

CHAPTER 11: RECREATION AND LEISURE

INTRODUCTION

- 11.1 Recreation and leisure are important for the quality of life of both individuals and the community as a whole. They can help promote healthy lifestyles, a sense of place, civic pride and community spirit and the enjoyment of culture and art. At the same time, they can raise the perception of the town by non-residents. This chapter aims to promote and encourage the provision of recreation facilities in the best manner possible so that they are readily accessible to all groups within the community.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

- 11.2 Partly as a result of its development as a New Town, Crawley has had recreation facilities provided to a high standard. These include two sports centres, a modern theatre and exhibition facilities, health clubs, an athletics stadium, a series of sports fields, golf courses and a driving range, and extensive public open spaces and amenity areas with footpaths and bridleways. However, the borough's population is now about 90,000 and could be between 100,000 - 105,000 by the end of the plan period - nearly twice the size of that originally planned for the New Town. Compared with many areas the population remains comparatively young and active. This population is also ethnically and demographically more diverse than at the New Town's inception. As a result, the number of people using recreation facilities has increased and the range of demand broadened, for e.g., spectator sports, informal, non-competitive and healthy activities are now being pursued.
- 11.3 The built-up area is now much larger than originally planned, such that open space and undeveloped land is an increasingly valuable resource. Remaining land is sought after for a wide range of potential new uses, including recreation and leisure. The problem of limited space is compounded by forecasts of a growth in demand for recreation activities which are more informal and often demand more space than traditional sports. Competing demands for development land and rising land values also constrain the commercial provision of recreation and leisure facilities to those that produce a very high return on investment.
- 11.4 In the past, many recreation facilities in Crawley have been provided by the Borough Council. However, recent public expenditure controls have limited this. Whilst remaining a major provider of many recreational facilities, the aim of the Borough Council is also to now act as an enabler, encouraging the private sector and voluntary groups to provide many of the facilities needed.
- 11.5 Given the interest in, and competition for, land within the borough, the use of a site for recreation has implications for other interests. These could include nearby residents, environmental concerns, or developers searching for sites to develop. It is, therefore, imperative that when allocating a site for recreation purposes the use is appropriately located and the full costs, including opportunity costs, are taken into account. This is particularly true for companies wishing to develop their playing fields.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Government Guidance

- 11.6 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 “Sport and Recreation” recognises the value of sport and recreation in terms of the health and well-being of residents, the development of community spirit and civic pride and its contribution to the local economy. It emphasises the need to balance land requirements for recreation, both formal and informal, with other possible uses. Public open space within the built-up area is seen as particularly beneficial for children and the elderly. It can also reduce development pressures on the countryside. In the urban fringe, recreation uses can complement the interests of agriculture, forestry and conservation. Such uses can also improve the rights of way network.
- 11.7 PPG 13 “Transport” emphasises the need to manage demand and plan for less travel. Consequently, where facilities are well located within their catchment area, they will reduce the need to travel by car and, hence, vehicular emissions. PPG 7 “The Countryside and the Rural Economy” emphasises the role of recreation and leisure within the countryside but also suggests that sometimes conflicts with other rural uses can arise.

West Sussex Structure Plan 1993

- 11.8 The Structure Plan states that while there is a need to increase recreation use of the countryside, it should be the sort of recreation that is in harmony with it. Uses encouraged comprise those that make the most of disused land, make use and conserve historic sites or contribute to the more effective use of existing or potential recreation areas. In particular, developments that are small scale and associated with quiet informal recreation will be encouraged. Within urban areas recreation uses will normally be permitted, so long as they comply with other policy considerations. The Plan also states that when recreation facilities are lost due to other forms of development, they should be replaced elsewhere.

ISSUES, STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

- 11.9 Government guidance and the general strategy of this Plan encourage new developments to be located so as to minimise travel and hence reduce energy consumption. There is also an emphasis on the need to improve the quality of life for residents and the conservation and enhancement of the environment. Consequently, this Chapter seeks to ensure that new recreation facilities are appropriately located to take into account the catchment area they intend to serve and are designed so as to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment.
- 11.10 The population of Crawley is now about 90,000 and could reach 105,000 by the end of the plan period. Consequently, the demand for recreation and leisure facilities is expected to increase and the range of demand to broaden. This is particularly true for the increasing number of elderly and school age children who will require particular types of provision. One of the key issues to be addressed in this Chapter is how to balance a wide variety of development pressures with the recreation and leisure needs of the borough’s population.
- 11.11 In the past, the Borough Council has been the major provider of recreation and leisure facilities. Recent public expenditure controls have, however, resulted in a greater emphasis being placed on the commercial development of recreation facilities. It is, therefore, necessary to ensure that new recreation developments reflect the needs and aspirations of the borough’s population. Of particular importance is the provision of recreation and leisure facilities that serve the local neighbourhoods and the town as a whole. It is necessary to achieve a good balance and variety of provision to a high standard.

