

Chapter 8

Leisure and Community Needs

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Chapter 8

Leisure and Community Needs

- 8.1 This chapter is split into two sections. Firstly it will deal with leisure which covers recreation and open space issues. Following this there is a section on community needs which addresses aspects of community facilities provision. The two topics are interlinked as the term leisure covers a range of activities including sport, recreation and more cultural pursuits such as the arts.

Leisure

Introduction

- 8.2 Due to the increasingly important role of leisure in today's lifestyle, the provision of sufficient open space and facilities for recreational pursuits is a key issue to be considered in the Local Plan. The trend towards increased leisure time has led to a rising demand for recreation facilities. Public recognition of the importance of recreation has increased, and there is a greater awareness of the benefits of regular exercise to the overall health of individuals. The Local Plan's role is to encourage the use of the recreational facilities whilst at the same time safeguarding the amenities of the area. Recreational facilities are particularly important in that local residents and indeed the local workforce need adequate opportunities to pursue leisure time activities and interests, which can be both indoor and outdoors and formal and informal. Open space can provide a dual function in that as well as providing a recreational role (where it is of a size, shape and location to be usable) it can also make a significant contribution to the character of an urban area, serving as 'green lungs' in built-up areas. This visual amenity role applies even to private or school sports fields and other open spaces to which the wider public are actively or tacitly denied access. The concept of sustainable development, which is the guiding principle of this Local Plan, is relevant here. Once lost, those valuable open spaces cannot be replaced. There is a need to protect an important part of our environment from erosion and consider the needs of future generations.

National Planning Guidance

- 8.3 Government guidance in PPG17: Sport and Recreation (1991), recognises that sport and recreation are important components of civilised life and that its development should be promoted in the widest sense. In recognition of the concerns felt by communities, the Government attaches great importance to the need to ensure the retention of adequate open space in urban areas and consider that the best means of protecting recreation land is to demonstrate a deficiency in accessible public open space. The PPG also states that playing fields should normally be protected in view of their significance in recreation and amenity terms. It also states that in countryside areas the aim should be to balance the demand for sport and recreation activities with the need to preserve the countryside and the needs of the other users of the land. Advice contained with PPG7: The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development (1997)

is also relevant to open space and recreation as it deals with the issue of diversification of uses of rural land and refers to the possibility of recreational uses of land or derelict buildings in the countryside, whilst according to the principles of sustainable development.

Regional Planning Guidance

- 8.4 Regional Planning Guidance for the South West issued in July 1994 encourages the development of facilities for leisure including sports and cultural activities where this is compatible with conservation objectives. It advocates that Local Plans should contain policies to protect open space in urban areas which is important for recreational or amenity reasons. The South Western Council for Sport and Recreation (SWCSR) is one of 10 regional councils for sport and recreation established in England. It has reviewed its 1989 Regional Strategy for Sport and Recreation 'A Strategy for the 90's' and a revised document 'Visions into Reality' has been published for the period 1994 – 1998. It seeks to ensure that the land use planning system takes fully into account the various sporting needs of the community. Amongst its objectives it recommends the protection of all playing fields and other recreational open space from development which may result in the loss of an existing or potential community benefit, and also encourages local assessments of playing pitch requirements. The links between leisure and tourism have been acknowledged by the publication in November 1992 of a joint policy statement by the Regional Tourist Board and Sports Council entitled 'Tourism and Sport'.

Structure Plan Policies

- 8.5 Community Facilities Policy A encourages major education, health, sport, recreation, cultural and other community service developments in the main towns including Christchurch. Community Facilities Policy B provides for the retention and improvement of local services and facilities, while Community Facilities Policy C guides the development of countryside recreational facilities. Water based recreation is encouraged in the main coastal resorts in Community Facilities Policy D, and Community Facilities Policy E provides for an adequate supply of playing fields. Parks and other open spaces contributing to the quality of the environment are protected in Environment Policy I.

Borough Council Policies

- 8.6 Christchurch Borough Council have adopted a non-statutory sport and recreation Policy which encourages the widening of the range of sporting and recreational facilities and sets out possible ways of achieving this strategy.
- 8.7 The Policy and Resources Committee in 1989 adopted a Planning Policy Statement of undeveloped land within the built-up area of the Borough of Christchurch, which aimed to protect open spaces in urban areas until Local Plans are adopted.

Recreation and Open Space in the Borough

- 8.8 Christchurch Borough has a wide range of recreation facilities and open spaces. There is an indoor sports centre, 2 Riversmeet Leisure Centre, serving the needs of the Borough

for a variety of sports activities. There is a range of outdoor sports and recreation facilities including recreation grounds, sports pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens and golf courses. The natural amenities of Christchurch lend themselves for recreational activities with riversides, harbour and coastal areas used for water sports and fishing. As well as formal recreational facilities there are also opportunities for more informal recreational activities including walking in informal open space areas such as riversides, beaches, cliff tops, parks, forestry, heathland and countryside. The countryside has been the subject of a diversification into recreational uses, such as golf driving ranges, equestrian centres and a ski centre. Within the built up areas there are recreational facilities for children in the form of equipped playgrounds and open play areas. Recreational facilities are provided by the private as well as public sector. There are private sports grounds often associated with companies and there is a private sports club at East Parley. The facilities in the Borough are used not only by local residents but also by visitors to the area, both daytrippers and holidaymakers. The tourism industry is an important part of the local economy, therefore the promotion of leisure activities can result in economic benefits.



Bowling Green in Castle Street

Assessment of Recreational Open Space within the Borough

- 8.9 On the whole the Borough is well provided for with visual amenity or informal open space, there being a variety of areas ranging from the beaches, harbour and riversides and marshland in the coastal strip to heathland and forestry in the rural areas to the north. Most areas are accessible to the public for informal or more passive recreation pursuits such as rambling. However, it is necessary to ensure that these visual amenity or informal open spaces are protected, and Policy L 1 seeks to achieve this.

- 8.10 However, the situation is different when assessing the provision of more formal recreational open space in the Borough. Based on the standards recommended by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) there is a deficiency of recreational open space within Christchurch. The NPFA recommends a minimum standard for outdoor playing space of 2.43 hectares (6 acres) per 1,000 population. This is broken down into youth and adult uses (1.6 – 1.8 hectares or 4 – 4.5 acres) which includes facilities such as sports pitches, recreation grounds, greens, tennis courts etc and children's use (0.6 – 0.8 hectares or 1.5 – 2 acres) which includes equipped playgrounds and informal play space within housing areas. The NPFA defines outdoor playing space as "space which is available for sport, active recreation and/or children's play, which is of suitable size and nature for its intended purpose, and safely accessible and available to the general public". Outdoor playing space is not the same as open space, land specifically intended for passive or informal recreation for adults or concerned with water-based sport and recreation.
- 8.11 Existing provision of outdoor playing space in the Borough has been calculated using the NPFA methodology. Throughout the Plan area this, as at 1999, totalled some 89.1ha (220.2 acres). Appendix 5 lists these areas. The mid-year estimate of the population of the Borough (1999) was 44,327. Therefore a shortfall of 18.6ha (46 acres) can be calculated.
- 8.12 Assessment of the current provision of outdoor playing space has been calculated on a Local Plan area basis using the only population information available for smaller areas from the 1991 Census (three existing Local Plans and the North Christchurch area). This has shown that most Local Plan areas have a shortfall. The Christchurch Town Centre Local Plan area has a shortfall of 0.2 ha (0.5 acres). The South Christchurch Local Plan area has a shortfall of 7.8 ha (19.3 acres) and the Highcliffe and District Local Plan area has a shortfall of 17.5 ha (43.2 acres). The North Christchurch area has a surplus of 20.5 ha (50.8 acres). However, the NPFA calculation includes private sports grounds even though access to the public is restricted through membership. The Bournemouth Sports Club at East Parley with 28.3 ha (70 acres) is therefore included in the calculation for North Christchurch even though it is a private club in an area inaccessible to public transport. Without the contribution of this establishment there would be an overall deficiency in North Christchurch of 7.8 ha (19.2 acres).
- 8.13 This analysis has been broken down further into looking at smaller areas within the Borough of Christchurch. Sixteen neighbourhood areas were defined and assessments were made of the recreation open space provision in relation to population (1991 census data for population of smaller areas). Measured against the criteria set by the NPFA most areas were deficient in recreational open space. Certain areas had a particularly high shortfall and those included Burton/Winkton, Somerford, North Highcliffe/Walkford, Airfield/Priory Park and Fairmile areas. When looking at the age structure, it was found that the Somerford, Burton/Winkton, Fairmile and Airfield/Priory Park areas had a relatively high proportion of under 16 year olds as well as a high shortfall of recreational open space. As part of the breakdown of the NPFA standard, the allocation of between 0.6 and 0.8 ha (1.5 and 2 acres) of children's playing space is recommended. A key element in judging the adequacy of provision of children's play space is not distance but the time a child takes to reach it. The recommendations describe the minimum amount of space which should be provided for play within a certain walking time of a child's home.

