

Core Strategy

15 Improving Sports and Leisure Facilities Key Issue Paper

Options for Consideration Consultation
4th October – 24th December 2010



Prepared by Christchurch Borough Council and
East Dorset District Council as part of the Local Development Framework

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1 Introduction

1.1 This paper has been prepared as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) to inform the development of the key strategy for matters relating to sport and recreation facilities, open space and green infrastructure. The preferred strategy will be set out in the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy. This paper is one of a number of thematic background papers which address distinct issues affecting Christchurch and East Dorset. These issues have been identified from local policy, local development framework evidence base and the Community Plans of Christchurch and East Dorset. This document sets out the process of how the strategy for the provision of sport, recreation, open space and green infrastructure has been refined toward the development of a preferred strategy following Issues and Options work undertaken for the Core Strategy in spring 2008. This paper sets out the critical issues, problems and challenges to be considered in planning for sport, recreation, open space and green infrastructure. The development of a preferred strategy to address these issues has been informed by the following:

- National and local policy
- Objectives of other relevant plans and programmes (National to local)
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Core Strategy Issues and Options Stakeholder Engagement
- Evidence studies undertaken by the Council and key stakeholders.

1.2 Leisure facilities and open spaces provide not only for the health and wellbeing of the population and spaces for the pursuit of formal and casual recreation, they provide natural relief in built up urban areas, 'green lungs' for carbon exchange and habitats for wildlife. The routes that connect these spaces also encourage walking and cycling and can contribute to a network of 'green infrastructure'. The main urban area of Christchurch, the village of Burton and the towns and villages of East Dorset are surrounded by countryside, the majority of which is designated as Green Belt or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Many areas are also covered by national and international nature conservation designations to protect rare habitats or species. Constrained by these designations and by natural features such as the coast, the urban areas are under pressure to accommodate significant levels of new housing and other forms of development within current settlement boundaries. This will place pressure on existing open space and leisure facilities which will become stretched through the demands of an increasing population. Open spaces may also increasingly be desired as land for the development of new housing. Local planning policies will therefore need to ensure that valuable open spaces are protected and maintained and that new provision is delivered to meet the needs of growing communities.

1.3 The formulation of a preferred strategy provides the context for the preparation of specific policies to inform decisions about how best to deliver recreation facilities and open space across the two districts. There is also a very significant 'action planning' element to the strategy which includes an implementation framework for the delivery of infrastructure and realisation of strategic objectives. Detail of the proposed implementation framework is included within this paper.

2 Baseline

Sustainability Appraisal Baseline Information

2.1 The Christchurch and East Dorset Sustainability Appraisal Draft Scoping Report (August 2008) sets out baseline information and identifies sustainability issues, those relevant to this paper are set out below.

2.2 Environmental Baseline Issues

2.3 Climate change

2.4 Sea level rise and increased rainfall will mean that more areas of land are subject to flooding. Land use policies should consider placing less vulnerable uses such as open space within the flood plains.

2.5 Biodiversity

2.6 Both districts enjoy diverse natural environments which support a range of biodiversity. As many of these areas are open to public recreation, conflicts can arise between nature conservation objectives and sport and leisure objectives, especially where habitats can be easily disturbed by the presence of humans.

2.7 Countryside

2.8 Approximately 80% of the area of the two districts is rural and residents generally have easy access to the countryside for informal recreation. To contain urban sprawl and to maintain the separate identity of settlements, the South East Dorset Green Belt was introduced in the 1980's and this has reduced the loss of green fields to development. Moors Valley Country Park in East Dorset is one of the most visited natural sites in the County. Other significant natural areas include beaches along the south coast of Christchurch and Bournemouth and the New Forest to the east.

2.9 Water

2.10 The rivers Stour and Avon flood regularly and wide areas of Christchurch are subject to both river and tidal flood risk. The town has a major flood protection scheme but is threatened by projected sea level rises. Within East Dorset, the Stour and its tributaries have historically caused serious flooding problems, notably in Wimborne, Shapwick, Longham and Sturminster Marshall. The flood plains are an important part of the river system, providing necessary water storage. There is a need to ensure development does not impinge on this or exacerbate flooding elsewhere.

2.11 Pollution

2.12 The main source of air pollution in Christchurch and East Dorset comes from road traffic. The key air pollutants are nitrous oxides – these are high (49.1µg/m³ in 2001) by contrast with levels of other pollutants, which are within target levels. There are no Air Quality Management Areas within the area. Pollution can be managed through careful location of new open spaces and leisure facilities, seeking to minimise the number and length of car trips to these sites.

2.13 Social Baseline Issues

2.14 Population

2.15 Christchurch has a population of 46,950, East Dorset 87,557 (ONS Mid Year Population Estimates 2009). Both districts have a higher proportion of elderly persons compared to national averages; whilst the population of the UK as a whole is ageing, the percentage over the age of 60 in East Dorset (31.8%) and in Christchurch (34.1%) far exceeds the national average of 19.5%. The districts also have two of the lowest proportions of population in the age group 0-39. This demographic clearly has an impact on the demand for and use of sports and recreation facilities.

2.16 Health

2.17 Overall the health of residents across the two authority areas is good. Life expectancy for the period 2004 to 2006 was 80.3 years for men and 84.4 years for women in Christchurch and 81.4 for men and 84.7 for women in East Dorset. The national figures are 77.2 and 81.5 respectively. The main causes of death (in 2006) were from circulatory diseases (569), cancers (468), coronary heart disease (257) and stroke (174).

2.18 Social inclusion and deprivation

2.19 For the most part both Christchurch and East Dorset are perceivably affluent areas; East Dorset is the least deprived of all the Dorset local authorities. However, there are several pockets of deprivation across the districts, namely Somerford (Grange ward) in Christchurch and Tricketts Cross East in Ferndown, Leigh Park in Wimborne, Potterne & Woolsbridge in Verwood and the Allen Valley in East Dorset. Access to essential facilities and services is an issue that needs to be considered in the light of the ageing population. Changes in the provision of services and facilities over the last 30 years have put pressure on local amenities, reducing their economic viability. This problem is particularly acute in the rural areas.

2.20 Leisure and recreation

2.21 The districts provide a range of cultural, leisure and recreational facilities which are used by both residents and visitors. All leisure activities contribute to the quality of life of residents, providing amenity and opportunities for enhancing intellectual, spiritual and physical well being. Additionally, they represent a tourism asset and their provision can result in economic benefits. Specific facilities include Two Riversmeet, Ferndown and Queen Elizabeth leisure centres, the Tivoli and Regent Centre theatres, golf courses, equestrian centres, sports pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens and a variety of clubs, museums and venues. The natural amenities of Christchurch lend themselves to recreational activities with riversides, harbour and coastal locations used for water sports and fishing. The rural areas provide significant opportunity for informal recreation although there is a conflict in both districts between recreation and the protection of the heathlands for their nature conservation assets. Suitable alternative open space is required to reduce the number of people wishing to use the heaths for their recreation.

2.22 Economic Baseline Issues

2.23 Tourism

2.24 Visitors to the area collectively generate approximately £71 million a year for the local economy in Christchurch and over £100 million in East Dorset (2008 figures). Christchurch's natural capital, in the form of its coastal setting of harbour and beaches, riverside walks and wildlife areas attract visitors for a range of outdoor activities including water sports, rambling, wildlife viewing etc. Many visitors to East Dorset return again and again to explore the beautiful countryside of the West Wiltshire and Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or to visit Moors Valley Country Park, which receives over 820,000 visitors each year, a similar number to Stonehenge.

Baseline Mapping

2.25 · Ecological designations and visitor destinations

2.26 Core Strategic Messages

2.27 There is an increasingly ageing population who are relatively healthy and have time to enjoy leisure time and pursuits. The cultural assets are also enjoyed by tourists and visitors to the area. These include the coast in Christchurch, the rural area of East Dorset including the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Moors Valley Country Park and Avon Heath Country Park, as well as the extensive areas of Forestry Commission land. These assets need to be protected and supported. Pressure for use of open space will increase as the population grows.

Policy Background

Sport, Leisure & Recreation

NATIONAL

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2001)

Planning Policy Guidance 17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)

Assessing Needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17 (2002)

PPS Consultation: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment (2010)

Circular 02/09: The Town & Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction (2009)

CABE: Green Space Strategies (2006)

CABE: Open Space Strategies (2009)

Sport England guidance & reports:

Planning for Sport & Active Recreation: Objectives & Opportunities (Interim Statement 2005)

Planning Contributions Kitbag

Spatial Planning for Sport: Creating Local Policy (undated)

LOCAL

Christchurch Local Plan (2001). Relevant policies:

- Policy L 1: Resists the loss of public and other open spaces.
- Policy L 2: Resists the loss of Playing Fields.
- Policy L 12: Identifies various areas which the Council will seek to secure as public open space.
- Policy L17: 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 for adequate recreational open space in new residential development and the circumstances and means by which the Council will request contributions from developers

East Dorset Local Plan (2002). Relevant policies:

- Policy CSIDE7 permits the use of land in the countryside for outdoor sport, recreation and allotment uses.
- Policy RCDEV2 seeks for new housing developments to provide open space and play areas in line with adopted standards in the Local Plan.
- Policy RCDEV3 allows the provision of recreation facilities off site where it is not possible on site with new development.
- Policy FWP11 supports the development of 15 hectares of land at Bracken Road, Ferndown as public open space.
- Policy WM3 supports the development of 3.6 hectares of land at Fryer Field, West Moors as public open space, sports pitches and a pavilion.
- Policy WM4 supports the development of 4 hectares of land north east of Oakhurst Road, West Moors as public open space.
- Policy WM5 supports the creation of a trailway from Station Road to the northern end of Ameysford Road, West Moors.
- Policy WIMCO9 supports the development of 2.5 hectares of land to the east of the Canford Bottom area as a NEAP.
- Policy WIMCO10 supports the provision of 16 hectares of open space at Leigh Road.
- Policy V11 supports the development of 10.8 hectares of land between Margards Lane and the River Crane for playing fields and community use in Verwood.

