

APPENDIX 1 - POLICY BACKGROUND

A1.1 Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG17) – Sport Open Space and Recreation (2002)

PPG17 recognises that sport, open space and recreation contributes to the quality of life of people. It is concerned with meeting the diversity of recreational needs from formal, organised sport through to the informal enjoyment of open space.

The planning objectives set out in PPG17 are to:

- Support an urban renaissance
- Support a rural renewal
- Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion
- Health and well being
- Promote more sustainable development

‘Sports facilities, parks and open and informal green spaces are integral to the built urban environment, (they) enhance quality of life and contribute to the sustainability of urban areas. Local Planning Authorities should therefore seek to provide a comprehensive and attractive network of formal and informal recreational facilities... as a general principle, development plans should be used to protect existing facilities and to make any necessary new provision’ (Para 3)

PPG17 does not prescribe national standards of recreational provision but requires Local Planning Authorities to set standards for their area based on an assessment.

PPG17 states the need for an audit of open space, sport and recreational facilities. PPG17’s companion guide ‘Assessing Needs and Opportunities’ guides Local Authorities on how this audit could be undertaken.

The main outcome of a PPG17 audit should ultimately be the setting of local standards or planning policies for provision that include, the quantitative element – how much is needed, and a qualitative component – against which the need to enhance existing facilities can be measured. Other factors such as accessibility, distance thresholds, costs of facilities and management could also be identified.

A1.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3) – Housing, 2000

PPG3 identifies the importance of ‘greening’ the residential environments and the need for landscape design. It also states that Local Authorities are required to have clear policies for the protection and creation of open space and playing fields.

PPG3 states that interpretation boards/centres, toilets and refreshment facilities should be allowed on open space providing they are sensitively implemented. Consequently the location of such facilities within PPG17 sites was audited and their provision became an important element of the qualitative assessment.

A1.3 Circular 1/97

Proposes that it would be appropriate to expect contributions from developers to provide a certain facility when their development would generate a need for that particular facility. This is relevant as contributions can be sought for open space, sport and recreational provision.

A1.4 English Nature – Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Areas

English Nature is developing a delivery plan following the implementation of EU Legislation regarding the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPA), internationally important habitat. The draft delivery plan contains standards for the provision of open space designed to provide mitigation for new residential development that would impact upon the SPA. With the setting of housing targets in the emerging South East Plan of 320 dwellings a year, it may be likely that GBC will have to identify new areas that can be used as open space to safeguard the SPA. The process is at an early stage but its implementation could have a significant impact on the requirement for and use of open space, mainly accessible natural green space, in the borough. The provision of new open space in relation to SPA mitigation would be in addition to new open space sports and recreation provision set out in the Local Plan and in the emerging Guildford Development Framework.

A1.5 Sports England Annual Report, 2003-2004

Includes ambitious targets which can be broken down into two key objectives

- To increase the number of people taking part in sport and active recreation for at least 30 minutes on three occasions each week by an average of 1% per year through to 2020
- To make England the best sporting nation in the world by 2020

Access to such facilities will be imperative to achieve these aims. Sports England has therefore gathered data on sports facilities in its 'Active Areas' project. The relevant data for the Guildford area was incorporated into the study and entered onto the council's Geographical Information System (GIS), however some gaps were identified. Sports England are however constantly updating this information and will be undertaking a study in 2006 to set benchmarks regarding the quantity of sports facilities provided.

A1.6 National Playing Fields Association Standards

The National Playing Field Association (NPFA) was established to ensure that every person has access to recreational space within easy reach of his or her home. The NPFA urged the adoption of a minimum standard in terms of space (formally known as the 'Six Acre Standard'). The recommendation is that there should be a minimum standard of 2.4 ha per 1000 people of outdoor playing space. A breakdown of NPFA standards is set out in the table below

Table 4 – NPFA Standards

Category	Size Per Population
Outdoor Sport	1.6 – 1.8 ha per 1000 population
Children's Playing Space	0.6 – 0.8 ha per 1000 population
Total Playing Space	2.4 ha per 1000 population

The break down of the components of each category can be found on p14 in Guildford's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Open Space 2002 (Appendix 1).