Detailed guidance on location, size and types of facility to be provided is contained with the NPFA publication 'The Six Acre Standard', published in 1992. These minimum standards for adult, youth and children's playing space will be incorporated into any new residential areas, and also in any plans to update and improve the existing provision of recreational open space throughout the Borough.

- 8.14 Although it is recognised that different communities will have different recreational needs, it is proposed to adopt the NPFA minimum standard of outdoor playing space of 2.43 hectares (6 acres) per 1000 population in order to assist in the aim of improving the range and distribution of recreational open space in the Borough. Opportunities to increase recreational open space provision may arise through redevelopment of sites through 'planning gain', new residential development (although this will be limited), acquisition of land for this purpose, or extension of existing sites. It is important that new sites for recreational areas and extensions to such areas are considered carefully taking into account the existing shortfalls in areas and local requirements. However it is considered appropriate to establish a standard against which to assess proposals for additional recreational open space.
- 8.15 In view of the shortfall of recreational open space in the Borough identified in Paragraph 8.11 above, in order to achieve the minimum standard it is proposed to:
- (i) Ensure that the existing provision of recreational open space is maintained to avoid a further reduction below the already inadequate supply by adopting protection policies and if appropriate improvement to these areas.
 - (ii) Identify areas with potential for increasing the provision of recreation open space and facilities.
 - (iii) Ensure that future residential developments provide an adequate level of open space.

In order to redress the identified shortfall of 18.6ha (50 acres) of outdoor playing space, opportunities for acquiring extra recreational open space have been investigated and the following areas are identified:

Site	Area
Land at Burton, east of Salisbury Road (Policy L 11)	5 ha (12.4 acres)
Public playing fields at Hoburne (Policy L 9)	4 ha (9.9 acres)
Surplus land at Burton School (Policy L 12 (7)) accountable as informal playing space -	1.4 ha (3.5 acres)
TOTAL	10.4 ha (25.7 acres)

If all these Policies are implemented, the total area of 10.4ha (25.7 acres) of the additional sites will go some way to meet the shortfall of 18.6ha (50 acres) identified of outdoor playing space. The fact that the Local Plan does not address the total shortfall is

recognised by this Council. Investigation of further sites in areas of most need will be an ongoing process with the objectives of full minimum provision being identified in the review of this Local Plan. The investigation will include a more detailed assessment of existing provision and needs for different types of recreational open spaces. In particular an analysis of playing pitch provision compared to the NPFA standard, will be undertaken. Thus there will be a qualitative as well as a quantitative assessment of recreational open space provision in the Borough.

Protection of Existing Recreation, Open Spaces and Public Open Space

- 8.16 Open spaces, both public and private are important in that they provide a valuable recreation facility and contribute to the environmental quality of the area. Based on the standards recommended by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) there is a deficiency of recreational open space within the Borough as identified in Paragraph 8.11 above. Moreover, the Plan area does attract a large number of visitors each year and therefore the demands on recreational facilities and amenities are considerably greater than a non-tourist area. As also stated above non-recreational areas of open space do contribute to the environmental quality of the area. Environment Policy I of the Structure Plan states "Within the urban areas, parks and other open spaces which contribute to the quality of the environment should be protected from development. Provision should be made for further open areas". The retention of open spaces including gardens is therefore vital in terms not only of their recreational value but also residential amenity and the character of the area in general. It is acknowledged in Paragraph 8.9 that on the whole the Borough is well served for visual amenity/informal open space. There are no recommended standards for provision of these areas. The following Policy resists the loss of open spaces although it is recognised that certain temporary uses of such land are permitted without the need to obtain formal planning consent under the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 1995. Open spaces are protected for their contribution to the environmental quality of the area. The guiding principle of sustainable development is relevant as it is important to protect this valuable part of our environmental inheritance. The following Policy will apply to any Public Open Space or other open spaces across the Borough. Playing fields are dealt with separately in Policy L2.

L 1 A DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL FOR NEW BUILDING OR CHANGE OF USE THAT WOULD LEAD TO THE LOSS OF ANY OR PART OF ANY PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, DELINEATED AS L 1 ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:

- 1) IT OCCURS AS A RESULT OF ANY PROPOSAL CONTAINED IN THIS LOCAL PLAN – IN WHICH CASE IT SHALL BE REPLACED BY AN AREA EQUAL IN ACREAGE, CONVENIENCE, ACCESSIBILITY AND AMENITY, OR**
- 2) IT WOULD ENHANCE OR ASSIST IN THE USE OF THE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE FOR PUBLIC RECREATIONAL USE.**

DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER OPEN SPACES WITHIN THE PLAN AREA WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:

- 1) IT IS COMPATIBLE WITH ANY RECREATIONAL AND LEISURE FACILITIES PROVIDED BY THE OPEN SPACE AND
- 2) IT WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE VISUAL AMENITY, WILDLIFE OR HISTORIC VALUE OF THE OPEN SPACE.



Public Open Space At Quomps

Playing Fields

- 8.17 Public, private and school playing fields provide essential facilities for sport and recreation in the Borough. As stated previously there is a deficiency of playing space, therefore it is necessary to retain playing fields and where possible bring playing fields into public use. School playing fields are worthy of a special mention.
- 8.18 In the 1980's due to falling school age numbers and increased financial constraint on education authorities, there was pressure from Central Government from local authorities to sell off land considered surplus to requirements. However, there has been a change in policy on this matter by Central Government. PPG 17 (1991) refers to the recent trends in loss of school playing fields and advised that, given the projected increase in school roles during the 1990's, school playing fields should not be disposed of unless it is firmly established they will not be required in the longer term for school or community use. The PPG states firmly that school playing fields should normally be protected in view of their significance in recreation and amenity terms.

- 8.19 This national issue of loss of school playing fields is particularly relevant to the north Christchurch area as residential development of part of Burton Primary School's playing fields was allowed on appeal by the Department of Environment in 1991. The Borough Council considered that the Inspector's decision was faulty in law and lodged an appeal to the High Court for the decision to be set aside. At the High Court Hearing in March 1992 it was decided that the Inspector's decision should stand. However, the Council took the case to the Court of Appeal and in December 1993 there was a unanimous decision that the Department of the Environment's decision should be quashed. Further details and a specific Policy relating to Burton School playing field is contained within Paragraphs 8.29 – 8.30 and Policy L 10.
- 8.20 There are eleven Local Authority primary schools, two Local Authority secondary schools, one grant maintained secondary school and two independent schools in the Borough. See Appendix 6 for a list of these. Even though the school playing fields are generally not accessible to the general public they provide essential space for school children to participate in sporting activities. These playing fields also form invaluable open space providing green wedges in an urban environment. They provide one of the few remaining options to alleviate the Plan area shortfall in recreational open space, most being well situated in urban areas where the need is greater.
- 8.21 In view of the shortfall of playing pitch provision it is essential that, should the school playing fields within the Borough become no longer necessary for educational use they remain as playing fields for public recreation. As school playing fields are not calculated in the NPFA's 6 acre standard, their general recreational use would enable the deficiencies of outdoor open space provision in the Borough to be reduced. Where playing fields are still needed for schools the possibilities of a dual use policy, providing play space for school children and the general public should also be explored. Analysis of the areas within which the existing school playing fields are situated has shown that most are situated within a local area which has a shortfall of formal recreational open space and they can also provide an invaluable visual amenity open space function within built-up areas. The following Policy sets out criteria by which development proposals on school, public and private playing fields will be assessed. In the case of the school sites identified on the proposals map the Policy only relates to the open playing fields and does not apply to the buildings and hard surfaced areas.

