

CHAPTER 4: THE BUILT AND NATURAL HERITAGE

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 There is increasing recognition of the value of historic and natural resources for amenity, education and recreation, and for providing a sense of place. Many of these resources are irreplaceable and can easily be lost or damaged through development or neglect. They therefore need to be protected to ensure losses are minimised. The policies in this chapter aim to protect and enhance the built and natural heritage of the borough, both in the urban area and in the countryside. The policies are divided into two sections, the first relating to the protection of valuable features of the built environment, and the second to the protection of the natural environment.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

- 4.2 The aims of the 1949 New Town Master Plan for Crawley included the desire to create an attractive and efficient town which was compact but had numerous open spaces. New building was to relate well to the landscape and existing buildings were to be preserved as far as possible, particularly those of architectural or historic interest. Crawley is spaciouly laid out compared with many towns, with landscape features forming an integral part of its design. The town's tree cover is extensive, as many forest trees have been retained and large numbers of new trees have been planted. Some early new town housing areas remain virtually unchanged and illustrate the principles of good urban design on which the town was based. Open space is present throughout the town; in the neighbourhoods and in the industrial areas. It ranges from roadside verges and small amenity areas in all parts of the town, to numerous large playing fields and public parks. The wide distribution of open spaces means they are close to where people live and accessible to all. The majority of these areas are well-maintained, and some have value for nature conservation. There are, however, some areas which are either neglected or over-used.
- 4.3 When Crawley New Town was developed some existing buildings were lost. Many were preserved, however, and provide an important link with the past. The buildings in the High Street, for example, illustrate Crawley's historic role as a coach-stop and trading centre between London and Brighton. 94 of Crawley's historic buildings have been included on the statutory list. The majority of these buildings are in good condition and in use. There are, however, a few which are deteriorating, usually because they are vacant and suffer from vandalism and the effects of the weather.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Government Guidance

- 4.4 The importance of protecting the nation's built and natural heritage is recognised in planning legislation. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 explains in detail the legislation for the protection of the architectural heritage. The Planning and Compensation Act 1991 requires development plans to include policies for of the conservation of the natural beauty and amenity of land. This is re-emphasised in the Government's White Paper "Our Common Inheritance" which includes as objectives the need to maintain and enhance wildlife habitats, the urban environment and urban open spaces. PPG12 also recognises the importance of environmental protection and of the value people place on the conservation of nature, landscape and water resources, and the built heritage. It advises that conservation and development need to be reconciled and should not be seen as being in conflict with each other.

- 4.5 PPG 15 on historic buildings and conservation areas explains that the Government's commitment to sustainable development is particularly relevant to historic resources as these are irreplaceable. Their conservation must be given full weight alongside the need for new development. It is a statutory requirement for local authorities to have regard to the desirability of preserving buildings and features of special architectural or historic interest, and to preserve and enhance conservation areas.
- 4.6 PPG 16 recognises that archaeological remains are valuable for their own sake, and for their role in education, leisure and tourism. They are particularly vulnerable to damage and destruction. Protection and management is essential to ensure their survival.
- 4.7 PPG 9 states that the effective conservation of wildlife and natural features is one of the essential tasks for local authorities. It stresses the key to wildlife conservation is habitat protection, and recognises that protection policies should not be confined to statutorily designated sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest because other areas can be as important locally. These include ancient woodlands and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance.

Regional Guidance

- 4.8 The guidance stresses that development should respect the South East region's valuable environmental features and avoid the wasteful use of land and other natural resources. It also states that planning should protect and enhance sensitive urban areas, wildlife sites, essential open spaces, trees and woodlands.

West Sussex Structure Plan 1993

- 4.9 The Structure Plan's primary objective is protecting and improving the urban and rural environment. It stresses the need to apply the highest standards of care to the best buildings and historic features including: statutorily listed buildings; buildings which are attractive or interesting features in the street scene, landscape or local history; and archaeological remains. It also emphasises the importance of wildlife habitats, landscapes, trees and the water environment, as well as valuable open spaces within the urban area.

STRATEGY, ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.10 Protection of the environment is one of the primary aims of this Local Plan. Historic and natural resources are not only important in their own right but are also considered vital in maintaining a good quality of life for residents and employees in Crawley. It is therefore important to ensure historic and natural resources are protected so they can be passed onto future generations. Some are under threat from development, particularly open space with no formal use. Development pressures are greatest in the town centre, and around the edge of the built up area, which is where Crawley's three established conservation areas and the majority of its listed buildings are located.

