

Country Park Accreditation Handbook

Chapter 4: Criteria Checklist – Evidence requirements

NOTE: A good Management Plan will contain much of the evidence requirements



This chapter attempts to sets out what the scheme is looking for in terms of suitable evidence that demonstrates the site is meeting each criteria.

It deals with Essential Criteria first, before moving on to the Desirable Criteria.

All evidence options are examples and not an exclusive list – applicants may identify other material that they feel demonstrates how their site meets a particular criteria.

In deciding on material to provide, applicants should seek to provide the strongest examples that demonstrate each criteria rather than every piece of material that demonstrates a particular criteria albeit tenuously. Having said that, if in doubt, we would advise submit more rather than less.

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Tick when complete	Ref No:	ESSENTIAL CRITERIA	Evidence options (this isn't an exclusive list-you may provide alternatives)
1 Area			
	1A1	At least 10 hectares (25 acres) in size	Clear statement of size of site (such as in management plan, leaflet or written statement) OS map with boundary and scale clearly shown
	1A2	Must have an identifiable boundary	Evidence options include: OS (or similar) map with boundary clearly shown and described (i.e. fence, open)
2 Accessibility			
	2A1	Readily accessible to the population which it is intended to serve	<p>'Readily accessible' is considered to be less than 10 miles from the majority of people it is intended to serve. However, sites with a principal population further afield will be deemed to have met this criterion if the managing organisation has a green transport policy or plan for the site.</p> <p>Evidence options include: OS map plus post code/grid reference of known catchment areas. Evidence of how those catchments were identified (e.g. visitor surveys, best value reviews).</p> <p>For populations more than 10 miles away, we will also need either of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Green travel policy or plan for the site OR 2. Statement of sustainable travel options in place that connect site to local communities. <p>Generic authority plans only sufficient if 2) above is also attached</p>

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Tick when complete	Ref No:	ESSENTIAL CRITERIA	Evidence options (this isn't an exclusive list-you may provide alternatives)
	2A2	Entry free of charge	This does not include the cost of car parking Evidence options include: Statement of entry charges. Site leaflets, web page & other public information stating this.
	2A3	Evidence of a Site access plan in place that has been developed following an access audit & addresses the requirements of the DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) to ensure indoor & outdoor facilities provided are inclusive & accessible	The managing organisation must be able to provide evidence that equality issues and the needs of visitors with disability and mobility issues have been carefully considered in relation to all public areas, and appropriate action identified and planned. The 'by all reasonable means' test should be applied wherever possible to ensure that access provision is adequate. Evidence options include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attach Access Audit and/or Access Plan that addresses DDA requirements. 2. Leaflets on or photos of park provision for people with disabilities
		Evidence of commitment to Equality Standards or equivalent level of	Provide evidence that the managing organisation is/has considered visitor diversity issues, and is identifying and planning action to promote a greater diversity of visitors, representative of the local community. The mechanism for this

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		delivery	<p>is that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If lead managing body is a Local Authority – the Authority (not just the site) is preparing an Equality Policy for all its activities. Provide evidence (e.g. Council or team meeting minutes, written statement, web page link) that the Authority has committed to develop a Comprehensive Equality Policy (see http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=5145192 (page 21 in document pagination NOT Adobe pagination)) If managing body is not a Local Authority – provide a statement of whether and how the site management considers equality issues in its day to day delivery (e.g. evidence of consultation with varied groups/cultures, evidence of staff training on equality issues, statements giving examples of how engagement has been handled)
3 Character			
	3A1	Must predominantly consist of natural or semi-natural landscape, e.g. woodland, grassland, wetland, heathland, parkland	Example evidence option: Show approximate areas of site elements on a clear map that has a scale
	3A2	Less than 5% total area of buildings	This refers to built structures: - it does not include car parks. Example evidence options: A map that shows approximate areas on map - it must have a scale

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Tick when complete	Ref No:	ESSENTIAL CRITERIA	Evidence options (this isn't an exclusive list-you may provide alternatives)
4 Facilities			
	4A1	Easily followed paths, bridleways and cycle paths, e.g. waymarked or with a leaflet	The site does not need to have all of these types of routes, but must demonstrate that they are easy to follow and well signed. Example evidence options: Site leaflet, management plan map, photos (of trail and signage) and written description.
	4A2	Toilets on site or within 2 minutes walking distance	The toilets must be open to the public during daylight hours, usually 9am to 5pm, including weekends. Where toilets are not on site, they must be within a short walking distance (2 minutes) from an entrance to the site and clearly signposted. Example Evidence options: Location clearly identified on OS/site map(or equivalent) AND statement of opening times (weekday and weekend), site leaflet (if inc. opening times), photo of facility inc with signage stating when open.
	5	Links to local communities and neighbourhoods	
	5A1	Opportunities for the local community to have an influence over the management and development of the site	Any evidence of "Friends of Group" or community engagement in management planning. Example evidence options may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responses to visitor/community surveys - Responses to local consultations e.g. by the Local Strategic Partnership, through Local Area Agreements - Comments box – cards used and record of feedback received