- Policy V12 supports the retention of the playing fields at Potterne Park, Verwood.
- Policy V14 supports the development of 1.8 hectares of land at Howe Lane for a sports hall and swimming pool, Verwood.
- Policy SM3 supports the development of 3.5 hectares of land at Station Road for public open space and sports pitches in Sturminster Marshall.

Christchurch Corporate Plan 2008-2012. Relevant objectives:

- HO1 – Develop new planning and housing policies to increase the supply of high quality sustainable housing development
- PE2 – Maintain a high quality environment
- PE4 – Work to ensure that the provision of green spaces and other amenities keeps pace with housing development
- PE5 - Encourage the use and enjoyment of the amenities provided by Christchurch's unique environment

East Dorset Corporate Plan (2010 -2016). Relevant objectives:

- Promises to promote thriving communities that are well served, healthy and safe
- Promises to manage and safeguard the natural and built environment for the benefit of current and future generations

East Dorset Cultural Strategy (2005)

- E7 - The Council will actively encourage the local community to take part in the care and management of their local environment
- H4 - The Council will promote external strategies that encourage regular exercise.

Analysis

- PPS1 cites accessible, high quality open space, sport and recreation provision as a key factor in delivering sustainable development
- PPG17 defines five primary objectives for planning to promote: urban renaissance; rural renewal; social inclusion and community cohesion; health and well being; sustainable development
- PPG17 and its companion guide strongly advocate the use of planning obligations for delivery of new open space and improvements to existing facilities
- PPS Consultation: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment encourages the delivery of Green Infrastructure, the provision of open space for community well-being, healthy lifestyles, good access to recreation and sports provision, and the use of the coast and countryside for recreational use. This paper acknowledges the link between natural and formal recreation space, and the links with healthy lifestyles.
- Both the Christchurch and East Dorset adopted Local Plans provide protection to identified existing open spaces and developer contributions policies to finance the development of new sites. Alongside a number of proposals for specific open space improvements, the East Dorset Local Plan also includes a set of open space standards which are tailored to developments of different sizes and provide a mechanism for financial contributions for off-site open space. The Christchurch Local Plan uses the NPFA six-acre standard and does not differentiate between the sizes of housing schemes. Although the underlying approaches used in the current policies is supported by the 2007 PPG17 study, it strongly recommends the

<p>adoption of locally-derived standards and an evidence-led consideration of local needs. LPAs should adopt local standards for open space based on local-level assessment and an audit of existing provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular 02/09 resists the loss of playing fields and requires adequate consultation prior to any plans for their replacement or loss • Sport England publications provides useful guidance (not policy) on the production of local policies for sport. Guidance supports: the use of planning obligations for sport & recreation; local determination and adoption of standards; prevention of further loss of provision; improvements to access to existing sites; dual use of education and private facilities for public use; development of outdoor sports facilities in the Green Belt; measures to protect, enhance and develop routes that provide opportunities to access the countryside by foot, bicycle and horse; protect, improve, and bring into use new resources for water-based sport. • The CABI publications recommend production of local green space / open space strategies to support policies in the LDF and provide useful advice on their content. • Both Corporate Plans strongly support provision of open space to meet local needs
<p>Core Strategic Messages</p> <p>The national documentation reviewed above provides more objective-based guidance than strict policy requirements for the Core Strategy to conform to. Locally derived standards should inform the most appropriate policy approach, which should generally aim to prevent loss of existing local provision, create new spaces to meet local needs, and deliver improvements to existing facilities. Policies should be set within the context of improving health and wellbeing and delivering sustainable development. Open space policy should ideally be integrated with measures to improve access to urban and countryside sites (Green Infrastructure).</p> <p>Where Local Plan policies have proved successful, the Core Strategy may wish to continue with a similar strategic approach by protecting valuable existing open spaces, supporting the provision of open space in new developments, and providing outdoor sport and recreation uses in the countryside where they do not conflict with neighbouring farmland, sites of nature conservation importance or residential areas.</p>

Table 2.1

<p>Green Infrastructure</p>
<p>NATIONAL</p> <p>PPG17 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)</p> <p>PPS Consultation: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment (March 2010)</p> <p>Green Infrastructure: Connected and Multifunctional Landscapes</p> <p>CABI – Grey to Green: How we shift funding and skills to green our cities</p>

LOCAL

Dorset Heathland Interim Planning Framework (2007-2010)

East Dorset Local Plan (2002). Relevant policies:

- Policy RODEV9 supports the development of a trailway between Corfe Mullen and the District boundary based upon the former Somerset and Dorset railway line.
- Policy CM1 supports the provision of a new path between Lockyers School and new playing fields.
- Policy CM6 supports the improvement of a bridleway and path to Roman Road.
- Policy CM7 supports the provision of an advisory cycleway from the C5 Wareham Road to Broadstone.
- Policy FWP12 supports the development of a trailway north of Ferndown between West Moors and Stapehill.
- Policy FWP13 supports the provision of a linked system of cycleways and footpaths to serve the schools and sports facilities in Ferndown.
- Policy FWP14 supports the provision of a cycleway and footpath between Leeson Drive and the northern end of Cobham Road.
- Policy FWP15 supports the provision of a cycleway and footpath along the proposed route of the West Moors bypass.
- Policy FWP16 supports the provision of a route for pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders on Parley Lane from Parley Cross to the District border
- Policy WIMCO11 supports the improvement of footpaths and routes out into the countryside and along the river banks from Wimborne.
- Policy WIMCO12 supports continued public access to Cannon Hill Plantation in Colehill.
- Policy WIMCO20 supports the provision of a shared footway/cycleway at St Margaret's Hill, Wimborne.
- Policy V31 supports the development of a cycle way/pedestrian and bridleway on completion of the Springfield Distributor Road (Manor lane), Verwood.
- Policy V34 supports the provision of a footpath and cycle route connecting the roads within Potterne Hill housing site to the open spaces at Potterne Hill and Manor Road, Verwood.
- Policy CHASE12 supports the development of a footway along Common Lane to the entrance of the village hall and sports ground in Sixpenny Handley.

Christchurch Local Plan (2001). Relevant policies:

- Policy L1 identifies significant open spaces and protects them from inappropriate loss
- Policy L2 identifies school playing fields and protects them from inappropriate loss
- Policy L3 protects the private sports ground bounded by Grange Road and Highcliffe Road as open space
- Policies L4, L5, L8, L9, L11, L12, L14, L15 and L16 designate and/or protect a number of specific sites in the Borough as public open space
- Policy L13 protects the open character and visual amenities of Fishermans Bank, Stanpit by restricting further development
- Policy L17 prohibits development of undeveloped riversides and harbour banks where it would be detrimental to character and visual amenity. Public access in these areas must be retained.
- Policy L18 places restrictions on proposals for new or extended boating facilities, moorings and jetties in Christchurch Harbour

- Policy L19 protects indoor and outdoor recreation facilities from loss
- Policy L20 requires a contribution of 2.4ha of open space per 1000 population within the layout of new development or a commensurate financial contribution to the council
- Policy L21 identifies land for a small country park at Dudmoor
- Policy CF3 proposes a new recreation / community building on the former cricket school site at Stanpit recreation ground
- Policy CF4 proposes a new community facility adjoining Highcliffe shopping centre
- Policy CF5 provides for a voluntary contribution for public art
- Policy CF6 protects allotments from loss
- Policy CF7 designates cemetery sites in Highcliffe and Burton

New Forest National Park Local Development Framework: Core Strategy and Development Policies Submission Document (February 2010)

- Policy CP3: Green Infrastructure. Proposals which create, maintain and enhance a network of green infrastructure will be supported, particularly where they:
 1. encourage connectivity between different habitats and sites; or
 2. relieve recreational pressures on internationally important nature conservation sites.

The Authority will work with adjoining authorities and other partners to develop green infrastructure for the National Park, and to ensure the impacts of development outside the Park’s boundary do not affect the Park, especially internationally important nature conservation designations.

Analysis

- PPG17 promotes local networks of high quality and connected urban spaces, and suggests that LDFs include clearly defined objectives to improve the local open space network.
- The Dorset Heathlands Interim Planning Framework requires housing development within 400m-5km of the Dorset Heaths to deliver Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) as part of a package of mitigation measures. Some sites may be able to perform a dual function as both open space and SANG.

Core Strategic Messages

It is critical that the Core Strategy provides a policy to support the development of the provision of sub regional Green Infrastructure. It needs to have a clear strategy for identified projects and their delivery over the plan period. This is supported in national policies and by our partner authorities in the sub region who are actively working together already.

Table 2.2

Developer contributions
<p>Circular 05/05: Planning Obligations (2005)</p> <p>Community Infrastructure Levy (draft regulations 2009)</p>
Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular 05/05 provides the policy framework within which developer contributions (obligations) can be sought towards essential infrastructure and community needs. A planning obligation must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (i) relevant to planning; • (ii) necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms; • (iii) directly related to the proposed development; • (iv) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development; and • (v) reasonable in all other respects • Government anticipate introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy in April 2010 which will allow local planning authorities to formulate a schedule of infrastructure for which new developments will make financial contributions. Open space and leisure provision could form an item on Christchurch and East Dorset local schedules.
Core Strategic Messages
<p>Developer contributions are an established and acceptable means of financing new or enhanced open space and leisure provision. Until CBC and EDDC can prepare infrastructure schedules for charging under the Community Infrastructure Levy, developer contributions could be charged under the terms of Circular 05/05. Contributions should be absolutely necessary, set at a level commensurate with the demand created and closely related to the contributing development, meeting the five tests set by Circular 05/05.</p>

Table 2.3

Community Strategies

2.28 The Community Strategy for Dorset ‘Shaping Our Future’ (2007-2016) recognises that people’s ability to access leisure and culture facilities has a significant effect on quality of life and life chances. Although there are no objectives aimed specifically at delivering improvements to open space, relevant objectives under ‘Improved Access to Services, Employment and Leisure’ include:

- C.5.2.3 Access and transport solutions to take account of the differing needs of individuals and communities.
- C.5.3.12 Reduce carbon emissions through promotion of development in locations and of a type that reduces the need to travel.

