

## LEISURE & RECREATION



### Introduction

7.1 Leisure and recreation embraces a wide range of pursuits which can be indoor or outdoor, passive or active and carried out within urban areas and the countryside. This chapter concentrates mainly on open space and recreational / sport facilities. Leisure issues are also highlighted elsewhere in the Plan, particularly in the Tourism, Countryside, Transport and Folkestone Town Centre chapters.

7.2 Due to a range of factors including changing working patterns, higher living standards resulting from growing disposable incomes, increased car ownership and greater awareness and interest in personal health and fitness, leisure and recreation is becoming an increasingly important feature of modern life.

7.3 Government policy seeks to promote the development of sport and recreation to enable all people to participate in a choice of leisure activities. Encouraging leisure and recreation creates a variety of social benefits such as improved physical health and inner well being, enhanced social skills and sense of community. It has an important environmental role, particularly through maintaining and improving the quality of urban areas, and can also be valuable in economic terms through promoting inward investment and tourism.

7.4 In recognition of differing local circumstances, Government advises that levels of provision for open space and recreational facilities are generally most appropriately determined locally. In Shepway, recreational facilities are provided by various organisations, including the District Council, Kent County Council, charitable trusts, clubs, town and parish councils, local schools and the private sector.

### Aim and objectives

7.5 The Plan's leisure and recreation broad aim is: -

1. To satisfy the increasing need for open space and leisure and recreational facilities throughout the District.

7.6 The Plan's leisure and recreation objectives are: -

1. To give long-term protection to existing leisure and recreational facilities and open space of amenity value in the interest of amenity for residents and visitors to the District.
2. To improve the quality and standard of provision of open space and recreational facilities and stimulate new provision to meet people's needs through the review of facilities supported by the Council, adherence to defined and adopted standards, consideration of local demand for particular activities and, through private and other public investment in partnership with the District Council.
3. To ensure that new leisure and recreational facilities and open space is well located and readily accessible to all sections of the local community through the encouragement and direction of facilities to appropriate locations in areas with an identified deficiency.
4. To encourage greater participation by the District's residents in sport and recreation.

5. To encourage a more efficient and effective use of recreational facilities and open spaces throughout the District by reviewing and re-organising the use of open spaces, the layout of sports pitches, improving ancillary facilities, maintaining and enhancing Shepway's public rights of way and cycle network and, through the multiple use of school recreational facilities.

6. To secure an appropriate standard of provision of open space including children's play space in new development, through adherence to defined and adopted standards.

## Assessment of sports provision

7.7 The provision of facilities for different sport and recreational uses in the district is assessed in relation to the quantity, quality and accessibility of existing local facilities and the need for additional facilities to cater for the needs of the whole community. Opportunities to participate in sport and recreation, whether as players or spectators, is a key aim of the Government's policy for sport and recreation. Consideration of the needs of all sectors of the population including the elderly and those with disabilities, should be part of an overall Sports Strategy. An open space survey was carried out in 1998, and this together with work carried out by Kent County Councils Sports Development Unit, has been used to identify the deficiencies set out below. The Council is currently revising the 1998 study and carrying out a comprehensive assessment of open space and recreation provision within the district. This will update the information on needs and deficiencies for sport and recreation and once completed, will be used to guide the Council's response to proposals which would have implications for the provision, replacement or loss of sports and recreational facilities.

7.8 Overall conclusions indicate that while Shepway has a broad range of sport and leisure facilities, there is vast potential to increase participation and accessibility to existing and new facilities. Deficiencies currently identified in specific sports provision are set out in paragraphs 7.9 to 7.13 below.

7.9 Major sports facilities – It is considered that there is a deficiency in quality indoor sports space in Folkestone and Hythe. Main provision should be accommodated at either Cheriton Road Sports Ground or Folkestone Sports Centre. The Hythe area would also benefit from enhanced local facilities. According to the county-wide assessment highlighted in paragraph 7.7 a polymeric ('rubber crumb') athletics track, associated indoor athletics facilities and outdoor velodrome could also potentially be supported in the Folkestone area. A new community sports hall at Southlands School, New Romney opened in 2001, incorporating a main hall, squash courts, fitness room and exercise studio. Additional community facilities, including a swimming pool, could also be supported to serve the western part of the District and meet the needs of the population of Romney Marsh up to 2011.

