

7. LEISURE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Background

7.1 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17) provides advice on a broader range of planning issues. Advice is given on the provision of sports and recreational facilities and on informal open spaces. Local planning authorities are advised to:-

- undertake robust assessments of both existing and future need for open space, sports and recreational facilities within their communities
- set local standards in terms of both the quantity and quality of facilities and accessibility to such facilities, based on an assessment of need and an audit of existing facilities
- maintain an adequate supply of open space and sports and recreational facilities, by ensuring that existing land and/or buildings should not be built on unless they can be shown to be surplus to requirements
- plan for new facilities, having regard to sustainable development principles and taking into account any particular locational requirements in respect of specific types of facilities or areas
- use planning obligations in conjunction with development proposals to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of provision, where new development would increase local need, or where existing facilities are inadequate or would be threatened by development

7.2 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) includes a range of policies in relation to recreation, sports and leisure.

7.3 RSS8 sets out regional priorities for sports and recreational facilities, referring the need to ensure adequate provision of facilities consistent with the priorities of the Spatial Strategy within urban and rural areas and within the relevant sub-areas of the region.

7.4 The adopted Derby and Derbyshire Joint Structure Plan provides more detailed policy guidance on leisure issues. Policies relate to:-

- the need to provide leisure facilities which are readily accessible by a range of transport modes and by all sections of the population
- the principles to be followed in the location of leisure uses
- a specific reference to the potential of the Derwent Valley Corridor for leisure development to sustain the local economy

- guidance on the location of specific recreation facilities with particular locational requirements or potential environmental impacts

7.5 The Borough Council's Strategic Objectives of 'Active Young People' and 'Healthier Communities' can be addressed by increasing the quality and range of leisure and cultural facilities.

Issues And Policies

Provision Of Outdoor Playing Space

7.6 Policies for the provision of outdoor playing space in the adopted Local Plan are based on the National Playing Fields Association standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population. These policies have proved successful in securing, in conjunction with new housing development, additional children's play areas and playing fields for both youth and adult use. In many locations, such provision has also helped to address deficiencies in outdoor playing space facilities. Using the 2001 Census data for average household size in Amber Valley (2.35 persons/household), the total playing space requirement per dwelling in respect of new housing developments equates to 56 sq.m.

7.7 The current policies normally require the provision of additional on site facilities to serve new development, although there is the flexibility to secure financial contributions towards the enhancement of existing off-site provision, where this is considered to be more appropriate.

7.8 The main concern with the existing policy approach is that it restricts the potential to secure new outdoor playing space, or off-site contributions, to those sites where there is sufficient potential to generate a requirement for at least 0.2 hectare of outdoor playing space. This has meant that smaller developments, generally below 30 dwellings, have not made any provision or contributions.

7.9 A more flexible policy, allowing the scope to seek provision or contributions in conjunction with all proposals for new housing development, would extend the scope to enhance the standards of outdoor playing space facilities within the Borough. It is acknowledged that the potential for provision in conjunction with smaller developments, or particular forms of development such as sheltered housing, is likely to be more limited, on the basis that it will be more difficult to demonstrate that infrastructure and community benefits are necessary as a direct result of the development.

7.10 The Borough Council has recently commissioned an assessment of the existing provision of sport, recreation and open space facilities within Amber Valley, in accordance with Government guidance in PPG17. This will require revisions to the existing Supplementary Planning Guidance, in relation to the provision of outdoor playing space in conjunction with development.

LC1 The Borough Council will seek to secure, through Section 106 Agreements, the provision of or financial contributions towards outdoor playing space in all new housing developments

Children's Play Areas

7.11 The National Playing Fields Association suggests that all children should have a play area within 400 metres of their home. In addition, the Borough Council considers that children's play area should normally be at least 0.2 hectare, in order to be suitable for both use and maintenance, although there is a need for some flexibility to ensure that provision is in proportion to the scale of new housing development. It is also acknowledged that the potential for provision in conjunction with smaller developments, or particular forms of development such as sheltered housing, is likely to be more limited, on the basis that it will be more difficult to demonstrate that provision is necessary as a direct result of the development. Areas should be designed and located close to the footpath and cycleway network to be readily accessible to the local community, whilst ensuring that they do not have an adverse impact on the environment and residential amenity. Developers will also need to satisfy the Borough Council's agreed specification for outdoor playing space facilities, as set out in approved Supplementary Planning Guidance.

