

Leisure and Community Facilities

Policy Title

Policy No.

3.2 RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

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3.3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

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3. Leisure and Community Facilities

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 Access to, and enjoyment, of leisure opportunities is important to the quality of life. Leisure centres and sports fields provide a wide range of facilities for active recreation as well as opportunities for social and community functions. Public open space within or adjacent to housing or employment areas provides an opportunity for residents and employees to enjoy more passive recreational activities like walking or sitting in a pleasant, open, environment. These open spaces often also provide opportunities for children's play, from small "kickabout" areas to fully equipped playgrounds. They also provide visual breaks in the built form adding considerably to the amenity and character of the area.

3.1.2 Government guidance on sport and recreation¹ states that local plans provide the appropriate context in which to assess local needs for recreational facilities; identify deficiencies in the provision of public open space; encourage the development of suitable sites and types of site for additional sport and recreation and open space provision; ensure that provision is properly co-ordinated with other forms of development and other land-use policies; and protect open space and other land with recreational or amenity value. Policies in local plans are encouraged to give full weight to sport, recreation and public open space needs, and where appropriate should encourage the development of sporting facilities. The Government attaches great importance to the retention of recreational and amenity open space in urban areas. Demand is concentrated there, and it is important that people, particularly children and the elderly should have access to open space close to where they live. Once built upon, open space is likely to be lost to the community forever. One of the best means of protection is to demonstrate that there is (or would result from its development), a deficiency in accessible public open space in the area.

3.1.3 Recreational activities are very popular in the Borough. The Borough's Recreation Strategy² has identified an above average participation rate in many outdoor sports and leisure activities. The Borough Council has a dual role to play in recreation provision through its powers as a local planning authority and its role in the provision and management of facilities, either directly or through supporting and assisting other groups such as private developers, clubs and voluntary organisations, schools and Parish Councils.

3.1.4 The Council seeks to retain and enhance community facilities within the Borough. These include health, social, religious, educational and arts facilities which serve the needs of the Borough's residents including those from minorities, people with disabilities, the young and elderly people. Community facilities are provided by a wide range of bodies including the Borough Council, Parish Councils, health and education authorities, voluntary organisations and the private sector.

3.1.5 'The arts' covers a range of activities including music, dance, drama, heritage, architecture, painting, sculpture, photography, graphic and craft arts, design, motion pictures, television and radio. Facilities for enjoying and gaining access to 'the arts' is seen by the Council as a very important aspect of the quality of life experienced by the Borough's residents. In September 1992, the Leisure Services Board adopted a Strategy for the Development of Arts in the Royal Borough until 2005. Amongst its aims, the Strategy seeks to ensure that adequate facilities (including buildings) are readily available; supports community-based arts initiatives which seek to strengthen community life; and encourages all those involved in arts provision within the Borough to work together to improve the quality and reach of the services being offered.

3.1.6 Examples of community facilities covered by policies in this chapter are day-care centres for pre-school children and the elderly, schools, hospital and health facilities, churches, public

¹ Department of the Environment - Planning Policy Guidance 17: Sport and Recreation, September 1991.

² Cobham Resource Consultants - Recreation Strategy for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, September 1990, (superseded in 1997 by The Borough Leisure Strategy, RBWM)

halls, meeting halls, places for public religious worship, libraries, theatres, cinemas, museums, arts centres and Citizens Advice Bureau. The planning policies in this chapter seek to provide the framework within which community facilities may be developed.



3.1.7 Key Objectives

- (i) To protect and enhance existing public open space
- (ii) To set standards for public open space provision to be met in new developments.
- (iii) To identify localised areas of public open space deficiency and to make proposals for improving public open space in these areas.
- (iv) To improve the standard and range of recreational facilities in existing residential areas.
- (v) To seek opportunities for new outdoor recreation facilities and to encourage additional all-weather playing surfaces
- (vi) To identify suitable sites for new indoor recreation facilities.
- (vii) To improve the public footpath network as a means of pedestrian access to areas of public open spaces, children's playgrounds, the open countryside and the Thames.
- (viii) To improve the provision of cycling facilities within the Borough
- (ix) To encourage the provision of facilities for the development of arts within the Borough.

¹ For example the Final Report of the New Towns Committee, 1946.

- (x) To protect and enhance the existing range of community facilities within the Borough.

3.2 RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Standards of Useable Public Open Space Provision

3.2.1 Government guidelines have in the past suggested a standard of 10 acres (4 ha) per 1,000 population to be realistic in accommodating the needs and demands of a new incoming population¹ This standard formed the basis of development within Bracknell New Town and now forms the basis for open space standards in adjoining authorities at Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Districts.

3.2.2 The standard of 4.3 ha per 1,000 population has been endorsed by Inspectors, following Inquiries in Bracknell Forest District into the North Bracknell Local Plan (which adjoins the Royal Borough) and the Sandhurst/Crowthorne Local Plan. The latter plan covered an area not including any of the original Bracknell New Town, but the Inspector came to the conclusion that the guideline was still applicable, so long as it was applied with flexibility and with regard to existing open space in the vicinity.

3.2.3 This standard of 4.3 ha per 1,000 is also considered appropriate within the Royal Borough to ensure a high standard of amenity in new housing developments. This overall standard is broken down into the following categories:

- | | | |
|----|--|--------|
| 1. | Formal sports provision
(pitches, courts, greens,
tracks etc.) | 1.8 ha |
| 2. | Informal open spaces for
passive recreation, children's
play spaces including
unequipped Local Areas for
Play, equipped playgrounds
and casual 'kickabout'
areas for children's play | 2.5 ha |

4.3 ha

The standard for children's play and formal sports provision is based on the standard set by the National Playing Fields Association for active outdoor playing space¹. The sports provision standard is endorsed by the Playing Pitch Strategy adopted by the Sports Council, National Playing Fields Association and the Central Council of Physical Recreation². This standard excludes areas of informal open space. The level of participation in passive recreational activity is higher than that for formal sports and is an important element within housing developments, especially when considered against the increasing number of smaller households in smaller dwellings with correspondingly smaller private garden space. Appendix 1 assesses the existing levels of provision for the main urban areas. It shows the shortfall in the existing level of provision compared to that required by the standards set out above.