7.10 Squash – Scope for further courts may exist in the Folkestone area. Additional provision would most appropriately be included in any proposals for the development of the Cheriton Road Sports Ground / Folkestone Sports Centre. Two squash courts are included within the community sports facilities at Southlands School, which improves provision in this part of the District.

7.11 Tennis – Folkestone and Hythe has a large number of tennis courts in total although their spatial distribution is uneven, with parts of western Hythe and east Folkestone being relatively poorly served. Also, a requirement for a tennis 'Centre of Performance' is identified by the sports governing body to serve the Ashford / Folkestone area, comprising of at least three indoor and four outdoor floodlit courts. Based on population catchments, a potential deficiency in the provision of tennis courts is identified for Hawkinge, Lympne and St Mary's Bay.

7.12 Bowls – In the urban areas of Folkestone and Hythe, local demand is sufficiently high to support additional bowling facilities. Provision in rural areas is often poor, with many villages devoid of provision. Additional facilities could particularly be encouraged in Lydd, Dymchurch, Hawkinge, Lympne and St Mary's Bay should suitable opportunities arise.

7.13 Equipped Play Areas – The provision of equipped play areas fails to fully meet National Playing Field Association standards across many parts of the district and the Council is investigating options for upgrading provision to better meet the needs of both younger and older children, and young people. Policy LR10 sets out requirements for the provision of children's play space as part of new residential development.

7.14 To achieve and maintain the appropriate level of provision, and to guide the provision of new indoor and outdoor facilities, including those required to meet the deficiencies identified above, the following policies will apply:-

**POLICY LR1** The District Planning Authority will not grant planning permission for development proposals which would result in a loss of indoor recreational facilities unless it can be shown that:-

- a) a replacement of equal or better community benefit would be made in the locality or;
- b) there is no longer a need for the facility and it is unsuitable for conversion to an alternative recreational use.

In deciding whether a replacement should be made, the economic viability of existing or proposed facilities will be taken into account.

**POLICY LR2** The District Planning Authority will grant planning permission for proposals to provide new and improved leisure and recreation facilities at appropriate locations in the District, subject to the following considerations: -

- i) compatibility with surrounding land uses;
- ii) access, amenity and environmental constraints;
- iii) location in relation to existing settlements;
- iv) accessibility by transport alternatives to the car, particularly for proposals likely to attract a large number of users;
- v) provision of adequate access for the disabled.

Proposals that would significantly conflict with one or more of the above considerations will only be acceptable where exceptionally justified by an overriding need to address deficiencies in provision and where measures will be taken to compensate for the adverse effect.

## Formal sport and recreation in the countryside

7.15 The countryside plays host to a wide range of recreational activities. Facilities associated with 'low key' informal countryside recreational uses such as walking and bird watching etc. can usually be provided with only minimal disturbance and such developments will be subject to Policy LR2. However, more intensive and formalised activities including golf courses and 'activity sports' can potentially have significant environmental and amenity impacts.

7.16 Shepway has a ratio of provision of golf courses in excess of one 18-hole course per 25,000 population, which is the desired level of provision stated by the sport's governing body. There are also several existing 9-hole courses in the District contributing to a good range of facilities across Shepway. Provision is further enhanced with the development of additional facilities already permitted at Lydd and Etchinghill. The question of adequacy of provision is a matter to be tested in the justification of specific proposals.

7.17 Often integral to golf course development are ancillary buildings, particularly a clubhouse (which can include facilities such as changing rooms, bar, professionals shop, and managers accommodation), groundsman's store and car park. Hotels, restaurants and other leisure elements such as squash courts, fitness suites etc., secondary to the main golf use can also accompany golf course proposals as a means of improving overall scheme viability. These can provide enhanced facilities for local residents and also visitors to the District, creating clear tourism benefits. Care must be taken however to ensure that built development is appropriate in scale and appearance to its surroundings and remains subordinate to the main golf use.

