

CHAPTER 11 - COMMUNITY FACILITIES

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11.1 **INTRODUCTION**

- 11.1.1 Community facilities include hospitals, clinics, schools, day centres, social centres, libraries, museums, meeting halls, residential homes for the elderly and places of worship. All of the residents of the Borough use some of these facilities. Some residents are heavily dependent on facilities such as hospitals and clinics. Other facilities such as schools are used by residents at different points in their life. Many such as libraries, places of worship, evening classes, and social centres are used by a large number of residents on a fairly regular basis. Some individuals and groups of the population face particular difficulties because they are disadvantaged in some way; for example disabled people can often be denied access to services because of thoughtless building design, and elderly people may find it difficult to socialise because of the lack of day centres or residential homes. People with young children may also be disadvantaged due to the underprovision of day nurseries.
- 11.1.2 The provision of health, welfare and education facilities is primarily the responsibility of the Eastern Surrey Health Authority, Epsom Health Care NHS Trust, Surrey Heartlands NHS Trust, Surrey County Council and the Funding Agency for Schools. The Borough Council is itself responsible for providing and maintaining certain day care centres and it also provides meals-on-wheels, dial-a-ride, shopmobility and minibus services, a community alarm scheme and grant aids a number of local organisations. Almost 20% of the Borough Council's budget for 1998/99 was spent on such services.
- 11.1.3 The private sector plays a significant role in the provision of education and is likely to play an increasingly significant role in the provision of health-care facilities. The voluntary sector also plays an important role in the provision of a wide variety of services for groups with special needs and indeed the Council is indebted to the many unpaid helpers who voluntarily give up their time to make possible the levels of service for such groups which are at present provided by the Council.
- 11.1.4 The local plan cannot properly concern itself with the planning and policy formulation for services which the Council does not itself provide. However, the Borough Council does make an important contribution to the planning and formulation of policies of the provision of such services through membership of the Joint Planning Teams and by making representations to the responsible bodies on issues arising out of the preparation of the District-wide Local Plan and associated public consultation exercises. Neither can the local plan concern itself with a review of the Borough Council's own policies for the provision of community services. The role of the local plan, in so far as it relates to the provision of community facilities, is to set out policies which deal with the land use implications arising out of the demand for these facilities.

11.2 **POLICY CONTEXT**

Government Policy

- 11.2.1 Recent changes in the arrangements for the funding by central government of health and education services have significantly changed the ways in which these services

are provided. In education, the government has encouraged schools to opt out of local authority control and grant-maintained schools, together with independent schools, set their own admissions procedures over which the Local Education Authority has no control. The Government has also promoted a rapid expansion in the number of students in higher education. In the case of health-care provision, the government has introduced an internal market and promoted a policy of "care in the community" with less reliance on large institutional facilities.

- 11.2.2 Local plans should make provision for land for schools and higher education, for places of worship and other community facilities. Where local authorities have other wider social considerations in mind in taking a view about how they hope to see the social pattern of their communities develop, it is important to use the reasoned justification to make explicit that view and the influence it has had upon the development plan proposals. However, the underlying approach must be to limit the plan content to social considerations that are relevant and to land-use policies.

County Structure Plan Policy

- 11.2.3 The Structure Plan states that planning authorities should identify the social and community needs of the population, particularly in those areas where there is a new development or where such provision is deficient having regard to changes in the population structure or the means of delivery of such services. Provision for such needs should take into account the need for accessibility and convenience of facilities to all sections of the community and the need for care in the community and other types of provision to be made within residential areas.
- 11.2.4 Development should not be permitted where it would lead to the loss of existing social and community facilities, unless alternative facilities are provided at locations readily accessible to the population served. Where buildings used for social and community purposes become redundant, a similar use should be sought if the existing range of facilities is inadequate. This should follow consultation with the County and other service providers, including the voluntary sector.
- 11.2.5 The provision of new facilities, including the operational needs of those services involved, should take into account the requirements of care in the community. Provision of group homes for people with physical disabilities, learning difficulties and mental illness together with other facilities such as day centres for the elderly, need to be accessible to the people served. This may justify an exception to the normal presumption against the loss of existing housing.

11.3 OBJECTIVES

- 11.3.1 The range and quality of accessible community and social facilities makes an important contribution to the quality of life enjoyed in the Borough. The Borough Council is concerned to ensure a high standard of provision of community facilities for all of its residents and has accordingly identified the following objectives:-

- (1) To maintain a balanced provision of community facilities in the context of decreasing public resources available for such services;
- (2) To ensure that a wide range of community facilities can be appropriately provided to meet additional demands arising out of the closure of hospitals in the Epsom Hospitals Cluster area and the introduction of large scale residential development on that land;
- (3) To have particular regard to the provision of facilities to meet the demands of those residents with special needs.

11.3.2 Objectives and policies which relate specifically to the development of the Epsom Hospitals Cluster area are set out in chapter 8 of this plan.

11.3.3 Details of the Council's policies for the provision of the community services for which it is responsible are contained in Personal Services Strategy and Housing Strategy documents which have been produced by the Community Services Department of the Council.