3.2.4 In addition to the above quantitative standard, an accessibility assessment is considered important in ensuring a fair distribution of public open space which should be within a short walk from every home. The NPFA suggest 400 metres as a maximum for local equipped play areas and this is also considered to be a realistic distance that people will be prepared to walk to informal open spaces. This distance relates to safe walking distance which means main roads will act as a barrier to accessibility unless a pedestrian crossing facility exists. The careful location of access points to the area of open space can also be used to improve accessibility.

Protection of Urban Open Spaces

POLICY R1

THE COUNCIL WILL NOT APPROVE PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF EXISTING AREAS OF IMPORTANT URBAN OPEN LAND IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, AND OTHER AREAS OF OPEN SPACE WHICH ARE IMPORTANT TO THE VISUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF URBAN AREAS UNLESS:

- 1) THEY ARE REPLACED BY NEW PROVISION WHICH IS AT LEAST COMPARABLE IN TERMS OF FACILITIES, AMENITY AND LOCATION; OR**

- 2) THEY CAN BEST BE RETAINED AND ENHANCED THROUGH THE REDEVELOPMENT OF A SMALL PART OF THE SITE.**

THE ABOVE EXCEPTIONS WILL NOT APPLY TO LAND WHICH IS CONSIDERED BY THE COUNCIL TO BE OF IRREPLACEABLE AMENITY VALUE AND, IN ANY OTHER CASE, THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT TO BE SATISFIED THAT A RETENTION OF THE ENTIRE SITE FOR RECREATION OR COMMUNITY USE IS NOT FEASIBLE.

3.2.5 Policy R1 seeks to retain open land in the urban areas which meets the recreational needs of the community. It is recognised that these 'green spaces' are also very important in maintaining the visual and environmental quality of urban areas, and often provide wildlife habitats. Other areas of open land, whilst not having public access, are also considered to contribute to the environmental quality of the urban area and will be protected under this policy. These areas include allotments, private playing fields, school playing fields and grounds, detached school playing fields, cemeteries, and other privately owned amenity space which contributes to the visual character of the urban area. PPG17 also emphasises the importance attached to the retention of recreational and amenity open space in urban areas and the contribution which such open space can make to the quality of life, irrespective of whether there is public access to it. Policy EN1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan, 1991 - 2006, seeks to protect and enhance the character and quality of the environment in towns, villages and other built up areas, including through the protection and enhancement of town and village greens and all open land important to the character of settlements. Policy R4 of the Structure Plan specifically seeks to protect sports grounds and public open spaces. Policy R1 is based on the advice in PPG17 and is in conformity with Structure Plan Policies EN1 and R4. Applications for development of any open space in the Borough will, therefore, be considered in relation to the above Policy and Policies EN 1 and R4 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991 - 2006.

3.2.6 Appendix 3 shows the existing provision of urban open space in the Borough with public access. The Borough Council attaches great importance to the retention of these recreational

¹National Playing Fields Association, 1992, The NPFA "6 Acre Standard".

²The Sports Council, The National Playing Fields Association and the Central Council of Physical Recreation, 1991, The Playing Pitch Strategy.

areas. It is important that local residents, especially children and the elderly, can have access to open space close to their homes. In a Borough where new development is largely restricted to the existing built up areas, pressures to develop open areas within towns can be expected to increase. The Borough Council will resist these pressures and attach a high priority to protecting open spaces available for public access from development or change of use.

3.2.7 A number of schools in the Borough have been identified as having playing fields surplus to requirements. It is considered appropriate to retain a recreational use on part of the surplus playing fields which would be of benefit to the school and the wider community. Government advice¹ in those situations where a playing field is not required for its original purpose is that, where possible, they should meet the growing need for recreational land in the wider community. The provision of synthetic surfaces capable of intensive use for multi-sports is also encouraged. School sites with independent access to their playing fields are particularly suitable for the provision of dual-use sports facilities.

3.2.8 Allotments are also an important component of recreation provision. Responsibility for allotment provision lies mainly with the Parish Councils, and in the urban areas of Windsor and Maidenhead, the Borough Council. Allotment land is predominantly found within or adjoining settlements for ease of access. They are often part of the established character and amenities of settlements and provide an important facility for local residents.

3.2.9 The Borough Council does not want to sterilise areas of under-utilised open space which currently do not have great recreational value, or school playing fields which have been declared surplus, or allotment land which is surplus to requirements, where there is a proven need for a recreational or social/community facility in the area.

~~Public Open Space Provision in Existing Residential Areas~~

~~POLICY R2~~

~~THE BOROUGH COUNCIL IN CONJUNCTION WITH PARISH COUNCILS WILL IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO OVERCOME DEFICIENCIES IN PUBLIC OPEN SPACE PROVISION BY THE FOLLOWING MEASURES:~~

- ~~1) ENHANCING AND UPGRADING EXISTING FACILITIES; AND~~**
- ~~2) IMPROVING ACCESS TO EXISTING PUBLIC OPEN SPACE THROUGH SEEKING MORE OR BETTER SITED ENTRANCE POINTS; PEDESTRIAN CROSSING FACILITIES ON MAIN ROADS IN THE VICINITY OF CHILDREN'S PLAYSACES AND KICKABOUT AREAS; AND IMPROVEMENTS TO, AND PROVISION OF, FOOTPATH AND CYCLEPATHS LINKING PUBLIC OPEN SPACES WITH HOMES, SCHOOLS AND SHOPS; AND~~**
- ~~3) ENCOURAGING THE DUAL USE OF SCHOOL PLAYING FIELDS OR THE JOINT PROVISION OF PLAY EQUIPMENT FOR SCHOOL/PUBLIC USE.~~**

~~3.2.10~~ ~~An accessibility study in the urban areas of the Borough has identified residential areas which do not meet the accessibility standard for equipped children's play areas and informal open space of 400 metres safe walking distance from each home. Many areas of the Borough contain very low density housing with large gardens. These areas were considered to have sufficient private open space and general mobility to be excluded from this accessibility study. The main areas, identified in Appendix 3, where deficiencies in accessibility were identified are:~~

~~Maidenhead~~ ~~Belmont/College areas; south of Altwood Road; Boyn Hill area; Farmers Way Estate; Meadowood Estate; Clivedon View Estate*; Cranbrook Drive Estate*; Aidebury Road Estate*; Queensway Estate*; Highway/St Marks area; North Town*; area between Blackamoor Lane and Ray Park Avenue; area north of Ray Mill Road East and east of Sheephouse Road.~~

~~Windsor~~ ~~Ruddlesway Estate; Clewer Green area; Bolton Road area; Guards Road area.~~

¹Department of the Environment - Planning Policy Guidance 17: Sport and Recreation, September 1991.