7.18 Over recent years, there has been a growing demand for activity sport such as paint ball war games, motor cycle and four-wheel drive events and clay pigeon shooting. By their nature, these sports require a rural location but can create significant adverse effects on important nature conservation and landscape resources as well as cause unacceptable noise impacts and disturbance to surrounding residents and other countryside users.

**POLICY LR3** Applications for the development of formal sport and recreational facilities in the countryside will be granted where the development meets the following criteria: -

- a) It is compatible with the character of the local landscape, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, sites of historic or archaeological importance, and maintains areas and features of nature conservation significance and provides new opportunities for wildlife where possible;
- b) It does not result in the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land;

- c) It is well located in relation to existing settlements and the highway network and can achieve an appropriate standard of access;
- d) accessibility by transport alternatives to the car, particularly for proposals likely to attract a large number of users;
- e) Does not unacceptably impact the amenity of local residents and other users of the countryside and protects or provides satisfactorily for existing public rights of way;
- f) Built development is appropriate in scale and appearance to its surroundings;
- g) Does not include as part of the proposals functionally unrelated ancillary development.

Note: In assessing amenity impacts, particular regard will be had to noise nuisance. This includes noise levels and frequency of emissions, and their impacts on local residents and important wildlife species, and effect on the quiet enjoyment of areas of nature conservation, historic and landscape value. In applying this policy, the 'countryside' is defined as the area outside of the settlement boundaries shown on the proposals map.

## **Cheriton Road Sports Ground / Folkestone Sports Centre**

7.19 Cheriton Road Sports Ground and Folkestone Sports Centre are of strategic importance to the current provision of recreational facilities within the urban area of Folkestone. The District Council is investigating options for enhancing the provision of purpose-built leisure and recreational facilities by these and other sites including improvement of the existing Sports Centre or construction of a new facility on part of the Cheriton Road Sports Ground site.

7.20 As a starting point, proposals should seek to enhance the quality of indoor sports space currently provided. A development brief will be produced in due course, in partnership with local sports clubs, to give comprehensive consideration to the representation of recreation uses on both sites.

7.21 The Pent Stream flows through both of these sites. This watercourse has suffered from flooding although the District Council has carried out flood alleviation works, to reduce flooding by the Pent Stream to a nominal 1 in 100 year risk. Any future development on these sites should not exacerbate flooding problems. Planning applications will need to be accompanied by a flood risk assessment in accordance with PPG 25: Development and Flood Risk.

**POLICY LR4** Planning permission will be granted for proposals which improve the leisure and recreational facilities provided by the Cheriton Road Sports Ground and [Folkestone Sports Centre](#) in partnership with the District Council. Such improvements should not harm amenity, environmental and highway interests and will need to be accompanied by a flood risk assessment.

## **Folkestone Racecourse**

7.22 Folkestone Racecourse is located in an excellent position in relation to both mainland Europe and the rest of the South East. The principle of its use for leisure purposes is long established and it is felt that its tourism and leisure potential has not been fully realised, primarily in view of the nature of existing development within the site and its strategic location with regard to existing and planned infrastructure. Potential exists to create an all year round attraction of major importance to the provision of leisure, recreational and tourism facilities within the district.

7.23 Subject to proposals satisfying countryside objectives, the District Planning Authority supports the principle of expanded / new appropriate leisure, tourism and exhibition facilities, including a conference centre, at Folkestone Racecourse.

7.24 Located within the site are the Grade I listed Westenhanger Manor and barns. Uninhabited parts of the Manor and outbuildings are identified as a Scheduled Ancient Monument as shown on the proposals map. It is likely that other earlier archaeological remains also exist on the site.

7.25 Part of the Racecourse is at risk from fluvial flooding. Development proposals should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment to include, as a minimum, a topographical survey showing existing and proposed levels, drainage details and the flood protection proposed for the development.

**POLICY LR5** The District Planning Authority will permit proposals for the intensification of uses at [Folkestone Racecourse](#) involving the development of additional leisure, recreational, tourism and exhibition facilities subject to proposals meeting all of the following criteria :-

- i. amenity, environmental and highway considerations and compliance with countryside conservation policy
- ii. provision of a flood risk assessment
- iii. Proposals protect the nationally important historic buildings, archaeological remains and setting of the Westenhanger castle complex.