2.29 The 2007 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment identified key themes and actions from the Christchurch and East Dorset Community Strategies and provided specific actions for open space and leisure. These are reproduced in the table below:

Community Strategy themes and objectives (CBC=Christchurch Borough Council, EDDC=East Dorset District Council)	Objectives for open space and leisure policy
CBC & EDDC Community Safety: good promotion and management of open space and leisure opportunities can help to reduce crime levels and make people feel safer.	Future Green Space Strategies should recognise and address the comments highlighted in the consultation underpinning this document about concerns in relation to vandalism, graffiti, and safety in respect of the use of open space.
CBC Culture, Learning and Lifestyle: imaginative planning and use of open space and leisure opportunities can enhance cultural and educational opportunities.	Future Green Space Strategies and Play Strategies should examine the relationship between the provision of equipped space for young people, and service provision (such as linking youth provision with youth 'outreach' and sports development work). Future Green Space Strategies should examine the imaginative 'opening up' of school facilities for wider community use in conjunction with local schools and the Education Authority. Future Green Space Strategies should examine management and interpretation of open space in a fashion that promotes greater environmental awareness.
CBC & EDDC Relationship between generations and meeting the needs of young people: good planning and management of open space and leisure provision can strengthen relationships between people and different generations. EDDC Youth: open space and recreation opportunities can help address the needs of young people	Section 6 of the PPG17 report provides area specific recommendations with regard to the improvement of opportunities for children and young people, and these should be pursued through future Green Space Strategies. Consider the adoption of the standards suggested in this report through the Local Development Framework (LDF). The recommended standards are based on the results of local consultation and their adoption would provide for a better range of open spaces relative to the needs of the community, compared with existing standards.

Community Strategy themes and objectives (CBC=Christchurch Borough Council, EDDC=East Dorset District Council)	Objectives for open space and leisure policy
<p>CBC & EDDC Health and Care: access to open space and leisure provision can help promote good health, reduce ill health and support vulnerable groups.</p>	<p>Future Green Space Strategies should encourage agencies and local groups to work together to use open spaces and recreation corridors for 'health based' initiatives. Natural spaces, green routes, allotments etc all potentially have a very important role to play in improving levels of health within the community.</p>
<p>CBC & EDDC Environment: well planned and managed open space has a major role in enhancing the natural and built environment.</p> <p>CBC & EDDC Transport and access: well planned and managed open space and leisure opportunities can help create communities where travel is affordable, efficient and sustainable.</p>	<p>Future reviews of the LDF and possible Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) should consider the possibilities for creating both utility and recreation routes for use by foot and bike in both urban and rural areas. Creative application of the Informal Green Space and Accessible Natural Green Space components of the proposed overall standard in respect of new development will be possible.</p> <p>Future Green Space Strategies should consider the possibility of changing the management regime of some existing spaces (especially in urban areas) that lack access to natural green space within easy walking distance.</p> <p>Future Green Space Strategies and future reviews of the Development Framework must recognise the need when planning for all types of recreation opportunity to take into account people's preparedness to travel, and requirements for different types of space. For children and young people this means easy access by foot/cycle.</p>
<p>CBC & EDDC Housing: high quality open space and recreation provision has a role in meeting the community's housing needs, by providing vital supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>CBC & EDDC Affordable Housing: should be available to all sectors of the community and should not be synonymous with 'poor' housing in terms of surrounding community infrastructure.</p>	<p>Consider the need to develop SPD to aid with the interpretation and application of the standards.</p> <p>Consider the adoption of the recommended new standards within future Local Development Frameworks. Ensure that the interpretation and application of any adopted new standards embrace the importance of open space being of high quality, both through future SPD and Green Space Strategies.</p> <p>Consider area specific issues raised in Section 6 of the PPG17 report in planning new housing development.</p>

Community Strategy themes and objectives (CBC=Christchurch Borough Council, EDDC=East Dorset District Council)	Objectives for open space and leisure policy
CBC Economic Prosperity: well planned and managed open space and leisure opportunities can help bring about economic vibrancy, where people want to work, live and study.	Work with developers and local business interests to maximise the support for the proposed new standards by the local development industry, in particular. (This will also be essential in EDDC)

Table 2.4

2.30 Core Strategic Messages (from Community Strategies)

2.31 The County and local strategies encourage the wise use of open space as a means of achieving a wide range of objectives including health, wellbeing, provision for young and elderly people, high quality environment, tourism and economic prosperity. Rather than call for the creation of new open spaces, most objectives relate more closely to better use of existing spaces and improvements to facilities. The Core Strategy should aim to deliver these improvements to existing sites while integrating new spaces into development as part of good urban planning. The Core Strategy should adopt locally-derived standards for open space and consider how best to locate new sites in a manner that reduces the need to travel by car. A lower level plan such as a Green Space Strategy or Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) should set out how the councils intend to meet local need through new and enhanced provision.

2.32 Strategic messages for the Options

2.33 National policy and guidance on open space and green infrastructure provision is quite clear; LDFs should adopt locally-derived standards for a range of open space types which are provided through developer contributions and other funding, with an aim of creating a network of accessible multi-functional spaces and routes. New provision, or enhancements to the quality of existing provision, should be delivered in step with new housing development and should consider the unique needs of local areas.

3 Identification of Issues

3.1 This section considers the validity of the questions posed in the Issues and Options consultation and how appropriate they are for continued consideration by the Core Strategy. A number of new issues have also been raised through the consultation, through discussions with stakeholders and members of the public and through recent changes to national and regional policy. The section concludes with a consolidated list of Key Issues for the development of preferred options in section 4.

Issues & Options Consultation Response

3.2 In March 2008 the Councils conducted a six week public engagement exercise on the Core Strategy, referred to as the 'Issues and Options' consultation. The document discussed the key planning issues that the Core Strategy will need to address and suggested a range of options to tackle each issue. In all, 210 individuals and organisations responded to the consultation, 154 of whom provided responses relating to sport and leisure facilities.

3.3 Questions asked through the Issues & Options consultation:

SL1: Do you consider there are enough of the following types of open space in your settlement?

- This issue was originally identified through work on the PPG17 assessment and the review of Local Plan policies and continues to be a valid issue which will be addressed through the Preferred Options. Responses to the issues and options consultation did not object to this being an issue to be addressed by the Core Strategy. This will be addressed under consolidated Key Issue 1 in Section 4 below.

SL2: To meet the future needs of the community, should we focus on providing brand new recreation and leisure facilities or on upgrading existing provision?

- This issue was originally identified through work on the PPG17 assessment and the review of Local Plan policies and continues to be a valid issue which will be addressed through the Preferred Options. Responses to the issues and options consultation did not object to this being an issue to be addressed by the Core Strategy. This will be addressed under consolidated Key Issue 1 in Section 4 below.

SL3: How should we require the provision of open space for residents of new housing development?

- This issue was identified through work on the PPG17 assessment and the review of Local Plan policies and continues to be a valid issue which will be addressed through the Preferred Options. Responses to the issues and options consultation did not object to this being an issue to be addressed by the Core Strategy. This will be addressed under consolidated Key Issue 2 in Section 4 below.

SL4: What policies should we adopt for water based recreation facilities such as marinas, moorings and associated club and training facilities?

- This issue was raised through engagement with local stakeholders in Christchurch and the review of Local Plan policies and continues to be a valid issue which will be addressed through the Preferred Options. Responses to the issues and options consultation did not object to this being an issue to be addressed by the Core Strategy. This will be addressed under consolidated Key Issue 1 in Section 4 below.

3.4 New issues raised through consultation

3.5 *How will developer contributions for open space be calculated and justified by evidence?*

3.6 Some responses expressed concern about increasing financial demands on developers and asked that open space contributions only be required where they could be justified and set at a level commensurate with identified local needs.

- The different elements of a proposed developer contributions policy for open space will be set out and assessed in detail in section 4 of this paper.

3.7 *This issue is a sub issue of Issue SL3 and will be discussed under Key Issue 2.*

3.8 *Above what threshold should a developer contributions policy apply to residential and/or commercial developments?*

3.9 As well as determining whether or not policies should apply to both residential and commercial developments, the policy must also define thresholds which make clear to applicants whether their proposal would need to make a contribution.

- The different elements of a proposed developer contributions policy for open space will be set out and assessed in detail in section 4 of this paper.

3.10 *This issue is a sub issue of Issue SL3 and will be discussed under Key Issue 2.*

3.11 *How can we ensure new facilities are accessible by a range of transport modes? (comments of Highways Agency)*

3.12 Decisions regarding the location of new facilities should take into account transport policies elsewhere which aim to reduce dependency on the car. Where possible sites should be located along easily accessible routes. This will be addressed under consolidated Key Issue 1 in Section 4 below.

- The location of new provision is one factor among many which should be addressed through an open space developer contributions policy and delivered through council green space strategies. The need for supplementary planning guidance or a green space strategy is discussed in Section 4.

3.13 *There is a need to deliver facilities for the 2012 Olympics.*

3.14 In preparation for Christchurch's involvement with water-based sports during the 2012 Olympics, the Core Strategy should examine the need for new facilities.

- The Core Strategy will not be adopted until at least 2012 so will have very little time to influence development proposals for the Olympics. Core Strategy policies will address water-based recreation facilities in general and will permit applications where they do not compromise coastal landscape value or character or cause harm to habitats. A policy for the Olympics is not considered necessary.

3.15 *How can we ensure that culture and art facilities are included in leisure policies?*

3.16 Culture and art are significant contributors to people's leisure time and should also be provided for through Core Strategy policies.

- Provision of culture and art facilities was addressed as Issue CI2 under the 'Community Issues' theme of the Issues and Options consultation. Refer to the Community Issues Key Issues Paper for policy development relating to this issue.

3.17 *How can open space policies also provide green infrastructure and alternative green space to mitigate recreation pressures on the Dorset Heaths and New Forest heathland areas?*

3.18 This issue was also raised through the consultation. In many instances, new open spaces created through development might also provide green infrastructure and/or heathland mitigation to relieve pressures on both the Dorset heaths and the New Forest. As future policy on open space, green infrastructure and heathland mitigation policy will almost certainly be underpinned by developer contributions, there is a need to ensure that developers are not over-charged.