~~Ascot / Sunninghill North Ascot, Cavendish Meads Estate, area east of Brookenhurst Road and Bouldish Farm Estate, South Ascot.~~

~~* Areas deficient in access to equipped play areas only.~~

~~3.2.11 Both Maidenhead and Windsor have large areas of informal open space within or adjacent to the urban areas where the public can freely enter. A lot of this land is owned by the Crown (e.g. Windsor Great Park) or the National Trust (e.g. Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead Thicket). However, the majority of this land is outside the urban areas and its accessibility is largely limited to residential areas on the fringe of Maidenhead and Windsor, and to those with access to a car. Accessibility to formal outdoor sport facilities is best assessed at the scale of the individual town, as people are generally prepared to travel further to these facilities. In both Maidenhead and Windsor virtually the entire population is within 1.5 km of a public playing field, tennis court or bowling green.~~

Public Open Space Provision in New Developments

POLICY R3

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS TO MAKE APPROPRIATE PROVISION FOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE IN ACCORDANCE WITH A MINIMUM STANDARD OF 4.3 HA PER 1,000 POPULATION.

POLICY R4

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS TO ALLOCATE A MINIMUM PROVISION OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE ON SITE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS:

SIZE OF SITE	0.4 Ha-1Ha	> 1Ha
MINIMUM % OF GROSS SITE AREA TO BE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE	CHILDREN'S PLAYSPACE ONLY (POLICY R5)	15%

THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE SHOULD BE CONTAINED WITHIN ONE AREA AND NOT SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE SITE.

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL SEEK A CAPITALISED MAINTENANCE PAYMENT FOR THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE.

POLICY R5

WITHIN NEW DEVELOPMENTS OF FAMILY HOUSES ON SITES LARGER THAN 0.4 HA OR 15 UNITS (WHICHEVER IS THE SMALLEST), THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE, IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS, A LOCAL AREA FOR PLAY (LAP).

WITHIN NEW DEVELOPMENTS OF FAMILY HOUSES ON SITES LARGER THAN 0.8 HA OR 50 UNITS, (WHICHEVER IS THE SMALLEST), THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE, IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS, IN ADDITION TO ON SITE LOCAL AREAS FOR PLAY, A LOCAL EQUIPPED AREA FOR PLAY (LEAP).

THE STANDARDS SET OUT IN APPENDIX 2 WILL BE APPLIED BUT THIS PROVISION MAY FORM PART OF THE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE PROVISION REQHRED BY POLICY R4.

~~**POLICY R6**~~

~~**THE FOLLOWING AREAS WILL BE SOUGHT FOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AS PART OF IDENTIFIED HOUSING SITES:**~~

- ~~1) **ALTWOOD CREST HOUSE, CANNON LANE, MAIDENHEAD** **0.4 HA**~~
- ~~2) **KING EDWARD VH HOSPITAL, ST LEONARDS ROAD, WINDSOR** **0.2 HA**~~
- ~~3) **LITTLE LOWBROOK FARM, COX GREEN** **1.0 HA**~~
- ~~4) **LAND TO REAR OF ALMA ROAD/CLARENCE ROAD, WINDSOR** **0.4 HA**~~

~~5) KENNEL GREEN NURSERY, BURLEIGH ROAD, NORTH ASCOT~~

~~1.0 HA~~

~~6) LAND TO REAR OF SUTHERLANDS CHASE, NORTH ASCOT~~

~~1.0 HA¹~~

~~3.2.12 Policies R4 and R5 set out the minimum requirements for on-site provision of public open space. This is set out for sites over 1 ha as the proportion of the site required for public open space. This approach is considered simpler to implement and enables a developer to plan costings more accurately from an earlier stage.~~

~~3.2.13 Provision on-site to the full standard of 4.3 ha/1,000 population is only likely to be practicable on very large sites, beyond the size of any anticipated in this plan. However, on sites over 1 ha the number of houses proposed will enable a useable area of land to be required on site. On these sites, on-site provision for formal outdoor sports provision will not normally be required. The total open space area should be split between children's playspace and informal open space as appropriate. On small sites of less than 1 ha, or on larger ones where only a part of the full requirement can be provided, the shortfall can be made up by means of a pro rata financial contribution towards off site provision by the Council.~~



~~3.2.14 In the past the majority of housing completions have taken place on small sites where no provision for public open space has been required due to the impracticality of providing areas of a meaningful size to be of any real benefit to residents. Such a situation is clearly inequitable and has resulted in the accumulation of a large number of dwellings making no contribution towards the~~

~~open space requirements of their residents. The economic climate prevailing at present, and likely to continue for the foreseeable future, means that local authorities will find it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to make good existing and future shortfalls of public open space provision. Indeed the Council should not be expected to provide open space that is required as result of new development. It is reasonable to expect all new development to contribute to the provision of open space which is required to meet the needs of that development. This will ensure that public open space is provided and paid for by the developers (and subsequent occupiers) of new dwellings rather than the burden falling on local taxpayers generally.~~

~~3.2.15 The total amount of public open space required on a site will be assessed by applying the overall standard of 4.3 ha/1,000 population to the expected final population of the proposed development. The following occupancy rates will be used:~~

- ~~• studio flats/bed-sits 1 person~~
- ~~• 1 bedroom dwellings 2 persons~~
- ~~• 2 bedroom dwellings 3 persons~~
- ~~• 3 bedroom dwellings 4 persons~~
- ~~• 4 or more bedroom dwellings 5 persons~~

~~In the case of outline applications where the dwelling mix is not known, a legal agreement will be sought which would establish the basis for determining the contribution. The actual amount payable will depend on the current cost per head of the Council providing and equipping 4.3 ha of open space, the number and type of dwellings proposed and the amount of on-site public open space which will be provided. This figure will be negotiated, in conjunction with the Council's Leisure Services Manager, at the planning application stage.~~

~~3.2.16 In order that payments received from developers for the provision of public open space may be directly related to needs created by that development the Council intend to produce an Open Space Strategy. This will need to be prepared in conjunction with the Borough's Leisure Services Unit, Parish Councils and other interested parties. The Strategy will establish the level of open space provision that exists in each local area and how it could most appropriately be improved or increased to meet the needs of present and future residents. It will identify where new provision~~