4.11 The following objectives set the framework for the policies of the chapter:-

Objectives for the Built and Natural Heritage

Objective 1

To protect and maintain the existing character and quality of Crawley's environment.

4.12 The planned layout of Crawley means that much of the town is attractive and spacious. The distinctive character of its environment, appreciated by local residents, could easily be destroyed by development, especially where it affects the original layout of streets and buildings, open spaces or important landscape features.

Objective 2

To protect features of historic or architectural interest which are important in reflecting Crawley's past.

4.13 The borough has many irreplaceable historic features, ranging from archaeological remains to family homes, public houses and churches. These are very important to the character and identity of the town, reflecting its origins. Crawley has 94 listed buildings which the Borough Council has a statutory obligation to safeguard. The town also includes features of historic or architectural interest, for example, areas of distinctive new town architecture and urban design, which are significant locally and which deserve protection.

Objective 3

To protect valuable nature conservation sites to help maintain and increase the range of local habitats.

4.14 Once habitats are lost, it is difficult and sometimes impossible to re-establish them. The protection of these sites is therefore necessary, as nature conservation is important for its own sake and for education. Many sites important for nature conservation are also of value for recreation or amenity.

Objective 4

To protect urban open spaces of value for recreation and amenity.

4.15 Open spaces are significant local features in Crawley, forming part of its distinct identity. They have an important amenity and recreation role, improving the quality of life for residents and are usually highly valued by the community.

Objective 5

To enhance the value of the borough's historic and natural assets through education, interpretation and improving public access.

4.16 Some of the borough's historic and environmental features are not valued as highly as they deserve because people are unaware of their significance or are unable to visit or see them. Improving awareness and understanding adds to the value of a site, particularly for local residents and occupiers and this can help its protection.

POLICIES

The Built Environment

Conservation Areas

Designation

Policy BN1

The Borough Council will designate as conservation areas any areas it considers to be of special architectural or historic interest in the context of the borough, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The following criteria will be taken into account in deciding whether to designate an area as a conservation area:

- (i) the historic value of the area and how this is reflected in the architecture, the grouping and materials of buildings, and the road pattern;**
- (ii) the quality of the buildings in the area; the presence of listed buildings, the contribution of unlisted buildings to the character of the area, and the impact of contemporary buildings on the area;**
- (iii) the quality of open spaces, trees and other landscape features;**
- (iv) the quality of advertisements, signs, shop fronts, street furniture and hard surfaces;**
- (v) the archaeological significance of the area;**
- (vi) the extent to which the area's character has been affected by demolition, the loss of important features, changes of use, unsympathetic alterations or new buildings, or the intrusion of traffic.**

- 4.17 The Borough Council is obliged to designate as conservation areas any areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The criteria in the policy identify the features which need to be considered in order to assess whether an area is of special architectural or historic interest, including the elements which may detract from it. There have been 3 conservation areas in Crawley for a number of years. An assessment of additional areas using the above criteria led to the designation of another 4 areas in 1996. These include distinctive areas of new town housing and urban design. There are specific policies in the plan relating to the established conservation areas in the High Street, Ifield and Worth. Proposals in the new conservation areas will be assessed against the criteria in Policy BN2, and the guidance in individual conservation area

statements. The Borough Council will continue to review the designation of new and existing conservation areas.

Implementation: CBC forward planning process, subject to public consultation with residents and occupiers.

Development in Conservation Areas

Policy BN2

The Council will seek to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas. Proposals for new development, including alterations, extensions or changes of use within or adjacent to conservation areas will only be permitted if:

- (i) the development respects the character of the locality and of existing buildings in scale, grouping and materials;**
- (ii) the development or change of use and the activity generated is compatible with the character of the conservation area;**
- (iii) the development would not result in an expansion of a use which is incompatible with the character of the conservation area;**
- (iv) views into and out of the conservation area will not be adversely affected.**

Planning permission will not be granted in outline for development in conservation areas.

