

12. LEISURE, RECREATION AND CULTURE

Context

- 12.1 Open spaces, sport, recreation and cultural facilities underpin people's quality of life. These facilities play a part in increasing the health of the nation, a key Government objective. Sport England has set a target of 70% participation in sport and physical activity by 2020 and policies in this Plan will contribute to achieving this.
- 12.2 Leisure and cultural activities are important to residents of all ages in the Borough. In particular, Surrey's `Ageing Well Strategy` pledges include the need to encourage older people to be active, and be informed about how to stay healthier both physically and mentally and Waverley's own Strategy for Ageing Well ¹ contains a five year action plan.
- 12.3 The Local Plan has a role in supporting the delivery of new and improved facilities that may be required to meet local needs and in helping to safeguard important existing amenities. This support may take a number of forms including:
- the provision of new or improved facilities where there is an identified deficit in provision. For example, through:
 - The forthcoming Waverley Cultural Strategy (adoption expected in June 2016).
 - Open Space, Sport, Leisure and Recreation Study, 2012
 - Playing Pitch Strategy, 2012- 2028
 - Play Area Strategy, 2015 - 2024
 - policies to safeguard existing amenities;
 - securing provision of new/improved facilities, or financial contributions toward their provision, where needed to offset the additional demands arising from new housing development.
- 12.4 The provision of new or improved recreation facilities can have wider benefits, such as supporting healthier lifestyles and to reduce obesity. These facilities may be formal (sports pitches or indoor sports facilities) or informal, including measures aimed at promoting walking or cycling, including the provision of new and improved footpaths, bridleways and cycleways. This is supported by the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) ² which identifies potential opportunities for enhancing the Borough's Green Infrastructure by linking routes to others outside the Borough boundaries.
- 12.5 National Planning Policy protects existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields. The Council has carried out an audit of all kinds of accessible open spaces and recreation land supplemented by the Playing Pitch Strategy 2012 and Play Area Strategy 2015. Both documents identify needs and deficits in these types of spaces which should

¹ Strategy for Ageing Well in Waverley 2015 -2018 –November 2015

² Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP): Waverley Borough Council 2012

be taken into account in development proposals. Losses in these facilities will not be permitted unless it is proven they are surplus to requirements or they are replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quality and quantity in a suitable location.

- 12.6 Sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments benefit businesses in rural areas, help sustain local communities and contribute to the economic prosperity of the Borough's rural communities. A careful balance is needed, however, to respect the character of the countryside in Waverley.

Provision in Waverley

Sports and Recreation

- 12.7 Leisure centres in the district are located in Farnham, Haslemere (The Herons and the Edge) Godalming and Cranleigh Leisure Centres. Farnham and Cranleigh centres underwent refurbishment in 2009/10, and a new leisure centre was constructed for Godalming in 2012. Haslemere Leisure Centre has seen extensive refurbishment, completed in January 2015. The Council is the main provider of outdoor sports pitches in the Borough and these are mainly located on sports and recreation grounds. Other facilities are provided and maintained by the Town and Parish Councils, the private sector, charitable organisations and voluntary groups. Many schools have shared community sports and leisure facilities, including all-weather pitches, halls and leisure centres.
- 12.8 The Borough has a large number of village and church halls, many of which provide space for local sporting and social clubs. These and associated recreation grounds and sports pitches, make a valuable contribution to the health and well being of communities. This particularly applies in the more rural parts of the borough, where access to the larger leisure centres can be limited due to accessibility issues, including a lack of public transport at certain times of day and evening.

Countryside, Parks and Green Space

- 12.9 61% of Waverley is within the Green Belt, and around 78% is designated as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and/or Area of Great Landscape Value. 1,000 hectares of countryside are managed by the Borough Council, ranging from small areas of woodland and village greens, to extensive areas such as Farnham Park, Frensham Common and National Trust land, which include the Devil's Punchbowl at Hindhead. There is a high proportion of woodland, much of which is publicly accessible. The amount of natural and semi-natural greenspace is therefore a key feature of the Borough and residents rate it as the most important type of open space in Waverley.³
- 12.10 There are hundreds of formal public open space sites across the Borough including ornamental parks and gardens, recreation grounds and children's

³ Open Space, Leisure and Recreation Study 2012

playgrounds. Both Farnham Park and Broadwater Park, in Godalming were awarded Green Flag status in 2015. In addition, there is an extensive network of public footpaths and bridleways. The North Downs Way, a national long distance footpath, commences at Farnham, while of regional importance is The Downs Link, a bridleway route based on the former Guildford to Horsham railway and the Greensand Way commencing at Haslemere Educational Museum.

- 12.11 Rivers include the River Wey and Cranleigh Waters. Frensham Great Pond and Frensham Little Pond are significant water bodies and there is an extensive network of lakes, used for sailing and fishing. Part of the Wey and Arun Canal runs through the eastern part of the Borough, and is being restored. Some stretches are accessible for walking with further opportunities being explored. The South Downs National Park adjoining the south of Haslemere and at Alice Holt to the west of Farnham provides further leisure opportunities
- 12.13 Detailed criteria for designating Local Green Spaces through local and neighbourhood plans will be provided as part of the Local Plan Part 2.