- The preferred options will consider how to best integrate open space contributions with heathlands mitigation and green infrastructure. Impacts on biodiversity will be managed through options set out in the Natural Environment Key Issues Paper.

3.19 *Should policy continue to protect all existing open space and designate further land as open space?*

3.20 Current Local Plan policies protect designated open space from development. Many of the spaces have legal covenants which protect their use as public open space, but others are only protected by the Local Plans. As the local development framework will eventually replace the Local Plan policies, consideration must be given to sites' ongoing protection.

- The preferred options will consider the most appropriate way to protect designated sites and whether any new sites require protection.

3.21 This will be addressed in consolidated key Issue 1 in Section 4 below.

3.22 **Evidence Studies**

3.23 South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Evidence and Opportunities Study (February 2010)

- The South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Study provides a framework for the development of cross border green infrastructure in the sub region of South East Dorset. The key messages from the report are:
- Develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy for SE Dorset
- Prioritise Green Infrastructure opportunities for delivery
- Identify key delivery partners for each priority
- Consider funding options
- Define Green Infrastructure tariff

New issues raised through evidence studies

3.24 *How do we ensure that developments which are too small to incorporate open space contribute towards provision?*

3.25 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments demonstrate that, excluding the urban extensions and new neighbourhoods, the vast majority of housing developments in Christchurch and East Dorset up to 2027 will be schemes of less than 10 dwellings, on sites generally smaller than 0.25ha. Small sites provide less scope to incorporate on-site open space and are therefore more likely to make financial contributions for off-site provision.

- This issue will be taken into account when determining the level of developer contributions and the location of new provision. A contributions threshold for new development is proposed through the options in section 4.

3.26 This issue will be addressed under consolidated Key Issue 1 in Section 4 below.

3.27 *Is there sufficient land available to build new facilities and open space?*

3.28 Within the urban areas there is very little available land on which to create new open spaces. Core Strategy policies will therefore need to focus on the enhancement of existing spaces and facilities and identify opportunities to intensify or consolidate recreation uses on these sites.

- This issue will be taken into account when determining the level of developer contributions and the location of new provision. The availability of land should be taken into account when drawing up a schedule of open space requirements to ensure that only realistic schemes are considered. This would be further assessed through a supplementary planning document or green space strategy - discussed in section 4.

3.29 This will be addressed under consolidated Key Issue 1 in Section 4 below.

3.30 *How can we provide a network of Green Infrastructure across the sub region?*

3.31 The recent report of the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Evidence and Opportunities Study (February 2010) recognised the need to provide a co-ordinated network of green infrastructure across the area and to work with partners in the health authority and forestry commissions to achieve shared objectives. This will be discussed under Cross-border issues below.

3.32 This will be addressed under consolidated Key Issue 3 in Section 4 below.

Cross-Border Issues

3.33 *How should policy deliver a network of Green Infrastructure?*

3.34 This issue was also raised through the consultation. There is definite cross-over between open space policy and emerging Green Infrastructure requirements. In the PPS Consultation: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment, it states Green Infrastructure should be considered at a broader scale than individual areas of open space, also taking into account the landscape and hinterland. Strategic links at a sub-regional level should be developed to maximise the benefits of a Green Infrastructure Strategy across local authority boundaries.

- Options will be considered under a new key issue on Green Infrastructure

3.35 This will be addressed under consolidated Key Issue 3 in Section 4 below.

3.36 *How can the assessment of local needs consider strategic facilities located some distance from housing areas, or even outside of the districts?*

3.37 The 2007 Open Space and Recreation assessment recognises where the nature and scale of some open spaces or recreation facilities attract visitors from neighbouring districts and have a catchment which extends well beyond local authority boundaries. Good examples include the coastal beaches of Bournemouth and Christchurch, Moors Valley County Park, and Littledown Leisure Centre. The assessment recognised the strategic nature of these sites and allows for them to be factored in to the standards of provision for a settlement, even if they are well beyond the boundary. A pragmatic approach is required, one which recognises that people will travel further to these sites and that they do not necessarily need to be replicated locally.

- This issue will be taken into account when determining the level of developer contributions and the location of new provision through options proposed in section 4

3.38 This will be addressed under consolidated Key Issue 1 in Section 4 below.

Summary of Identified Critical Issues

3.39 The following are the consolidated Key Issues following the Issues and Options engagement and in response to the evidence base and other plans and strategies. Section 4 interrogates the issues raised at Issues and Options toward the generation of preferred options and reasonable alternatives which are set out under the following issue headings:

Key Issue 1: What open space and leisure provision should we provide to best meet identified local needs?

3.40 This issue will focus on the type, nature and location of open space and recreation provision which is required across the two districts. The following issues asked at Issues and Options or identified through consultation and evidence will be addressed:

- **Do you consider there are enough of the following types of open space in your settlement?** This issue was asked at issues and options (SL1).
- **How do we ensure that developments which are too small to incorporate open space contribute towards provision?** This issue was raised by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments.
- **How can we ensure new facilities are accessible by a range of transport modes?** This issue was raised by the Highways Agency through consultation.
- **How can the assessment of local needs consider strategic facilities located some distance from housing areas, or even outside of the districts?** This issue was highlighted in the 2007 PPG17 assessment.
- **Is there sufficient land available to build new facilities and open space?** This has been identified as a cross-border issue by the councils.
- **Should policy continue to protect all existing open space and designate further land as open space?** This has been identified as a cross-border issue by the councils.

Key Issue 2: How could a developer contributions policy apply to new development?

3.41 This issue will focus on the mechanics of a proposed developer contributions policy which will aim to deliver the open space and recreation requirements discussed under Key Issue 1. The following issues asked at issues and options or identified through consultation and evidence will be addressed:

- **How should we require the provision of open space for residents of new housing development?** This issue was asked at issues and options (SL3).
- **How could developer contributions be calculated and justified by evidence?** This issue was raised through the issues and options consultation.
- **Above what threshold should a developer contributions policy apply to residential and/or commercial developments?** This issue was raised through the issues and options consultation.

Key Issue 3: How should policy deliver a network of Green Infrastructure?

3.42 This issue has been raised through evidence and recent partnership working across Dorset.

- **How can open space policies also provide green infrastructure and alternative green space to mitigate recreation pressures on the Dorset Heaths and New Forest heathland areas?** These issues were raised through the issues and options consultation and by evidence and local policy.

4 Formation of Options

4.1 The formulation of Options set out within this section considers the outcomes of the Core Strategy Issues and Options engagement process, relevant evidence documents, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment. The process includes a critical assessment of the options put forward to address issues identified in the Issues and Options paper. In some instances additional issues have been identified as a result of the issues and options engagement and evidence gathering process, which are also examined here.

Issue Identified at Issues and Options

SL1: Do you consider there are enough of the following types of open space in your settlement?

4.2 Respondents were asked to tick whether they believed there was ‘not enough’, ‘enough’ or ‘too much’ of a range of open space types in their settlement. This question aimed to determine whether people feel there is sufficient quantity of open space in their area, but did not directly address quality or accessibility. In total 105 people responded to issue SL1.

Issues and Options Consultation Response

4.3 Table 1 sets out the responses to SL1 and how they compare with the findings of the 2007 Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study. In the table, ‘Enough’ or ‘Not Enough’ is marked when there was a clear majority of responses; where there was no clear majority, ‘split’ is recorded. A dash ‘-’ indicates that no responses were received for the open space type in that settlement. For those marked with ‘*’ less than 10 responses were received.

4.4 *Top row = Issues and Options responses, Bottom row = 2007 Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study findings*

Settlement (no of responses)	A: allotments	B: amenity space	C: Park/green	D: pitches	E: hard surface courts	F: playgrounds	G: community halls	H: teen facility
Alderholt (2)*	Enough	Not Enough	Not Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	Not Enough
	Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	-	Not enough	-	Not enough
Ashley Heath (2)*	Split	Enough	Not Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Burton (1)*	Not Enough	Not Enough	Not Enough	Not Enough	Not Enough	Not Enough	Not Enough	Enough
	Not enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	-	Not enough	-	Not enough

4 Formation of Options

Settlement (no of responses)	A: allotments	B: amenity space	C: Park/green	D: pitches	E: hard surface courts	F: playgrounds	G: community halls	H: teen facility
Christchurch (25)	Not Enough	Split	Split	Enough	Split	Not Enough	Not Enough	Enough
	Not enough	Not enough	Enough	Enough	-	Not enough	-	Not enough
Colehill (4)*	Split	Enough	Enough	Enough	Split	Split	Split	Split
	Not enough	Not enough	Not enough	Not enough	-	Not enough	-	Not enough
Corfe Mullen (9)*	Not Enough	Split	Not Enough	Split	Split	Split	Enough	Not Enough
	Not enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	-	Not enough	-	Not enough
Cranborne (1)*	Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	-	Enough	Enough	Not Enough
	Enough	Not enough	Enough	Enough	-	Enough	-	Enough
Ferndown (2)*	Split	Split	Split	Split	Enough	Enough	Split	Not Enough
	Not enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	-	Not enough	-	Not enough
Highcliffe (18)	Split	Split	Enough	Enough	Not Enough	Split	Split	Not Enough
	Not enough	Not enough	Enough	Enough	-	Not enough	-	Not enough
Holt (2)*	Not Enough	Enough	Not Enough	Enough	Split	Not Enough	Enough	Not Enough
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Matchams (1)*	Not Enough	Enough	-	Enough	Not Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mudford & Stanpit (7)*	Not Enough	Split	Not Enough	Enough	Split	Split	Not Enough	Split

Settlement (no of responses)	A: allotments	B: amenity space	C: Park/green	D: pitches	E: hard surface courts	F: playgrounds	G: community halls	H: teen facility
St Leonards & St Ives (4)*	Not Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	Split
	Not enough	Enough	Not enough	Not enough	-	Not enough	-	Not enough
Three Legged Cross (2)*	Not Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	Not Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough
	Not enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	-	Not enough	-	Not enough
Verwood (1)*	Not Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	Split	Enough	Not Enough
	Not enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	-	Not enough	-	Not enough
West Moors (7)*	Not Enough	Split	Split	Enough	Split	Enough	Enough	Enough
	Not enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	-	Not enough	-	Not enough
West Parley (5)*	Not Enough	Not enough	Not Enough	Split	Split	Split	Enough	Split
	Not enough	Enough	Enough	Enough	-	Not enough	-	Not enough
Wimborne (12)	Not Enough	Split	Split	Enough	Enough	Split	Enough	Split
	Enough	Not enough	Not enough	Not enough	-	Not enough	-	Not enough

Table 4.1

4.5 Table 1: responses to Issues and Options compared with the 2007 PPG17 study findings

4.6 The consultation results for issue SL1 were compared with figures reported in the 2007 Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study (the 'PPG17 assessment') to assess whether there were any significant differences. The PPG17 assessment was informed by 813 survey responses across the two districts, in addition to targeted consultation with local sports clubs and citizens' panels. In total only 105 people responded to issue SL1 through the Issues and Options consultation. Indeed for many of the smaller settlements, only a handful of responses (many less than 5) were received. For this reason, greater weight and confidence has been attributed to the PPG17 assessment. Suggestions made under option "other, please specify" were for specific small-scale requests and did not demonstrate an agreed need for any particular facility in any particular area.