## Nickolls Quarry, Hythe

7.26 Nickolls Quarry is identified as a major mixed-use development opportunity based around the water areas left following completion of gravel extraction. Redevelopment will require retention of a substantial water area in the interests of recreation (the existing lake is used by local sailing and angling clubs), amenity and nature conservation. Given the scale of residential development proposed, substantial new strategic open space areas and children's play areas will be necessary. Key requirements are set out in more detail under Policy HO2 in the Housing Chapter.

## Coastal leisure and recreation

7.27 The 25 miles of the District's coastline ranges from the cliffs at Folkestone Warren to the shingle storm beaches at Dungeness. The coastal area, including coastal waters and the foreshore, are a valuable leisure and recreational resource which support a wide range of passive and active pursuits from walking to water-skiing. The foreshore area also represents an important area of public open space and public amenity.

7.28 A number of locations along the coast have been identified as "High Profile Sites" for which improvement projects are in hand or are proposed including Folkestone Seafront and the Lower Leas Coastal Park.

7.29 A Development Brief is to be prepared for Folkestone Seafront and Harbour area encompassing the redevelopment sites outlined in Chapter 13. The brief will seek to complement existing Plan policies, environmental improvements and regeneration strategies to encourage the revitalisation of the Seafront and hinterland, and enhance the area's leisure and tourism potential. This includes the creation of a new leisure zone with potential for a range of new purpose-built indoor leisure uses and also a new marina at the harbour.

7.30 The Lower Leas Coastal Park is a long established part of the District's recreational open space being popular with locals and tourists alike. The District Council considers that this park has potential to become a regionally important visitor facility and could provide greatly enhanced formal and informal leisure and recreation opportunities in an open landscape setting. Works are proposed to address existing problems and increase the attractiveness of the area. These include landscape restoration and enhancement, public safety and access improvements and provision of appropriate new leisure and cultural facilities. Funding for implementation of proposals has been secured from a wide range of sources and the first phase of works, including a substantial new children's play area and an amphitheatre, was opened in May 2000.

**POLICY LR6** The District Planning Authority will permit suitable proposals for new and enhanced leisure, recreation and tourism facilities at the [Lower Leas Coastal Park](#) as shown on the proposals map. Proposals will be subject to amenity, environmental and highway considerations and should enhance the Park's character, its usefulness to visitors, and make a positive contribution to improving the Park's appearance.

7.31 Within Shepway, opportunities for leisure craft to gain access to the sea from the developed coastline via formal slipways are relatively limited. The development of a marina at Folkestone Harbour is encouraged under Policy FTC5 in the Folkestone Town Centre chapter. Land at Range Road, Hythe also has potential to provide improved facilities for pleasure sailing including facilities for the repair and storage of boats and other uses related to the coastal location.

**POLICY LR7** The District Planning Authority will permit proposals which provide opportunities for improved sea access for boats and related facilities at [Range Road, Hythe](#), and at other suitable coastal locations, subject to amenity, environmental and highway considerations.

7.32 The White Cliffs Countryside Project has produced the Dover – Folkestone Heritage Coast Management Plan. In terms of leisure and recreation, the Management Plan aims to ensure a co-ordinated approach to

planning and managing for leisure and recreation whilst promoting conservation of natural beauty and heritage.

7.33 Further improvements are also being developed for Dymchurch and St Mary's Bay beaches. A Visitor Management Plan for Dungeness National Nature Reserve has been prepared.

7.34 The District Planning Authority is aware that the many recreational demands placed on the coastal area can lead to conflicts between users, so reducing the level of enjoyment for all. It will therefore monitor the suitability of the location of coastal recreational uses and, will consider introducing measures to resolve potential conflict between users in the interests of public safety and amenity.

## Public rights of way

7.35 The District's public rights of way network is an important recreational and tourism facility, particularly in rural areas and the urban fringe where it enables access to the wider countryside. A safe, convenient and attractive public rights of way network can also encourage walking as an alternative to car use.