- 11.12 In addition, Crawley has a particular role within its sub-region as a provider of recreation and leisure facilities. This not only increases the variety and choice of facilities for the residents of Crawley, but also attracts visitors to Crawley and enhances the status of the borough. Within this context there will be a need to identify appropriate locations which are highly accessible by a variety of means of transport. Outside the built-up area recreational activity does occur, particularly in the form of farm based tourism. Farm based tourism can be an important component of the rural economy. However, the policies in the Countryside Chapter and Recreation and Leisure Chapter are particularly relevant.
- 11.13 The following objectives set out what the Plan envisages for recreation and leisure provision in Crawley and its surrounding area.

Objectives for Recreation and Leisure

Objective 1

To ensure sufficient and appropriate opportunities for recreation facilities to be provided to meet the needs of the borough's population.

- 11.14 The development of recreation and leisure facilities that meet the expanding and changing needs of the borough are very important. However, actual local demand for recreation facilities often only becomes evident when the facilities have been provided. It is, therefore, important that the Plan makes allowance for the provision of as many types of recreation facility as possible.

Objective 2

To encourage a good standard of provision of sport and recreation facilities within and around Crawley.

- 11.15 The provision of recreation facilities should aim to be of the highest standard. This objective is beneficial for the users themselves and the status of the borough as perceived by visitors to Crawley.

Objective 3

To ensure that development proposals for recreation facilities conserve and enhance the natural and built environment.

- 11.16 The location of some recreation facilities can have an adverse impact upon the environment. In particular, certain recreation facilities, such as those intending to serve the sub-region, will encourage travel. Locating such facilities so that they are accessible by a variety of means of transport will reduce the impact of the motor car and hence reduce energy consumption. An additional concern is the impact of new recreation development on the countryside. Consequently, facilities will be encouraged to locate within the built-up area and designed to a high standard which seeks to conserve and enhance the environment.

Objective 4

To ensure that all development proposals for recreation and leisure facilities are designed and located to enable access by the whole community.

- 11.17 Within Crawley there are sections of the community who have a below average access to a motor car. These groups are, however, increasing their participation in recreation activities. Therefore, facilities need to be designed and located to be easily reached by public transport, foot or bicycle.

Objective 5

To provide appropriate opportunities for the provision of recreation and leisure facilities which serve the borough and surrounding areas commensurate with Crawley's position and status within the sub-region.

11.18 Crawley has an important role within the region as a centre of employment, a transport hub and as a town which many people visit. In so far as opportunities arise, accommodating certain sub-regional recreation demands can greatly benefit local residents by providing more or better facilities than might otherwise be the case.

POLICIES**PROVIDING LEISURE FACILITIES IN CRAWLEY****Policy RL1**

The Borough Council will support proposals which will increase the range and quality of recreation and leisure facilities provided that they:

- (i) are accessible by a variety of means of transport and are suitably located to serve their catchment population; and**
- (ii) are appropriately designed and located to protect the environment.**

11.19 Leisure, recreation, sport, the arts and other complementary activities can make a major contribution to the quality of life enjoyed by the borough's citizens. Future growth in Crawley's population and the increasing sophistication of the town's residents will mean that further investment in a variety of recreation and leisure facilities will be needed. In particular, recreation and leisure developments which increase the range of facilities for the young, elderly and disabled will be encouraged. When the development of a specific site is proposed high standards of siting and design will be required.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, CBC Planning and Environmental Services and Leisure Services, private sector and other developers.

Policy RL2

Proposals for development which results in the loss of recreation facilities within the borough will only be permitted if:

- (i) alternative provision can be made in an appropriate location; or**
- (ii) such facilities can clearly be demonstrated to be surplus to borough wide requirements; or**
- (iii) the dual management of the site with other recreation uses is not possible; or**
- (iv) partial redevelopment of the site would result in better use of facilities for recreation, leisure and community purposes.**

11.20 The loss of sites providing for recreation needs could result in a reduction in the quality of life for residents. However, there are instances when poor siting or changing needs result in the demand for a facility decreasing to a level which renders the continued operation of that facility non-viable. Under these circumstances the land might be better used for another purpose.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, CBC Planning and Environmental Services and Leisure Services, private sector and other developers.