Play Areas

- 12.14 There are currently 73 equipped Waverley Borough Council and Parish/Town Council owned play areas in Waverley. These include skate parks and a small number of hard surface ball courts. A deficiency in provision for children and young people overall, has been identified in Waverley and redressing this is ⁴one of the Council's corporate priorities. ⁵ The Council incorporates Surrey County Council standards supporting safer routes to play spaces to be integrated into the design and improvement to proposed schemes.
- 12.15 National guidance encourages local standards to be developed for play space and sports provision. Fields in Trust (FIT) standards in 'Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play' (2008) identified a shortfall in Waverley of designated (or equipped) play space of 0.19ha/1000 people (or 23.17 hectares), with a surplus of informal play space of 0.18ha/1000 people. On average there is 0.06ha of equipped play space for every 1000 people.⁶
- 12.16 The Fields in Trust (FIT) standards were reviewed in 2015⁷, however, the standards for provision of space and walking guidelines remain as reported in the Waverley Play Strategy. This differentiates play areas designed to meet the needs of children of all ages, and sets out a recommended application of quantity benchmark guidelines. These are recommended to relate to residential and mixed use developments involving non- specialist residential use (i.e. the standards should be reviewed for developments such as student housing or sheltered accommodation) using average household sizes in Waverley.

⁴ Waverley Play Areas Strategy 2015 -2024

⁵ Waverley Borough Corporate Plan 2012 - 2015

⁶ Waverley Play Areas Strategy 2015 - 2024

⁷ Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' - December 2015

12.17 The guidelines⁸ shown in Table 1 should be provided on site in accordance with the minimum sizes shown. A financial developer contribution towards improvement of an existing equipped/designated play space may be sought in lieu of on-site provision for larger scale play spaces or where existing, adequate play space lies within the walking distance guidelines also shown in Table 1. It should be noted that these are provided as minimum guidelines and should be adjusted if necessary, to take account of local circumstances.

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⁸ Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' - December 2015

Type of space	Standard (per 1000 population)	Walking guidelines from dwellings	Scale of development	Minimum Size (minimum dimensions)	Buffer zones
Informal play space	0.55 ha	NA		NA	
Local Areas for Play (LAPs)	0.25 ha	Accompanied walking distance 100m	5 or more dwellings	0.01ha (10 x 10 metres)	5m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings
Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs)	0.25 ha	400m	10 or more dwellings	0.04ha 20 x 20 metres	20 m minimum separation between the activity zone and the habitable room façade of dwellings
Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)	0.25 ha	1,000m	201 – 500 dwellings: contribution 501+ dwellings: provision of NEAP	0.1 ha (31.6 x 31.6 m) *	30 m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings
Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and skateboard parks	0.30 ha	700m	10 -200 dwellings: contribution 201+ dwellings: provision of MUGA	0.1 ha (40 x 20 m)	30 m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings

* Minimum activity zone of 1000 sq.m comprising an area for play equipment and structures and a hard surfaced area of at least 465 sq.m (the minimum needed to play five a side football)

The quality guidelines for these types of spaces can be found in [Table 1 of Guidance for Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard.](#)

- 12.11 The Play Area Strategy 2015 - 2024 identifies seven wards that fall below the Waverley average for both equipped play provision and the Fields in Trust standard for informal play space. These are: Cranleigh East, Farnham Bourne, Farnham Moor Park, Farnham Shortheath and Boundstone, Godalming Binscombe, Godalming Charterhouse, and Milford. Other wards have significantly less than average equipped play provision, but more informal play space.
- 12.19 The standard set out in the Play Area Strategy is to achieve 0.8ha of equipped or informal play space for every 1000 people. This target, incorporated in this Local Plan, aims to balance the large quantity of accessible open space in the Borough with the need for equipped play areas.

Playing Pitches

- 12.20 The Playing Pitch Strategy (2013) provided a quantified assessment of current and future need for pitches, together with local standards for provision and quality. It confirms a relatively high level of satisfaction with pitches and a 'reasonably good' level of local facility supply.
- 12.21 The Strategy identified a deficiency in the borough-wide provision of youth football pitches in 2013, but a surplus in other types of sports. This should not automatically be interpreted as signifying that the 'surplus' could be disposed of, since the standards against which the surplus was assessed are the minimum that are required to meet current local needs. Also, a 'surplus' in one form of provision (for example adult football pitches) may compensate for shortfalls in other types of provision locally (for example, youth football pitches).⁹
- 12.22 In many of the more densely populated urban parts of the Borough, the potential to meet identified deficiencies in playing pitches are limited by the absence of opportunities in such built-up areas. However, the opportunities presented by new developments may offer the flexibility to achieve enhanced levels of pitch and greenspace provision, recognising that the current standards represent an assessment of the minimum amounts that are needed.
- 12.23 New development in Waverley should meet the following standards for provision of playing pitches, which are based on Sport England's Playing Pitch Model (PPM). The PPM compares peak supply and demand and builds in other considerations such as pitch carrying capacity, to produce an estimate of surpluses or deficiencies. This was then used to establish the adequacy of current and future provision as shown:¹⁰ The Playing Pitch Strategy provides a high level of detail as to what is needed and the justification for the standard.