11.4 DEMAND FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

11.4.1 The ongoing closure of the hospitals within the Epsom Hospitals Cluster will generate a requirement for the provision of additional group home and hostel accommodation for ex-patients within the Borough. Group homes and hostel accommodation will also continue to be required for people with learning disabilities now living in the community either in residential units or with families and carers. The recommended model for future services is "Care and Cluster", whereby a variety of staffed, semi-staffed and unstaffed units of ordinary housing in a local neighbourhood relates to a co-ordinating support base. Such facilities will be required throughout the Borough and will not be restricted to the Epsom Hospitals Cluster area.

11.4.2 Residential development within the Epsom Hospitals Cluster site will generate requirements for new educational and community facilities. New educational requirements will be met either by extensions to a local school or schools or by the construction of a new school on a site identified at the Horton Hospital site. Requirements for community facilities will mainly be provided within the Epsom Hospitals Cluster area.

11.4.3 Little in the way of provision of new sites will be required during the plan period to meet the needs of residents outside the Epsom Hospitals Cluster area. This is due to stable population forecasts and to the few areas of expected growth within that part of the Borough in relation to the future provision of facilities. There is, however, a need to provide additional youth centres and school places, particularly in the north of the Borough, to meet the needs of young people and to provide additional day care centres to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of elderly residents within the Borough. The existing provision of community facilities tends to be concentrated in the older centres and there is a need to ensure that new

facilities are readily accessible for residents in the more recently developed residential areas.

- 11.4.4 Although a large proportion of community services and facilities are provided by the public sector in terms of buildings and manpower, voluntary groups often provide services of great value. Their requirements in land use terms often amount to little more than the use of existing buildings for meetings and of small areas as offices or for storage purposes.

11.5 GENERAL POLICIES RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF LAND AND BUILDINGS

- 11.5.1 The Borough Council considers it desirable to remedy existing deficiencies in the provision of community facilities and to seek to ensure that new development will not result in further deficiencies. Many community facilities have been built or provided by the Borough Council in recent years, such as Longmead Day Centre and The Wells Social Centre, and it is likely that there will be few further essential or urgent requirements to be met by the Borough Council during the plan period. The Borough Council has however identified a need for the provision of some additional community facilities, particularly in the north of the Borough. The Borough Council will continue to provide buildings or initiate services where appropriate and where resources permit and will view favourably proposals for the development of community facilities by other agencies or bodies. The Borough Council will maintain its programme for providing facilities for the community.

- 11.5.2 The Borough Council is concerned to ensure appropriate provision to meet the needs of religious groups throughout the Borough and provision is specifically made in Policy HC6 in Chapter 8 of the plan for the development of a local centre which is likely to include places of worship. The Lifestyle Centre development, which is under construction on the site to the rear of Waterloo Road and High Street in Epsom, is to provide a number of additional community facilities including a much improved library.

CF1 PROPOSALS FOR NEW OR IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES WHICH ARE REQUIRED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:-

- (I) THE AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTS ARE NOT UNDULY HARMED; AND**
- (II) THERE IS NO ADVERSE EFFECT ON HIGHWAY SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY.**

- 11.5.3 In view of the increasing demand for facilities for general community uses such as fetes, fairs, shows, exhibitions and car boot sales, the Council will regularly review its land holdings to determine the extent to which they may be used to meet further demand for community uses, and where appropriate, will take steps to encourage new or additional community uses.

11.5.4 Public resources available in the future for new community projects will be restricted. The high land values within the Borough militate against the development of new community facilities and often make it difficult for groups of residents or voluntary organisations to find suitable premises for community uses. It is therefore essential that all existing facilities are retained, unless they are to be replaced during the course of redevelopment. Community facilities such as places of worship and halls, which are no longer required for the original purpose, can often be converted to provide for alternative community uses. The Council will therefore resist changes of uses of community buildings.

~~**CF2 THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL SEEK THE RETENTION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN ORDER TO RETAIN ACCOMMODATION FOR LOCAL ACTIVITIES. MATERIAL CHANGES OF USE OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED.**~~

11.5.5 Due to the increasing constraints on public resources, more emphasis may have to be placed on the provision of services by the private sector, particularly voluntary organisations. Mid-Surrey Council for Voluntary Services, Age Concern (Epsom and Ewell), WRVS and local churches are just some of the organisations which are likely to continue to be very involved in this type of work in the future. The Borough Council will give them encouragement and support where possible and will view favourably proposals for the change of use of existing buildings to provide community facilities where appropriate. The Borough Council will seek to co-ordinate, to encourage and support the development of community facilities by other agencies and voluntary organisations.

CF3 PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS TO PROVIDE COMMUNITY FACILITIES WHICH ARE REQUIRED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS PROVIDED THAT:

(I) THE AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTS ARE NOT UNDULY HARMED, AND

(II) THERE IS NO ADVERSE EFFECT ON HIGHWAY SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY.

