

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

- 12.1 Facilities for education, health care and other social needs, such as community centres and meeting rooms, play an important part in community life. There are a number of public agencies and voluntary bodies and private sector organisations responsible for and involved in the provision of such services within the Borough, such as West Sussex County Council Social Services and Education Departments, NHS Trusts and the Worthing Council for Voluntary Services. This chapter of the Local Plan considers the needs of those agencies, the voluntary and private sector and of residents in general.
- 12.2 It is important that adequate facilities are provided with new development and that social and community facilities are accessible by all. One of the key aims of this Plan is to encourage sustainable forms of development. The Aims and Objectives of the Plan encourage the development of facilities in locations which people can reach by public transport, or allow people to make fewer journeys; or which encourage the development of community identity. These Aims and Objectives are pursued in this chapter.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

- 12.3 Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 - Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance requires that Local Plans make provision for community facilities and infrastructure in all major developments. Development Plans should take into account the capacity of infrastructure, and the need for additional infrastructure, including education and health facilities. Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 states that policies should encourage the location of facilities, which need to be near their clients in residential areas or local centres, so that they are accessible without a car. Local Authorities should encourage a wide range of facilities at the local level.

West Sussex Structure Plan

- 12.4 The West Sussex Structure Plan 1993 and the West Sussex Structure Plan Review both provide a framework for issues relating to social and community facilities and make explicit that facilities such as land and buildings for education, health care, libraries and other community facilities are, in fact, part of the infrastructure, services and amenities made necessary by development which occupiers will need. If such facilities are not provided, increasing pressure will be placed on existing facilities. Policies G4 (1993 Structure Plan) and G4 (Structure Plan Review) state that development will not be permitted unless the infrastructure, services and amenities made necessary by that development are available or will be provided at the appropriate time.
- 12.5 Policy S1 of the Structure Plan Review also encourages a wider role for local centres, and states that uses such as leisure or cultural facilities may be appropriate in local shopping centres.

GENERAL POLICIES

- 12.6 Worthing Borough Council carried out a survey of social and community facilities available within the Borough in 1996, with a view to identifying shortfalls in provision. This looked at a range of social facilities including church halls, community centres, club meeting rooms, and other rooms available for hire.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 12.7 Such facilities are available throughout Worthing, and there are also three purpose-built Community Centres in the Borough at East Worthing, Durrington and Heene. However there are some parts of the Borough from where residents must travel some distance to use them. Parts of Tarring, Gaisford, Marine and Goring wards, as well as East Worthing (north of the railway line) and High Salvington, seem to lack facilities. It is difficult to determine precise catchment areas, as some areas are more accessible than others. Except for West Durrington, where a range of community facilities will be developed to meet the needs of future and existing residents, there is no clear scope to increase the number of social facilities available. It is hoped that future redevelopment may release sites in existing urban areas for such uses.
- 12.8 Broadwater Community Association has established a Steering Group to further the development of an additional community centre in the Borough, which Worthing Borough Council will support in principle.
- 12.9 The objectives of community identity and sustainability suggest that the best approach is to encourage social and community facilities to locate in core areas. A hierarchy of retail parades already exists, and a study of these, undertaken in 1994/5, has shown that some of these parades already act as a focus for social and community facilities, such as dentists, doctors, meeting rooms, libraries or churches. However, some retail parades have become run-down, or are unable to meet the daily shopping needs of the local community, as discussed in Chapter 13. These parades could benefit from the location of social and community facilities nearby or within them, to increase their attractiveness and draw people to the area.
- 12.10 It is therefore proposed to permit social and community facilities on the ground floor within certain retail centres outside the defined retail core, or on upper floors of centres provided there is no loss of residential accommodation in accordance with Policy H10 or business floorspace in accordance with Policy B10. Uses that are likely to be acceptable include doctor's surgeries, dentists and other complementary health care uses, crèches, advice centres and meeting or counselling rooms.
- 12.11 In addition to specific developments referred to in this document, Worthing Borough Council will support in principle any proposal, which will add to the range of facilities available to meet the social and community needs of the people of Worthing. However, whilst the principle of such proposals will be supported, the actual details of a scheme may conflict with other policies in this Plan. Where these circumstances arise, the scheme will not be acceptable. For example, where a scheme will conflict with Policies H10 or B10 by virtue of an inappropriate loss in residential accommodation or commercial floorspace, it will not be permitted.

POLICY SC1

Social and community facilities will be permitted on: -

- (i) upper floors within the district, neighbourhood or local centres;
or**
- (ii) the ground floors of district and neighbourhood centres outside
the defined retail core.**

Provided there is no unacceptable loss of residential accommodation or business floorspace in accordance with Policy H10 and Policy B10 respectively.

EDUCATION

- 12.12 West Sussex County Council has a statutory responsibility to assess and make provision for education. In the past, this has resulted in alterations to existing school sites and amalgamations in some cases reflecting changes in school rolls. The Borough Council recognises the importance of making proper provision for education needs and such proposals within the Built Up Area are acceptable in principle provided that there is no unacceptable loss of amenity to local residents and that suitable arrangements for car and cycle parking are made. In the interests of safety it may be necessary to provide dropping-off points to avoid congestion, in certain cases. It is anticipated that the only new school site, which will be required in the Plan period, is in the West Durrington area.