7.36 While the County Council is responsible for public rights of way the District Council continues to work to protect, enhance and promote the footpath and bridleway system, both independently and in association with others such as the White Cliffs Countryside Project. New development can create opportunities to protect and enhance the rights of way network. Development proposals should genuinely incorporate existing rights of way into their layout and design. In particular, development should ensure that existing and diverted rights of way are at least as safe, attractive and convenient for users and also well linked with new routes provided as part of development.

**POLICY LR8** Rights of way will require to be properly integrated into the design and layout of development sites. The District Planning Authority will not permit development which would interrupt existing rights of way unless alternative provision can be made which will provide a facility of equal or greater benefit. Regard will be had to a route's attractiveness, safety and convenience for public use.

## Protection and provision of open space

7.37 Public open space meets a variety of formal and informal recreational needs for all members of the community, including the elderly and disabled. Even where public access is restricted, open space can be important in terms of visual amenity and local environmental quality and, can potentially become publicly available to meet deficiencies. Open space can also be of value for nature conservation, providing wildlife habitats and 'stepping stones' between them. Once areas are developed however, they will likely be lost to the local community forever.

7.38 Recent provision of new areas of open space has often been opportunistic rather than based on a defined target or hierarchy of provision. In the past, areas of strategic open space were acquired by or donated to the District Council by benevolent land owners but only where major new development is proposed, such as at Hawkinge and Nickolls Quarry, does the opportunity now exist to create major new areas. Where development can only support the provision of relatively small areas of open space and this could result in problems in terms of maintenance, inadequacy for users and likely neighbour problems, it may be more appropriate to improve existing facilities by way of provision.

7.39 The District Planning Authority supports the recommendations of the National Playing Field Association (NPFA) regarding outdoor play space, of a minimum 2.43 hectares per 1,000 population – the Six Acre Standard, (divided between public open space for outdoor sport and children's play space). This minimum standard will be used as a target for negotiations with developers for open space provision. It however generally excludes areas of informal open space such as woodlands, landscape, amenity and wildlife areas that can be retained or provided through residential proposals to create high quality housing schemes, meet other policy objectives etc. Where outdoor play space is not required due to the level of existing provision in the locality or nature of residential development proposed, then additional improvements to existing, informal open space areas will be sought in lieu of formal provision where a deficiency in informal open space exists.

7.40 The following general policy is intended to protect and provide open space for recreation, leisure and amenity purposes. The provisions of Policy LR9 do not apply to allotments and school playing fields, which are specifically protected under Policies LR11 and LR12. Areas not currently in use as open space have been identified in meeting future needs or remedying deficiencies in provision. Opportunities in open space coverage will be sought through the development control process and planning agreements. Areas of open space of leisure, recreation or amenity value unable to be identified on the proposals maps due to their scale are also protected under Policy LR9 below.

**POLICY LR9** The District Planning Authority will provide an adequate level of public open space for leisure, recreational and amenity purposes, by protecting existing and potential areas of open space and by facilitating new provision by means of negotiation and agreement.

#### **Loss of open space**

Areas of open space of recreation, leisure or amenity value or potential as identified on the Proposals Map will be safeguarded. Development proposals which would result in a net loss of such space will only be permitted if:-

- a) sufficient alternative open space exists;
- b) development does not result in an unacceptable loss in local environmental quality;
- c) it is the best means of securing an improved or alternative recreational facility of at least equivalent community benefit having regard to any deficiencies in the locality.

#### **Provision of new open space**

In deciding planning applications for residential development within areas where an open space deficiency exists or will be created, the District Planning Authority will be guided by the following criteria: -

- i) Sites of 25 or more dwellings should provide open space to the standard of 2.43 hectares (6 acres) per 1,000 population. Where full provision on site would not be appropriate or desirable the space needed may be met by commuted sum payment towards the provision or improvement of open space nearby on a scale related to the size and scale of the development;
- ii) Sites for less than 25 dwellings should contribute towards the provision and improvement of open space on a scale related to the size and nature of the development.

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7.41 The following information will be used in development control to assess whether a deficiency in open space exists or will be created through the loss of an existing area of open space and / or new development:

- a. The hierarchy of open spaces, Maps 1 to 5 and Tables 1, 2A and 2B in Appendix 9;
- b. The range and condition of local open space facilities and their levels of use.