4.7 For settlements where there is a significant shortfall or abundance of certain open space types, the responses to the issues and options consultation agreed largely with the PPG17 assessment. For locations where the levels of existing provision are less pronounced, there was some variation between what the consultation respondents considered 'enough' or 'not enough' of each open space type and what was concluded by the PPG17 assessment. The most significant of these were:

- Christchurch teen facilities: 14 of the 20 consultation respondents considered there was 'enough' provision, whereas the PPG17 assessment identified a significant overall shortfall. The Christchurch Play Strategy, Active Living Strategy and Community Strategy all highlight a lack of young people's provision and there are clearly very limited facilities dedicated to teenagers.
- Corfe Mullen parks and gardens: 5 of the 8 responses thought there was 'not enough' parks & greens while the PPG17 assessment recorded twice the recommended quantity standard for 'Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens'. This disparity is understandable as Corfe Mullen only has one large recreation ground. Although in quantity terms the standard is satisfied, the accessibility standard is not. Both the consultation responses and the PPG17 assessment support the creation of a new recreation ground or public garden around central or south Corfe Mullen.
- West Moors teen facilities: 5 of the 7 consultation respondents recorded 'enough' teen facilities while the PPG17 assessment identified a distinct shortfall in 'Children & Young People's Play'. Within West Moors there is a new skate park and a teen shelter, both in the northwest of the area. There is a need for new facilities in the centre and east of the settlement.
- Wimborne sports pitches: 10 of the 11 responses considered there are 'enough' pitches, but the PPG17 assessment recorded a slight shortfall. Comparative to other settlements in East Dorset, Wimborne is very well provided with recreation grounds and active sports spaces; existing provision only just falls short of the recommended standard.

4.8 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.9 Overall the Issues and Options responses to SL1 are compatible with the results of the Open Space Audit carried out for the 2007 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study ('the PPG17 assessment') which assessed the quantity, quality and accessibility of recreation spaces across both district areas. The study was designed to meet the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) and is the most comprehensive planning-orientated study into open space and recreation provision carried out by the Councils in recent years. The study considers the National Playing Fields Association Six Acre Standard and the English Nature Accessible Natural Green Space (ANGSt) Standard and recommends a set of locally derived standards of provision for a range of open space types, both for accessibility (expressed in terms of straight line distance) and quantity (expressed in hectares per 1000 head of population). The recommended standards are set out in Preferred Option HE 8 later in section 4 of this paper. The Issues and Options consultation responses have given confidence in the validity of the PPG17 assessment and support the open space standards it recommends. There is no other suitable evidence to question the standards.

4.10 Identification of 'Local Need Areas' (LNAs):

4.11 The PPG17 assessment divides the districts into 16 distinct 'Local Need Areas', the boundaries of which were drawn to reflect the geographical characteristics of discrete local communities, following physical barriers to movement such as rivers or main roads. Each LNA therefore represents the area within which residents can realistically be expected to create a demand for open space and leisure provision. These LNAs will need to be partially redrawn to include the urban extension in Christchurch and the new neighbourhoods in East Dorset.

4.12 For each Local Need Area the report indicates whether the recommended open space standards are met, or whether there are shortfalls in any of the open space types examined; figures are provided at appendix 1a (Christchurch) and 1b (East Dorset). If the proposed standards are adopted by the Core Strategy, they will determine which open space types are required in each LNA. This will subsequently inform Council strategies on open space delivery and could form the basis for tariff-style developer contributions policies.

4.13 The PPG17 assessment provides the Councils with an evidence base to prioritise which forms of provision are required in each Local Need Area and tailor the contribution a development makes, dependant on its location. However, such an area-based approach should also provide developers with a clear indication from the outset of what contribution their scheme would be required to make.

4.14 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal

4.15 Issue SL1 did not propose any specific options that could be assessed individually against the SA objectives at issues and options stage. All of the proposed facilities would give benefits in terms of healthy lifestyles (Objective 12) and access to community facilities (Objective 16) should they be provided. Only when the type and the location are more certain can a more comprehensive assessment be carried out against the other SA objectives.

4.16 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options

4.17 The PPG17 findings and the consultation responses agree that there are significant deficiencies in open space and recreation facilities across the districts and that the Core Strategy should aim to provide higher levels of new provision in step with development. Using the recommended open space standards and Local Need Areas, local policies will need to ensure that new development does not result in a loss of provision, but instead facilitates the delivery of new and/or improved open spaces and recreation facilities to a level commensurate with the proposed standards and in step with increases in population.

4.18 Options to address this issue are set out below under the consolidated Key Issue 1: "What open space and leisure provision should we provide to best meet identified local needs?"

Issue Identified at Issues and Options

SL2: "To meet the future needs of the community, should we focus on providing brand new recreation and leisure facilities or on upgrading existing provision?"

Issues and Options Consultation Response

4.19 Number of responses received for each option:

Option	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Total
A: Focus primarily on providing new facilities	12	46	11	69
B: Focus primarily on upgrading the quality of existing	61	13	9	83
C: Balance provision of new and upgrading of existing facilities	76	10	9	95
D: Other, please specify				3

Table 4.2

4.20 The responses reflect that people would rather see existing facilities improved (option B), but that this should be balanced with new provision where it is required (option C). Concerns were expressed under option D that new provision should not unnecessarily compete with existing facilities which might be underused. Both the consultation responses and the PPG17 assessment support a pragmatic approach to provision which recognises where existing facilities have extra capacity and can be maximised through improvements, or where new provision is required in areas not currently provided for.

4.21 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.22 When compared with the PPG17 Assessment recommended open space standards, there are significant shortfalls in the quantity of provision across both Christchurch and East Dorset. However, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments for both districts conclude that the majority of new housing will be provided through small schemes of less than 10 dwellings and that overall, there is very little accessible land available for new open space development. Therefore, there are unlikely to be many opportunities to include large open spaces on-site within new developments or within the urban areas, except through the provision of new neighbourhoods.

4.23 Two key issues raised by the evidence were *“most housing sites developed during the Core Strategy period will be too small to include on-site open space”* and *“is there sufficient land available to build new facilities and open space?”*. Key Issue 2 deals with the issue of on-site vs. off-site contributions but will need to be informed by an assessment of the actual potential within each LNA for policy to deliver new sites. Following this, proposed works need to be costed and used to inform a per-dwelling charge, and an implementation plan put in place. The 2007 PPG17 study and other internal countryside, recreation and open space plans will need to form the basis for this work.

4.24 The PPG17 study suggests that opportunities may exist to maximise the recreational value of existing provision by intensifying or broadening the range of uses on-site or consolidating facilities to free up land for different forms of recreation elsewhere. A future implementation and delivery plan will need to identify whether and where these opportunities exist.

4.25 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal

4.26 Option A: Negative score against objective 2 (wise use of land) as it would require development on scarce available land. There are so few suitable developable sites, the option might be undeliverable. New facilities are likely to increase visitor numbers and vehicle trips so scored negatively against objectives 6 (air pollution) and 7 (people's need to travel). Scored highly for objectives 12 (healthy lifestyles), 16 (community facilities), 17 (cultural activities) and 21 (public access to open space).

4.27 Option B: As for option A scores negatively against objectives 6 (air pollution) and 7 (people's need to travel) but to a lesser degree. Scores positively against objective 2 (wise use of land) as would not require new sites to be developed. In areas where no existing facilities exist, this option would be undeliverable. Scored highly for objectives 12 (healthy lifestyles), 16 (community facilities), 17 (cultural activities) and 21 (public access to open space).

4.28 Option C: As for options A and B, scored negatively against objectives 6 (air pollution) and 7 (people's need to travel). This option provides the most flexibility in terms of land take for new facilities and improvement of existing so is considered the most deliverable. Scored most highly of the three options for objectives 12 (healthy lifestyles), 16 (community facilities), 17 (cultural activities) and 21 (public access to open space).

4.29 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options

4.30 Core Strategy policy should plan for a mix of new provision and enhancements to existing sites which increase their attractiveness to users and their capacity for more intensive use by a greater population. The Councils should identify specific open space and recreation development opportunities prior to final adoption of the open space standards and the setting of a contribution charge. This may be best achieved through an implementation and delivery plan. Policies should be flexible enough to meet the specific needs of different settlements. A balanced approach to upgrading existing sites and providing new ones will make the best use of land and minimise the impacts associated with the construction of new facilities.

4.31 Options to address this issue are set out below under the consolidated Key Issue 1: "What open space and leisure provision should we provide to best meet identified local needs?".

Issue Identified at Issues and Options

SL4: "What policies should we adopt for water based recreation facilities such as marinas, moorings and associated club and training facilities?"