LC2 The Borough Council will seek to secure through Section 106 Agreements, the provision of or financial contributions towards children's play areas in all new housing developments, subject to provision:-

- a) **being an appropriate size in proportion to the housing development**
- b) **being well linked to the local footpath/cycleway network**
- c) **being suitably equipped and designed to meet the Borough Council's specification**
- d) **not having an adverse impact on the local environment and residential amenity**

Playing Fields, Parks And Informal Open Spaces

7.12 The adopted Local Plan currently protects existing playing fields from development, where there is a demand for their continued use and where suitable alternative provision cannot be met elsewhere in the locality. PPG17 advises that local planning authorities extend such protection to other areas, including parks and informal open space.

7.13 Within Amber Valley, there are many such parks and informal open spaces, especially within the main urban areas, which provide 'green lungs' within easy access of significant numbers of people. The protection of these areas from inappropriate development is therefore critical.

LC3 Planning permission for development which would result in the loss of playing fields, parks and informal open space, including those areas shown on the Proposals Map, will only be granted if either: -

- a) **it can be demonstrated that there is no demand for their continued use either currently or in the foreseeable future, or that they will be replaced by alternative facilities, at least as accessible to current and potential new users, and at least equivalent in terms of size, usefulness, attractiveness and quality, or**
- b) **the proposals would not harm their individual character and function**

Belper Meadows

7.14 At Belper Meadows, there is an opportunity to develop an integrated network of existing open spaces to provide a strategic location for recreational activities within the town, effectively to create a 'town park'.

LC4 The Borough Council will seek to develop an integrated network of formal and informal open space at Belper Meadows, as shown on the Proposals Map. Any development proposals within this area will need to be of a form, scale and design that takes into account the following: -

- a) **the need to avoid increasing flood risk**
- b) **the need to protect existing areas of nature conservation interest**
- c) **the location of the area within the Green Belt, the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and Belper Conservation Area**

Safeguarded Land For Extension To Alfreton Park

7.15 Opportunities may exist to extend Alfreton Park to the west, to provide a range of additional leisure and community facilities to serve the town and the wider community. The Borough Council will therefore need to continue to protect an area of land for this purpose.

LC5 The Borough Council will safeguard land to the north of Wingfield Road, Alfreton, as shown on the Proposals Map, from any development that could prejudice the extension of Alfreton Park to provide additional leisure and community facilities

Leisure Facilities

7.16 Amber Valley has a variety of indoor and outdoor leisure facilities which serve the local community, within both the public and private sectors. These range from more formal facilities, such as the Leisure Centres in each of the four main towns, to more informal recreational areas in both the urban and rural areas.

7.17 There is further potential to expand existing leisure facilities and to develop new facilities to extend the range and choice available to the local community. There is a need however to ensure that any proposals can be accommodated without any adverse impact on the environment. This is especially significant in rural areas, where the scale and design of provision will need to reflect local character. The Derwent and Erewash Valleys offer significant potential for informal leisure uses, but it is essential that any provision reflects the particular character of the riverside environment. Any proposals within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and Buffer Zone will also need to be carefully considered in terms of their impact on the special character of this part of the Borough (policy EN29)

LC6 Planning permission will be granted for the provision of new leisure facilities, or the extension of existing facilities, providing that:-

- a) **in rural areas, the proposals are either within or immediately adjoining existing villages, are well linked to the existing footpath network and of an appropriate scale and design which reflects the character of the village and the surrounding countryside**
- b) **where the proposals relate to land adjoining the River Derwent or River Erewash, they would preserve or enhance the character of the riverside environment**
- c) **where the proposals relate to the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and Buffer Zone, the proposals satisfy the criteria in policy EN29**

Arts And Cultural Facilities

7.18 In conjunction with East Midlands Arts, the Borough Council has produced an Arts Strategy. The aims of the Strategy include widening access to professional arts,

using the arts to support regeneration, developing infrastructure to support individual and groups of artists and to maximise arts resources. The Local Plan can help to deliver these aims by supporting proposals for arts and cultural facilities, and by seeking either the provision of or financial contributions towards facilities, in conjunction with development proposals for other uses.