Maps 1 – 5 show equipped children’s play area and area park provision based on maximum travel thresholds. Table 1 indicates deficiencies on a ward / area basis utilising the NPFA ‘Six Acre’ standard per 1,000 population outlined in paragraph 7.37 9. Tables 2A and 2B assess individual children’s playgrounds against key facility standards. In operating Policy LR9 (and LR10), the District Planning Authority will seek to utilise payment received towards open space provision or enhancement within the neighbourhood to the meet the standards identified above.

### **Equipped play areas**

7.42 Equipped play areas should be located and designed so as to minimise annoyance to adjacent occupiers, meet children’s play and safety needs, and ensure that they are visible from neighbouring properties. The NPFA has established an hierarchy of play areas based on the needs of different age groups, adopted by many other local authorities and reflected in Policy LR10 below. Equipped play areas should, where possible, be within 400 metres or 10 minutes walking distance from all dwellings within an estate. It is recommended that a suitable safety surface should be installed in all new play areas and appropriate fencing around areas designed for younger children.

7.43 A comprehensive review of Shepway’s equipped play areas was undertaken by the District Council in 1996, which included consultations with Town and Parish Council’s, play area users and adjoining residents. The aim of the review was to identify adequacy of provision and related problems such as vandalism and public order disturbance. This review and subsequent updates identify that a significant number of the District’s play areas fail to meet all NPFA minimum standards.

7.44 The District Planning Authority considers that in new housing schemes containing 20 or more child bed spaces, the standard of 5sq.m. (54 sq.ft.) of play area per child bed space provides a good basis for local assessment. Consequently, the provision of equipped play space in new housing developments will be based upon this standard as a clear and defined minimum, to ensure consistency and fairness in assessment. The

following policy will apply, to determine the minimum amount and type of equipped play space to be provided as a proportion of the total open space requirement sought through Policy LR9: -

**POLICY LR10** All residential development in which children are expected to live should ensure adequate provision of children's play space. Such provision can be made in a number of ways. The District Planning Authority will seek by negotiation and agreement to achieve a level of provision which meets, or is equivalent to, the guidance set out below.

Criteria for the provision of children's play space in developments containing 20 or more child bed spaces: -

- a) Where a deficiency in the provision of children's play space would exist, a minimum of 5sq.m. of space per child bed space should be provided;
- b) Areas should be set out and located so as to minimise annoyance to nearby occupiers, maximise children's safety and be visible from neighbouring properties. Play areas should be within walking distance of all dwellings containing child bed spaces.

Within the above criteria, the following types of area may be provided, depending on the size and nature of the development.

i) Local Area for Play

Small areas with an activity zone of at least 100sq.m. and 5m away from the curtilage of the nearest house to cater mainly for 4-6 year olds within one minute walking time of home (approximately 100 metres).

ii) Local Equipped Area for Play

Equipped areas with an activity zone of at least 400sq.m. and 20m away from the curtilage of the nearest house to cater mainly for accompanied 4-8 year olds, and slightly older unaccompanied children, within five minutes walking time of home (approximately 400 metres).

iii) Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play

Equipped areas with an activity zone of at least 1,000sq.m. and 30m away from the curtilage of the nearest house to cater mainly for unaccompanied 8-14 year olds with consideration for older children and young people, and for slightly younger supervised or accompanied children, within 15 minutes walking time of home (approximately 1,000 metres).

Note: Child bed spaces are calculated by subtracting all bed spaces in old people's dwellings, all bed spaces in one or two person dwellings and two bed spaces in family dwellings, from the total number of bed spaces in the scheme.

7.45 In assessing the type and size of children's play space to be provided, regard will be had to the number of child bed spaces proposed and to existing deficiencies in local provision. The standard of 5sq.m. set out in Policy LR10 indicates a minimum level of provision. This will not preclude negotiations with developers to secure a provision above the minimum where local circumstances warrant it, eg where an environmental justification for a more generous provision may be pertinent. This could include ensuring that areas are provided to meet minimum size and distribution standards for the different types of play space in order to meet the needs of young people and avoid disturbance to surrounding residents.