Issues and Options Consultation response

4.32 Number of responses received for each option:

Option	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Total
A: New or improved water recreation facilities should be encouraged only in locations where they would have no impact on the coastal landscape and habitats (for sufficiently large developments)	57	20	19	96

B: New or improved water recreation facilities should be supported even when they might have impacts on coastal landscape or habitats	20	52	17	89
C: New water recreation facilities should be resisted in order to protect the character of the coast, harbour and rivers	24	32	21	77
D: Other, please specify				4

Table 4.3

4.33 Responses to this issue did not indicate a very strong preference for any one of the options but the majority did support policies along the lines of option A which permit the development of new facilities, while affording protection to coastal landscapes, character or habitats. In principle this type of policy is well supported by national policy and good planning practice. Issues of maintained access, quality and use for all forms of recreation within Christchurch Harbour were raised. The Core Strategy should recognise that the harbour is under pressure from many different users.

4.34 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.35 This issue was identified through consultation and focuses primarily on Christchurch's coast, harbour and rivers. Riversides, harbour banks and coastal areas are important assets across both districts in terms of character, leisure and tourism and are therefore worthy of protection through planning policy. Policy L17 of the Christchurch Local Plan specifically sought to resist development of currently undeveloped riversides and harbour banks where it would be detrimental to the character and visual amenities of the waterside or would result in a loss of public access. Comments received through the consultation support a similar policy approach through the LDF, where development is permitted provided it does not harm these essential qualities. The 2003 Borough-wide Character Assessment for Christchurch identifies the key qualities of the Borough's major waterside locations and provides guidance on how to preserve their integrity. Emerging landscape character work produced by Dorset County Council is also expected to provide a useful assessment of harbour character that will inform future policy decisions.

4.36 Potential conflicts between the ecological status of these sites and recreation or commercial uses, was felt by a small number of consultees to be a threat. While the Core Strategy will provide protection for harbour habitats, and may facilitate commercial or leisure uses where they are appropriate, it will be unable to directly manage conflicts or prevent effects such as silting and coastal erosion unless specific development proposals are likely to result in those impacts. Policies in this regard are more appropriate for a development control style Development Plan Document (DPD). The Core Strategy should compliment and assist in delivering the objectives of the *Christchurch Harbour & Waterways Management Plan* (2009). The Managing and Safeguarding the Natural Environment Key Issues Paper deals with options for ecological protection and measures to ensure the continuing integrity of riverine, coastal and harbour habitats. The Design and Landscape Key Issues Paper addresses options to protect and enhance 'waterfront character'. A preferred Core Strategy option for this issue under this theme is not therefore considered necessary.

4.37 Options to address this issue are set out below under the consolidated Key Issue 1: "What open space and leisure provision should we provide to best meet identified local needs?"

4.38 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal

4.39 Option A: The option scored very highly for objectives 1 (protect habitats), 18 (protect heritage) and 22 (enhance landscape) as the policy would actively prevent harmful impacts. No significant negative impacts were identified.

4.40 Option B: This scored very negatively for objectives 1 (protect habitats), 18 (protect heritage) and 22 (enhance landscape) as the policy would allow harm to occur to valuable assets.

4.41 Option C: As for option A, scores were high for objectives 1 (protect habitats), 18 (protect heritage) and 22 (enhance landscape) as the policy would actively prevent harmful impacts. The option was the only one to score negatively for objectives 12 (healthy lifestyles), 17 (cultural activities) and 21 (public access to open space) as it would actively prevent development of new facilities.

4.42 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options

4.43 A standalone Core Strategy policy for water-based recreation facilities is not considered necessary. The issue will be adequately addressed through environmental protection criteria (set out in the Managing and Safeguarding the Natural Environment Key Issues Paper) and design criteria (set out in the Design and Landscape Key Issues Paper).

4.44 Options to address this issue are set out below under the consolidated Key Issue 1: “What open space and leisure provision should we provide to best meet identified local needs?”

Issues identified through consultation or the evidence base

Issue: “How do we ensure that developments which are too small to incorporate open space contribute towards provision?”

4.45 *This issue has already been addressed as part of the discussion on issue SL2 (above).*

Issue: “How can we ensure new facilities are accessible by a range of transport modes?”

4.46 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.47 The issue of locating new sites in areas which are easily accessible by a range of transport modes was specifically raised by the Highways Agency through the Issues and Options consultation. Emerging county-wide planning looking at a network of ‘green infrastructure’ aims to improve connectivity between sites thereby facilitating access by alternative methods to the car.

4.48 This issue is most applicable to major facilities with wide catchments which will attract a high number of visitors. Smaller open spaces and facilities are more difficult to plan for in this manner. Many open spaces are intended to serve only a small local community. Those financed through developer contributions should be located close enough to the contributing development(s) so that the residents of that development will make use of, and benefit from them. Their best location will be largely dependant on the location of the development, and of communities which are lacking in facilities. When combined with a paucity of available developable land suitable for open space provision, these constraints make it difficult to ensure that all small sites are accessible by multiple modes of travel.

4.49 Conclusions / Implications for Preferred Options

4.50 New facilities should be located so that they assist the creation of a network of accessible multi-functional sites and routes (green infrastructure). As with all forms of development, the Core Strategy should seek to promote access by alternative forms of transport to the car.

4.51 Options to address this issue are set out below under the Key Issue: “What open space and leisure provision should we provide to best meet identified local needs?”.

Issue: “Assessment of local needs should also consider strategic facilities located some distance from housing areas, or even outside of the districts.”

4.52 *This issue was identified in Section 3 above under Cross Border issues, and was recognised in the PPG17 Study.*

4.53 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.54 The PPG17 study does not factor ‘outside’ strategic facilities into the open space standards so it will be for the Councils to ensure they are considered where appropriate. This may mean in some cases that identified local need within an Local Needs Area is already partially met through an existing strategic facility (potentially outside of the districts), or that a new strategic facility, if located wisely, will serve several Local Needs Areas in the vicinity.

4.55 Conclusions / Implications for Preferred Options

4.56 Policies will need to recognise where strategic facilities, perhaps not themselves within an LNA, do actually meet local demand due to their large catchment.

4.57 Options to address this issue are set out below under the Key Issue: “What open space and leisure provision should we provide to best meet identified local needs?”.

Issue: “Is there sufficient land available to build new facilities and open space?”

4.58 *This issue has already been addressed as part of the discussion on issues SL1 and SL2 (above).*

Issue: “Should policy continue to protect all existing open space and designate further land as open space?”

4.59 *This issue was identified in Section 3 above and arose through the review of the Local Plan policies in the current plans.*

4.60 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.61 The community consultation and needs analysis within the 2007 PPG17 assessment placed significant weight on protecting and enhancing existing facilities, along with providing new ones. Much of the valuable character of Christchurch and East Dorset is enriched by the wide range and number of open spaces which act as tourist destinations and generators of income. The audit of provision identified many shortfalls in leisure space which the Councils

should address through a developer contributions policy. The assessment also showed that in quantity terms some settlements are sufficiently provided with open space of one type or another and meet the recommended standards. For example, residents within the majority of Local Need Areas have access to a far greater quantity of natural and semi-natural greenspace than the standard requires. It is important to recognise however, that these are 'minimum' standards and that exceeding them is a positive planning objective. An abundance of high quality natural open space for example should not be seen as an unnecessary 'surplus'; natural areas are essential assets for both districts and an integral part of their character. However, the report does suggest that there may be opportunities to combine uses on existing sites, thereby maximising their potential. Where more than the minimum standard of a particular open space type exists, the Councils should investigate whether any sites of that type have the potential for re-designation as a different type of open space or leisure facility.

4.62 An implementation and delivery plan could consider whether recreation provision could actually be improved by allowing redevelopment of existing open spaces. There may be examples where sites are genuinely surplus to requirement and could be released for development, the contributions from which could be used to significantly improve a site elsewhere. There may also be sites which could be best enhanced by allowing redevelopment of a small part of that site.

4.63 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options

4.64 Evidence suggests that all major existing sites should be retained and new sites identified. Most sites are already protected by policies in the Councils' Local Plans which will need to roll forward, but it may be necessary to allocate further sites where local need can be demonstrated.

4.65 Options to address this issue are set out below under the Key Issue 1: "What open space and leisure provision should we provide to best meet identified local needs?".

Options

Key Issue 1: “What open space and leisure provision should we provide to best meet identified local needs?”

Preferred Option pSL1: Adoption of local open space standards and a Local Need Area approach. Existing open space sites will be protected and, where appropriate, new sites designated.

The recommended open space standards and Local Need Area boundaries provided by the 2007 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study will be adopted for the Plan area (amended as necessary to take account of recent open space developments and new areas being considered for housing in the Core Strategy). Contributions will be directed towards meeting the quantity, quality and accessibility shortfalls for each of the Local Need Areas. The option will aim to deliver a combination of new facilities and improvements to existing ones, depending on the unique needs of the Local Need Area and the availability of land.

This option will protect existing open spaces and leisure facilities identified in the Local Plans and will not permit their loss unless their whole or partial redevelopment would result in greater benefits to the community than retaining that facility. Protected sites will be identified through the forthcoming Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document. The proposed open space ‘implementation and delivery plan’ will identify opportunities to maximise the use of existing sites and potentially re-designate sites for alternative leisure uses, in line with local needs.

Recommended Open Space Standards from the 2007 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study

Open space type	Recommended accessibility standard (straight line distance).	Recommended quantity standard (hectares per 1000 population)	Recommended quantity standard (square metres per person)	Total recommended provision
Recreation Grounds & Public Gardens (includes parks)	450m	0.5 ha	5.0 sq m	3.75 ha per 1000 population / 37.5 sq m per person
Amenity Green Space	450m	0.5 ha	5.0 sq m	
Natural & Semi-natural Green Space	600m	1.0 ha	10.0 sq m	
Active (outdoor) Sports Space	600m	1.25 ha	12.5 sq m	

Children & Young People's Space	450m	0.25 ha	2.5 sq m	
Allotments	600m	0.25ha	2.5 sq m	

Table 4.4

Issue Identified at Issues and Options

SL3 “How should we require the provision of open space for residents of new housing development?”