¹~~This area includes the area of Wildlife Heritage Site to be retained.~~

~~could be made throughout the Borough, and the nature of the open space to be provided.~~

~~3.2.17 In certain cases it may be appropriate for funds to be used to improve the quality of the existing public open space rather than to increase the quantity. This may arise in areas where little development is expected or where there is adequate existing provision in terms of quantity but where there is scope for improving facilities at, or the appearance of, the open space (for example through the provision of an equipped children's play area).~~

~~3.2.18 The public open space standards will be applied flexibly. If it can be demonstrated that sufficient informal open space already exists adjacent to the site, a smaller proportion of the site area may be acceptable for on-site open space provision. Conversely, on large sites in areas of identified public open space deficiency, a larger proportion of on-site provision may be appropriate. Similarly in town centre flat schemes, or schemes providing accommodation for the elderly, the only on-site provision sought will be areas of amenity space. Flexibility will also be applied in the breakdown of public open space between the different categories. In the case of houses designed for family occupation (normally 2-4 bedroom houses) the first priority will be children's play space to the standard required in Policy R5.~~

~~3.2.19 Appendix 2 sets out the main requirements and characteristics of Local Areas for Play (LAP) and Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP). Children's play spaces should be sited and designed to minimise any detrimental effects on the residential amenities of surrounding properties while being safe and convenient for use by children. Detailed design and siting requirements should be discussed at an early stage with the Borough's Leisure Services Unit. More detailed information on these requirements and the hierarchy of play sites and current programmes is contained in the Borough Council's Play Strategy. Chapter 8 sets out full details of the Council's infrastructure, service and amenity requirements for new developments.~~

Formal Sports and Leisure Facilities

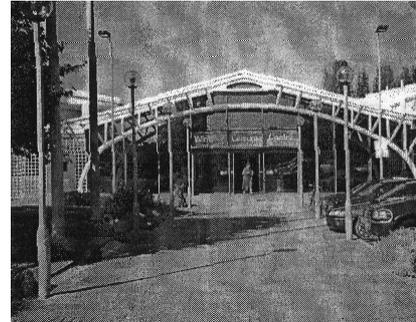
POLICY R7

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL NOT PERMIT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF A BUILT SPORT OR LEISURE FACILITY AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UNLESS EITHER:

- 1) A COMPARABLY SIZED REPLACEMENT FACILITY IS PROVIDED; OR**
- 2) A SMALLER FACILITY OF GREATER RECREATIONAL VALUE IS RETAINED ON THE SITE.**

POLICY R8

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL PERMIT DEVELOPMENT FOR PUBLIC OR PRIVATE RECREATION USE EXCEPT WHERE SUCH DEVELOPMENT WOULD RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL OR HIGHWAY PROBLEMS OR WHERE IT WOULD CONFLICT WITH ANY OTHER POLICIES OF THIS PLAN.



3.2.20 The Borough Council sees the retention of existing recreational facilities and the provision of further facilities where required as very important to the quality of life experienced by residents of the Borough. There may be occasions when a recreational facility can be improved through a cross-subsidy from other development on a site. In such cases an existing facility may be changed or reduced in size so long as the local planning authority is satisfied an equivalent facility will be provided locally, or that a recreational facility will remain on the site and its recreational value will be enhanced; for example through a better quality facility or through wider availability to the public or through the provision of a type of recreational facility which meets an identified local need.

3.2.21 Although recreational facilities will generally be encouraged, the Borough Council will need to have regard to any adverse environmental effects, particularly in the Green Belt and adjacent to residential areas. New buildings should be of a scale and design sympathetic to the character of the area. Consideration will be given to any possible harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties when assessing proposals which are likely to result in excessive noise or traffic generation or which require floodlighting.

POLICY R9

~~THE BOROUGH COUNCIL THROUGH PARTNERSHIP VENTURES WILL PROVIDE AN IMPROVED RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR, INDOOR AND WATER BASED RECREATION ACTIVITIES. IN PARTICULAR, THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW AND IMPROVED SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES ON SCHOOL SITES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOLS AND OTHER AGENCIES, AND WILL ENCOURAGE IMPROVED ACCESS TO SCHOOL SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES.~~

~~3.2.22 The need for additional recreational facilities in the Borough was investigated by Cobham Resource Consultants in 1990 and a Recreation Strategy document produced. This will form the basis for identifying a programme for resource commitments and for negotiations with other providers such as private developers, clubs and voluntary organisations, schools and Parish Councils. The main land-use requirements identified in the Borough include full-size, floodlit, "all-weather" surfaces, 2 pay and play golf courses and a 6-8 court pay and play indoor tennis facility.~~

~~3.2.23 The Borough Council will investigate suitable sites for all weather multi-sports surfaces which ensure a good distribution of these facilities throughout the Borough. School sites are considered to be particularly suitable as they can enable dual use to be made between schools, clubs and the public generally. Planning permission has already been given for facilities at Altwood School and Desborough School (without floodlighting). Charters School will be investigated to balance the provision in the south of the Borough, and because it would complement the existing indoor facility provided by the Charters Recreation Centre at the school.~~

POLICY R10

~~THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE THE PROVISION OF ACCESS AND APPROPRIATE FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO ALL NEW RECREATION FACILITIES AND WILL ENCOURAGE THE PROVISION OF SUITABLE ACCESS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING FACILITIES.~~

~~3.2.24 Not all recreation facilities in the Borough are available for public use. Some are restricted to members of private clubs, to employees or to schools. Many facilities are inaccessible or provide limited access for people with disabilities, either as participants or spectators. The Council will require access improvements and adequate provision in new developments to encourage wider use of existing~~

~~and new facilities, particularly by those with disabilities. The Borough Council will also encourage the opening up of school facilities for the enjoyment of the whole community. This can provide a cost effective means of meeting the needs of the community and can reduce the land requirements for these facilities.~~

Recreation Facilities in Major Commercial Redevelopment Schemes

POLICY R11

WHERE APPROPRIATE THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL SEEK THE PROVISION OF FORMAL SPORTS FACILITIES AS PART OF A SCHEME FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF ALL, OR PART OF, AN IDENTIFIED EMPLOYMENT/COMMERCIAL AREA. SUCH PROVISION MAY BE IN THE FORM OF BUILT INDOOR ACCOMMODATION SUCH AS SQUASH COURTS OR OUTDOOR PROVISION OF PITCHES OR COURTS. IF FACILITIES CANNOT BE PROVIDED ON-SITE A CONTRIBUTION WILL BE SOUGHT TOWARDS THE PROVISION OF NEW RECREATION FACILITIES BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL.

