.

feature;

- has a varied topography with some gentle slopes, a mix of open and wooded areas, and a focal point such as a viewpoint, monument etc.

Criteria for design and facilities

Essential

- includes a variety of paths which enable at least one circular walk of at least 5km (approx. a 60 min walk);
- includes adequate car parking for visitors with that car parking being well located in relation to the road network;
- be clearly signed at access points and at key junctions on the surrounding road network, with an information panel at each access point which explains the layout of the SANG and the routes available to visitors.
- access points for visitors arriving on foot must be well located in relation to nearby residential areas;
- designed so that the SANG is perceived by users as a cohesive semi-natural space which is safe and easily navigable;
- paths must be clearly discernible, well signposted/waymarked, and have firm, level, well drained surfaces (albeit unsealed to avoid any 'urban feel') in order to be useable throughout the winter;
- movement within the SANG must be largely unrestricted, with plenty of space away from road traffic;
- Dogs are welcome and the majority of the sites is suitable for safe off-lead dog exercise.
- Dog swimming area.
- Dog waste bins.

Desirable

- car parking would be free of charge in the winter and preferably all year round;
- has multiple access points and with car parking at each rather than in a single location;
- incorporates innovative and attractive dog walking facilities such as dog activity trails, agility courses, enclosed off-lead training/exercise areas, dog washing facilities.