The NPFA also recommends the provision of different types of play areas for a range of age groups. There are three categories of provision identified for new housing developments. These are Local Areas for Play, Local Equipped Area for Play, Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play. (Further details are available in the SPG Open Space p17)

It must be noted that these are not compulsory standards. In PPG17 it is stated that Local Authorities should adopt their own standards. Guildford BC does, however, attempt to meet the NPFA standards through the Open Space SPG.

A1.7 Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 9) 2001

Policy Q2 of RPG9 states that, 'the quality of life in the urban areas, including suburban areas, should be raised through significant improvement to the urban environment, making urban areas more attractive places in which to live, work, shop, spend leisure time and invest, thus helping to counter trends to more dispersed patterns of residence and travel'

Attractive open space and parks with access to leisure facilities is a way of achieving this.

A1.8 The Emerging South East Plan (SE Plan) (Consultation Draft 2005)

The SE Plan clearly identifies the link between open space and recreation and a thriving healthy community, outlining a more proactive approach for Local Planning Authorities in developing healthy areas to live. Policy S2 – Supporting Healthy Communities states that 'Local Development Documents should embrace preventative measures and tackle the cause of ill health at the source, for example by providing access to open space or recreational opportunities at an early stage in new developments '.

The SE Plan also makes it clear that Local Planning Authorities should increase and diversify the cultural landscape by providing access and facilities such as libraries, museums and sports facilities.

A1.9 Surrey Structure Plan, 2004

Policy DN13 – Leisure and Recreation Facilities is relevant.

The policies states that ' development for recreation or leisure use will be encouraged in urban areas, particularly where it overcomes deficiencies in existing provision. Opportunities for informal recreation, such as improved pedestrian and cycle networks in town and between town and country, should be provided in conjunction with development. Land and buildings used for sport and recreation should be retained in such use unless surplus to requirements. Development for other purposes will only be acceptable where it is demonstrated that the land is not suitable to meet a deficiency in another form of open space provision or where relocation of facilities will achieve a better more accessible network. The audit will allow the council to identify local needs and if there is any surplus.

The policy will be implemented through Local Authorities providing PPG17 audits. It is also stated that Sports England will identify significant areas for sport in the county.

A1.10 Surrey Cultural Strategy

This strategy sets a vision, and action plan, for the whole county. The vision states that Surrey should be a place 'where culture is central to people's lives and where opportunities for participation embrace our heritage, celebrate local traditions and encourage a healthy life style'. The Strategy places great emphasis on facilities identifies in PPG17 such as parks, open space, sports facilities, libraries, museums and galleries as central to culture and therefore the mental and physical well being of the community.

The strategy sets out clear actions that will have direct application to the Guildford Cultural Strategy and the PPG17 Audit, these being

Objective 3.e ‘Encourage youth organisations to use sport and arts as a particular tool of social development and integration’, it is important that Guildford has the facilities available to allow this objective to be met

Objective 4.d ‘Encourage sport and recreation in the extensive areas of water in Surrey’,

Objective 4.l ‘Develop a programme to improve degraded urban fringe landscape including creating recreational open space’, the PPG17 audit will allow the Borough Council to target any new provision to where it is needed.

Objective 5.d ‘Encourage all sport clubs to form junior sections and encourage the formation of new sports clubs in areas where there is clearly unmet demand’

A1.11 The Guildford Community Plan, 2003

Table 5 – Community Plan Priorities

Culture (p6)	Environment (p8)	Housing (p1)
More local play areas for young people	Improving the environment through small parks, nature conservation and better lighting	Need to ensure open space and play facilities are provided within or close to housing developments
Improve recreational access to the waterways and lakes		
Measures to enable people on low incomes or with disabilities to take part in leisure activities.		

Actions Identified

- Assess the need for more sports facilities
- Provide a strategy for children and young peoples formal play facilities e.g. Skateboarding and BMX
- Promote the use of schools and public buildings by the whole community
- Link pedestrian areas through the walking strategy and improve lighting in public spaces

The PPG17 audit will allow base line information to be gathered to help implement the Community Plan.