4.18 Designation of a conservation area does not mean that all development should be prohibited, but that any development should respect its special character and appearance. Open spaces, areas of planting, walls, gates and street furniture, as well as buildings, make an important contribution to this character. Changes of use or the activity generated by a new building can also have a major impact on the character of a conservation area and may be more significant than the built development itself. For example, commercial activity appropriate in the High Street Conservation Area would have an adverse impact on the character of the more rural Ifield Village or Worth Conservation Areas. The acceptability of a development proposal in a conservation area often depends upon the details of its siting, design, appearance, access and landscaping. It is often not possible to assess properly the impact of a development on a conservation area unless these details are submitted as part of the application.

Implementation: CBC development control process.

Policy BN3

Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will not be granted unless the building is inappropriate in structure or design for the conservation area, or is wholly beyond repair. Any proposals for demolition must be accompanied by details of the proposals for the future development or use of the site which must meet the criteria in Policy BN2.

- 4.19 The loss of a building in a conservation area can alter the character of the area, particularly if it forms part of an important group of buildings and demolition therefore needs to be carefully controlled. Vacant sites, once a building is demolished, can have a negative impact on a conservation area and it is therefore important that a future use or development for the site which respects the character of the area has been identified.

Implementation: CBC development control process; conditions may be imposed linking demolition with future development or use.

Policy BN4

Proposals for advertisements and signs in conservation areas will only be permitted if their size, design and siting respect the building and land on which they are displayed and do not detract from the character and appearance of the area. Free-standing signs should complement adjacent buildings.

- 4.20 It is important that signs and advertisements in conservation areas do not detract from the character and appearance of the area. It is often appropriate to require signs in conservation areas to adopt a particular style and to be of a more modest size than in other areas. Supplementary planning guidance has been prepared for the High Street Conservation Area.

Implementation: CBC development control process.

Policy BN5

The Borough Council will seek to prevent the occurrence of, or will require the removal of, unsympathetic features or minor developments which have, or would have, an adverse impact on the character and appearance of a conservation area.

- 4.21 The character or appearance of a conservation area can easily be harmed by unsympathetic features such as the deterioration or neglect of a building or site, or the presence of inappropriate signs or advertisements. The Borough Council can require remedial action to be taken, such as the removal of signs, screening, or improved maintenance of landscaping. Some minor developments which have permitted development rights can also have an adverse impact on conservation areas. Examples include replacement doors and windows, satellite dishes, small advertisements and alterations to walls and fences. It may be appropriate, in some cases, for the Borough Council to seek control over these developments which could be achieved through Article Four Directions. There is also a new power to control permitted development on dwelling houses, and supplementary planning guidance can be used to help persuade residents and occupiers that minor changes should

respect the character and appearance of a conservation area.

Implementation: CBC enforcement, forward planning and development control processes.

Policy BN6

The Borough Council will encourage statutory undertakers and the highway authority to have respect for the character and appearance of conservation areas when carrying out works within them.

- 4.22 The appearance of a conservation area can be adversely affected by insensitive highway works or reinstatement by statutory undertakers and, therefore, particular care should be taken when such works are undertaken. High quality materials and good design should always be used within conservation areas.

Implementation: CBC forward planning process, WSCC as highway authority, statutory undertakers.

High Street Conservation Area

Policy BN7

The Borough Council will seek to preserve or enhance the appearance and trading character of the High Street Conservation Area by:

- (i) ensuring development and changes of use protect the potential for ground floor retailing (SH10) and encouraging developments, such as the relocation of the market (SH14) which contribute to the High Street's function as a trading centre;**
- (ii) requiring the design of shop fronts and other building frontages to be compatible with the historic setting, particularly adjacent listed buildings;**
- (iii) ensuring new advertisements and signs are compatible with the character of the conservation area, and encouraging the replacement of incongruous advertisements and signs;**
- (iv) promoting measures to reduce unnecessary traffic and parking in the street and to improve the environment for pedestrians;**
- (v) improving the design and standard of public areas, including the greens, using appropriate materials and street furniture;**
- (vi) encouraging the retention of residential units in or near the High Street;**

(vii) encouraging the reorganisation of rear service areas.