Policy RL3

The Borough Council will encourage appropriate recreation and leisure facilities to be designed so as to be suitable for more than one recreation, leisure or community use.

11.21 There are many recreation and leisure buildings and some sites which are not always used to their full potential, particularly at night and the weekend. At the same time there are other recreation and leisure needs which could make use of the facilities when they are not required for their primary purpose. The dual use of existing and new facilities will increase the number and range of facilities available for leisure. It can also provide revenue for their owners and reduce the competing demands for increasingly scarce recreation and development land.

Implementation: CBC Planning and Environmental Services, Leisure Services, public, voluntary and private sectors.

SITING OF NEW FACILITIES

Major Built Facilities Serving the whole Town or a Wider Area

Policy RL4

Proposals for major built recreation and leisure facilities will normally be permitted within the built-up area and in particular the town centre, provided that:

- (i) the development is suitably located for its catchment population and is accessible by a variety of means of transport, particularly public transport, cycling and walking;**
- (ii) there is no adverse impact on the character, appearance and amenity of the surrounding area and other policies of this Plan; and**
- (iii) the development adds to the variety and choice of recreation and leisure facilities within Crawley.**

11.22 Some recreation and leisure uses can generate large amounts of traffic, particularly if they attract people from a wide area. New developments will be encouraged to be sited in locations which are accessible by a variety of means of transport, particularly public transport. In many cases the preferred location will be in or near to the town centre. Consequently, the design of such facilities must be to a high standard and one which takes into account the natural and built environment. This is particularly important for buildings that serve a wider catchment area since these buildings may enhance the status of the borough as perceived by visitors. Proposals which are to be sited outside the built-up area will be subject to the policies of the Countryside Chapter.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, CBC Planning and Environmental Services and Leisure Services, private sector and other developers.

Recreation and Leisure Within the Town Centre.

Policy RL5

Proposals for the development of recreation and leisure uses within the core, primary and secondary shopping areas will normally be permitted provided that:

- (i) the design of the street frontage remains compatible with the shopping function of that particular area;**
- (ii) the use is complementary to the town centre's shopping function; and**
- (iii) in the case of existing buildings within the core and primary shopping areas the proposed use is not located on the ground floor of a shopping unit.**

11.23 Many recreation uses draw custom to an area during the evening and at weekends. Permitting recreation uses within the town centre could also complement its shopping function by attracting visitors after shoppers have gone. The main function of the town centre is, however, retail. Other uses must not be allowed to jeopardise this. Some recreation uses could assist in regenerating use and interest in secondary shopping areas and may help limit the 'deadening' effect of conversion to office uses. Proposals for amusement arcades are dealt with separately in Policy SH19.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers.

Specific Sites**Policy RL6**

Land will be reserved north of Ifield Avenue for major leisure and recreation facilities as part of a mixed leisure and commercial development.

The redevelopment of the site will be subject to the satisfactory relocation of existing uses currently occupying the site and will be in accordance with a development brief to be prepared by the Borough Council.

11.24 Crawley is well provided with sports facilities, particularly for the common team sports. However, its provision of leisure, recreation and entertainment facilities, often provided by the private sector, is not as good. Land north of Ifield Avenue offers a prime opportunity to provide some of these facilities in a complex which is easily accessible by a range of modes of transport. Indeed, this is considered to be the main, if not only, such site capable of accommodating a prestigious leisure development of regional significance which can enhance the borough's status in the same manner as developments in other towns such as Guildford. It would also contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre. By locating several leisure uses within the complex, it may be possible to achieve economies of scale in the development of the area. The site does, however, require a high quality development which reflects its position between two main roads.

11.25 There are at present a number of valued recreation and community uses on the site. The Borough Council is investigating the options for relocating them. Policy RL18 identifies a site that could accommodate the bowls club (Development now

completed). All of the recreation facilities have now been successfully relocated and the development of the allocation initiated. The fire station, however, continues to operate from its current location although the Council will continue to support proposals for its relocation if it enables further development for commercial leisure.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, CBC Property and Construction Services, private sector and other developers.

Policy RL7
Crawley athletics arena may be improved to form a town multi-sports stadium.

11.26 Crawley athletics arena provides good accommodation for athletics events and as such makes a useful contribution to the town's image and reputation. It is already used for some other recreation events. There is, however, scope to improve the arena's facilities to accommodate more spectators and a wider range of sports and events. Such improvements would not only widen the range of recreation facilities and opportunities available to all the community, but could also benefit those who use it for athletics. A modern, well-appointed town multi-sports stadium would enhance the town's image and reputation.