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Tick when complete	Ref No:	ESSENTIAL CRITERIA	Evidence options (this isn't an exclusive list-you may provide alternatives)
			- Equality Standards Level 2 Assessment and community engagement plan (see http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=5145192) See page 28 (document pagination, NOT adobe pagination)
6 Links to the wider countryside			
No essential criteria			
7 Management			
	7A1	Daily staff presence	This does not need to be permanent but should be visible and include carrying out activities such as litter collection, maintenance, providing information and the enforcement of byelaws or other regulations relating to the site. Should highlight weekend and out of hours cover, and arrangements for periods when staff will not be on site Example evidence options; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Written statement including hours and days Country Park is staffed. 2. Clear statement of how often staff will normally be on site. 3. Site Leaflet. Evidence of how public can contact staff when not on site – e.g.. Photos of on site contact points.
	7A2	Up to date management plan	Wherever possible this should be publicly available e.g. on the managing organisation's website. Example evidence options; Attach management plan, link to

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			where it appears on website (if applicable)
8 Activities			
	8A1	Available for public or educational events	Example evidence options: Written Statement/Policy Photos of community organised events. Example booking and feed back forms
9 Information and interpretation			
	9A1	Clear entrance signage	Welcoming signage must be provided at <u>all key</u> entrances to the site, telling visitors where they are. Example evidence options: Photos from all key entrances
	9A2	Information about where visitors can go and what they can do	Example evidence options: 1. Photos 2. Leaflets/audio tapes 3. Copies of any information material

DESIRABLE CRITERIA	Suggested Evidence options (this isn't an exclusive list – you may provide alternatives)	Ref No:	Tick when complete
1 Area			
No desirable criteria			
2 Accessibility			
Green transport policy or plan for the site	The managing organisation must be actively seeking to improve accessibility by foot, bicycle or public transport for the population it is intended to serve	2B1	

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	<p><u>Example evidence options:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attach Green Transport Policy or Plan – can include generic policy, but must demonstrate how it is applied on the site. - Evidence can include bus timetables referring to the site and cycle route maps 		
<p>Additional facilities for less able visitors e.g. easy going trails, accessible seats and picnic benches, relevant site information in an accessible format, play equipment</p>	<p>Provide evidence that the need of less able visitors have been considered and addressed through provision of at least core facilities (paths, seating, toilets) and ideally more– i.e. a trail that less able can access, examples of benches and seating, if there are toilets, one is suitable for less able people of the existence of</p> <p><u>Example evidence options:</u> Site leaflets, photos, written description e.g. in management plan</p>	2B2	
<p>Evidence of progress towards the next level of equality standards or equivalent level of delivery specifically relating to the site</p>	<p>Provide evidence of working towards equality standards to level 3, or equivalent (if not a Local Authority)</p> <p><u>Example evidence options:</u> <i>If lead applicant body is a Local Authority:</i> Written statement of progress and timeline / supporting statements from public/partners . Level 3 independent audit (as required to achieve that level of Equality Standard - see</p>	2B3	

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DESIRABLE CRITERIA	Suggested Evidence options (this isn't an exclusive list – you may provide alternatives)	Ref No:	Tick when complete
	<p>http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=5145192 page 35 in document pagination NOT Adobe's pagination)</p> <p>If lead applicant is not a local authority, provide evidence of delivery /commitment equivalent to that required by Equality standard level 3 i.e. completion of an audit of the site by an outside body/members of public</p>		
3 Character			
<p>Management and promotion of the site's biodiversity, geo-diversity and historical environment</p>	<p>This includes all areas of importance for biodiversity and geodiversity features of historic interest and features of conservation interest and is as much about conserving diversity as it is about highly notable features of special quality. It may therefore include evidence of designations of national, regional or local status but equally importantly, it refers to any element of conservation interest, or of natural or man-made historical interest in the landscape.</p> <p>Example evidence options; Survey and action plans for ecology and/or heritage. Links to evidence in Management plan. Copies of Site public information/interpretation</p>	3B1	
4 Facilities			
<p>Outdoor recreation facilities e.g. water sports,</p>	<p>Emphasis here is more on sporting activity – includes trim trails, football pitches, climbing walls, or even franchises (such as Go-Ape) - can be for groups or individuals.</p> <p>Example evidence options;</p>	4B1	