## Allotments

7.46 Shepway has a number of allotments throughout the District, many of which are of long standing and well used by local residents including the elderly and disabled. As such it is important to ensure easily accessible local facilities to meet the needs of users. Allotments can also contribute to environmental quality and informal open space provision, especially in urban areas and, like other areas of open space, once developed are usually lost to the local community forever. For these reasons, it is important that they are protected from inappropriate development:

**POLICY LR11** The District Planning Authority will refuse planning permission for the development which results in the loss of allotment land unless it can be shown that: -

- a) sufficient alternative provision exists including the ability of displaced allotment holders to be satisfactorily relocated in the locality;
- b) development does not result in an unacceptable loss of environmental quality;
- c) it is the best means of securing an improved or alternative recreational facility of at least equivalent community benefit having regard to any deficiencies in the locality.



## Protection of school playing fields

7.47 School playing fields can make an important contribution to (future) leisure and recreational open space provision and together with other less formal grass play and amenity areas on school sites, can enhance the visual amenity of neighbourhoods. It is therefore important that sufficient protection is given to these resources balanced with the need to ensure that necessary school expansion is not unduly restricted to meet local educational needs.

**POLICY LR12** Proposals resulting in the loss of school playing fields or grass play and amenity areas at school sites, as shown on the Proposals Map, will only be permitted where development would not cause an unacceptable loss in local environmental quality and where it also accords with both the following criteria:

- a) In the case of school playing fields, sufficient alternative open space provision exists or new sport and recreational facilities will be provided of at least equivalent community benefit having regard to any deficiencies in the locality;
- b) The land required is for an alternative educational purpose which cannot reasonably be met in another way.

Note: In assessing whether sufficient alternative open space exists, regard will be had to relevant details referred to in paragraph 7.41 above.

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## Dual use of school facilities

7.48 The District Council considers that more indoor and outdoor recreational and leisure facilities could be provided by the dual use of school and other facilities. This would represent an efficient use of existing resources, potentially contribute to meeting identified deficiencies and local demand for leisure and recreation provision and avoid the need to release undeveloped land adjacent to the urban area.

~~**POLICY LR13** The District Planning Authority will seek, where appropriate, the multiple use of recreational facilities through agreements with the Kent Education Authority, individual schools and others, particularly in areas where a deficiency of open space or demand for sports facilities exist.~~

## Southlands School, New Romney

7.49 A study of sports facilities in Shepway identifies a need for a community sports hall to serve the western part of the District. Development of a dual use Community Sports Centre at Southlands School, New Romney is viewed as the most appropriate option for satisfying the sports requirements of Romney Marsh communities. This is supported by a wide range of bodies including the District Council, Kent County Council, the Rural Development Commission, the Sports Council, and the School Governors.

7.50 A range of funding sources has been secured and the facility opened in 2001. In the longer term, it is hoped that additional community sports facilities at the School can be developed including a swimming pool. The following policy will therefore apply: -

**POLICY LR14** The District Planning Authority will permit proposals to provide additional community sports facilities on land at [Southlands School, New Romney](#), as shown on the Proposals Map, subject to highway, environmental and amenity considerations.

## Cycling

7.51 Matters relating to cycling are addressed Chapter 11 on Transport.

## Amusement facilities

7.52 Amusement centres arcades in the traditional seaside holiday areas of Folkestone and Romney Marsh continue to fulfil a role in entertaining tourists, particularly day visitors. However, due to the nature of activity generated, noise and appearance, arcades can be incompatible with other surrounding uses and will normally be restricted to the areas in which they already exist and further expansion will not be allowed. Amusement

centres differ in character to amusement arcades and subject to local amenity and shopping policy considerations, may be acceptable outside of these areas. The following Policy will apply:-

**POLICY LR15** The District Planning Authority will permit the establishment of new amusement centres and arcades within the areas identified on the Proposals Map. Elsewhere, new amusement arcades will not normally be permitted. Amusement centres will only be permitted outside of the area shown on the [Proposals Map](#) where they meet the following criteria:-

- a) the premises will not interrupt a shopping frontage in the identified Primary shopping area of Folkestone town centre;
- b) the use would not give rise to conflicts with existing uses in the area by reasons of noise and general disturbance;
- c) a satisfactory 'shop window' type display will be provided.