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

Recreation Facilities Serving Neighbourhoods

Policy RL8
Proposals for the development and improvement of both built and outdoor recreation and leisure facilities within neighbourhoods will normally be permitted provided that:

- (i) the development is so located to be accessible by cycling and walking and therefore able to provide for the recreation and leisure needs of the surrounding local community;**
- (ii) there is no adverse impact on the character, appearance and amenity of the surrounding residential area; and**
- (iii) the development adds to the variety and choice of recreation and leisure facilities within the neighbourhood.**

11.27 Many of Crawley's neighbourhood centres and neighbourhood facilities were designed when people had different social and recreation needs. Opportunities may arise to develop or redevelop facilities so that they provide for contemporary local needs. When considering proposals for new local facilities account must be taken of the particular character of the residential area and the needs of the local community. In this way variety and choice can be maintained in a high quality built environment.

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

Specific Sites

Policy RL9

Land north of the allotments at Wickland Court, Southgate is allocated for small scale outdoor recreation purposes, provided that the site is capable of being used by the residents of the neighbourhood in which it is located.

- 11.28 The Wickland Court site is underused land north of the existing allotments area. It has only limited potential for alternative use because it lacks separate vehicular access. However, certain small scale recreation uses may be appropriate for this area without giving rise to problems for adjacent houses and uses.

Implementation: CBC development control process, CBC Leisure Services.

Policy RL10

Land at Notre Dame School and the former Worth Annexe to Pound Hill School, will be reserved for a mixed use development which will include public open space.

- 11.29 The Notre Dame and "Worth Annexe" to Pound Hill schools, (located on Turners Hill Road), including their school playing fields, are no longer required for educational purposes and are allocated for housing development. Their playing fields, however, traditionally provided an element of open space in a part of the borough which is poorly served in this respect. Moreover, although private (school) fields, there has been an element of unofficial public use by local children reflecting the local lack of usable public open space. Consequently a requirement of the development of these sites will be to retain an area of land for public open space for amenity and recreational purposes.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, CBC Leisure Services, private sector and other developers.

Policy RL11

Land at Dobbins Place, Ifield, will be reserved for a mixed use development which may include small-scale built recreation facilities that serve the local area.

- 11.30 This site could make a contribution to meeting some of the recreation needs within this part of Ifield neighbourhood. It is a modest size site within an open area suitable for small scale activities which have a limited impact upon their surroundings.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, Leisure Services and Property and Construction Services, private sector and other developers.

Policy RL12

Land between Oak Road and Denne Road, Southgate, will be reserved for a mixed use development which will include small-scale public open space.

- 11.31 This site has become available because the Horsham Road Radial scheme has been rescinded, and has been allocated for a mixed use development of mainly residential,

community and recreation and leisure uses. The site comprises of an old scout hut that could be relocated within the site to provide a new improved facility. In addition, this particular part of the Southgate neighbourhood is poorly provided for in terms of public open space, particularly children's playspace. Consequently, there will be a requirement for the development to retain an area of land for public open space for amenity and recreational purposes.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, CBC Leisure Services, private sector and other developers.

Outdoor Facilities Serving the Town or a Wider Area

Policy RL13

Proposals for the development of mainly outdoor recreation and leisure facilities will normally be permitted, provided that:

- (i) the development is suitably located for the catchment population it intends to serve and is accessible by a variety of means of transport, particularly public transport, cycling and walking;**
- (ii) there is no adverse impact on the character, appearance and amenity of the surrounding area; and**
- (iii) there is no conflict with policies contained in the Countryside Chapter;**

11.32 Outdoor recreation and leisure facilities such as open space, playing pitches and children's play space are important for the social development and quality of life of Crawley's residents. Consequently proposals which serve the town or wider catchment population will be particularly encouraged. It may be appropriate or necessary to accommodate some types of outdoor recreation facilities beyond the built-up area. However, such developments may require very large areas of land and this might result in competition by alternative uses and other interests, e.g. those of nature conservation.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, CBC Planning and Environmental Services and Leisure Services, private sector and other developers.

Policy RL14

The Borough Council will support proposals for further recreation facilities or the improvement of existing recreation facilities and visitor attractions in Tilgate Park provided that:

- (i) the development is compatible with the rural character and existing use of the area;**
- (ii) there is no adverse impact upon the character and amenity of the nearby residential area, particularly through the generation of increased traffic levels.**

Where proposals are considered to have an adverse impact on the residential area there will be a requirement for an improvement of vehicular access and/or better public transport provision.