L 2 PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTING IN THE LOSS OF PLAYING FIELDS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:

- 1) SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES CAN BEST BE RETAINED AND ENHANCED THROUGH THE REDEVELOPMENT OF A SMALL PART OF THE SITE OR**
- 2) IT IS REPLACED BY AN AREA EQUAL IN SIZE, CONVENIENCE, ACCESSIBILITY AND AMENITY OR**
- 3) IN THE CASE OF SCHOOL PLAYING FIELDS THEY ARE NEEDED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.**

Private Sports Grounds

- 8.22 There are three private sports grounds in Christchurch Borough of which two relate to firms or companies: British Aerospace at Somerford and the West Hants Water Company sports ground adjoining the Reid Industrial Estate in Fairmile. The other is Bournemouth Sports Club at Hurn which comprises high quality recreational facilities on a 28.3 ha (70 acre) site. The existing private sports field at Grange Road relating to British Aerospace is considered to be of sufficient importance to justify individual attention in this Local Plan. The land in its open form not only provides a valuable visual amenity, but its protection is vital in order to achieve the original 'Mude Valley Concept' of a wedge of open space providing public access between Highcliffe Road and Mundeford. The concept originated from the development of the former Christchurch Airfield and to date the Council has been successful in achieving much of this provision.

- L 3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXISTING SPORTS GROUND BOUNDED BY GRANGE ROAD AND HIGHCLIFFE ROAD AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP WILL NOT BE PERMITTED AND IT SHALL REMAIN AS OPEN SPACE.**

Protection of Other Open Spaces

Druitt Gardens

- 8.23 Druitt Gardens is worthy of special mention. Policy ES 5 designates an area for shopping and other facilities on land west of the High Street. In Policy ES 5 it is made clear that there should be no encroachment of any development onto the Gardens. A formal designation of Druitt Gardens as a proposed public open space is appropriate to underline the Local Planning Authority's commitment to maintaining this 'green lung' within the Town Centre. The area designated includes the additional area of land adjoining the north - western boundary which was agreed as an amendment to the Christchurch Town Centre Local Plan. Hence the following Policy applies:

- L 4 DRUITT GARDENS AND ADJOINING LAND AS INDICATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP SHALL BE DESIGNATED AS PUBLIC OPEN SPACE.**

Highcliffe Coastal Park

- 8.24 The Highcliffe and District Local Plan adopted in 1989 contained policies to retain the Highcliffe Castle grounds as public open space and to acquire land to permit a public footpath across the private Rothesay Park land to link Steamer Point woodlands and Highcliffe Castle grounds. Highcliffe Castle grounds, well treed and offering spectacular sea views and a beach access are a popular visitor attraction and well used by locals. The future of Highcliffe Castle is discussed in Paragraphs 4.50 – 4.52 of Chapter 4. Policy BE 18 sets out possible future uses of the building with the proviso that these uses should be compatible with the continued public use of the grounds and retention of the beach access. The policy to acquire private land at Rothesay Park was to achieve the

completion of the coastal footpath which facilitates public access alongside or close to the coast from Mudeford Quay in the west to Chewton Bunny in the east. This aim is still important but it would now seem that to acquire just a footpath would be inadequate and it would be appropriate to move this policy a stage further to acquire land at Rothesay Park for the dual purpose of enabling the creation of a coastal park as well as completing the coastal footpath. A coastal park can be formed comprising land at Steamer Point woodlands Nature Reserve Rothesay Park land and Highcliffe Castle grounds as shown on the proposals map. The land mentioned forms part of the original Castle grounds. PPG 15 recognises the importance of the grounds of a Listed Building to its setting. Therefore it is essential that the setting should not be prejudiced. Steamer Point Woodlands are managed to respect nature conservation qualities on the land. It is anticipated the area will gain 'Local Nature Reserve Status' in the near future. In order to protect the amenities of the residents of Rothesay Drive, a buffer strip is proposed. This would comprise an area of undeveloped land between the public area of Rothesay Park and the residential properties of Rothesay Drive. Policy L7 below identifies this area of private open space. The boundary line reflects the historic features of the Castle grounds in that it is drawn parallel to one of the former carriage drives. Accordingly the following three Policies aim to ensure the continuing public access to Highcliffe Castle grounds, acquire the necessary land to achieve a coastal park and designate an area of private open space to form a buffer strip.

- L 5 THE GROUNDS OF HIGHCLIFFE CASTLE SHALL REMAIN AS PUBLIC OPEN SPACE MAINTAINING THE EXISTING PUBLIC ACCESS VIA ROTHESAY DRIVE. EXISTING ACCESS TO THE BEACH WILL BE PRESERVED.**

- L 6 LAND AT ROTHESAY PARK SHALL BE DESIGNATED AS PUBLIC OPEN SPACE TO FORM A COASTAL PARK ON HIGHCLIFFE CLIFF TOP, COMPRISING HIGHCLIFFE CASTLE GROUNDS, ROTHESAY PARK LAND AND STEAMER POINT WOODLAND NATURE RESERVE AND TO ENABLE THE COMPLETION OF THE COASTAL FOOTPATH.**

- L 7 LAND AT ROTHESAY PARK, AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, SHALL BE DESIGNATED AS PRIVATE OPEN SPACE TO FORM AN UNDEVELOPED BUFFER STRIP BETWEEN THE PROPOSED PUBLIC OPEN SPACE OF HIGHCLIFFE COASTAL PARK AND THE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES OF ROTHESAY DRIVE.**

Highcliffe Castle Golf Course

- 8.25 This private golf course, with a public right of way across it is a valuable and attractive amenity and recreational open space in a prominent location in Highcliffe. The 45 acres or thereabouts of open greenery add to the variety of land use within the Borough, comprise an important recreational facility and form a substantial visual amenity to people using Lyminster Road or the public right of way which crosses the course. The

area also has an important function in providing a valuable green open space within the surrounding built-up areas. For this reason the following Policy applies:

L 8 HIGHCLIFFE GOLF COURSE WILL BE DESIGNATED AS OPEN SPACE.

Areas identified to increase open space provision

- 8.26 As well as protecting existing open space, further areas are identified to redress the shortfall of recreational open space, or increase the provision of visual amenity/informal open space.

Hoburne

- 8.27 Opportunities to identify new large areas of formal recreational open space within the urban area are somewhat limited. However, within the Hoburne Farm development, the final phase of which is yet to be completed, there is an area which has been allocated for additional playing field space.

L 9 LAND AT HOBURNE, AS DELINEATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, IS DESIGNATED AS PUBLIC OPEN SPACE FOR FORMAL RECREATIONAL USE.

Burton

- 8.28 Burton is one of the areas in the Borough which has a shortfall of recreational open space. Assessments of playing space using the NPFA standard show that there is a shortfall of approximately 6.1 ha (15 acres). In view of the high concentration of population and relatively high proportion of under 16 year olds in the Burton area, there is a need to redress this shortfall. Opportunities for acquiring extra recreational open space have been investigated and there are two large areas which warrant special policies: land declared surplus at Burton School playing fields and the identification of land for playing pitches east of Salisbury Road.