- 4.23 The character, appearance and function of the High Street has changed over time. It has become more congested with traffic and parked cars and the appearance and condition of some buildings has deteriorated, whilst others have been redeveloped. The street's traditional function as a trading area has declined, with shops being replaced by offices and other service activities. A key objective for the Conservation Area, designated in 1986, is to arrest this process of decline and to restore the area's valued trading character and historic appearance. Other objectives and policies for the area are detailed in the High Street Conservation Area Statement. It is important that the potential for retailing in the High Street is maintained through the control of changes of use and redevelopments, and that developments which will increase the trading function of the area are encouraged.
- 4.24 Frequent changes to shopfronts are made in the High Street which could affect the appearance of the area if the new shopfronts are not properly integrated with the overall design of the building. The area's commercial nature also means the control of signs and advertisements is particularly important. Design guidance for shopfronts, signs and advertisements in the High Street has been published. Since the Conservation Area was designated, some improvements have been made to the High Street such as the enhancement of the entrance to the Broad Walk and the introduction of new street furniture. A major opportunity for enhancing the area has arisen now the High Street Relief Road has been constructed, enabling traffic in the street to be reduced and the pedestrian environment to be improved. Consideration will also be given to measures which could qualify for the implementation of a Conservation Area Partnership with English Heritage, although it is recognised that the number of Partnerships will be limited. Increasing residential use in the High Street may help maintain buildings of historic or architectural interest by giving them a positive use which provides an income. It will also help increase activity in the area, particularly at night.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, developers, WSCC as highway authority.

Ifield Village Conservation Area

Policy BN8

The Borough Council will seek to preserve or enhance the village character and rural setting of the Ifield Village Conservation Area, and will seek improvements to its character and appearance. Measures which will be promoted include:

- (i) protection, establishment and restoration of features important to the village scene, including trees, hedgerows, footpaths, ponds and water courses;**
- (ii) opportunities for reducing parking in Ifield Street and making provision for parking in less prominent locations;**
- (iii) protection and management of the paddocks within the Conservation Area;**
- (iv) the repair of boundary walls, fences, hedgerows and verges.**

- 4.25 Ifield Village Conservation Area has been designated because the area still retains its character as a small, scattered rural settlement, focused upon an historic church and public house. The Conservation Area includes several listed buildings and other buildings of interest, a large village green and paddocks of unimproved grassland which have been identified as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. There are also numerous mature trees in the conservation area. Environmental improvements have been undertaken to enhance the character of the area including restoration of an historic dew pond and resurfacing in Ifield Street. The Ifield Village Conservation Area Statement details further proposals and policies.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, developers, WSCC as highway authority.

Worth Conservation Area

Policy BN9

The Borough Council will seek to preserve or enhance the rural character and appearance of the open setting of St Nicholas Church within the Worth Conservation Area. The erection of new buildings in the area will not normally be permitted. Improvements will be sought, such as:

- (i) opportunities for improving local parking facilities and other visitor facilities;**
- (ii) the repair and improvement of road surfaces and footways with appropriate materials;**
- (iii) the repair of boundary walls, fences, hedges and verges;**
- (iv) additional informal planting.**

- 4.26 Worth Conservation Area was designated to preserve and enhance the rural setting of the Saxon church of St Nicholas and new development should, therefore, be kept to a minimum. The area includes several open fields, some designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, and large houses which surround the church. It has good tree cover. Visitor pressure is high in the Conservation Area because of interest in the church's history, and its popularity for weddings and other special events. The Worth Way footpath also passes through the area. The Borough Council will seek improvements where these will enhance the setting of the church and help meet visitor requirements without affecting the area's rural character. These proposals are detailed in the Worth Conservation Area Statement.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, developers, highway authority.

Areas of Special Environmental Quality

Policy BN10

In Areas of Special Environmental Quality, development will not be permitted if it will, individually or cumulatively, result in adverse

changes to the character and appearance of the area or lead to the loss of important features such as trees and landscaping.

- 4.27 The majority of Crawley's housing areas have a good quality environment, with attractive layouts including open amenity areas. Distinct individual areas which have a special environmental quality have been identified and are defined on the Proposals Map. They include areas developed at a low density, areas with a particular style or type of dwelling or layouts designed to retain a substantial proportion of the existing tree cover. The special character of these areas is normally recognised and valued by residents. New development and redevelopment proposals in these areas may individually only have limited impact on the amenity of adjoining property, but could, with other proposals, progressively alter the valued character and appearance of the whole area and should therefore be carefully controlled.

Implementation: CBC development control process.