11.6 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

11.6.1 Within the Borough, there are 30 schools of which 6 are independent and 6 are grant maintained. These cater for a wide range of ages and abilities and include a school for children with special educational needs. In addition, there are two colleges of further and higher education and an adult education establishment

11.6.2 In 1989, Epsom High School was closed and the then Ewell High School was remodelled and extended and became know as Epsom and Ewell High School. Glyn School, Rosebery School and Nonsuch High School were also extended and

refurbished. To deal with an emerging shortage of secondary school places in the Borough, the Funding Agency for Schools opened the new Blenheim High School on the former Epsom High School site in September 1997. A new primary school opened in Langley Vale in September 1999, but no further need for primary school places outside the Epsom Hospitals Cluster area is envisaged. Additional school places will be required at both primary and secondary school level to serve the proposed residential development on the Epsom Hospitals Cluster Area and reference to these is made in Chapter 8 of this plan. In cases where proposals are submitted to accommodate increased pupil numbers, schools will be asked to produce a master plan for development control purposes, and a transport plan. Guidance notes on parking and transportation, issued in relation to schools and colleges are set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance.

11.6.3 The North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOT) is located off Reigate Road, Ewell. It is the major provider of higher and further education in the Borough. The College has consolidated activities at the Ewell site and a need for additional floorspace has been identified to provide for forecast increases in student numbers. This includes provision of new academic buildings, the replacement of obsolete accommodation and the provision of ancillary facilities such as a crèche and student residential accommodation.

11.6.4 Some but not all of that new and replacement accommodation will be provided within the designated Major Developed Site (MDS) to the south of the railway line and will be subject to Policies GB7 and GB8. The remainder will be accommodated to the north of the railway in accordance with Policy CF6. In relation to each planning application for development on the land to the north of the railway, the College will be required to establish an educational need that is sufficient to outweigh any environmental harm against which Policy DC1(I) and DC1(II) seeks to protect, and to show that the development cannot be accommodated within the MDS. The College will also be expected to submit a long term development plan for the implementation of its future proposals, which will address transport issues, including a traffic impact assessment, parking and a College Transport Plan.

11.6.5 The Surrey Institute of Art and Design, the Borough's only other full time higher education institution, currently occupies two sites within the Borough. The Institute is currently considering the possibility of relocating the facilities on its Linton's Lane site to its Ashley Road site. This would involve the expansion of the educational facilities at the Ashley Road Site.

CF4 PROPOSALS FOR NEW EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES OR FOR EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:

- (I) THE AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTS ARE NOT UNDULY HARMED; AND**
- (II) THERE IS NO ADVERSE EFFECT ON HIGHWAY SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY;**

~~CF5 AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, LAND AT BEACONSFIELD ROAD, LANGLEY VALE IS ALLOCATED FOR A NEW SCHOOL~~

CF6 PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR EDUCATIONAL AND/OR ANCILLARY DEVELOPMENT ON THE AREA OF LAND TO THE NORTH OF THE RAILWAY LINE AND TO THE EAST OF REIGATE ROAD (AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP) PROVIDED THAT:

- (I) THE HEIGHT OF EXISTING BUILDINGS WITHIN THE NESBOT CAMPUS IS NOT EXCEEDED;
- (II) IT ACCORDS WITH THE PROVISIONS OF A LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE WHOLE NESBOT SITE;
- (III) THERE IS AN ESTABLISHED EDUCATIONAL NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT;
- (IV) IT DOES NOT HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE IMPACT UPON THE TRANSPORT NETWORK; AND
- (V) IT INCORPORATES PROVISION FOR PUBLIC ACCESS THERETO;

THE COUNCIL WILL USE PLANNING CONDITIONS AND SEEK TO ENTER INTO PLANNING OBLIGATIONS AS APPROPRIATE TO SECURE THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS POLICY.

11.7 HEALTH FACILITIES

11.7.1 The Eastern Surrey Health Commission is responsible for the purchase of most of the health care provision within the Borough and the role of the Local Plan is to make proper provision both for new health care facilities and for the improvements to existing facilities. General practice fundholders are responsible for purchasing a substantial amount of health care in the Borough and the private sector also purchases a significant proportion of health care. Epsom Health Care NHS Trust, the main provider of the acute and community health care facilities has indicated that it does not intend to seek the relocation of the general hospital within the plan period but has stated that it may well wish to expand, improve or reprovide health care facilities for the residents of the Borough. It has not indicated any need for the provision of new sites to meet the provision of improved facilities outside the Epsom Hospitals Cluster area. The Surrey Heartlands NHS Trust is the main provider of services for people with a mental illness and/or learning disabilities and their requirements are dealt with in Chapter 8 of the plan, which deals with the Epsom Hospitals Cluster. As indicated in section 11.4, there will be an increased demand for facilities providing care in the community.

CF7 PROPOSALS FOR NEW OR IMPROVED HEALTH OR WELFARE FACILITIES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:

- (I) THE AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTS ARE NOT UNDULY HARMED;**
- (II) THERE IS NO ADVERSE EFFECT ON HIGHWAY SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY.**