Burton School Playing Fields

- 8.29 Burton Primary School is situated in Salisbury Road, Burton. Its playing fields form one of the few significant areas of informal open space in the village and in the early 1980's the County Council Education Committee declared approximately 1.6 ha (4 acres) as surplus to requirements. Residential development on this land was allowed on appeal in 1991 but this decision was contested by the Planning Authority in the High Court but was dismissed in 1992. The High Court judgement was then appealed by the Borough Council and finally allowed in a Court of Appeal Judgement in 1993. Following this decision, the Planning Inspectorate decided that the appeal should be re-determined and this was finally dismissed in January 1995. The Inspector in his decision recognised the current importance of the playing fields in meeting the needs for informal open space use for many in the village, particularly the young and elderly who are less mobile. He

considered that it would be wrong to close the option of continuing the open space use of this land, particularly when there are no effective alternatives available within the village. The Inspector said: "PPG 17 has stressed the importance of providing open space for purposes of recreation and amenity, and of preserving that which exists where it can contribute to these purposes. The site can only go some way to meeting the need for playing fields, but the significance of the site is more that it is in the village and used by villagers. Additionally, in terms of the character and appearance of the village this land extends the school playing fields into a significant open space which provides a substantial and attractive open area within the village and forms part of the wider setting of Burton Hall and the surrounding Conservation Area, as well as linking to the nearby countryside. From its long existence it is a part of the fabric of the village, whatever the intention of the Town Map may have been, and clearly recognised as such by local people. It can, and apparently does, meet the needs for informal open space for many in the village, particularly the young and the elderly who are less mobile and to whom other options such as the provision of playing fields or the country footpaths beyond the village would be remote to the point of being of little practical use".

- 8.30 In view of the strong support at appeal for the opposition of development on the surplus land at Burton School, and in recognition of its current use as an area of informal open space by local residents in a built-up area where there are no easily accessible alternative spaces, the Borough Council has now acquired a lease on this land in order that its use can continue. Although not ideally suitable for playing pitches, the land nevertheless makes a valuable contribution to the recreational needs of the Burton residents. Moreover this land, together with the school playing fields is important for its contribution to the character and amenity of the village, due to its open parkland quality. The following Policy applies to the area of playing fields retained by the school whereas the land to be acquired by the Borough Council falls within Policy L12.

L 10 THE RETAINED BURTON SCHOOL PLAYING FIELDS FOR USE BY THE SCHOOL AS INDICATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP SHALL BE DESIGNATED AS OPEN SPACE.

Playing Pitches at Burton – east of Salisbury Road

- 8.31 The identification of further public open space on part of Burton School playing fields in Policy L 10 above can only go some way to meet the recreational open space shortfall in the Burton area. There is little scope for laying out playing pitches on this land. As the Burton/Winkton area is one of those identified as having a particularly high shortfall of recreational open space, it is considered necessary to identify additional land to meet this. Accordingly a site has been identified east of Salisbury Road on open land which is presently used for agricultural purposes. It is considered to be in an ideal location as it is close to the centre of the village and would have direct access to the main Salisbury Road. It is large enough to provide playing pitch facilities for a variety of sports with appropriate landscaping to respect the amenities locally. The access to the adjoining extended cemetery provision identified under Policy CF 7 could be considered as part of

8.32 the proposals for the site. The following Policy allocates the land for formal recreational use and safeguards it for that use.

L 11 LAND AT BURTON TO THE EAST OF SALISBURY ROAD, AS DELINEATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, IS ALLOCATED FOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE FOR RECREATIONAL USE. PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR BUILT DEVELOPMENT OR USE ON THIS AREA FOR ANY PURPOSE OTHER THAN THAT ASSOCIATED WITH OPEN SPACE AND FORMAL RECREATIONAL USE.

Other Proposed Public Open Spaces

8.33 Other smaller areas have been identified for public open space purposes and are listed below. Although these areas are small they make a vital contribution to either formal recreation, visual amenity and informal recreational activities such as walking. They represent the Council's continuing commitment to opening up more areas for public enjoyment of the beautiful environment we are fortunate to live in.

L 12 THE FOLLOWING AREAS WILL BE DESIGNATED AS PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP:

- 1) LAND SOUTH OF MONKSWELL GREEN.**
- 2) LAND SOUTH OF ASHTREE COURT MARSH LANE, PUREWELL (FORMER ASHTREE RIDING STABLES).**
- 3) LAND AT STANPIT, REAR OF FORMER COUNCIL DEPOT.**
- 4) WOODLAND TO WEST OF PEREGRINE ROAD, MUDEFORD.**
- 5) LAND AT TUTTONS WELL.**
- 6) LAND AT THE FORMER DRA SITE, BARRACK ROAD.**
- 7) LAND AT BURTON SCHOOL.**

8.34 Not all of this land can or should be utilised for recreational activities. The natural qualities of the spaces in a predominantly urban environment will be protected in the interest of amenity and nature conservation, while taking advantage of possibilities for formal recreational use on the less sensitive sites. Additional open space will be created adjoining the existing Stanpit Recreation Ground by the inclusion of land to the rear of the former Council Depot at Stanpit. The Mude Valley concept shall be extended with the implementation of L 12 at Peregrine Wood, where a continuous footpath system through natural woodland and riverbanks shall be created. The area of Tuttons Well occupied in part by the Stanpit Guides is identified as proposed public open space. Due to the

interest in this area there is a need to investigate the whereabouts of the Tuttons Well and provide a feature for local interest.

- 8.35 The redevelopment of the majority of the DRA site at Barrack Road (See Policy EI 8) enables opportunities for the Borough Council to acquire further public open space. The redevelopment of the site for industrial/retail/housing/community use purposes has enabled the area close to the River Stour to be identified for public open space purposes. As well as the redevelopment site, there is an area which is to be retained by the DRA. Looking ahead to the possible redevelopment of this site, the Council have identified an additional area of open space adjacent to the River Stour which will be a valuable addition to the stock of public open space in the future.

Fishermans Bank

- 8.36 Fisherman's Bank, Stanpit, is situated on the edge of Christchurch harbour. It consists of a narrow strip of privately owned land down to mean high water line. The bank is registered as common land under the Commons Registration Act 1965, although with no registered rights of common. A public footpath N^o 22, of between 3 feet and 8 feet in width, runs along the bank which lies within the Stanpit and Fisherman's Bank Conservation Area. The open nature of Fishermans' Bank makes an important visual contribution to the setting of the harbour and for this reason it is proposed to protect this visual amenity. Although planning applications can be assessed with regard to Conservation Area policies, there is a unique situation in this area of a conflict between public access and private ownership. It is therefore considered that there is a need for specific policy guidance for this area in order that the general public and residents are clear as to the Council's policy. To avoid any proliferation of walls, fences etc not normally requiring formal planning consent (known as 'permitted development') which might adversely affect the open character of the bank, the Council has concluded that it must now apply for a direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 to restrict the types of permitted development that can be allowed in future and will do so as the principal means to implement this Policy.

- L 13 THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO MAINTAIN THE OPEN CHARACTER AND OTHER VISUAL AMENITIES OF FISHERMANS BANK, STANPIT, BY RESTRICTING THE GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION FOR FURTHER STRUCTURES AND OTHER MEANS OF ENCLOSURE.**

Land adjoining Civic Offices, Bridge Street

- 8.37 It is considered that land on the eastern side of the River Avon, adjoining the Civic Offices is sufficiently important to merit a specific land use policy. In character terms the land can be split into two parts. The land to the south, adjoining the Civic Offices and the rear car park is an open area of natural vegetation with moorings facilities. This area, in its naturally overgrown state makes an important visual contribution to the character of this riverside area, which can be enjoyed without actual physical access. In order to ensure that its open nature is retained it is considered necessary to allocate this land as Open Space. In contrast, the land to the north, adjoining the Civic Offices car park,

currently used for boat storage facilities, by its hard, stark appearance somewhat detracts from the character of this locality. Land south of the existing boat park, adjoining the Civic Offices has been included in this designation as it has been offered for Public Open Space as part of the planning approval for residential development on Rossiter's Boatyard.

L 14 LAND ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE RIVER AVON, ADJOINING THE CAR PARK TO THE REAR OF THE CIVIC OFFICES, AND AS INDICATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP SHALL BE DESIGNATED AS OPEN SPACE.

L 15 LAND ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE RIVER AVON, ADJOINING THE CIVIC OFFICES, THE FRONT CAR PARK AND FRONTING BRIDGE STREET, AS INDICATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP SHALL BE DESIGNATED AS PUBLIC OPEN SPACE.