11.33 Research by the South East England Tourist Board in 1988 showed that Tilgate Park was the third most popular visitor attraction in West Sussex. There may be scope within the park to extend its range of facilities and attractions. However, the park currently only has vehicular access through a residential area. The expansion of the park's attractions could create significant problems for the residents of Tilgate. The Borough Council is currently investigating alternative access options.

Implementation: CBC development control process, CBC Leisure Services.

Policy RL15

Proposals for recreation development that does not serve solely a local catchment may be permitted within the North East Sector provided that it:

- (i) cannot be satisfactorily accommodated elsewhere within the built-up area;**
- (ii) does not have an adverse impact upon the development and quality of the environment of the new neighbourhood;
and**
- (iii) can be accommodated on land unsuitable for residential development and not required to provide facilities for the new neighbourhood.**

11.34 The Borough Council recognises that it may not be possible to accommodate all the new recreation facilities the borough needs within the existing built up area. Some areas of the North East Sector are unsuitable for development as part of the neighbourhood by virtue of certain constraints, e.g. excessive noise levels. However, there are may be instances when a well designed proposal could overcome such constraints and this could release the land for further recreational development, bearing in mind other policies contained within this Plan. Other areas will need to be kept free of development for landscape and amenity reasons. Some of these areas might be suitable for accommodating recreation and leisure uses and small-scale developments, particularly those which mainly require open space, provided that traffic and access requirements can be met and the use does not prejudice development of

the neighbourhood. The general areas in question will be identified in the development brief to be drawn up for the sector.

Implementation: CBC development control process, private sector and other developers.

Specific Sites

Policy RL16

Land at Target Hill, Broadfield, is allocated for mainly outdoor recreation use, provided that:

- (i) access onto the site directly from nearby residential areas is maintained;**
- (ii) the development does not generate a significant increase in traffic on adjacent residential roads;**
- (iii) if necessary, the site is well landscaped to blend in with surrounding areas.**

11.35 Target Hill is a large undeveloped site, currently used by residents as informal open space. If properly laid out and landscaped it could provide a more valuable outdoor recreation facility for residents of the neighbourhood, the borough as a whole, or even people from outside Crawley. However, the site must be used in a manner in keeping with its location both on the urban-rural fringe and within a residential area.

Implementation: CBC development control purposes, CBC Leisure Services.

Small-Scale Outdoor Recreation and Leisure Facilities within Open Space

Policy RL17

The Borough Council may permit proposals for small-scale recreation or community developments that improve or make better use of small surplus areas of open space within the built-up area provided that:

- (i) they are generally in keeping with the open, undeveloped character of the remainder of the site;**
- (ii) there is no conflict with the recreational, countryside or nature conservation value of the open space.**

11.36 Proposals sometimes arise for amenity and recreation space to be partially developed for small-scale recreation or community buildings. A site's amenity value or level of use is often increased through such an improvement. However, there may be instances where an area of open space has significant nature conservation value in terms of the flora and fauna it sustains. In 1991, the Borough Council produced its Green Space Strategy. It identified a number of sites throughout the borough worthy of protection or promotion for recreation purposes including the creation of new conservation and education areas.

Implementation: CBC development control processes.

Specific Sites

Policy RL18

Land within Willoughby Fields and Broadfield Annexe will be reserved for small-scale recreation purposes.

- 11.37 These sites can make a contribution to meeting some of the recreational needs within the borough. They are modest sized sites within or adjacent to existing open areas and are suitable for small-scale recreation activities that have a limited impact on their surroundings. These activities might include built facilities such as clubhouses or pavilions but whose main purpose is for outdoor recreation activities.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, CBC Leisure Services and Property and Construction Services, private sector and other developers.

OUTDOOR PLAY AND RECREATIONAL SPACE

Policy RL19

The Borough Council will require all new housing development of over 0.4ha which will affect the supply or demand for outdoor play and recreation space to make provision in accordance with the following requirements based on N.P.F.A. standards;

- (i) provide at least 1.2 ha per 1000 population of youth and adult playspace as designated recreation grounds or areas suitable for playing pitch provision; 0.2 ha per 1000 population as specific teenage 'kickabout' playspace; 0.4 ha per 1000 population as public open space suitable for casual play and recreation; and**
- (ii) provide at least 0.3 ha per 1000 population of children's playspace as formal playspace; 0.5 ha per 1000 population as informal playspace; and**
- (iii) ensure that the development of at least the teenage 'kickabout' playspace and all children's playspace be located so as to be easily and safely accessible by foot from those areas of housing likely to give rise to its use; and**
- (iv) ensure that any conflict between residential amenity and the proposed use can be resolved.**

In the case of smaller residential developments unable to provide the required space on site or where larger residential developments can not make full provision, e.g. for adult and youth playspace, commuted payments will be sought.