~~3.2.25 The large growth in employment generating businesses within the Borough in recent years has created a demand for sport and leisure facilities from people working in the Borough which places additional pressure on existing community facilities, over and above the demands of the local resident population. Many businesses now have their own sports teams. In the Borough the nature of employment opportunities available has attracted younger, more affluent people who have the highest participation rates for sports.~~

~~3.2.26 The provision of formal recreation facilities as part of new business development is considered to be of benefit not only to future companies seeking high quality facilities to attract top-quality staff but also to the community generally, as pressure can thereby be reduced on existing public provision.~~

3.2.27 There are no major new employment sites allocated within the Borough so the only opportunities for achieving meaningful provision are when a large identified employment area is redeveloped, or a major office scheme is proposed. Joint provision with the Borough Council may be appropriate on certain sites to achieve greater recreational provision. In those cases, although such provision will be primarily for employees, arrangements for access to local residents at certain times such as evenings or weekends will be expected. Where provision on-site is not appropriate, a financial contribution towards the provision of facilities by the Borough Council will be sought by means of a planning obligation in accordance with Circular 1/97.

Golf Courses

POLICY R12

~~PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE GOLF FACILITIES PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:~~

- ~~1) THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT RESULT IN AN UNACCEPTABLE CONCENTRATION OF GOLF COURSE FACILITIES IN ANY PARTICULAR PART OF THE BOROUGH;~~
- ~~2) THE PROPOSAL MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS SET OUT IN CHAPTER 2 OF THE PLAN, IN PARTICULAR POLICIES GB2, NI-N10, AND DG1 AND DOES NOT CAUSE HARM TO THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE GREEN BELT OR ANY AREAS OF ARCHITECTURAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL OR NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST;~~
- ~~3) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT INVOLVE THE LOSS OF EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES OR EXCESSIVE ALTERATION OF GROUND LEVELS OR THE CONTOURS OF THE SITE WHICH WOULD BE OUT OF CHARACTER WITH THE OPEN AND RURAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA AND DETRIMENTAL TO THE LANDSCAPE;~~
- ~~4) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT INVOLVE THE INTRODUCTION OF ALIEN URBAN FEATURES SUCH AS FLOODLIGHTING OR FREE-STANDING BUILT FORMS SUCH AS THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH GOLF DRIVING RANGES, WHICH WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE OPEN RURAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA;~~

~~5) THERE ARE SUFFICIENT EXISTING BUILDINGS ON THE SITE WHICH ARE SUITABLE FOR CONVERSION FOR ANCILLARY ACTIVITIES SUCH AS CLUBHOUSES. WHEREVER POSSIBLE SUCH EXISTING BUILDINGS SHOULD BE REUSED. ANY NEW BUILDINGS WILL BE CONSIDERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICIES GB1 AND GB2;~~

~~6) THERE IS SUFFICIENT EXISTING RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION ON THE SITE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE PROPOSAL;~~

~~7) THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE THE MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY ACROSS GOLF COURSE LAND AND SEEK THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY WHERE OPPORTUNITIES EXIST TO IMPROVE LINKS WITHIN THE LOCAL PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY NETWORK.~~

~~3.2.28 PPG2 (Revised 1995) sets out a number of objectives for the use of land in Green Belts. These include the provision of opportunities for access to the countryside for the urban population, the provision of opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation near urban areas, and the improvement of damaged and derelict land around towns. As a form of outdoor recreation, golf courses generally constitute appropriate development in the Green Belt (provided they maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt) and can assist in meeting these Green Belt objectives. Proposals for new golf facilities will need to be considered against a number of criteria. These will include the impact of the proposal on the natural environment, landscape features, the highway network, public rights of way and the open and rural character of the area as set out in the above policy. Where there are already existing or approved golf courses in the same area the cumulative impact will need to be considered. This can be particularly important for the character of the area, and the Local Planning Authority will seek to prevent a concentration of golf courses where this would result in an unacceptable increase in traffic or in harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.~~

~~3.2.29 Paragraph 3.4 of Revised PPG2 recognises that essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation are appropriate development in the Green Belt. Paragraph 3.5 makes it clear that such essential facilities should be genuinely required for uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt, and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it. Possible examples of such facilities in relation to the functioning of a golf course, could include facilities for administration or small changing rooms. These facilities should use existing buildings wherever possible. Any proposals will need to comply with Policies GB1 and GB2. Proposals which include non-golf related elements or facilities for use by non-participants will be strongly resisted.~~

~~3.2.30 The Local Planning Authority will resist the introduction of features which would result in the urbanisation of the rural character of the area. These could include floodlighting, unsightly high fencing, or golf driving ranges. The Local Planning Authority will also wish to be satisfied that the proposal will not give rise to pressures for additional residential accommodation in the Green Belt. Where there is likelihood that residential accommodation will be required, for example for a greenkeeper, proposals should demonstrate that there is sufficient existing residential accommodation on the site to meet those needs.~~

~~3.2.31 Wherever possible new facilities, especially those for 'pay and play' courses, should be accessible to a choice of means of transport including public transport and cycling. This will provide an alternative to travel by car and will also make the facility accessible to non-car owners. Golf course proposals should not be accessed from minor roads or result in increased traffic through sensitive areas, like conservation areas or villages where greater traffic flows would be detrimental to local amenity or the built environment.~~

~~3.2.32 Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have carried out a thorough assessment of the site and its suitability for the proposed use. Where relevant the application should be accompanied by the following:~~

- ~~1. An agricultural statement indicating the quality of land and the future use of any remaining land or buildings, and the potential for the land to revert to agricultural use in the future.~~

- ~~2. An ecological survey to show important areas and opportunities for improvements, particularly for the conservation and enhancement of wildlife or other natural habitats.~~
- ~~3. Landscape appraisal indicating full proposals for soft and hard landscaping, the impact on the locality and on any areas of special landscape importance.~~
- ~~4. Proposals to safeguard and enhance public rights of way.~~
- ~~5. Land management information relating to major areas of woodland within or adjacent to a site and peripheral hedgerows, copses etc.~~
- ~~6. Details of existing topography, any earthworks proposed and soil removal/importation.~~
- ~~7. Course layout and design, with details of the principle elements of the design strategy.~~
- ~~8. Full details of existing buildings to be demolished or converted and any new buildings proposed.~~
- ~~9. Details of the proposed access and parking arrangements.~~
- ~~10. Traffic flow forecasts for hourly and daily vehicle movements.~~