Issues and Options Consultation Response

4.66 Number of responses received for each option:

Option	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Total
A: Generally require on-site provision of open space as part of the development (for sufficiently large developments)	88	7	8	103
B: Generally require a financial contribution to the Council for development of open space away from the site	34	35	12	81
C: Specify criteria for how open space should be provided by different development types, sizes and locations	75	8	10	93
D: Other, please specify				10

Table 4.5

4.67 There was a preference for option A which would require open space to be provided on-site as part of new developments rather than through a commuted financial sum to the councils for off-site provision. Where on-site provision can meet local needs, this approach is certainly favoured by the Councils as it most closely links new provision with new housing. The responses also strongly support a criteria-based policy (suggested as option C) which explains clearly when and what open space contributions will be required.

4.68 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.69 Provision of open space on-site ensures a close link with new development. However, due to limited land and a potential need for large facilities this will not always be feasible or appropriate. For example, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments demonstrate that most sites built within the Core Strategy period are likely to be less than 10 dwelling schemes which will be unlikely to make a valuable on-site open space contribution. Amenity green space is the most likely form of provision to be included within a development but in the past has often consisted of small ‘left over’ patches of grass which are of little use for formal recreation. The 2007 PPG17 assessment found that some LNAs were not deficient in amenity green space and suggests that schemes in this area should not be required to provide it on-site, unless for landscaping. The assessment also identifies some need for facilities which can only be provided off-site and are unlikely to be fundable through individual developments. In these instances contributions from several developers would need to be pooled.

4.70 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal

4.71 Option A performed best for objective 7 (people’s need to travel) as provision located directly within or adjacent new development would not require residents to travel, which in turn scores well under objective 1 (protect habitats) and 6 (reduce pollution) due to the related reduction in emissions. Option B did not score as well under the same objectives as residents of new development would need to travel to off-site open space, may encourage car use. Option A also scored most highly for objective 21 (public access) as it would guarantee access to public open space whereas option B could not guarantee access for the residents of contributing developments. Both options A and B raise a concern under objective 13 as they would require open space development on land which could otherwise be developed for affordable housing. The clear sustainability benefits of either option A or B, in terms of integrated open space provision, are felt to outweigh any identified negative impacts. As option C does not propose any policy measures itself, no negative impacts were identified.

4.72 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options

4.73 On-site contributions performed best through the Sustainability Appraisal. However, given the shortage of available land for large developments and the difficulties of incorporating valuable open space within small schemes, it is sensible to adopt a policy approach which tailors the type and location of new provision to each settlement’s needs, the level of development within them and the likely size of individual schemes.

4.74 Shortfalls in amenity green space and children’s play for example, are more likely to be adequately met through on-site schemes whereas active sports facilities such as pitches will require financial contributions towards off-site facilities. Policy should aim to deliver an appropriate mix and should recognise the unique needs of the LNAs.

4.75 Options to address this issue are set out below under the Key Issue: “How should a developer contributions policy apply to new development?”.

Issue: “How will developer contributions be calculated and justified by evidence?”

4.76 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.77 Policies within the current Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plans, and indeed most policies elsewhere in Dorset and across England, are based on a developer contributions policy which requires new housing to provide open space to meet the needs of its occupants. The current Local Plan policies have not been wholly successful in delivering sufficient open space and leisure improvements in step with new development. Existing policies are based

on the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) Six Acre Standard which are now considered to be out of date and due for replacement with locally derived standards. While the policies deal adequately with on-site contributions within large developments, they do not provide robust figures upon which to base a financial contribution. The Core Strategy should therefore aim to address these deficiencies.

4.78 *Types of contributing development:*

4.79 Residents living in new housing development unarguably place added pressure on existing open spaces and leisure facilities. A residential contributions policy has long been established through the current Local Plans and is strongly advocated by PPG17 and Sport England guidance. Core Strategy policies should therefore apply to residential development.

4.80 Non-residential development such as offices, warehouses and retail also place pressure on leisure provision, although to a far lesser degree than housing. Employees may use open space or sports facilities before and after work or during lunch times. Core Strategy policies should therefore consider applying a contributions policy to commercial development, although the lesser demand that they actually create should be assessed and factored into the policy.

4.81 *The level of financial contributions:*

4.82 Determining the cost of meeting local need

4.83 The 2007 PPG17 assessment provides the Councils with baseline information on the range, type and amount of each type of open space in each identified Local Need Area, and the provision standards which the Councils should aim to meet. To calculate an appropriate charge for new development, the Councils need to determine:

- specific opportunities (or at least examples which would best meet local need) within each LNA for new and/or enhanced provision
- the cost of delivering an appropriate level of new provision to meet the demands of additional population up to 2026
- the likely increase in population within each LNA up to 2026

4.84 This information will allow for calculation of per-dwelling and/or per-hectare charges, tailored to the needs of each LNA. Policy will need to consider how the level of contributions affect development viability, especially in light of the range of other infrastructure development may be asked to contribute towards.

4.85 Additional demand for open space: residential development

4.86 National policy Circular 05/2005 *Planning Obligations* advises that contributions should be '*fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development*'. New housing will create different degrees of demand for open space depending on the number of people who are likely to be living in it. The 2001 Census provides data to calculate average occupancy rates for different dwelling types and sizes (see table 4 later in this section for a summary of these figures). These rates can be used to inform a developer contributions policy which sets levels of contribution commensurate with the likely increase in population from different housing types.

4.87 Additional demand for open space: commercial development

4.88 Employees create less demand for open space compared to residents of new housing. This is because they are only likely to use facilities during an hour before work, an hour at lunch time, up to 2 hours after work and only on weekdays, compared with residents who may use facilities during a period of up to 15 hours a day and 7 days a week. Also, 2001 Census data indicates that approximately 50% of all working residents in each authority area both live and work in the districts (and should not therefore be factored into the calculations twice). To recognise this far lesser demand, a 'discount' rate for commercial developments of 90% (compared to residential) is deemed appropriate.

4.89 The proposed employment urban extension at Ferndown Industrial Estate will generate new demand for social, sport and leisure facilities. This extension presents an opportunity to provide a dedicated support building to the industrial estate incorporating meeting spaces, cafeteria facilities and gym or squash court facilities.

4.90 ***Other sources of funding:***

4.91 Developer contributions are not the only source of funding for open space and recreation improvements. The Councils will each continue to have internal budgets and access to occasional central Government, Sport England, Lottery or other grants throughout the Core Strategy period. However, these sources have not historically provided sufficient funding to meet demand for open space and are under continual threat from budget cutbacks. Past experience demonstrates clearly that local authority budgets and external grants will not be nearly enough to provide sufficient open space and recreation provision to meet the demands of development over the Core Strategy period.

4.92 Funding acquired through the Dorset Heathland Interim Planning Framework (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) and emerging Green Infrastructure policy could potentially fund open space and recreation improvements. However, contributions secured through the Dorset Heathlands Interim Planning Framework will not be suitable for improvements to existing open space or new local provision unless it provides heathland mitigation.

4.93 **Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options**

4.94 The PPG17 assessment provides a robust evidence base upon which to determine a developer contributions policy based on locally-derived standards and the assessment of local needs. A contributions policy could apply to both residential and commercial development and should recognise the respective demands they create for open space. The evidence suggests a discounting rate of 90% for commercial development (compared with residential).

4.95 Developer contributions should not be the sole source of income funding new and enhanced open spaces; they should be complimented by other sources of funding where it is available.

4.96 Options to address this issue are set out below under Key Issue 2: "How should a developer contributions policy apply to new development?"

Issue: Above what threshold should a developer contributions policy apply to residential and/or commercial developments?

4.97 **Consideration of Evidence and Policy**

4.98 Residential development

4.99 The current Local Plans take a slightly different approach to open space requirements; Christchurch (policy L20) does not set any development size threshold, while East Dorset (Policy RCDEV2) defines different thresholds and a set of open space standards. Sport England advise that all new housing development (of one dwelling net gain or more) potentially places added pressure on open spaces and leisure facilities (*Planning for Sport & Active Recreation: Objectives & Opportunities*, 2005). Cumulatively, 100 single dwelling (net gain) developments will exert the same demand on open space as a 100 dwelling development. Therefore, Core Strategy policies should set a 1 net dwelling threshold for residential development. Setting standards will involve considering thresholds for development viability.

4.100 Policy could also require developments involving the creation of new bed spaces (as part of dwelling extensions) to make a contribution towards open space, based on the assumption that extra bed spaces generate capacity for extra population within a dwelling, thereby creating an additional demand on open space. This approach is less well established through current practice however, and is considered by the Councils to be an excessive application of contributions policy. The large volume of applications for household extensions and the subsequent need to administer section 106 agreements would place an administration burden on local authority planning departments which would be unlikely to be resourced.

4.101 Commercial development

4.102 Different types of business employ considerably different numbers of employees per hectare and will therefore not create equal demand for open space. However, due to the low levels of usage attributable to employees of commercial premises, and the difficulties in determining the number of likely employees at the outline planning application stage, it is considered that Open Space policies could be applied within the Core Strategy to commercial development over 1,000 sqm floorspace threshold, and this will be considered as Alternative Preferred Option HE 10 below.

4.103 **Conclusions / Implications for Preferred Options**

4.104 All residential development which results in 1 dwelling or more net gain creates a demand for open space and should therefore make a contribution. Larger areas of commercial developments could contribute to open space requirements; larger commercial developments over a certain floorspace size threshold could also contribute.

4.105 Options to address this issue are set out below under the Key Issue: “How should a developer contributions policy apply to new development?”.

Options

Key Issue 2: How should a developer contributions policy apply to new development?

Preferred Option HE 9 : Developer contributions for the provision of open space will be applied to residential units of 1 net gain or greater. The Core Strategy will include a developer contributions policy which seeks to deliver new open space and enhancements to existing facilities in step with new residential development. Funding acquired through developer contributions will be complimented by other sources of funding where it can be secured.

.Where appropriate in terms of location and the nature of the development, and where a local need for small scale facilities has been identified, an on-site contribution will be preferable. It may be appropriate for earlier developments to provide the land upon which later developments pay for structures or equipment. The policy will aim to deliver a combination of new facilities and improvements to existing ones, depending on the unique needs of the Local Need Area (LNA) in which new development takes place and the availability of land.