11.38 Playing fields and open space suitable for play are important recreation and community facilities serving the town as a whole as well as local neighbourhoods. The N.P.F.A. standard (see Appendix 11) is a nationally recognised standard ensuring an adequate level of provision. However, in Crawley this should normally be treated as a minimum standard, given the high level of sports participation and the clay soils which can easily become waterlogged, rendering some playing fields unusable for long periods during the year. Most residential developments need an area where young children can play safely. This can benefit the children and the community as a whole, providing a focal point where parents can meet and talk. The Borough Council will, therefore, seek the provision of outdoor play and recreational space, in accordance with the N.P.F.A. standards and taking into account the geological, social and demographic factors affecting the supply and demand for space.

11.39 The N.P.F.A standards for youth and adult playspace identify a requirement of 1.8 ha per 1000 population. In many residential areas, there is a lack of facilities for teenagers and young teenagers. The provision of a suitably surfaced and possibly fenced area could meet their needs, offering scope, for example, for 5-a-side football 'kickabout area', basketball and netball. However, the location of such a facility is crucial for its success. It needs to be such that it is remote enough to avoid disturbing residents, yet prominent enough to ensure that anti-social behaviour can be surveyed

and prevented. Crucially, the facility needs to be easily accessible to people who have minimal access to a motor car.

11.40 Sheltered accommodation for the elderly will normally only be required to provide open amenity space which can be enjoyed by its residents.

11.41 In most large developments the provision of the N.P.F.A requirements and the specific sub-divisions outlined in policy RL19 can be achieved. Some developments of over 0.4 hectares may, however, not be able to justify individually the provision of new play areas. In such instances, contributions may be sought from developers to a fund to enable play space to be provided in another suitable location nearby. To ensure that the N.P.F.A requirements and subsequent contributions are met by small developments guidance is set out in Appendix 2.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, CBC Leisure Services, private sector and other developers.

Policy RL20

The Borough Council will seek to retain all existing children's playspace, youth and teenage 'kickabout' playspace unless:

- (i) the playspace is both poorly used and unpopular; or**
- (ii) the playspace is obsolete or unsafe and cannot be brought up to a reasonable standard; or**
- (iii) replacement facilities will be provided in an appropriate, alternative location.**

Proposals to extend and improve areas used for children's, youth and teenage 'kickabout' playspace will normally be supported if it is a safe and appropriate location for play and any resulting increase in activity and use of the area will not adversely affect the character of the area or amenity of surrounding development.

11.42 Some play facilities within existing residential areas suffer from lack of use or vandalism. Other areas give rise to problems and disturbance to neighbours, especially when they are used by teenagers and youths rather than by young children. Frequently, this is because they are poorly sited or equipped, or because they do not appeal to the young population in the area. When such problems cannot be resolved in situ, it may be appropriate for the facilities to be located on a more appropriate site.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, CBC Leisure Services, private sector and other developers.

Policy RL21

Proposals for development involving the whole or partial loss of playing fields and open space, included as part of the N.P.F.A standard, within Crawley Borough, will not normally be permitted unless:

- (i) the facility is demonstrated to be surplus to requirements; or**
- (ii) shared use of the facility with other recreation or community activities is not possible; or**
- (iii) adequate replacement or alternative playing field provision, accessible by a variety of means of transport, can be made elsewhere within the neighbourhood;**
- (iv) the land is in private ownership and private use and the proposed development will allow for public access to and public use of any area to be retained for recreational use.**

Where proposals for the redevelopment of playing fields beyond the built up area is permitted, it must be for a use which is compatible with the countryside and strategic gap objectives.

11.43 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 'Sport and Recreation' advises that playing fields can often give a sense of place in the urban area. They are important tracts of recreation land and can ensure that there is appropriate provision of open space within a neighbourhood.

11.44 Some playing fields are located within the countryside or at the edge of the built-up area. Their open nature makes a considerable contribution to the character of the countryside and to ensuring a gap exists between Crawley and other built up areas. The development of such sites could have a detrimental effect upon the environment beyond the built up area and will therefore be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal complies with both countryside and strategic gap policies.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers.