~~3.2.33 Proposals for golf courses will be expected to demonstrate that they will not harm wildlife habitats. Policy N11 encourages the management of existing habitats and the creation of new habitats in connection with new development. The design of proposed golf courses will normally be expected to include schemes for creative nature conservation and management or the restoration of degraded habitats. Every attempt must be made to provide a development which harmonises with its surroundings and makes full use of existing landscape and ecological features. Major earth movements should normally be avoided.~~

~~3.2.34 Existing public footpaths and bridleways should be protected and care taken to sensitively incorporate them into course designs to ensure the safety of the public and minimum disruption to~~

~~established routes. Opportunities to enhance and expand the existing public rights of way network should also be investigated in order to help achieve the Green Belt objectives set out in PPG2 (Revised, 1995), of improving access to the countryside and making provision for outdoor recreation.~~

Other Specialist Recreation Facilities

POLICY R13

PROPOSALS FOR THE USE OF LAND OR WATER FOR SPECIALIST OR ORGANISED ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE INCLUDING, BUT NOT RESTRICTED TO, NOISY WATER SPORTS, PAINTBALL GAMES, CLAY PIGEON SHOOTING, AUTO OR MOTOCROSS RACING AND HANG GLIDING, WILL BE PERMITTED SUBJECT TO THEIR MEETING THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- 1) ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE FOR ACCESS AND PARKING FACILITIES; AND**
- 2) THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT CAUSE SIGNIFICANT HARM TO AGRICULTURE LANDSCAPE FEATURES, WILDLIFE HABITATS, THE OPEN AND UNDEVELOPED CHARACTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE; AND**
- 3) THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AMENITIES AND SAFETY OF LOCAL RESIDENTS AND OTHER USERS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE.**

ANY ADDITIONAL BUILDING CONTENT MUST BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM, AND EXISTING BUILDINGS SHOULD BE RE-USED WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

3.2.35 Changes in leisure patterns, together with pressures on the agricultural industry to diversify and the growing popularity of specialists sports requiring large areas of land or water will continue to make new demands on the rural area. Where these activities are infrequent and of short duration they may be able to operate with the benefit of permitted development rights. Where permission is required locations need to be carefully chosen to avoid any adverse impacts upon the environment or local amenities. Consideration will be given to the degree of visual intrusion, noise, traffic generation levels, scale of proposal and public safety.

Rights of Way and Countryside Recreation

3.2.36 Consideration of the footpath network in the Local Plan is concerned with identifying opportunities to improve the recreational value of the system. The Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006 (Policy R2) reaffirms the commitment to protecting and enhancing existing public rights of way and to improving access to the countryside through, amongst other things, improvements to the rights of way network.

3.2.37 This Local Plan cannot by itself create new rights of way as these are dependent upon detailed negotiations between the Borough Council and landowners. The Plan can, however, outline the major opportunities and problems associated with the development of recreational routes in the Plan area. It is considered that such an approach will assist in coordinating the activities and resources of other agencies and voluntary organisations in developing the recreational value of the footpath network.

POLICY R14

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL SAFEGUARD AND ENHANCE THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK AND RECREATIONAL CYCLE ROUTES.

IN PARTICULAR THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL:

- 1) SUPPORT THE COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION IN ITS EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH THE THAMES PATH AS A NATIONAL TRAIL INCORPORATING RIVERSIDE PATHS AND TOWPATHS, AND WILL SEEK TO PREVENT ANY ENCROACHMENT OF THE ROUTE BY DEVELOPMENT;**
- 2) SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GREEN WAY RECREATIONAL ROUTE BETWEEN COOKHAM AND BRAY AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, THROUGH:**
 - (i) SIGNPOSTING AND PROMOTING THE USE OF THE GREEN WAY FOR WALKERS AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, CYCLISTS;**
 - (ii) MAKING THE ROUTE ACCESSIBLE TO THE ELDERLY, DISABLED AND PEOPLE WITH**

PRAMS OR PUSHCHAIRS BY REMOVING STEPS AND STILES;

(iii) RESISTING PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD PREJUDICE THE ROUTE OR DETRACT FROM USERS' ENJOYMENT OF IT;

(iv) ENCOURAGING IMPROVED ACCESS AND LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT TO AREAS ADJOINING THE ROUTE.

3) SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIRCULAR WALKS ESPECIALLY WHERE THESE ENHANCE THE RECREATIONAL VALUE OF THE GREEN WAY AND/OR THE THAMES PATH.

3.2.38 The Countryside Agency (formerly the Countryside Commission), in association with Environment Agency, are progressing with the creation of a continuous Thames Path between the Thames Barrier in Greenwich and the source near Kemble in Gloucestershire. The National Trail was formally designated in 1989. Within the Borough the path deviates from the towpath in the following places:

1. Between the Albert and Victoria bridges, where the towpath passes through the HomePark, which is not accessible to the public for security reasons. The proposed route crosses to the north bank at Albert Bridge where it would follow the river on a new footpath before joining the B3021 through Datchet and rejoining the river bank beyond the residential properties
2. Cookham, where the designated route follows Mill Lane and passes through Cookham village centre. This diversion is considered acceptable.

3.2.39 The Green Way recreational route is supported by the Maidenhead Civic Society and the East Berkshire Ramblers Association. It forms a continuous footpath link between Cookham and Bray and forms an important role in linking areas of public open space and the open countryside with the built up areas of Maidenhead, Cookham and Bray. In addition it forms an important pedestrian/cycle link through the centre of Maidenhead. Recent developments at Hines Meadow have enabled a more direct routing through

Maidenhead to be proposed, closely following the banks of York Stream. The section between York Road and the Stafferton Way Industrial Area is heavily used by pedestrians and cyclists, and forms a convenient and safe route for these travellers to the industrial area. The possible redevelopment of the York Road Football Ground creates an opportunity to provide a joint footway/cyclepath linking to the Green Way by the railway bridge via a new bridge over York Stream. A separate cycle facility would enable the numerous steps to be removed, originally designed to deter cyclists but, while failing to do this, creating problems for disabled people, the elderly and people with young children in prams or pushchairs. The Green Way can be used in conjunction with the Thames Path to form a circular walk of approximately 11 miles, or other existing footpaths to make shorter circular walks. The Council recognises that parts of the Green Way will have to be diverted because of permitted gravel extraction, but the exact routes of the diversions will not be decided until closer to the start of the works.