Jumpers Common

8.38 Jumpers Common is adjacent to Jumpers Cemetery and comprises 1.1 ha (2.73 acres) of open space that is presently used for informal recreation purposes. It was originally purchased for the purpose of a cemetery extension, but since 1967 has been approved for use as a recreation area. The land came within Christchurch Borough Council control in 1974. The Jumpers area has a shortfall of playing space having regard to NPFA standards. The North Christchurch Planning Issues Report on Open Space and Recreation (1992) identified a shortfall of 6.8 ha (16.89) acres of playing space. The land is ideally situated in the built-up area of Jumpers and easily accessible to local residents.

L 16 LAND AT JUMPERS COMMON AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP SHALL BE ALLOCATED FOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE.

Riversides and Harbour Banks Public Access

8.39 As far as natural features in the Borough are concerned one of the main attractions lie in the river and harbourside areas, which are a valuable resource for active and passive leisure pursuits. The riversides and harbour banks are an important asset to the Local Plan area and need to be protected from development which would adversely affect their visual qualities and wildlife interest. This is in accordance with the guiding principle of sustainable development in safeguarding our environmental inheritance for future generations. Public access should be extended where this can be achieved without detriment to the qualities referred to and such public access will be managed to safeguard those interests (See also paragraph 3.26).

- L 17 DEVELOPMENT OF CURRENTLY UNDEVELOPED RIVERSIDES AND HARBOUR BANKS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHERE IT WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE CHARACTER AND VISUAL QUALITIES OF THE WATERSIDE. EXISTING PUBLIC ACCESS WILL BE MAINTAINED AND FURTHER ACCESS WILL BE SOUGHT IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS BUT THE PROVISION OF SUCH PUBLIC ACCESS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AS A REASON TO PERMIT INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT.**

Waterside Recreation

- 8.40 As well as contributing to the visual character of the area, the rivers, Christchurch Harbour, Stanpit Marsh, Mudeford Quay and the coastline are a valuable recreational asset, in particular for boating and fishing. This is also important to the overall tourist trade within Christchurch in attracting holidaymakers, daytrippers and water sport enthusiasts to the area, especially during the summer months. Resulting from this is a demand for additional boating facilities and moorings. However, the rivers and harbour are of great ecological importance, the Moors River, Avon Valley and Christchurch Harbour being designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by English Nature (See Paragraphs 3.28 – 3.30 and Policy ENV 11). There are Policies in Chapter 3 aimed at protecting the flood plains. Therefore it is important to balance the conflicting uses, ensuring recreational and tourist activities do not adversely affect the natural history and habitats of the rivers, harbour and Stanpit Marsh.
- 8.41 Possibilities for increased use of the harbour are limited, for, as well as conservation issues, the physical characteristics are adverse to intensifying sporting and recreational activities. The fact that the harbour estuary is shallow, the entrance through the Run is constricted and the deep water channel is shifting, has prevented the development of the Harbour for commercial traffic or increased numbers of pleasure craft. However, the water is ideal for small yacht sailing and windsurfing, although facilities on shore are limited. The nature reserve status of Stanpit Marsh discourages boats from landing and the whole marsh is subject to a Scientific Management Plan produced by the Council. Therefore it can be seen, as in the case of the harbour, possibilities for expanding existing and new recreational uses on the Marsh are limited.
- 8.42 In order to meet the requirements of sustainable development, it is important to ensure that further provision of moorings or boating facilities does not upset the delicate balance between the natural assets of the area (which include SSSI) and the provision of leisure facilities. Therefore any proposals for boating facilities, moorings and jetties shall be assessed in the light of the following Policy:

- L 18 PROPOSALS FOR NEW OR EXTENDED BOATING FACILITIES, MOORINGS AND JETTIES AT CHRISTCHURCH HARBOUR WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:**

- 1) OTHER HARBOUR OR MARSH USERS ARE NOT ADVERSELY AFFECTED;**
- 2) THE NATURAL HISTORY IMPORTANCE OF THE HARBOUR IS NOT DIMINISHED AND**

3) **THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE VISUAL IMPACT ON THE AREA.**



Boating in Christchurch Harbour

Intensive Recreational Facilities

8.43 The provision of this type of facility is limited in the area. It is considered important that the present level of provision is maintained if the significance of the area in tourism and leisure terms is not to be diminished. Any new intensive recreational facilities would be considered appropriate provided there are no adverse effects on the character of the area.

L 19 PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH RESULTS IN THE LOSS OF EITHER INDOOR OR OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHERE IT WOULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THE AREA IN TOURISM AND LEISURE TERMS.

8.44 An example of a site suitable for new recreational facilities is at land between Bridge Street, Stony Lane South and the Civic Offices which has been identified in policy EO 3 for mixed development. The site is relatively under-used and visually unattractive with little prospect of improvement in the absence of major redevelopment. Leisure and recreational facilities have been identified as a suitable use for part of a mixed scheme. This is in accordance with government policies which encourage redevelopment of land within urban areas for recreational purposes, thereby reducing development pressures on

the countryside. PPG 17 – sport and recreation – advises that in view of the limited land supply in urban areas, priority needs to be given to intensive forms of recreation provision, such facilities benefiting visitors as well as locals. This particular site would appear to meet many of the factors which need to be taken into account when considering such a proposal as it is surrounded by a variety of uses, has good access to the road network, is close to existing public transport routes and has good links to existing leisure uses and open space.

Amusement Arcades

- 8.45 Within the Plan area only one amusement arcade exists, at Stour Cottage in Barrack Road. The Council will assess planning applications for further amusement centres and arcades having regard to its Amusement Centres and Arcades Policy which is available from the Planning and Environmental Services Department. Those guidelines are Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) which is of a lower status than Local Plan Policies when determining planning applications (see Paragraph 1.4).

Open Space within New Residential Development

- 8.46 To ensure that new residential development does not exert greater pressure on existing recreational open space, the Council shall require that both adequate recreational open space, and landscape areas are to be provided within the development (see also ENV 21).

- L 20 THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE TO BE PROVIDED AT THE RATE OF 2.4 HECTARES (6 ACRES) PER 1,000 POPULATION WITHIN THE LAYOUT OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE CHARACTERISTICS AND NATURE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND ITS LOCATION IN RELATION TO EXISTING AREAS OF PLAYING SPACE.**

WHERE THIS IS NOT ACHIEVABLE THE PROVISION OF OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITIES OR A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE WILL BE SOUGHT.

- 8.47 The Council will require recreational open space to be provided at the rate of 2.4 ha (6 acres) per 1,000 population in accordance with the standards recommended by the National Playing Fields Association. The Council will also require to be satisfied regarding the arrangements for the future maintenance of such areas. It is recognised, however, that the size and other characteristics of the site may preclude the provisions of meaningful recreation areas. In such cases the above Policy will be applied having regard to the special characteristics of the site. In exceptional circumstances the Council may consider as an alternative either the provision of other forms of public recreation facilities or an offer of a financial contribution to assist the Council in funding the acquisition of land for public open space use when the opportunity arises.

Countryside Recreation

- 8.48 The Countryside areas are situated in the northern part of the Borough at Hurn, St Catherine's Hill and Burton. The more open, agricultural land or river valley landscapes are found around Hurn Village and surrounding Burton. There are areas of forestry at the northern part of Hurn and around the Matchams Lane area. Heathland areas are located at St Catherine's Hill, Town Common, Dudmoor and the northern part of Hurn. A large part of the countryside areas are designated as SSSIs and these protect heathland areas at Town Common, Parley Common and Hurn Common and river valley areas at Avon Valley and Moors Valley. It is important to adhere to the guiding principle of sustainable development when considering the introduction of recreational uses into the countryside areas. Provision of such uses in the most suitable locations where there is access by public transport can draw people away from the more environmentally sensitive locations.