Policy RL22

Where proposals for the whole or partial redevelopment of playing fields is permitted, it will normally be required to be for a use compatible with a residential area such as:

- (i) local recreation or community services;**
- (ii) residential development, particularly social or affordable housing;**
- (iii) small-scale employment workshops, suitable for local residents.**

11.45 Most playing fields are within the built up area and within or adjacent to residential areas. Any new use for a playing field must therefore, be for the sort of activity that is well suited to a neighbourhood location both in terms of ensuring there is no detrimental impact upon the amenity of existing properties and by making a contribution to the opportunities and facilities available within the neighbourhood.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers.

Specific Sites

Policy RL23

Land within Maidenbower is allocated for public playing fields and children's playspace.

11.46 In accordance with Crawley's neighbourhood principle, the Borough Council considers that all residential areas should have adequate facilities for recreation activities.

Implementation: CBC development control process, CBC Leisure Services.

LINEAR OPEN SPACE

Policy RL24

Proposals for small scale recreation and leisure developments which adjoin, incorporate or affect linear routeways may be permitted provided that;

- (i) the development adds to the amenity value and complements the function of the particular routeway;**
- (ii) the development does not generate extra traffic which might have an adverse impact on the character of the local area; and**
- (iii) the proposal is compatible with strategic gap and countryside policies.**

Where proposals for developments that adjoin, incorporate or affect linear routeways are permitted, the Borough Council may require assistance in the implementation or improvement of those routes affected by the development.

11.47 Linear routeways include cycleways, footpaths and bridleways. The provision of picnic sites and kiosks boost the potential of these routes. They will enable more people to use them for recreation purposes and to gain access to the countryside. Policies within the Countryside Chapter encourage the development of new routes and the improvement and maintenance of existing routes.

Implementation: CBC Planning and Environmental Services, Leisure Services, WSCC as highway authority, landowners.

Policy RL25

The Borough Council will seek to retain and where necessary improve the bridleway network. Proposals which initiate new routes between the countryside and built up area will be particularly encouraged.

11.48 Many horse riders try to circumnavigate the urban parts of Crawley in order to gain access to different parts of the countryside. At present, they often have to use heavily trafficked roads. The provision of a bridleway network would ensure riders have safe, legally designated routes. Particular problems have been identified in the areas of Ifield to Tilgate Park via Gossops Green; Ifield to Buchan Park via Gossops Green; and Fernhill to Tilgate Park. Where necessary the Borough Council will investigate the development of a series of toll rides to increase access within and around Crawley.

Implementation: CBC Planning and Environmental Services, Leisure Services, WSCC as highway authority, landowners.

Specific Sites**Policy RL26**

The line of Worth Way, together with its interlinking footpaths, will be safeguarded and opportunities sought for their improvement.

11.49 The Worth Way from Station Hill to the motorway is controlled and maintained by the Borough Council. It is also a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. Worth Way is an important recreational route that follows public rights of way and a length of disused railway line. It is a regionally significant route that allows access to the countryside and links in with many other footpaths within the region. The Borough Council in conjunction with the sustainable transport charity "Sustrans", is investigating the multi-use of the Worth Way by a variety of users. It is hoped that such a study will identify where suitable improvement works can take place to improve access to the countryside.

Implementation: CBC Planning and Environmental Services, Leisure Services, WSCC as highway authority, landowners.

Policy RL27

Land will be safeguarded for an amenity footpath along the route of the Ifield Stream between the junction of Hyde Drive/Rusper Road and into and around Ifield Village Conservation Area.

11.50 The proposed Hyde Drive/Rusper Road footpath links with other footpaths in the area. The Borough Council is actively encouraging landowners to allow the implementation of the proposal.

Implementation: CBC Planning and Environmental Services, Leisure Services, WSCC as highway authority, landowners.

Policy RL28

Land within Broadfield and Maidenbower will be reserved for linear amenity routes.

11.51 Linear amenity routes provide important links between and within neighbourhoods. In particular, they can assist in encouraging access to the countryside. Policy H3B and H3C within the Housing Chapter identifies, amongst other sites, new housing developments within Broadfield and Maidenbower neighbourhoods. A requirement of

these housing allocations is the provision of linear amenity routes, identified on the Proposals Map. Within Broadfield these routes exist adjacent to allocations 14 and 15A in Policy H3C and within Maidenbower the routes extend along the length of the Gatwick stream and Stanford Brook. In addition, circular routes extend into the neighbourhood. Proposals for the new neighbourhood are detailed in Chapter 13. These include a requirement for the development of a network of walking and cycling routes. Where possible these routes could also have an amenity route function.