3.2.40 The countryside offers opportunities for informal recreation which are increasingly being enjoyed by a large section of the community. As demand for informal recreation grows it will become increasingly necessary to balance the pressures of recreation in the countryside (new footpaths, car parks etc.) with positive management and conservation of the natural environment of the area, and to minimize any interference with farming and forestry.



3.2.41 The Borough Council will assess the potential for improving public access and recreation in individual situations against any detrimental impact which may be caused. Where appropriate, the Borough will encourage the following initiatives:

1. Improvements to the existing public rights of way network. This may include improving accessibility for disabled or elderly people, or families with push-chairs by replacing stiles with gates, path widening, or step removal in selected cases. It may also include safety improvements where paths cross or join major roads.
2. Creation of new rights of way. This includes the establishment of long distance footpath/bridleway routes like the Thames Path and the creation and signposting of local circular walks, and important footpath links. Examples of new footpath links are shown on the proposals map and include:
 - Crossing of dry flood ditch behind Northern Telecom building, Maidenhead (to form part of Green Way).
 - Path alongside York Stream behind Squash Club in Crown Lane, Maidenhead (to form part of Green Way).
 - Link from Bray Road to Braywick Park and new path alongside the Cut between Hibbert Road and Old Mill Lane,
 - enabling a circular walk to be created around Bray Village, and also linking into the Green Way.
 - Extension of Footpath 60 under Cookham Bridge to link into Ferry Lane.
 - Link from Widbrook Common to the Thames across White Place Farm creating an additional link between the Thames Path and the Green Way enabling circular walks around Cookham.
3. Access agreements with local landowners to enable public access to suitable areas for informal recreation like woodland, meadows or riverside areas. These areas should ideally be linked by public rights of way to create a network of open-access sites. These areas may include small pocket parks for local use (as defined in Chapter 2, Section 2.2) and larger areas of open space. Agreements could also be associated with farm diversification and set-aside schemes, the after-use of mineral sites, or afforestation initiatives. The use of agricultural schemes like these to improve public access is encouraged by the

Government in PPG17, Sport and Recreation, and also in the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006 (Policy R2).

4. Management of existing facilities. The Borough will seek, through the management of its own land and through encouraging other large land owners like the Crown and the National Trust, to introduce recreation amenities on suitable land such as nature trails, way-marking, viewpoints, picnic-areas, car parks and interpretation facilities.
5. Creation of recreational cycle routes. These would provide safe links from urban residential areas to the surrounding countryside using country lanes, improved and redesignated footpaths, bridleways and other existing rights of way, cycle tracks alongside main roads, signposting and junction safety improvements. Links to the National Cycle Network will be encouraged.
6. Improvement of public transport links to the countryside.

~~POLICY R15~~

~~THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL PROMOTE THE RETENTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE RECREATIONAL VALUE OF THE THAMES PATH NATIONAL TRAIL AND OTHER RIVERSIDE PATHS BY:~~

- 1) ~~THE PROVISION OF SMALL APPROPRIATELY SITED AND DESIGNED CAR PARKS AND CYCLE PARKING FACILITIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE TOWPATH; AND~~
- 2) ~~IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO THE THAMES INCLUDING IMPROVED SIGNING, NEW FOOTPATH LINKS AND EASIER ACCESS FOR ALL USERS INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.~~

~~3.2.42 Possible locations where access to the Thames could be improved include:~~

- ~~Temple~~
- ~~Quarrywood~~
- ~~Cookham village~~
- ~~Datchet~~

~~Access can be improved through the provision of~~

~~car parks and cycle parking facilities in addition to improved pedestrian access to the river by means of improved signing, new footpath links and improved access for all users including people with disabilities. Temple and Quarrywood may also be suitable for siting small scale picnic areas. No buildings should be provided, and any development must be small scale and appropriate to a Green Belt and important landscape location, and in the case of Quarrywood, sensitive to the nature conservation interest of the ancient woodlands.~~

POLICY R16

PROPOSALS TO REDEVELOP OR CHANGE THE USE OF BOATYARDS OR OTHER BUILDINGS PROVIDING SERVICE FACILITIES TO RIVER-USERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE REPLACEMENT FACILITIES EITHER AS PART OF THE REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME OR ON A SUITABLE SITE ELSEWHERE.

POLICY R17

~~THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL PERMIT THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC SLIPWAYS WITHIN THE BOROUGH.~~

~~3.2.43 The need to conserve the character of the Thames must be balanced against the tourism potential that the Thames offers within the Borough, both in terms of its scenic quality and its historic associations. It is important to ensure that adequate boat servicing and related facilities for river uses are retained. Such facilities could include boat repair, flesh water, supplies, accommodation or eating places. The designation of the Thames Path National Trail is also likely to generate demand for such services along the river. Policies R16 and R17 encourage the retention and replacement of such facilities and the provision of new public slipways. New slipways will need to be provided in conjunction with the Environment Agency.~~

~~The Colne Valley Regional Park~~

POLICY R18

~~THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL CONTINUE TO SLIPPORT THE COLNE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK STANDING CONFERENCE IN DEVELOPING THE VALLEY AS A MAJOR REGIONAL CENTRE FOR COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION. WITHIN THE AREA DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP THE BOROUGH~~

~~COUNCIL WILL NORMALLY PERMIT RECREATION PROPOSALS WHICH PROVIDE FOR:~~

- ~~1) **A. BALANCE BETWEEN WET AND DRY RESTORATION SCHEMES ON GRAVEL WORKINGS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOTH WATER BASED RECREATION AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES REQUIRING LARGE AREAS OF OPEN LAND (SUBJECT TO POLICY GB2 AND N11);**~~
- ~~2) **IMPROVED PUBLIC ACCESS TO LAKE MARGINS;**~~
- ~~3) **INFORMAL RECREATION ADJACENT TO LAKE MARGINS BY THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES SUCH AS WAY-MARKED WALKS, PICNIC AREAS, ANGLING SITES, NATURE TRAILS AND INFORMATION BOARDS IN A HIGH QUALITY LANDSCAPED ENVIRONMENT;**~~
- ~~4) **APPROPRIATE LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY N3;**~~
- ~~5) **HABITAT CREATION THROUGH WOODLAND PLANTING, POCKET PARKS OR SIMILAR MEASURES;**~~
- ~~6) **PROTECTION OF EXISTING WILDLIFE HABITATS.**~~