A1.12 Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003

The most relevant local plan policies are as follows

- G5 (10) Open Spaces of Value
- G6 Planning Benefits

M6	Provision for Cyclists and Pedestrians
HE12	Historic Parks and Gardens
R1	Loss of land and Facilities for Sport and Recreation
R2-R4	Recreational Open Space Provision
R5	Protection of Open Space

These policies are intended to provide an adequate range and distribution of recreational open space. A full breakdown of the Local Plans objectives towards recreation and open space are identified in Para 13.6 of the Local Plan. The Local Plan has adopted the NPFA minimum standards.

A1.13 Open Space – Supplementary Planning Guidance, 2002

This SPG was prepared to support and amplify the open space and recreation policies in the Local Plan. It sets out the justification for the protection of existing open space and promotes the provision of adequate open space in relation to new housing development by way of on site provision and/or developers contributions.

The SPG identifies the scale of contributions that should be sought from developers. The amount of contribution is based on anticipated costs of a facility of required size. It was developed using the experience of the Leisure Service Unit in providing these facilities. These figures will be updated in the emerging Infrastructure SPG.

Table 6 – Contributions Required from New Development

Dwelling Size	Children's Space	Play	Sports Ground	Total
One bedroom	£392		£482	£875
Two bedrooms	£657		£805	£1462
Three bedrooms	£787		£967	£1754
Four+ bedrooms	£1050		£1290	£2340

A1.14 Planning Obligations and Infrastructure – Supplementary Planning Guidance 2003

This SPG covers matters regarding planning obligations, it recommends that the SPG on Open Space should be consulted for detailed matters regarding open space provision. The SPG identifies the thresholds at which contributions would be sought. For open space it is:

Between 5 and 25 dwellings or less than 0.4ha = 2.4 ha of recreational open space per 1000 pop

Sites over 25 dwellings or commercial developments over 2500m² on sites above 0.4ha would be considered on a site-by-site basis

A1.15 Residential Design Guide, 2004

The SPG sets out good practice it states that '(new developments) should be developed around buildings and existing landscape features to include both public and private space.... main pedestrian and cycle thoroughfares should incorporate and connect features such as children's play areas, open space and safe routes to school.'

A1.16 Open Spaces Study, 1997

In 1997 a survey of existing open spaces in the borough identified public and private open spaces in the urban areas including playing fields, children's play areas, allotments, parks and gardens, cemeteries and amenity areas. One of the purposes of the study was to identify significant open spaces that should be protected from development because of their amenity or recreational value.

The survey enabled the council to identify deficiencies and surpluses of open space in relation to the NPFA standards on a ward basis. It was found that there was an overall significant deficit of open space in the urban areas.

The following table summaries,

Table 7 – The 1997 Open Space Assessment Overall Findings

Area	Existing Open Space (ha)	Open Space per 1000 pop (ha)	NPFA requirement (ha)	Surplus/Deficit (ha)
Guildford urban area sub total	66.6	1.11	143.9	-77.3
Ash urban area sub total	23.6	1.3	42.3	-19
Borough Total	89.9	1.16	186.2	-96.3

The PPG17 audit has allowed this assessment to be reviewed and expanded to the rural areas of the borough.

A1.17 Parks and Countryside Service Business Plan and Strategic Objectives 2002-2004

The key leisure service aims in the context of this audit are,

- To provide and encourage the provision of leisure opportunities in the borough for all
- To encourage access to, and increased use of, both indoor and outdoor leisure activities in line with the policies of the local plan
- To balance the provision of a modern, publicly accessible leisure service of the highest quality with the need to protect, sustain and enhance the environment.

The mission statement for the Leisure Service Unit is, 'to meet the people of Guildford's needs for leisure, both through the direct provision of facilities and services and through partnerships with other agencies and providers to enable a full range of stimulating activities to take place.'

The Parks and Countryside Services Unit's mission is... 'We are here to give the people of Guildford Borough and our visitors the best parks, countryside and allotments we possibly can'. The relevant service aims are:

- **2.** To improve the range of play for all ages of young people in parks and children's - playgrounds
- **13.** To promote leisure cycling especially links between open spaces to promote healthy lifestyles and less dependency on the motor vehicle

- **15.**To provide more facilities for teenagers, particularly in the North Guildford area.
- **16.**To improve access to the parks and countryside for those with disabilities.