POLICY SC2

Proposals for the development of new educational facilities, and the improvement of existing facilities will normally be permitted, providing that: -

- (i) suitable access, cycle and parking facilities and, where necessary, adequate and easily accessible dropping-off points are provided;**
- (ii) there is no unacceptable loss of amenity to nearby residents; and**
- (iii) proposals comply with all relevant policies in the Transport Chapter.**

Northbrook College Site, Littlehampton Road

- 12.13 It is possible that during the Plan period development may take place at Northbrook College, Littlehampton Road, to allow for the expansion and/or re-organisation of educational facilities. There are a number of constraints on development at this site, which must be addressed. It is important that the high quality landscape and environment of the site are maintained. To this end, the group of trees to the north-east of the site should be retained, and the present open aspect of land adjacent to Titnore Lane should remain in order to safeguard the "rural" character of this road.
- 12.14 The site is poorly related to public transport, cycle facilities and pedestrian links. Any intensification of use must address this deficiency. This should include the provision of improved links to Goring Station.
- 12.15 The location of the site adjacent to Littlehampton Road also raises issues of vehicle safety. Any further development on this site must demonstrate safe and adequate vehicular access particularly in terms of access/egress to the site.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 12.16 There is a sewer running north/south, along the eastern boundary of the site, and Ferring Rife runs east-west to the south of the site. Any development must be carried out in liaison with the Environment Agency and/or Southern Water, to ensure that their requirements are met. This may mean that no hard surfaces/development may take place over the line of the sewer.

POLICY SC3

Development for educational facilities at Northbrook College, Littlehampton Road, will be permitted, provided that: -

- (i) existing trees and shrubs at the north-east corner of the site are retained;**
- (ii) no development including car parking, takes place to the west of the existing building line parallel to Titnore Lane, in order to preserve the present open aspect of this road;**
- (iii) adequate provision is made for cyclists and pedestrians, and public transport links are provided to and within the site;**
- (iv) suitable vehicle access and parking can be provided, without adverse environmental impact; and**
- (v) adequate provision is made for surface water drainage and any requirements relating to Ferring Rife are met.**

Worthing Sixth Form College, Bolsover Road

- 12.17 It is possible that during the Plan period, development for additional appropriate alternative uses may need to take place at Worthing Sixth Form College, Bolsover Road, to allow for the expansion and/or reorganisation of educational facilities. An appropriate development scheme would be judged in the context of the policies within the Local Plan.

LIBRARIES

- 12.18 West Sussex County Council has identified an immediate need to improve existing library services within the Borough. Long-term demand for new facilities may be met at the site allocated in West Durrington. In addition, the need to improve library services is referred to within the West Durrington Development Brief.
- 12.19 The policy reflects the need for a new library facility to serve Durrington and to meet the needs of the proposed new development at West Durrington. Whilst Policy SC4 refers specifically to a site adjoining a District centre as shown on the Proposals Map, the preferred option is to locate such a facility within the new development (Policy H4) as referred to in the West Durrington Development Brief. If this has been secured, the site identified under Policy SC4 can be released for alternative development to assist in

the funding of the library provision. Any future use of the site shown in the Proposals Map will be assessed in relation to other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

POLICY SC4

Development of a library will be permitted on the site reserved for this purpose at West Durrington, as shown on the Proposals Map.

HEALTH

Worthing Hospital

- 12.20 The Worthing Local Plan (1994) identified a site within which the development of additional facilities to support Worthing Hospital would be permitted; a major extension to Worthing Hospital has now been built. It is possible that further reorganisation or expansion may be required. This will be acceptable within the defined site, subject to access and environmental considerations.

POLICY SC5

Subject to access and environmental considerations, development of additional health care facilities at Worthing Hospital, will be permitted within the site shown on the Proposals Map. Proposals must comply with policies in the Built Environment Chapter.

- 12.21 Proposals for expansion to other sites and other development associated with Worthing Hospital, must comply with other policies in the Plan.

Swandean Hospital

- 12.22 Swandean Hospital occupies a 4.5 hectare site to the north-west of the town, fronting the A27. The hospital complex is used for a variety of health care services, and provides the headquarters for the Worthing Priority Care NHS Trust. Approximately one-third of the site is open grazing land. A 66-bed healthcare unit, Salvington Lodge, has recently been developed in the north-east corner of the site and provides care for frail elderly patients. Worthing Priority Care NHS Trust has indicated that Salvington Lodge will remain in the foreseeable future, but the rest of the site may be available for redevelopment within the Plan period. The paddock may, or may not, be part of this package. In such a circumstance, healthcare, residential, or hotel development will be appropriate uses. However, it is important that the character of Salvington Hill is not damaged or lost by any development at this site. The character of this road is derived from the large number of mature trees, the grassed banks, and lack of hard urban features such as pavements. Any alterations or improvements necessary for development at this site will be required to retain this character. The sensitive location of the site within the Built Up Area boundary but adjacent to the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and surrounded by residential properties and healthcare uses, means that particular care will be required in developing any part of this site.