~~3.2.44 The Colne Valley Regional Park has been developed since the 1970s as a linear park serving the recreational needs of a considerable population in West London, East Berkshire and adjoining counties. The Colne Valley Park Strategy was adopted in 1971 by the constituent local authorities as a framework for the development of the valley's potential for rural recreation. The Strategy identified that part of the Valley within the Royal Borough as being of particular importance for water-based recreation, largely resulting from the restoration of old gravel workings. However, restoration in the past has often been poorly planned and implemented, especially in the Hythe End area.~~

~~3.2.45 A large proportion of the Colne Valley Regional Park in the Borough comprises the 'Wraysbury Lakelands', an area containing over 30 attractive, mature lakes. A large part of this area forms part of the Wraysbury and Hythe End~~

~~Gravel Pits Site of Special Scientific Interest. Within the Wrybury Lakelands the Borough Council will encourage appropriate countryside recreation activities and increased public access through additional public rights of way subject to there being no detrimental effect to nature conservation interests.~~

~~3.2.46 The Colne Valley Regional Park was identified as an Important Countryside Recreational Area in the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006 (Policy R9) which makes provision for a modest camping and touring caravan site within this area, although a specific site is not identified. Suitable sites could include filled gravel pits or areas of degraded landscape in conjunction with a landscape enhancement scheme, and possibly other countryside recreation uses. The Colne Valley Regional Park lies within the Green Belt and planning applications will be determined in accordance with Policy GB2. A camping and touring caravan site is an acceptable Green Belt use so long as it is on a modest scale. However, any site under consideration would have to be very carefully evaluated on its merits in terms of the impact on the open, rural or countryside character of the area; the scale of activity proposed including the requirement for any buildings and its impact on the amenities of residential properties in the locality.~~

~~3.2.47 The Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006 states that there is a need for tourist camping and caravan sites to enable visitors to stay cheaply near the main towns or to camp en route when using the Thames or Thames Path. In general, camping facilities should take the form of small scale sites, in particular those associated with other enterprises, for example as part of a diversified farm enterprise or in association with a public house (Paragraph 12.24 of the Berkshire Structure Plan). The provision of such a facility also accords with this Council's Tourism Strategy of improving the range and type of visitor accommodation locally.~~

3.3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Protection of existing facilities

POLICY CF1

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL NOT PERMIT THE LOSS OF EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND BUILDINGS UNLESS IT IS SATISFIED THAT:

- 1. THERE IS NO LONGER A NEED FOR THEM; OR**
- 2. AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE PROVISION IS TO BE MADE ELSEWHERE.**

3.3.1 In view of the general shortage and difficulty in obtaining premises for community use it is important to protect the existing community use of sites wherever possible by resisting their loss to another use. This is particularly important in town center areas where the high cost of land creates pressure for alternative income generating uses. The Council will therefore not grant planning permission for any development that would result in the loss of community facilities unless it can be shown that there is no longer a need for the site or building in any form of community use or that there is an acceptable alternative means of meeting the need, either within the new development or in another suitable location. The relocation of existing community facilities within the local area will normally be acceptable. The policy will also be applied flexibly in the case of facilities like public schools which do not exist primarily to meet the needs of local residents.

Provision of new facilities

Policy CF2

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL PERMIT PROPOSALS FOR NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES WHICH MEET THE NEEDS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS OR FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES PROVIDED THAT:

- 1. ADEQUATE ACCESS AND CAR PARKING CAN BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S ADOPTED STANDARDS SET OUT IN APPENDIX 7; AND**
- 2. ADEQUATE ACCESS AND FACILITIES ARE PROVIDED FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.**

POLICY CF3

PROPOSALS INVOLVING THE CHANGE OF USE OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TO A COMMUNITY FACILITY WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE:

- 1) IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE FACILITY IS LOCATED WITHIN A RESIDENTIAL AREA; AND**
- 2) THE CRITERIA IN POLICY CF2 ARE SATISFIED.**

POLICY CF4

THE FOLLOWING SITES LISTED BELOW ARE ALLOCATED FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES:

- 1) ROYAL FREE SCHOOL, BACHELORS ACRE, WINDSOR (PART) FOR A REPLACEMENT LIBRARY WITHIN A MIXED USE SCHEME;**
- 2) NORDEN FARM, ALTWOOD ROAD, MAIDENHEAD FOR AN ARTS CENTRE.**

3.3.2 The Council wish to see community facilities improved and enhanced and will therefore look favourably on any applications for such developments. The size of a facility should be related to the local need and the character of the surrounding area. Large facilities designed to meet the needs of a whole town are likely to result in substantial traffic generation and general disturbance to neighbouring properties and should therefore not be located within residential areas or the Green Belt. All community facilities should ensure that they are accessible to disabled people, and those arriving on foot, cycle or public transport. Facilities which rely on Policy CF2 for support must be available to the whole community, to meet an identified local need. Commercial enterprises will not normally be acceptable in residential areas or the Green Belt unless a local need is proven; the Council are satisfied that no harm will arise to residential amenities in the neighbourhood; and the Council are satisfied that the proposed facility could not be located elsewhere.

3.3.3 Where it is proposed to locate a community facility within an existing residential property, the Council will normally require that part of the property is retained for residential purposes. The type of property suitable for such a use would be detached and well separated from its neighbours with good access and off-street parking. Only facilities which require to be located in close proximity to patient's or client's homes will be considered appropriate in a residential property. The Council will also be concerned to avoid a proliferation of non-residential uses within a

residential area. It will monitor the level of permissions within an area, and whether any complaints are received. In addition, conditions may be placed on any permissions restricting the hours of operation and the amount of activity likely to be generated. In some cases it may be appropriate to impose a personal condition or issue a temporary consent to enable the effect of the proposal on the residential amenity of the area to be assessed or to control future changes arising through a change of occupier.

3.3.4 The need for a new arts centre for Maidenhead has been recognised for several years. The redevelopment of the Norden Farm site in Altwood Road, Maidenhead will provide the opportunity to acquire a purpose built arts centre for the town. The Borough Council support the development of an arts centre on this site, subject to satisfactory access and parking arrangements which minimise any disturbance which may arise to neighbouring residents.