The aims and missions identified above are evidence that the PPG17 Audit has the scope to become a corporate project, as the data will be relevant to the work of many service units.

A1.18 Guildford Cultural Strategy, 2003

The Cultural Strategy recognises the importance of sport and open space on the culture and well being of the population of the borough. On pages 12-13 it identifies some of the organisations and facilities available that are provided and accessible to the public such as the ‘thousand hectares of formal parks, open space, and countryside areas.’

The Strategy identifies the link between a high quality natural and built environment with the boroughs vitality and prosperity, especially in attracting business and tourists. (p16)

The Strategy identifies accessibility as an issue that needs to be tackled (p19), in terms of low income, teenagers, and people with disabilities. The two key policies in the context of this audit are ‘Environment Policies’:

- Continue to provide and enhance quality parks, countryside and open space
- Support the surveying and recording of the borough’s historic parks and gardens to promote conservation, restoration, management and public access.

A1.19 Guildford Tourism Strategy 2003-2007

The Tourism Strategy is relevant to a PPG17 Audit due to the fact PPG17 states that any audit should take into account those working in and visiting the area, as well as residents.

The Tourism Strategy had identified Parks and Open Spaces as a ‘Strength’ in the SWOT analysis, and the river was seen as an ‘Opportunity’

Issues were raised regarding improved accessibility and the need to improve public toilet provision in parks and open space following the results of the Best Value Service Review.

A1.20 Guildford Walking Strategy, 2004

PPG17 states that walking and cycling networks are important aspects of sustainable development, therefore open space and recreational facilities should be accessible by such means of transport. Walking has been identified as one of the key recreational pastimes, coming third to shopping, and cinema visits (Citizen’s Panel 2002). The walking strategy identifies the need to increase the number of trips completed on foot. As 80% of walking trips are less than one mile it is important to locate facilities such as open space and recreation in close proximity so they can be accessed on foot, and be more sustainable.

The strategy states the importance of a safe and accessible walking network. This is significant as open space facilities should ideally be located on such a network to maximise their full potential.

A1.21 Guildford Cycling Strategy, 2004

This strategy has the aim of quadrupling the number of trips by bicycle from the 1996 levels by 2012. Cycling is therefore set to increase as a recreational pursuit if the aims of this strategy are met. Therefore similar issues to those identified in the walking strategy are relevant.

A1.22 Guildford Fixed Equipment Playground Strategy 2003

The Parks and Countryside Service has undertaken a review of all playgrounds within the borough. In preparing the base information for the strategy, officers undertook an assessment of quality and current provision, identifying potential locations for new provision.

The plan has identified £1.6million worth of improvements to all of the Borough's playgrounds. The long-term plans stretching over ten years include spending £942,000 on refurbishment and £675,000 on children's equipment.

An assessment of every park has been made and identified those, which are not up to standard. Assessment included their usage, age of equipment, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

The next ten years will see funds targeted at those play areas in need from £7000 to £111,737. Avondale in Ash will get a £47,000 revamp, Kings College will get £57,000 and Stoke Park gardens will get a £49,000 face-lift. Sutherland memorial Park one of the biggest play areas in the Borough will get more than £110,000 targeted at basket ball posts, swings and a playhouse.

A1.23 Sports Development Strategy 2003-2007

The strategy sets out why sport development opportunities are important to the quality of life of individuals and communities within the Borough. It assesses the value of sport by showing its ability to contribute towards wider social issues such as healthy living, culture and social inclusion. The consultation and audits that were undertaken to produce this strategy will be of particular significance to the PPG17 audit.

A1.24 Climate Change Strategy (Guildford Borough Council), 2004

The overall aim of the Climate Change Strategy is 'to identify ways in which the effects of Climate Change can be addressed at the local level by mitigation – or reducing the production of greenhouse gases, and adaptation – adapting to the effects that are happening now and in the future.' Increasing the levels of open, green space will aid the mitigation of some of the effects of pollution. This is referred to in PPG17 as improving the 'green lungs' of urban areas. By ensuring that facilities of appropriate quantity and quality are located at appropriate distance thresholds, the need to travel to access basic recreational facilities will be reduced, therefore lowering pollution. This is re-iterated in the emerging Guildford Sustainable Development and Construction SPD.