Table 2: Local Standards of Provision

Pitch	Standard
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⁹ Waverley Playing Pitch Strategy 2013 – paragraph 62

¹⁰ Waverley Playing Pitch Strategy 2013 – paragraph 51

Adult football	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One adult pitch (1.2ha) per 5,000 people. • All aspects of all pitches and ancillary facilities should rate 'average' or better. • The whole population within 15 minutes walk or drive of the nearest pitch.
Youth football	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One youth pitch (0.75ha) per 3,200 people. • All aspects of all pitches and ancillary facilities should rate 'average' or better. • The whole population within 15 minutes walk or drive of the nearest pitch.
Mini-soccer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One mini-soccer pitch (0.2ha) per 5,000 people. • All aspects of all pitches and ancillary facilities should rate 'average' or better. • The whole population within 15 minutes walk or drive of the nearest pitch.
Cricket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One cricket pitch (1.2ha) per 2,800 people. • All aspects of all pitches and ancillary facilities should rate 'average' or better. • The whole population within 15 minutes walk or drive of the nearest pitch.
Rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One rugby pitch (1.25ha) per 6,000 people. • All aspects of all pitches and ancillary facilities should rate 'average' or better. • The whole population within 20 minutes walk or drive of the nearest pitch.
Synthetic turf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One synthetic turf pitch per 12,000 people. All aspects of all pitches and ancillary facilities should rate 'average' or better. The whole population within 20 minutes walk or drive of the nearest pitch.

The Arts, Galleries, Museums and Entertainment

- 12.24 Waverley has a rich and diverse cultural offer which includes a university dedicated to the creative arts and a thriving arts centre. The Council actively supports the arts through its own efforts and in partnership with others. It is recognised that fostering arts activities supports economic activity. Waverley benefits from two multi-arts facilities in the Borough; the Farnham Maltings, a nationally significant organisation; and the Cranleigh Arts Centre. Also, Godalming Borough Hall and Haslemere Hall offer a range of events and activities including theatre and cinema, music and dance. These and other smaller venues such as galleries and schools and community halls with their seasonal events, play an important role in the cultural life of the Borough and attract visitors from outside the area.
- 12.25 There are four museums in Waverley: Farnham, Godalming, Haslemere Educational Museum and the Tilford Rural Life Centre.
- 12.26 A Borough-wide audit of cultural assets is taking place as part of the new Waverley Cultural Strategy. This includes mapping the facilities, identifying deficiencies and is expected to be adopted in April 2016.

Policy LRC1: Leisure, Recreation and Cultural Facilities

Proposals for new residential development will be expected to make provision for play space in accordance with Fields in Trust standards as set out in Table 1.

The Council will seek to secure the provision of new pitches or contributions towards improvements to existing pitches taking account of the local standards set out in Table 2, to ensure that there is adequate provision made in the Borough.

The Council will seek positive measures and co-operative action to secure appropriate public access for water-based and waterside

recreation, provided it does not conflict with nature conservation interests.

Leisure, recreation and cultural facilities will be safeguarded from development. If the use of an existing facility is to be changed, evidence must be presented demonstrating that:

- a) The existing use is no longer required or viable,
- b) That no other leisure, recreation or cultural provision is required or appropriate in that area, or
- c) That alternative provision of a suitable scale and type can be made.

Where a need arises for new or improved facilities as a direct result development then appropriate contributions of on-site provision will be sought in accordance with Policy ICS1. The Council will encourage the provision of new open space, sports, leisure and recreation facilities and the promotion of outdoor recreation and access to the countryside, taking account of the evidence in the Open Space, Sport, Leisure and Recreation (PPG17) Study 2012; the Waverley Playing Pitch Strategy March 2013; and the Waverley Play Area Strategy 2015 – 2024, provided they accord with relevant national and local planning policies.

Delivery

12.27 The policy will be delivered by:

- Working in partnership with Waverley's Community Services, other sport and leisure providers and the Community Development Officer for Arts.
- The greening of the environment, improvements in biodiversity and enhancements of the existing green infrastructure to be undertaken in partnership with various organisations such as the Waverley Countryside Service, Action for Wildlife, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, the Surrey Heathland Project and the Surrey Biodiversity Partnership.
- The granting of planning permissions for leisure, recreational and cultural facilities.

Evidence

- Open Space, Sport, Leisure and Recreation (PPG17) Study 2012
- Waverley Playing Pitch Strategy: March 2013
- Waverley Play Areas Strategy 2015 – 2024
- Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard. Fields in Trust 2015.