Listed Buildings

Policy BN11

Proposals for new development including extensions, alterations or changes of use affecting a listed building or its setting will only be permitted if:

- (i) there is no adverse impact on the building's historic or architectural interest;**
- (ii) the scale and form of the existing building is respected, including its roof profile, doors and windows, and internal layout;**
- (iii) appropriate materials are used, and existing materials are re-used as far as possible;**
- (iv) existing walls, railings, gates and other features are retained with a minimum of alteration.**
- (v) the archaeological implications of the proposals have been considered and adequate arrangements can be made for recording remains which would be lost.**

- 4.28 Development, however minor, can adversely affect the historic or architectural qualities of a listed building. Most alterations to listed buildings require Listed Building Consent. The Borough Council will seek to ensure that all changes, including adjacent development, complement the existing building and preserve or enhance its character, appearance and setting. Many listed buildings are of archaeological interest and this therefore needs to be taken into account when applications are considered.

Implementation: CBC development control process.

Policy BN12

Proposals for advertisements and signs on listed buildings used for commercial purposes will only be permitted if they respect the external features and character of the building in size, design, materials, colour and siting. Internal illumination, other than halo lighting, will not be acceptable.

- 4.29 Several of Crawley's listed buildings are commercial properties, particularly in the High Street, and it is recognised that advertisements and signs are necessary. However, signs and advertisements can have an adverse impact on the appearance of a listed building and they therefore need to be very carefully designed and sited. It is recognised that the illumination of signs is often desirable, particularly on buildings which are mainly used at night, but this should be as discreet as possible. Halo lighting is usually appropriate.

Implementation: CBC development control process.

Policy BN13

Proposals for the installation of satellite dishes, burglar alarms and other similar features on listed buildings will only be permitted if:

- (i) they are discreet and their colour, design and siting respect the external appearance of the building;**
- (ii) they are not situated on the front of a building facing a highway.**

- 4.30 Satellite dishes, burglar alarms and similar features such as telecommunications equipment can be very intrusive and affect the appearance of a listed building. They should be as discreet as possible and located away from very visible locations on the front of buildings.

Implementation: CBC development control process.

Policy BN14

The Borough Council will monitor the condition of the listed buildings in the borough and will encourage their maintenance and continued use. Proposals for changes of use, alterations or extensions of a listed building under threat may be permitted if they will ensure the building's retention and preservation. Standards, such as parking standards, may be relaxed where proof is provided that such exceptions are justified.

- 4.31 Buildings are listed because they are of architectural or historic interest and worth preserving. Lack of regular maintenance can threaten the preservation of a listed building and the Borough Council therefore carries out a regular condition survey. It is recognised that the best means of protecting a building is to ensure it is used. Uses not normally acceptable in a particular location may be permitted as a means of ensuring the retention or refurbishment of a listed building under threat, provided that there is no significant adverse impact upon the surrounding area or major conflict with

other policy objectives. Similarly, standards such as parking standards may be relaxed if this would encourage a use resulting in the retention of a listed building without causing serious problems in the locality.

Implementation: CBC development control process.

Policy BN15

The Borough Council will only grant listed building consent for the demolition of a listed building in exceptional circumstances and must always be satisfied that every possible effort has been made to find a suitable use for the building. If, exceptionally, consent for demolition is granted, suitable provision for the recording of features which will be destroyed may be required.

- 4.32 Listed buildings are irreplaceable and are comparatively rare features in Crawley. Proposals for their demolition should not be given consent simply because redevelopment is more economic. Developers must therefore prove the viability of alternative uses has been fully explored, including the sale of the building. Some listed buildings are either of intrinsic archaeological interest or stand on ground which contains archaeological remains and arrangements should therefore be made for the protection or recording of features which would be lost.

Implementation: CBC development control process.

Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest

Policy BN16

The Borough Council will seek to secure the retention of a building recognised as being of particular local architectural or historic interest. Planning permission may be refused for proposals for development, extensions, alterations or changes of use which will lead to the demolition of such a building, cause the removal of features of interest or detract from the character or setting of the building.

- 4.33 There are many buildings that are considered to be of special local importance because of their individual character or place in local history, or because of their contribution to the overall street scene. When judged against national criteria, these buildings may not be worthy of statutory protection, but it is desirable to seek their retention whenever possible, not least because they illustrate the history of Crawley's development. The Council is aware of some of these buildings, but the value of others may only become apparent when a development proposal is considered.

Implementation: CBC development control and forward planning processes.