POLICY SC6

In the event of all or part of the Swandean Hospital site being available for development, residential, healthcare or hotel uses will be permitted, subject to: -

- (i) satisfactory access and parking arrangements, which do not damage the environmental character of Salvington Hill;**
- (ii) there being no adverse impact on the adjoining Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and**
- (iii) there being no unacceptable loss of amenity to nearby residents.**

Central Clinic

- 12.23 It is the aim of the Worthing Priority Care NHS Trust to relocate the Central Clinic from its existing site at the rear of the Town Hall to an alternative town centre location. Reuse of this building, or redevelopment for other forms of healthcare use, office use, or "civic" uses, would be acceptable in principle. Redevelopment of this building could increase the height to a maximum of two storeys. In addition, the opportunity should be taken to improve the relationship of this building to the public space behind the Library and Portland House.

POLICY SC7

The relocation of the central health clinic, currently situated to the rear of the town hall, to an appropriate alternative location is supported in principle.

Re-use of the existing building, or redevelopment of the site to two-storeys will be acceptable in principle for office use (A2/B1) or healthcare use, or other uses appropriate to the civic nature of the site. Proposals must comply with all relevant policies in this Plan.

Complementary Health Care

- 12.24 There have been a number of applications in recent years for complementary health care practices, often in premises in existing residential areas. (Complementary health uses cover a range of treatments, including dentistry, chiropody, osteopathy, homeopathy and acupuncture). Proposals for complementary health care must comply with the relevant policies within this Plan.

DAY CARE FACILITIES

Day Nurseries and Crèches

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 12.25 There is a great demand for day-care facilities for pre-school children in the form of crèches or day nurseries. The lack of such facilities can prevent a parent or carer from taking paid employment.
- 12.26 Day nurseries are commercial operations, which often operate in premises in existing residential areas. Children may attend all day, or on a sessional basis.
- 12.27 Applications for these types of facility have increased in recent years. Whilst day care nurseries provide a valuable facility, it is important that there is no unacceptable loss of residential amenity, particularly through increased traffic, the dropping off and collecting of children, and hours of operation. Careful management can help to avoid potential problems, for example, reducing the impact of noise on the surrounding area by staggering arrival and departure times, and playtimes. In addition to this, suitable vehicle access and parking will be required plus, where appropriate, a dropping-off point within the site. The Council will seek to ensure that new facilities are readily accessible by public transport and bicycle. Where practicable, facilities should be located within the residential areas they seek to serve so that they are accessible by foot.
- 12.28 Many aspects of the day-to-day operation of day nurseries are controlled by West Sussex County Council Social Services Department. However, the issue of outdoor play areas is not covered by Social Services regulations. The Borough Council is of the view that it is important in the interests of the amenity of the users that day nurseries provide appropriate and sufficient space to ensure that children, some of whom may spend all day at the nursery, are able to play safely outside. For this reason, Worthing Borough Council has adopted as guidance a standard of 6 square metres of usable outdoor amenity playspace per child. This figure has been derived from the average requirement of three square metres per child of interior space, as set out by West Sussex County Council Social Services. Given the need for a larger area of external open space, in order to provide a usable area within which children can play, the internal space requirement has been doubled; giving a total of 6 square metres of usable outdoor amenity play space per child. An analysis of existing day nurseries in Worthing indicates that this figure is slightly below the average amount of outdoor amenity playspace provided by these premises, and is therefore achievable. This standard will not apply to children of under two years, who have different requirements for external open space. In such circumstances, the external open space requirement will be assessed individually, in consultation with West Sussex County Council Social Services.
- 12.29 In order to be usable, playspace will have to be of a suitable shape, well located and screened to protect residential amenity, (particularly from noise) and should not be directly accessible from the street for security reasons.

POLICY SC8

Day nurseries and crèches will normally be permitted, providing:-

- (i) there will be no unacceptable loss of amenity for nearby residents;**
- (ii) there will be no adverse effect on the character and/or appearance of the area;**

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- (iii) there is adequate provision of usable outdoor amenity play space, in the order of 6 square metres per child (2 - 5 years) and;**
- (iv) proposals comply with Policy H10, concerning loss of residential accommodation.**

12.30 Hours of operation, and/or numbers of children will normally be controlled by condition in order to protect residential amenity.

WEST DURRINGTON

12.31 The proposed development of West Durrington as a major residential growth area means that further social and community facilities are required in this area, to meet both new requirements and supplement existing facilities. The Durrington area has undergone considerable expansion in the past and there are concerns that social and community needs have not been adequately met. The provision of such facilities by public and private sectors, is being carefully considered. The West Sussex Family Health Authority has indicated that the development of a new GP's surgery is required within the West Durrington Development Area. A site for this will be reserved. Other facilities, to include community halls and leisure facilities are also likely to be included in the development. Policy H4 and the West Durrington development brief provide further details on this issue.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY
FACILITIES