Informal Recreation

- 8.49 The countryside offers a range of opportunities for informal recreational pursuits such as walking, cycling, horseriding and fishing for both residents and visitor to the area. St Catherine's Hill located to the north of St Catherine's Hill residential area has a high conservation value due to its rare heathland and wildlife and is covered by the Town Common SSSI. The area is used mainly for passive recreation by the public and includes a gun club. The hill is managed by a joint agreement between Christchurch Borough Council's Planning and Environment Department and English Nature. The hill is also of archaeological and geological importance. It is not anticipated that there will be any intensification of recreational use of this area due to the possible conflict with conservation interests. Other heathland areas are located at Barnsfield Heath to the west of Matchams Lane. Some of this land is presently accessible to the public. There may be opportunities to increase the recreational potential of forestry areas but this should be subject to no adverse effect on the woodland and liaison with the Forestry Commission. The open agricultural and river valley areas around Hurn and Burton villages are used mainly for walking, horseriding and fishing activities.
- 8.50 Informal recreational activities can create a demand for associated facilities such as car parks, picnic areas and litterbins. It is important that these are sited sensitively and use appropriate materials in order not to adversely affect the character of the rural area. Facilities should be small scale in order to ensure that any one area is not over-used and to safeguard the nature conservation interest.

Public Rights of Way

- 8.51 One of the most popular leisure activities in the countryside is walking. Other associated activities are rambling, picnicking and bird watching. The countryside area has a network of public footpaths, bridleways and byways generally running in a north-south direction in Burton, Bockhampton, St Catherine's Hill, along the River Stour and East Parley. These footpaths, bridleways and byways provide opportunities to enjoy the countryside. There are two long distance footpaths running through the Borough, the Avon Valley and Stour Valley footpaths. The Avon Valley footpath links Salisbury with Christchurch and runs north-south through Burton, ending at Christchurch Priory. The Stour Valley footpath

runs along the River Stour from Bournemouth to Christchurch in an east-west direction. The Borough Council consider that the existing rights of way network should be protected and maintained and where opportunities arise, the network should be extended. The improvement and increased use of footpaths, bridleways and byways can be encouraged by securing better signposting.

Formal Recreation in the Countryside

- 8.52 PPG 17 – Sport and Recreation – identifies the potential for sport and recreation uses in the countryside, providing they are appropriate and in harmony with it. Changing agricultural policies mean that it is no longer a priority to retain as much land as possible in agricultural production. The priority now is to promote a diversification of the rural economy. Alternative uses of agricultural land could include sport and recreation although it is important that the development of such facilities do not conflict with the overriding policies for restraining development, protecting the countryside, including the best and most versatile agricultural land and safeguarding the nature conservation interest. The use of the countryside areas for sport or recreation facilities can have an adverse effect on the rural environment if associated facilities such as buildings, car parking, fencing and floodlighting are required. Certain sports can cause problems with noise or disturbance, such as some gun sports, motorised sports or leisure activities such as war games. Whilst the opportunities for increased recreational use of the countryside are recognised it is important to ensure that such uses either individually or cumulatively do not detract from the rural character, landscape quality or nature conservation value of the area. Golf is a popular leisure activity. It is more likely that any new golf courses would be located in the open countryside area due to limited land within the main urban area of Christchurch. Golf courses are extensive land uses and can have a significant impact on the character of the open area if there is unsympathetic landscaping and with the introduction of ancillary facilities such as car parks, club houses, equipment stores etc. Golf course development can be an appropriate use within the Green Belt, but the overall Green Belt and other environmental restraint Policies will apply.

Dudmoor

- 8.53 The Dudmoor Farm area of Christchurch is located between St Catherine's Hill and the River Avon. The area was divided into plots after the war and since then the Dudmoor Farm Lane has had a history of gypsy (see Paragraph 5.44) and tipping problems which are the combined result of the fragmented ownership and the relatively remote location. The land is surrounded by sites of high conservation value, such as St Catherine's Hill, the Town Common and the River Avon. Dudmoor Farm is presently used as a leisure centre which comprises a 9 hole golf course and an equestrian centre. The Dudmoor area is also used for informal recreational activities such as walking or horseriding.
- 8.54 The area is considered suitable for use as a small-scale country park. Dorset County Council and Christchurch Borough Council have set out a strategy for the acquisition of land at Dudmoor for this purpose. There are four country parks in the South East Dorset conurbation: Moors Valley Country Park at Three Legged Cross, Avon Forest Park at Ashley Heath, Upton Country Park and Hengistbury Head, Bournemouth. The potential for a country park at Dudmoor has also been investigated and evidence from demand

experienced at existing recreational facilities within the conurbation suggests that there is potential for a range of formal and informal recreational activities at Dudmoor although a large-scale country park may not be a viable proposition in view of the proximity of the other four sites. Moreover there are a number of constraints on the use of the Dudmoor area. Access to the site is extremely limited at present and the introduction of even a modest recreational activity would necessitate improvements. The proximity of large SSSI, SPA's, SAC and Ramsar Sites is another constraint on the types of activity and their operational management. It is also necessary to take into account the presence of established Dudmoor residents. Despite these constraints and uncertainties there are opportunities for the creation of a modestly sized country park in the Dudmoor area which could provide for a range of low key recreational activities such as an extension of the horseriding activity, a wildlife centre associated with SSSI, walking and picnic areas. The Borough Council will continue its strategy of acquiring land for this purpose. Any proposal for a Country park will be subject to public consultation. The Council will endeavour to work closely with the conservation bodies that have an interest in the Dudmoor area.

- L 21 THE AREA AT DUDMOOR AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP IS ALLOCATED FOR A SMALL SCALE COUNTRY PARK. PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR USES OR DEVELOPMENTS THAT WILL CONFLICT WITH THIS OBJECTIVE.**

Community Needs

- 8.55 It is essential within the community that there is an adequate level of educational, health, social and cultural facilities and services to meet the needs of the population. The term 'community facilities' covers services such as hospitals, schools, doctors' surgeries, social services, libraries, community halls, places of worship, arts centres, museums, allotments, cemeteries and specialised facilities for certain sectors of the population such as playgroups, elderly persons' day centres or rest/nursing homes. Communities also need adequate shops, post offices and public transport and these issues are dealt with in the Shopping section within Chapter 6 and Transport Chapter of the Local Plan. Planning Policy Guidance Note 12: Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance, in its section on the content of local plans advises that 'authorities will wish to consider the relationship of planning policies and proposals to social needs and problems, including their likely impact on different groups in the population' and also that plans should make provision for land for community facilities. The overall strategy of the Structure Plan with regard to community requirements is to concentrate new provision in the main urban areas. The County Council encourages, in conjunction with the District Authorities, the identification of deficiencies in the provision of facilities and services, and to seek ways of improving the situation.
- 8.56 There is a wide range of community facilities and services provided by various bodies and organisations within Christchurch. These services are mainly provided for by Dorset County Council, the Dorset Health Commission, or private organisations or volunteers. The Borough Council provides some services and also gives financial assistance to some centres or organisations. Partly because Christchurch is one of the smallest

Boroughs in England, and because the age profile is relatively high there is a tradition of very strong community involvement which is shown by the number of active Residents' Associations as well as a large range of interest groups, support groups and fundraising organisations, many of which depend on the commitment and enthusiasm of volunteers for their management.



Mundeford Wood Community Centre

- 8.57 When looking at the same level of community facilities provided on an area by area basis in the same way as was undertaken for recreational open space provision (see Paragraph 8.13) it was found that the facilities were spread unevenly throughout Christchurch. The policies put forward in previous Local Plans and the consultation on the Community Facilities Issues Report on North Christchurch (1992) have also been taken into account. The following section examines the provision of different categories of community facilities and, where a need has been identified in a certain area, policies and proposals are put forward to seek ways of reducing this deficiency. Although the Borough Council is not, in the main, a direct provider of such facilities, the Local Planning Authority can secure benefits through planning agreements. In this way facilities for community use can be secured through agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. However, firstly it is important to protect the existing community use of sites by resisting their change to another use. Pressure could arise for redevelopment of school sites or other community uses and in the interests of the community it is essential that they are not lost unless the developer proposes to provide equivalent facilities elsewhere in the locality. Planning permission will not be granted for the redevelopment of, or change of use of buildings or land used to provide community

facilities unless it can be proved that there is no need for their retention or the developer provides acceptable alternative community facilities elsewhere in the locality.