Archaeology

Policy BN17

All development proposals will be appraised to assess their possible effects on archaeological remains and, if necessary, a field evaluation will be required. Development proposals which adversely affect Scheduled Ancient Monuments or their setting will be strongly resisted. In archaeologically sensitive areas and other areas of archaeological interest, development may be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the remains will be preserved in situ and / or can be satisfactorily recorded. The Borough Council will seek to improve the management and interpretation of these sites.

- 4.34 Archaeological remains are irreplaceable and are particularly vulnerable to disturbance and destruction. There are 4 sites in the borough designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 13 sites have been recorded by the County Council as Archaeological Sensitive Areas. These are identified on the Proposals Map. 38 other areas of suspected archaeological interest have also been identified. These latter sites have not been fully investigated and other sites may be discovered, possibly in the course of development. The Borough Council will seek to protect all important archaeological sites as part of Crawley's heritage. In areas where the remains are less significant, it may not be necessary to resist development, especially where they can be physically preserved on the site. As a last resort, remains can be recorded before development commences. Improved management and interpretation of Crawley's archaeological remains will help them become an educational resource which can be appreciated by all.

Implementation: CBC development control process in consultation with WSCC archaeologist; consultation with English Heritage if development affects Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Historic Gardens

Policy BN18

Proposals for development that would adversely affect any significant features, including trees, of a park or garden of special historic interest will not normally be permitted.

- 4.35 Crawley has 6 historic parks which are included in the County Council's list of sites of archaeological interest. These have no statutory protection but the sites are worthy of protection for their historic interest, particularly as they were important features of the area before the development of the New Town, and because some attractive landscaped areas still exist. The remaining areas which are considered to be important are defined on the Proposals Map.

Implementation: CBC development control process.

NATURAL HERITAGE

Nature Conservation

Policy BN19

Proposals for development will be resisted if it will adversely affect, directly or indirectly, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance identified on the Proposals Map, or which are identified in the future. Proposals for development will not normally be permitted if it would adversely affect other important habitats, including those identified within Ancient Woodlands, unimproved pastures, water features and flood plains and areas where protected species are present. The Borough Council will seek improvements in the nature conservation value of an area in association with new development, and will encourage the improved management and interpretation of these areas.

- 4.36 The County Council has produced a register of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance and the Borough Council also has a list of locally important sites. The Structure Plan states the importance of protecting such sites as they are very vulnerable to the direct and indirect impacts of development. Ancient Woodlands are areas which have been continuously used as woodland for at least 400 years. Ancient semi-natural woodlands in particular normally support a variety of species which are slow to spread into replanted areas and hence tend to be more vulnerable. Ancient woodlands which are replanted are usually of lesser value to nature conservation. The Ancient Woodlands shown on the Proposals Map are those included in an Inventory of Ancient Woodland compiled by English Nature and are of both types. The Inventory is a provisional inventory primarily based on a map survey. More detailed site surveys carried out in connection with development proposals may enable a more accurate age and description of the woodland to be established. Any amendment made to the Inventory by English Nature will subsequently need to be reflected in a revision of the Local Plan and Proposals Map.
- 4.37 Other areas, such as unimproved pastures and water courses are also important in maintaining biodiversity as they are wildlife habitats and may support protected species. Water features and adjacent areas of land are valuable as a source of open space, some of which has significant landscape value. These areas also provide links between different parts of the built up area and into the countryside, forming attractive footpath routes and important wildlife corridors. All habitats are also important for their amenity, recreation and educational value. In applying the policy regard will be had to the reasonable needs of agriculture and forestry. Areas of natural habitat within the borough will be reviewed regularly, to identify opportunities for improvement and to ascertain whether any sites should be given greater protection. The Borough Council has also declared 2 Local Nature Reserves.

Implementation: CBC development control and forward planning processes, CBC Leisure Services.

Landscape

Policy BN20

Proposals for development will not normally be permitted if it will adversely affect important natural landscape features, including woodlands, water courses and adjacent land, trees and hedgerows. If development is permitted, the replacement of landscape features lost may be required (see Policy GD5). The Borough Council will undertake and encourage improvements to the amenity and recreational value of these areas.

- 4.38 Protecting the natural landscape is an important element in maintaining the high quality of Crawley's environment and new development should respect existing natural features, including woodlands, streams and ponds. These areas have an important amenity value and are also important areas of open space, often forming links between different parts of the built up area and into the countryside. Their protection is therefore important, and if any landscape features are lost they should be replaced wherever possible. A small area of Crawley's landscape is part of the nationally important High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policy C5 indicates how this area will be protected.