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DESIRABLE CRITERIA	Suggested Evidence options (this isn't an exclusive list – you may provide alternatives)	Ref No:	Tick when complete
adventure sports	Leaflet, photos and written description		
Promoted self-guided healthy walking opportunities	Example evidence options; Leaflet, event fliers, photos and written description/statement of what exists	4B2	
Visitor centre	Example evidence options; Leaflet, photos and written description	4B3	
Play facilities This may include formal play facilities and/or informal opportunities for play within the natural environment of the site.	Example evidence options; Leaflet, photos and written description Forestry Commission and Play England are amongst the many bodies who can offer good practice examples should people be seeking them.	4B4	
Catering provision This should include as a minimum the availability of basic refreshments including hot and cold drinks, and light snacks.	To satisfy this, provision should be at minimum daily at weekends and peak periods (i.e. bank holidays and school holidays). Facilities offering drinks and food envisaged - occasional ad-hoc ice cream van visits are not sufficient. Example evidence options; Leaflet, photos and written description, statement of when provision is offered (inc. evidence of how this message is presented to the public).	4B5	
Cycle or horse	Example evidence options;	4B6	

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trails	Leaflet, photos and written description		
Art or sculpture	<u>Example evidence options;</u> Leaflet, photos and written description	4B7	
5 Links to local communities and neighbourhoods			
Outreach programme to engage and involve local people	This includes planned activities by site managers to forge close links with people who live close to the site and are directly affected by the site in some way or those who use the site on a regular basis. <u>Example evidence options;</u> Photos, web pages, marketing material for engagement opportunities aimed at local people, feedback received, calendars Statements in Business /Management Plan.	5B1	
Active promotion to less represented sectors of the community	Information or evidence of promotions and communities engaged <u>Example evidence options;</u> Marketing material, web page, meeting minutes, example feedback, photos	5B2	
Outreach programme to engage and	Information or evidence of school/learning education centre engagement	5B3	

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DESIRABLE CRITERIA	Suggested Evidence options (this isn't an exclusive list – you may provide alternatives)	Ref No:	Tick when complete
involve local schools and lifelong learning delivery	<u>Example evidence options;</u> Session lesson plans, visit booking calendar, feedback, marketing material. Site or education specific Business Plan		
6 Links to the wider countryside			
Links from the site to the Rights of Way network, permissive access routes or other adjoining public open space or open access areas. Connectivity between site and where people live	Way-marked circular trails into the surrounding countryside are of particular value. <u>Example evidence options;</u> Map showing connections and clear evidence of links. Statement of sustainability of these and the efforts being , made to improve their sustainability. Marketing material, photos, definitive map copies.	6B1	
7 Management			
Permanent staff presence during the daytime	This normally means 9am to 5pm or similar, and includes weekends. <u>Example evidence options;</u> Written statement including hours Country Park is manned. Leaflet. Photos of notices stating when how staff can be contacted	7B1	

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DESIRABLE CRITERIA	Suggested Evidence options (this isn't an exclusive list – you may provide alternatives)	Ref No:	Tick when complete
Opportunities for community involvement in practical or management tasks	<u>Example evidence options;</u> Web page or Leaflet explaining opportunities Job description	7B2	
Annual Action Plan / Work Plan	Should demonstrate planned operations/ developments in a calendar and/or financial year. <u>Example evidence options;</u> Attach Action/ work plan or reference relevant section of Management plan	7B3	
Achieved or working towards Green Flag Award (GFA) status	<u>Example evidence options;</u> Attach Certificate or Action plan and statement of intent to apply with envisaged timescale.	7B4	
8 Activities			
Programme of walks or events	<u>Example evidence options;</u> Leaflets, adverts, programmes, copies of booking diary	8B1	
Programme of activities and events that promote healthy living and environmental awareness	This might include such activities as guided health walks, bat detecting, moth trapping, leaflets and information provision, talks and presentations. <u>Example evidence options;</u> Leaflets, adverts, programmes, copies of booking diary	8B2	

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9 Information and interpretation			
More detailed information and interpretation about the site and other issues	For example, interpretation panels, leaflets, displays, website. <u>Example evidence options;</u> Attach Interpretation /Signage Plan and photos	9B1	
Brown and white tourist directional signs	<u>Example evidence options;</u> Photos, management plan	9B2	
Shown on OS map	Extract from OS Map	9B3	