Health Facilities

- 8.58 Health facilities in the Plan area are provided by the Dorset Health Commission which is responsible for identifying the health care needs and purchasing health care for all the residents in Dorset County. There are three medical centres in the Borough at Purewell, Burton and Highcliffe, doctors' surgeries at Jumpers, Barrack Road and Highcliffe and dentists at the Town Centre, Hoburne, Stanpit and Highcliffe. It would appear that medical facilities are not so well provided for in the main urban area of Jumpers/Fairmile/St Catherine's Hill and a second medical centre or surgery would be beneficial to this part of North Christchurch.
- 8.59 Christchurch Hospital is situated on Fairmile Road in north Christchurch. It is managed by the Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Trust. There is currently a plan to concentrate certain specialist services on this site which would render part of the site redundant. A review of operations has resulted in a concentration of certain specialist services on this site. Part of the site was rendered redundant and is currently being redeveloped for residential purposes. This redevelopment includes the conversion of one of the former hospital buildings into a community hall, which would serve the North Jumpers/Fairmile area. Previous consultation exercises, including the recent Borough-wide Community Facilities Survey have identified this area as lacking in provision for a community hall. In view of this long-established need it is considered vital that this opportunity to redress the shortfall in provision in this area is taken up and the following Policy is proposed.

CF 1 THE REDEVELOPMENT OF PART OF THE CHRISTCHURCH HOSPITAL SITE, AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, WILL INCORPORATE THE PROVISION OF A COMMUNITY HALL.

Education

- 8.60 There are 11 infant/junior schools, 3 secondary schools and 2 independent schools in the Borough. See Appendix 6 for list of schools. Only one secondary school (Highcliffe Comprehensive) has Grant Maintained status, so Dorset County Council as Local Education Authority is responsible for the provision of the majority of the education in the Plan area. The future provision of schools depends upon the demands of population growth. The Council are advised by the Education Authority that there is a shortfall in school places in the area served by Christchurch Infants, Christchurch Junior and the Priory primary schools. The County Council have investigated the possibility of identifying a new school site in the north west of the Borough. Unfortunately recent opportunities which have arisen at the redundant part of Christchurch Hospital site and part of the West Hants Water Company site which is earmarked for residential development at Knapp Mill, have been explored but have not proved successful. Suggestions have been made for a new school site on land in the Green Belt owned by West Hants Water. However, this would appear to conflict with the objectives of the

Green Belt and the County Council will need to demonstrate that there are very special circumstances if the land is to be developed for a school.

- 8.61 Schools perform an important community function and their potential for shared use was recognised in the 1988 Education Reform Act. Schools can rent outbuildings and equipment for community use. Twynham School already fulfils a useful function as a major adult education centre. There is scope for the facilities of other schools to be utilised for community activities providing it is managed correctly and is not to the detriment of the school. In areas where there is a lack of community facilities this should be explored. The Local Education Authority is responsible for granting leases to outside bodies for the use of school buildings by community organisations, outside school hours.

Social Services/Youth Services/Advice Centres/ Elderly Persons' Accommodation

- 8.62 Social services are provided by Dorset County Council and the Christchurch Social Services Department is based in Jumpers Road. Facilities provided comprise the Avon View elderly persons' home in Bronte Avenue, the Juniper Social Education Centre in Jumpers Road for people with learning disabilities and a day centre in Lymington Road, Highcliffe. Youth facilities are provided by Dorset Youth Services and there is one Youth Centre at Burton, two youth clubs at Somerford and Highcliffe and voluntary youth clubs at Mudeford Wood and in the Town Centre (the Lighthouse). Project Hyped provides a Youth Advice shop in Bargates. The Citizens' Advice Bureau is located in part of the former Telephone Exchange building in Sopers Lane. Elderly persons' accommodation can be in the form of bungalows, sheltered accommodation, rest homes or nursing homes and are provided by Housing Associations and the private sector. They are located in various parts of the Borough and do perform a community function, allowing elderly people to be cared for locally. The Council has produced Supplementary Planning guidance on the development of Rest Homes and Nursing Homes, and Sheltered Accommodation.

Community Halls

- 8.63 There are various community halls available for hire throughout Christchurch. Purpose built community halls include Druitt Hall, the Regent Centre, Priory Hall and Burton Parish Hall. Greystones House, a Grade II* Listed Building in Highcliffe, has been converted into a community centre and is run by volunteers. In terms of facilities at Druitt Hall, there may be an opportunity to improve the facilities at Druitt Hall in conjunction with any minor shopping development to the west side of the High Street, as identified in Policy ES 5. Other halls are available for hire in association with churches, local groups such as the Sea Scouts, pubs or sports centres. For instance Hurn does not have its own community hall but Hurn Parish Council makes use of the facilities at Christchurch Sporting Club. When looking at provision overall, certain neighbourhood areas are better provided for than others. The North Jumpers/Fairmile/St Catherine's Hill area and North Highcliffe areas are particularly lacking in such facilities. The redevelopment of part of the Christchurch Hospital site offers an opportunity for conversion of one of the buildings to a community hall, and Policy CF 1 puts forward this proposal.
- 8.64 The site of the recently demolished Catherine Wheel Public House offers an opportunity for additional community facilities provision. Its potential for such a use first came to light

during discussions at the Working Party on community facilities in the Jumpers/St Catherine's/Hurn area, held as part of a series of working parties across the Borough. After this the Council was successful in defending an appeal against the refusal for sheltered flats on this site. There was a lot of opposition to this proposal, but arising from this was a strong local support for a need for a meeting centre on this site for those in the St Catherine's ward area, which was referred to by the Inspector in his decision letter. Taking into account this body of local opinion expressed both in the Working Party and in opposition to the appeal proposal and the acknowledged shortfall in community provision in this part of the Borough, it is considered vital to ensure that any new development includes substantial community benefit. This could be either in the form of the use itself or as a facility for local residents ancillary to the proposed use. Suitable uses could include a day centre, drop-in centre for Age Concern, information centre for St Catherine's Hill, indoor sports facility, place of worship or indeed a new public house.

- CF 2 THE SITE OF THE FORMER CATHERINE WHEEL PUBLIC HOUSE SHALL BE RESERVED FOR A DEVELOPMENT THAT INCLUDES SUBSTANTIAL COMMUNITY BENEFIT EITHER IN THE FORM OF THE USE ITSELF OR AS A MEETING ROOM/FACILITY FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS ANCILLARY TO THE PRINCIPAL USE. THE SCALE AND MASS OF ANY DEVELOPMENT SHOULD RESPECT THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA.**

Stanpit Recreation Ground

- 8.65 There is a need for a replacement pavilion and new public toilets for Stanpit Recreation Ground. There is an opportunity to provide these for the site combined with a community hall and educational facility associated with the nature reserve at Stanpit Marsh. The suitable location for these facilities is on or adjacent to the cricket school site.
- 8.66 The pavilion will allow much more intensive and efficient use of Stanpit Recreation Ground. Although the primary use of the building would be to facilitate use of the open space, a meeting room will be provided which can be used for educational purposes in relation to the nature conservation value of Stanpit Marsh and for other informal group meetings.

- CF 3 THE FORMER CRICKET SCHOOL BUILDING, PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AND CHANGING ROOMS AT STANPIT RECREATION GROUND SHALL BE DEMOLISHED. A NEW BUILDING TO INCORPORATE CHANGING ROOMS, PUBLIC TOILETS, A COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM AND AN EDUCATIONAL FACILITY FOR USE IN ASSOCIATION WITH STANPIT MARSH NATURE RESERVE SHALL BE PROVIDED ON THE SITE OF THE FORMER CRICKET SCHOOL AS INDICATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.**

Highcliffe

8.67 In the Highcliffe area there is an opportunity to consolidate the provision of community facilities. The existing day centre, doctors surgery and youth club on the edge of the Highcliffe shopping centre represents an agglomeration of essential community facilities in a good accessible location. Moreover, adjoining land, including land formerly reserved for the relief road, now identified as a Green Corridor provides an opportunity to further concentrate such facilities, thus enhancing the general services that the shopping centre has to offer. The developer on the Hoburne Estate in Highcliffe included a community facility. However a survey of local residents showed that opinion was divided as to the need for a facility in this location due to the proximity of the Mundeford Wood Community Centre. It was therefore agreed by the Council and developer that a financial contribution be made towards the provision of community facilities in the eastern part of the Borough in lieu of providing the facility at Hoburne. Options for community provision in the eastern part of the Borough were considered as part of the Council's Community Facilities Strategy at the Extraordinary Council Meeting of 15 October 1997. It was agreed that the Hoburne contribution would be used towards the provision of a community facility adjoining The Globe, Lymington Road and provision of children's play equipment at Hoburne, Walkford or Wingfield. This land is well placed for access by public transport as well as by private car and adjoins the public car park proposed under Policy P 3 which can be operated to provide parking spaces for the uses of the existing and any new community facilities. For these reasons this site has been allocated accordingly.