Implementation: CBC development control and forward planning processes.

Tree Preservation Orders

Policy BN21

Where an application is necessary for the removal of a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order (T.P.O), permission will only be granted if the tree is unhealthy or dangerous, or if it no longer contributes to public amenity. The planting of replacement trees may be required. Work on trees protected by T.P.O.s may be permitted if it does not detract from the health or appearance of the tree.

- 4.39 Crawley's extensive tree cover is an important part of its character. Groups of trees and woodlands make significant visual breaks in the built-up area and also have a role in nature conservation, in providing visual and noise buffers, and in improving air quality. Individual trees can also be very important, especially where tree cover is limited. Trees or woodlands which make a particularly important contribution may be made subject to T.P.O.s, especially if they are under threat. Felling of a tree covered by a T.P.O. could result in the loss of a significant local amenity feature which may take up to fifty years to replace and will therefore be resisted. Limited work on these trees can, however, often improve their appearance or health.

Implementation: CBC development control process.

Urban Open Space

Policy BN22

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss of any urban open space which makes a positive contribution to the character or amenity of its surroundings.

Development of small-scale buildings, or the limited extension of existing buildings, may be permitted in areas of urban open space which make a positive contribution to their surroundings provided that:

- (i) it will not adversely affect the character or amenity of the area; and**
- (ii) it will contribute to the functioning of a recreation, community or education use; or**
- (iii) the particular piece of land does not make a contribution to local amenity or ecology, or to community or recreation uses.**

4.40 Open space within and adjacent to the built-up area contributes to Crawley's visual amenity and to the quality of life of residents, employees and visitors. The Structure Plan states that development which could destroy valuable open spaces must be very carefully controlled. Development which contributes to recreation, community or education uses can sometimes be acceptable if it increases the value of the spaces for local residents. The major areas of urban open space in the borough include its parks and playing fields and there are numerous other areas of open land, such as small amenity areas and even grass verges. Most of these areas, large and small, were deliberately included in the planning of Crawley, and have a positive impact on the character and amenity of individual streets and of the borough as a whole.

Implementation: CBC development control process.

Policy BN23

Proposals for the change of use and incorporation of public amenity land into private curtilages will be strongly resisted, particularly where the land forms part of the overall design of an area. Proposals will only be permitted where the land does not and cannot contribute to public amenity.

4.41 Proposals to change the use of and incorporate public amenity land into private gardens are sometimes made. Some areas of amenity land contribute to the character of individual streets, and others are important as integral parts of the planned layout of the town. Allowing the incorporation of either of these into private curtilages means they will be lost as a public amenity for the future. Such proposals should only be permitted if the land does not, and cannot in the future, contribute to public amenity.

Implementation: CBC development control process.

Policy BN24

Subject to the availability of resources, the Borough Council will continue its programme of implementation projects which help fulfil the objectives of the Green Space Strategy.

- 4.42 The Borough Council has prepared a Green Space Strategy which sets out a number of detailed aims in relation to the protection, enhancement and improved management of the borough's open spaces and the links between them. The Strategy also contains a periodically updated action programme which targets and co-ordinates those Council initiatives that are associated with the Borough's green spaces, e.g. tree planting and footpaths. It is also an important means of involving voluntary and community groups, and other agencies in schemes which will assist in the implementation of the strategy.

Implementation: CBC forward planning process, CBC Leisure Services.

MONITORING

- 4.43 The key test of the strategy adopted in this chapter, and of the effectiveness of its policies and proposals, is the extent to which the objectives set out in paragraph 4.11 are met. One of the main themes is the protection of important features of the environment which, once lost, cannot be replaced.
- 4.44 Most policies require monitoring through regular review of planning decisions and of the implementation of proposals. In addition, periodic assessment is required of:
- the degree of success in protecting the historic and natural environment;
 - the need for additional statutory designations, for example conservation areas and Tree Preservation Orders (BN1, BN21);
 - the situation shown by review of the Green Space Strategy (BN19 - 20, BN 22 and BN24);
 - inappropriate features, problems and opportunities in conservation areas, the condition of listed buildings and proposals affecting them and the loss of public amenity land (BN3 - 9, BN12 and 13, BN14 and 15, BN16, BN17, BN22, BN23). This may be done through detailed survey.