Implementation: CBC Planning and Environmental Services, Leisure Services, WSCC as highway authority, landowners

ALLOTMENT SITES

Policy RL29

The Borough Council will seek to retain all allotment sites unless:

- (i) they can be clearly demonstrated to be permanently surplus to borough-wide requirements;**
- (ii) satisfactory alternative provision can be made available within the neighbourhood or another adjacent and accessible area.**

11.52 For many people, allotments provide an important outlet for relaxing recreation. Accordingly, there is generally a need to ensure their retention, particularly as Crawley has a slightly lower level of provision than that recommended by the Thorpe Report. However, allotment use varies considerably. In some cases, release for another purpose would be a better use of a scarce land resource.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, CBC Leisure Services and Property and Construction Services, private sector and other developers.

TOURISM

Policy RL30

Proposals for the development of tourism, exhibition and conference facilities beyond the built-up area will not be permitted unless:

- (i) there is no conflict with strategic gap and countryside interests; and**
- (ii) the proposal is for the sympathetic conversion of an existing building.**

11.53 Many elements of tourism are likely to expand over the next few years. Tourism can make a considerable contribution to the provision of jobs within the borough. Given the strategic location of Crawley, with the proximity of Gatwick Airport, a good supply of hotels, conference, shopping and entertainment facilities, the motorway and the Sussex Weald, Crawley could develop a strong tourism sector .

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers.

Hotels

Policy RL31

Proposals for the development of, or extension to, hotels and guest houses within the built up area will normally be permitted. Proposals for the development of hotels and guest houses beyond the built-up area will not normally be permitted unless:

- (i) there is no conflict with strategic gap and countryside interests;**
- (ii) the proposal is for the sympathetic conversion of an existing building.**

11.54 There is a significant demand for hotel and guest house accommodation in the borough. Much of this is generated by airport passengers and airline employees. The provision of such facilities also adds to the range of leisure facilities available to residents of the borough as hotels often have health suites and restaurants. It is therefore important that hotels are accessible to all sectors of the community. However, hotels often operate on a twenty-four hour basis, particularly those with guests who use the airport. It is therefore important to ensure that their activities will not adversely affect neighbouring uses.

11.55 Strategic gap and countryside policies do not normally permit new development unless it is for specific countryside uses or involves the appropriate use of existing buildings.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers.

Hotel Site

Policy RL32

Land at Haslett Avenue, known as the 'Squareabout', is allocated for hotel, or hotel and leisure uses. (Completed)

11.56 The Structure Plan envisages provision for hotel development being made in the built-up area. The Squareabout site lies between two railway stations on major bus routes. It is close to the town's major recreation and leisure facilities. Such a location is, therefore, suitable for hotel and leisure development. Compatible recreation and leisure uses should be small in scale and could include a sauna or health club. This particular site is constrained to a large extent by the nature of the highway network. Proposals for the development of the site will require a traffic impact assessment as part of any application. Development of the site for leisure uses has now been completed.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers.

Caravan and Camping Facilities

Policy RL33

Proposals for touring caravan and camp sites, including the temporary use of playing fields, will be permitted provided that the use:

- (i) can be properly serviced;**
- (ii) does not conflict with any public use of the area;**
- (iii) does not result in the long term damage of the area;**
- (iv) does not have an adverse impact upon the character and amenity of the surrounding area.**

11.57 Within the South East, there is a deficit in the provision of caravan and camping facilities. The provision of sites for temporary caravans and tents will broaden the range of facilities within the town and provide the opportunity for an element of tourism. However, the location of such sites requires careful consideration to ensure there is no adverse impact upon surrounding uses.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes, private sector and other developers.

Policy RL34

Land on the east side of the A23 in Southgate is allocated for travel facilities.

11.58 This allocation reflects long-standing proposals for this site and provides the opportunity to bring an unattractive site into a more positive use. The original proposals included the development of a lorry park but the construction of the southwestern bypass means that there should be no reason for through freight traffic to use the A23 in Southgate. Therefore, the allocation is for the provision of facilities for the travelling public. The potential traffic and environmental impact of this development will need to be carefully assessed when proposals are considered.

MONITORING

11.59 The main 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 11.13 are met. The basic aim is to achieve the widest possible range of high quality recreation and leisure facilities, available to those who live or work in, or visit, Crawley, in a manner which conserves and enriches the environment.

11.60 Most policies require monitoring through regular analysis of planning decisions and implementation. In addition, periodic assessment is required of:

- built recreation and leisure facilities within and outside the town (RL4, RL5, RL8 and RL13)
- the use and effectiveness of existing children's play space provision (RL20);

- progress on problems and opportunities for footpaths, bridleway and cycleway routes (RL24 - 28);
- opportunities and instances of dual use (RL3);
- losses (other than through development) of allotment sites (RL29).