CF 4 A SITE ADJOINING THE HIGHCLIFFE SHOPPING CENTRE AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, WILL BE DEVELOPED FOR COMMUNITY FACILITY PURPOSES.

8.68 Another opportunity for increasing the provision of community facilities provision in Highcliffe may arise at Highcliffe Castle. The external fabric and some internal areas of this Grade I Listed Building have undergone restoration. In looking at the long term future of the building, community use is considered appropriate, and Policy BE 18 identifies Highcliffe Castle as suitable for a mixture of community and commercial uses.

8.69 It is recognised that there is still a lack of community facilities in north and west Highcliffe. Should the situation change in the future regarding the implementation of Policy CF4, other options may have to be looked at. An important part of the Community Facilities Strategy will be monitoring and review. Investigation of other sites for community uses in Highcliffe or initiatives such as dual use of existing schools can take place outside the remit of this Local Plan.

Libraries

8.70 There are two libraries in Christchurch. The main library is located in the High Street and there is another branch in Highcliffe. The rest of the Borough is served by mobile library stops. The County Council have no plans to extend their provision of static branch libraries.

- 8.71 The library in Highcliffe is located in Gordon Road and is on a small site which has no associated parking provision. Whilst the present building is generally satisfactory in terms of its size and general location it was not purpose designed as a library and the lack of parking is extremely inconvenient. The possibility exists to relocate the library within the proposed community facilities site within the shopping centre which would remedy these problems whilst keeping the library in a good central location. The redevelopment of the existing library site together with adjoining properties in a comprehensive scheme should provide a capital sum which will, in effect, partly finance the relocation. Any such comprehensive scheme would have to be fully self-financing.

Museums/Arts

- 8.72 There are 2 museums in Christchurch, the Red House Museum and Electricity Museum. Christchurch is very fortunate in having an arts/community centre at the Regent Centre in the High Street. This was originally built as a cinema in 1931 and acquired by Christchurch Borough Council in 1982. It is managed by a volunteer trust. The centre contains a cinema/theatre and has facilities to hold exhibitions and other arts and community activities. It is a valuable asset to the Borough and its retention is seen as important.

Percent for Art

- 8.73 The Arts Council first promoted its 'Percent for Arts' campaign in 1989. Its aim is to encourage developers to provide works of art or craft as part of their building projects in the same way that they provide landscaping, parking or paving. The idea is that a proportion of the budget for building is allocated for commissioning new works of art or crafts. This is not restricted to sculptures and works could include stained glass windows, paintings, murals, tapestries and other features such as railings or gateways. Ideally at least one percent of the building budget should be allocated for this purpose, but the amount may vary depending on the size and scale of the building contract. This is a worthwhile concept which can be applied not only to built development, but also to public open space. The Council will apply this Policy when considering proposals for development or schemes which will be used by the public, or are in large scale prominent places.

- CF 5 WHEN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES TO BE USED BY THE PUBLIC, OR THOSE ON PROMINENT SITES, THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL NEGOTIATE A VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION OF A PROPORTION OF BUILDING COSTS FROM DEVELOPERS TO BE ALLOCATED TO COMMISSION WORKS OF PUBLIC ART.**

Allotments

- 8.74 There are 5 allotment sites in the Borough of Christchurch located at Douglas Avenue, Rutland Road, Southey Road, Walkford Road and Roeshot Hill. Four of these sites are fully used with the fifth only having a few vacant plots. PPG 17: Sport and Recreation advocates the protection of public and private open space and other land of recreational

or amenity value and expresses the opinion that Local Authorities should lead by example in the use they make of sites they own. Although allotments are excluded from the definition of outdoor playing space set out by the NPFA, they make a valuable contribution to the recreational provision of communities, especially those deficient in open space. Therefore, in the interests of the communities and in view of the demand for such facilities it is proposed to protect these allotment sites from development.

CF 6 PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTING IN THE LOSS OF ALLOTMENT SITES AS INDICATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP WILL NOT BE GRANTED UNLESS THERE IS NO LONGER A DEMAND FOR SUCH FACILITIES, OR AN ALTERNATIVE SITE OF COMPARABLE AREA IN A SUITABLE AND CONVENIENT LOCATION CAN BE FOUND.

Cemeteries

8.75 The existing cemetery at Jumpers will be full in a number of years. As the Council has decided to remain a burial authority, there is a need to identify other suitable sites within the Borough. The original proposal to provide a single large cemetery was put out to consultation, but met with public opposition. The matter was reassessed and this prompted the identification of 2 smaller areas, located adjoining existing cemeteries, being more sensitive and catering for more local burial needs. The following sites are identified as cemeteries:

CF 7 THE FOLLOWING SITES AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP ARE ALLOCATED FOR FUTURE CEMETERY USE:

- 1) ADJACENT TO ST MARKS CEMETERY, HIGHCLIFFE**
- 2) REAR OF ST LUKE'S CEMETERY, BURTON**

Chapter 8: Leisure and Community Needs

POLICY L 1

Resists the loss of public and other open spaces.

POLICY L 2

Resists the loss of Playing Fields.

POLICY L 3

Resists the loss of the private sports ground at Grange Road/Highcliffe Road.

POLICY L 4

Designates Druitt Gardens and adjoining land as public open space.

POLICY L 5

States the grounds of Highcliffe Castle are to remain as public open space.

POLICY L 6

Designates land at Rothesay Park to form a Coastal Park with Steamer Point Woodland and the Castle Grounds.

POLICY L 7

Designates land at Rothesay Park as private open space.

POLICY L 8

Designates Highcliffe Golf Course as open space.

POLICY L 9

Identifies land at Hoburne to be designated as public open space.

POLICY L 10

Designates retained land at Burton School Playing Fields as open space.

POLICY L 11

Identifies land at Burton, to the east of Salisbury Road, to be designated as public open space.

POLICY L 12

Identifies various areas which the Council will seek to secure as public open space.

POLICY L 13

Seeks to maintain the open character and other visual amenities of Fisherman's Bank.

POLICY L 14

Identifies land on the eastern side of the River Avon, adjoining the Civic Offices rear car park to be designated as open space.

POLICY L 15

Identifies land on the eastern side of the River Avon, adjoining the Civic Offices and its front car park to be designated as public open space.

POLICY L 16

Identifies land at Jumpers Common for public open space.

POLICY L 17

Resists development of undeveloped riversides and Harbour Banks, and seeks to maintain existing and where possible, increase public access.

POLICY L 18

Sets out criteria for the development of boating facilities, moorings and jetties.

POLICY L 19

Resists loss of indoor or outdoor recreation facilities which would have a significant impact on tourism and leisure.

POLICY L 20

States requirement of adequate recreational open space in new residential development.

POLICY L 21

Identifies an area at Dudmoor for a small scale Country Park.

Community Needs**POLICY CF 1**

Identifies part of Christchurch Hospital site for the provision of a community hall.

POLICY CF 2

Identifies part of the former Catherine Wheel Public House site for a community facility.

POLICY CF 3

Identifies land adjoining Stanpit Recreation Ground for a new building to incorporate changing rooms, toilets, meeting room and educational facility.

POLICY CF 4

Identifies site adjoining Highcliffe Shopping Centre for a community facility.

POLICY CF 5

Sets out the Council's intention to negotiate a contribution with developers for works of public art.

POLICY CF 6

Resists loss of allotment sites.

POLICY CF 7

Identifies alternative sites for cemeteries.