Contributions commensurate with demand:

Population increase will be used to determine the relative demand created by different developments. For residential development, contributions will be on a per-dwelling basis and the level of contribution will be higher for larger housing than for small houses or flats; this will be determined by the average occupancy rates (where the average occupancy acts as a multiplier reflecting population increase):

Dwelling type and size	Average occupancy (persons per dwelling)
1 bedroom flat	1.1
1 or 2 bedroom house / 2 bedroom flat	1.5
3 or 4 bedroom house or flat	2.3
5+ bedroom house or flat	2.8

Table 4.6

(Average dwelling occupancy rates source: Office of National Statistics 2006 household projections)

Delivering new and enhanced provision:

To provide an evidence base upon which to base the contributions policy the Councils will produce an 'implementation and delivery plan' which will include a list of the priority needs and objectives for each LNA and specific opportunities for new or enhanced provision. The plan will provide costs for establishing and maintaining a range of formal and informal leisure facilities, which will then be factored into the calculation of per-dwelling (residential) and per-hectare (commercial) developer contributions. The plan will also provide developers with clarity about which form of contribution they will be required to make. Applicants should consider how their development can meet the identified priorities, either through on-site provision within the development, or through a financial contribution.

Location of new provision:

When considering sites for new open space and leisure provision, priority will be given to sites which are easily accessible by a range of transport modes and which can be integrated into a network of green infrastructure. Transport options being proposed through the Transport Key Issues Paper, aim to reduce people's need to travel by car and to guide new development towards accessible locations (such as town centres) and major transport corridors. Issue: How should policy deliver a network of green infrastructure? in this chapter provides options for integrating open space policy with green infrastructure and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace. Sites for new open space provision will be identified through an implementation and delivery plan and allocated through the forthcoming Site-Specific Allocations Development Plan Document.

4.106 Alternative Preferred Option HE 10: Developer contributions will be applied to commercial developments over 1,000sqm gross internal floorspace

As Option HE 9 and developer contributions will also be applied to commercial developments of over 1,000sqm gross internal floor space for B1, B2 and B8 uses and hotels.

A discounting rate of 90% will be applied to commercial development (compared with residential) to recognise that employees create less demand than residents. The contribution will then be charged at a per-sqm rate.

Preferred Option HE 11: use a standard contribution across both districts and spend contributions anywhere in the districts.

4.107 The same as Option HE 0 but contributions would be spent anywhere in the districts, rather than just within the LNA in which the development takes place.

Non-Preferred Option HE 12: use a standard contribution across both districts and contributions spent within the Local Need Area of the contributing development

4.108 . The Local Needs Areas were identified effectively as catchment areas for general open space provision. However, they are not definitive as different open spaces and recreational activities have different catchment areas. If contributions are collected and spent within a Local Needs Area they are simply seen as being directly related to the development. However, development is likely to be focused in confined areas and this could result in disproportionate levels of contributions being collected for different LNAs. This could prevent good opportunities for provision being provided as contributions would not be available, whereas problems of delivery in the LNA could mean that contributions are unspent.

Issue identified through consultation or the evidence base

“How can open space policies also provide green infrastructure and alternative green space to mitigate recreation pressures on the Dorset Heaths and New Forest heathland areas?”

Issue and Options Consultation response

4.109 This issue was not directly asked through the consultation but was identified by a number of consultees in their response. Several developers expressed concern that because of their similar nature many open spaces provided through new development will also provide a function as green infrastructure or Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs). Developments should not therefore be charged twice if a single contribution could serve multiple purposes. Natural England requested that the Core Strategy should integrate evidence and work being carried out for the Dorset Heathlands Interim Planning Framework and emerging joint Development Plan Document with policy on Green Infrastructure. Government Office for the South West suggested that the Core Strategy should identify potential locations and connecting routes for Green Infrastructure and plan strategically for its delivery.

4.110 In response to questions under the Transport theme, the South West Regional Assembly highlighted the importance of Green Infrastructure as a means of encouraging travel by other means than the car.

4.111 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.112 Green Infrastructure (GI) is a relatively new concept and is not addressed by the current Local Plans. It has been promoted in the emerging PPS Consultation: Planning for a Healthy and Natural Environment, where the first national policy for green Infrastructure is given. Policies proposed in the now revoked RSS required local authorities to develop policies to deliver green infrastructure, which it defined as “*strategic networks of accessible, multifunctional sites (including parks, woodland, informal open spaces, nature reserves and historic sites) as well as linkages (such as river corridors and floodplains, wildlife corridors and greenways)*”. It therefore includes the sort of formal and informal spaces delivered through open space planning policies, as well as larger sites delivered through the Dorset Heathland Interim Planning Framework. This close inter-relationship suggests that green infrastructure policy should be closely integrated with open space and heathland policy.

4.113 A partnership of the five local authorities in South East Dorset (Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch, East Dorset and Purbeck) commissioned Land Use Consultants to produce the *South East Dorset Green Infrastructure – Evidence and Opportunities Study (2009)* which, at the time of writing this paper, had been received in draft. The study proposes some general principles and site-specific opportunities for GI, in particular the provision of a strategic country park along the River Stour to serve the sub region, and reinforcing the strategic Castleman Trailway routes and key nodes and recreational destinations in the sub region. Key Recommendations of relevance to the Core Strategy include:

- Prioritise GI opportunities for delivery
- Identify key delivery partners for each priority
- Consider funding options, including both capital funding and revenue funding
- Define GI tariff

4.114 The partner authorities are currently considering options for a Green Infrastructure Strategy which will inform local authority planning documents.

4.115 *Heathland mitigation:*

4.116 To mitigate the harm caused by recreation to the protected Dorset Heaths, the Dorset Heathlands Interim Planning Framework (2007-2009, extended 2010-2011) requires all residential development (of one unit net gain and above) within 5km of the heaths to contribute a financial sum to a joint projects fund managed by the five partner Councils (including Christchurch and East Dorset). Within 400m of the heaths, harm cannot be mitigated and therefore no increase in housing is permitted. This approach is expected to continue in some form under the emerging Joint Development Plan Document which will replace the Interim Planning Framework. Provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs) is one form of mitigation measure aimed at relieving pressure on protected heaths. Research conducted to inform the Development Plan Document argues that alternative sites should offer conditions similar to those users would find on the heaths eg. large natural and relatively wild open spaces with the freedom to let dogs of the lead (source: *Access Patterns in South-east Dorset. The Dorset Household Survey 2008: Consequences for Future Housing and Greenspace Provision*, Footprint Ecology, December 2008). Formal open spaces and recreation facilities are highly unlikely to sufficiently replicate essential heathland features, and therefore will not provide a dual function as SANGs.

4.117 *Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options*

4.118 Due to the close relationship between open space and heathland policy, and the role of green infrastructure as a holistic approach to green space, all three policy themes should be integrated. The location and nature of sites delivered through open space and heathland policies should reflect the objectives of green infrastructure. Heathland mitigation may need to retain some autonomy however, to ensure that contributions are only spent on projects which effectively mitigate development pressures.

Options

Key Issue 3: How should policy deliver a network of Green Infrastructure?

Preferred Option HE 13: Creation of a Green Infrastructure network using a shared open space/recreation and heathlands mitigation contributions policy.

Where appropriate, developer contributions acquired through local open space policies and the Dorset Heathlands Interim Planning Framework/Development Plan Document will be used to develop a strategic green infrastructure network. Developments will be expected to incorporate elements of green infrastructure into their design such as ‘permeability’, with green foot and cycle paths running through the development, connecting with existing routes wherever possible. A new separate charge for green infrastructure will not be levied through Section 106 or through a tariff based approach. Instead, contributions acquired through open space policy and heathland mitigation and supported by local authority budgets will provide the necessary funding.

This approach will recognise the unique situation in Dorset where large open spaces are already being funded through an existing developer contributions policy aimed at diverting recreational pressures away from the sensitive Dorset Heaths. The focus of the Joint Heathland Interim Planning Framework/Development Plan Document upon mitigating recreational pressures will be preserved. The mitigation benefits of sites funded through the Interim Planning Framework/Development Plan Document will be enhanced by Green Infrastructure policy through improved connectivity with other open spaces, thereby promoting informal recreation (such as cycling and dog walking) and facilitating access by alternative forms of transport to the car. Green infrastructure will also be designed to protect and enhance sites of biodiversity value.

4.119 Non Preferred **Option HE 14: Establish a separate contributions policy for Green Infrastructure.** This option would implement a new separate charge for green infrastructure through Section 106 or through a tariff based approach on the basis that local open space policies, local authority budgets and the Dorset Heathlands Interim Planning Framework will be insufficient to deliver the required level of green infrastructure. Examples of infrastructure that might not be fundable through existing mechanisms include connecting routes which do not fall under either ‘open space’ or ‘heathland mitigation’. Proposals for green infrastructure would be costed up and used to inform a per-dwelling or per-hectare charge to new development.

4.120 Reason for this being the Non-Preferred Option: Preferred Option HE 13 is proposed on the basis that development is already expected to contribute towards open space and heathland mitigation and that these two policy strands should be sufficient to deliver a level of green infrastructure commensurate with the pressures created by new development. Given the significant shortfalls in open space identified in Christchurch and East Dorset by the 2007 PPG17 Assessment and the emphasis on improving green spaces proposed by Options HE9 to HE 13, the Councils will already be delivering green infrastructure improvements without need for an additional charge.

5 Implementation

Infrastructure	Timing	Funding Sources	Responsibility	Delivery Documents
Provision of new or upgraded sports and leisure facilities	Uncertain	Developer contributions, Sport England, National Lottery, other grants	Local Planning Authority, Town and Parish Councils, Sports clubs	Core Strategy
Provision of SANGS	Uncertain	Developer contributions	LPA, Land owners, developers, Natural England	Core Strategy Heathland Mitigation Strategy
Provision of Green Infrastructure	3 – 15 years	Developer contributions	LPA, land owners, Primary Care Trust, Forestry Commission, Natural England	Core Strategy, Green Infrastructure SPG

Table 5.1