LC7 Planning permission will be granted for the provision of arts and cultural facilities, including through the change of use of existing buildings, providing that the proposals satisfy the criteria in policies LS1-4

LC8 In considering development proposals, the Borough Council will negotiate, either the provision of public art within the development, or financial contributions towards the establishment of public art elsewhere within the locality, where it is considered that public art would provide a significant improvement in the quality of the environment

Safeguarded Land For Educational Facilities

7.19 The County Council has formally notified to the Borough Council a number of sites within the Borough which they wish to safeguard for either the future expansion of existing schools, or the provision of new schools or school playing fields.

LC9 The Borough Council will safeguard land, as shown on the Proposals Map, from any development that could prejudice the provision of new schools at:

- a) Hunter Road, Belper
- b) Mill Lane, Codnor
- c) Coasthill, Crich
- d) Church Street, Denby
- e) Hands Road, Heanor
- f) Newlands, Heanor
- g) Roper Avenue, Heanor
- h) Church Street, Riddings
- i) Ashbourne Road, Turnditch

and school playing fields at Flowery Leys Lane, Alfreton

Safeguarded Land For Cemetery Extensions

7.20 The Borough Council has identified a number of sites within Amber Valley that need to be safeguarded for the future extension of existing cemeteries.

LC10 The Borough Council will safeguard land, as shown on the Proposals Map, for future cemetery extensions at:-

- a) **Rodgers Lane, Alfreton**
- b) **Leamoor Avenue, Leabrooks**
- c) **Cemetery Road, Belper**
- d) **Western Drive, Marlpool, Heanor**
- e) **Cromford Road, Aldercar**
- f) **Cemetery Road, Ripley**
- g) **Hazelwood Road, Duffield**

Community Facilities

7.21 Many areas of Amber Valley are supported by existing community centres, village halls, post offices, public houses or other venues that provide a range of activities for the local community. There is a need to protect such buildings from any other potential uses, unless it can be shown that there is no demand for their continued use. Equally, any proposals to provide additional community facilities, particularly for young adults and teenagers, should also be supported in principle, especially as such facilities can play an important role in helping to reduce crime (see policy LS2). There is also the opportunity to seek the provision of community facilities in conjunction with development proposals, including medical centres or similar health facilities, where such facilities are shown to be necessary as a result of development. The Prison Service has identified the Midlands as a priority area of search for a new prison and considers that Amber Valley is well located strategically to meet urgent needs for additional prison places. Any proposal for a new prison will be considered against policy LC13 and any other relevant policies.

LC11 The redevelopment and change of use of existing community facilities will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is insufficient local demand to justify or sustain their existing use

LC12 In considering development proposals, the Borough Council will seek to negotiate, where appropriate, the provision of community facilities in conjunction with development

LC13 Planning permission will be granted for the development of community centres or similar community facilities, providing that:-

- a) the development would be of a scale, character and appearance appropriate to the local environment**
- b) where possible, the development would be located so as to be accessible to existing public transport routes**
- c) the development will not significantly detract from the amenity of local residents**

Provision Of Horse Riding Facilities

7.22 Horse riding is a popular activity, which by its nature takes place within the countryside. It does however often give rise to proposals for built development and associated activities, which can have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and can also give rise to increased traffic movements. There is therefore a need to balance support for the provision of horse riding facilities with the need to maintain the openness of the countryside. In particular, there is a need to exercise careful control over the form and scale of any buildings or other structures, including by granting temporary permission where necessary, to avoid a disproportionate amount of development in relation to surrounding open land.

LC14 Planning permission will be granted for stables, riding centres and other facilities associated with horse riding, which can assist in diversifying the rural economy, providing that the proposals are of a form, scale and design which, individually and cumulatively, would not have a significant adverse impact on the transport network or the open character of the countryside, including by ensuring that any buildings or structures are proportionate to the total area of the site