

# PART THREE

## INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

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**AIM 4 -** to make specific provision for improved sport, recreation and community facilities to overcome identified deficiencies and meet local needs.

**AIM 5 -** to facilitate the efficient movement of people and goods within the town in ways which safeguard the environment and which increase road safety.



# CHAPTER 7

## Recreation and Open Space

Introduction	113
Objectives	113
Outdoor Sports	113
Roots Hall Stadium	115
Indoor Sports	115
Golf Courses	117
Parks, Gardens and Children's Playgrounds	118
Informal Countryside Recreation	121
Allotments	122
Proposals	123



## **CHAPTER 7**

# **Recreation and Open Space**

### **Introduction**

- 7.1 Increasing leisure time, disposable incomes and car ownership levels, together with a growing awareness of the concept of leisure and its value to the quality of life, are all contributing to a "leisure boom" and the need to plan for a wide range of recreation and leisure interests. Moreover, rising expectations are affecting not only the quantity but also the quality of provision, with people increasingly seeking varied, easily accessible facilities provided in a high quality environment.
- 7.2 However, this increase in public interest in leisure and recreation is occurring at a time when public expenditure is at its most constrained. For many years, the public sector has been the chief provider of recreation and open space facilities. Because of continuing restrictions on local government finance, the Council must increasingly act as an "enabler" rather than as a direct provider, working in partnership with the private sector and other public bodies to promote new facility provision. In addition, shortage of land resources and the high acquisition costs of urban land will further restrict the opportunities available in Southend itself.
- 7.3 This chapter assesses the adequacy of existing recreation and open space facilities - both active and passive - in the light of these considerations and guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17 - Sport and Recreation, September 1991) and puts forward policies and proposals to meet the requirements of the town's residents in the 1990's. These policies and proposals reflect and develop the land use implications of a strategy for sport adopted by the Borough Council in February 1990, establishing priorities for action to overcome known deficiencies in sports provision in the town.

### **Objectives**

(See Introduction, Aim 4)

- 7.4
1. To provide for and encourage the provision of a range of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities to overcome identified deficiencies in sports provision.
  2. To ensure that the provision of new recreation facilities does not adversely affect the surrounding countryside, landscape quality or residential amenities.
  3. To identify areas in the Borough deficient in the provision of public open space and children's playground facilities, and to make good, where possible, such deficiencies.
  4. To encourage greater awareness of and access to the countryside for informal recreation.
  5. To identify active and passive recreation opportunities and to make resources available for their implementation as priorities permit.

### **Outdoor Sports**

- 7.5 For over 50 years, thinking in Britain concerning playing fields has been conditioned by the

National Playing Fields Association standard of 6 acres of playing space per thousand population. Current Sports Council standards suggest a minimum provision of 4.5 acres of formal playing fields, courts and greens per thousand population which, together with 1.5 acres of informal play space, make up the 6 acres per thousand of the NPFA standard.

- 7.6 Provision in Southend at the present time totals approximately 348 acres of formal playing fields (some 273 acres of public pitches, courts and greens, plus 75 acres of private facilities) (see Appendix 6, Tables 13 and 14, pages 211 to 213). Based on the current population of the Borough (165,000), this represents a standard of only 2.1 acres per thousand - just half the Sports Council recommended minimum, and indicative of a very substantial shortfall in the provision of outdoor sports facilities in the town.
- 7.7 Such standards should, however, be treated with caution. Precise requirements will depend on the characteristics, preferences and behaviour patterns of the local population, together with the location, siting, standard of construction, maintenance and management of existing facilities. The inadequacies of assessments based purely on standards are recognised by the Sports Council, which has developed a new approach based on a simple demand equation derived from the number of teams to be accommodated in the area. The Borough's more precise playing pitch requirements will be reviewed using the new methodology in due course.
- 7.8 Examination of the current demand for and usage of Council-owned pitches, courts and greens does indeed suggest a more limited apparent requirement for additional facilities, with a general balance between supply and demand for many sports. Without a detailed survey of all clubs, however, including an investigation of latent or suppressed demand, it is not possible to establish or forecast precise requirements for the 1990's. Nevertheless, there is undoubtedly a need for some additional provision, in particular to meet the growing demand from certain sports such as hockey, rugby, cricket and bowling and the need for more synthetic pitches. In addition, the athletics facilities at Southchurch Park arena are poor and in urgent need of upgrading to an all-weather synthetic surface. A specific proposal to achieve this by relocation to a new sports complex at Francis Sports Ground (part of Proposal P7d, page 124) is set out at the end of the Chapter.
- 7.9 In the light of this, it seems clear both that existing facilities should be safeguarded and their use optimised, and that, despite the land and financial resource limitations facing the Council, some additional provision should be sought for the 1990's. Subject to the special considerations set out in paragraph 7.11, the following policy will therefore apply:

#### **POLICY R1 - OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

**The Borough Council will encourage and promote the retention of existing, and the provision of additional, outdoor sports facilities, both public and private. Permission will not be given to proposals involving the loss of such facilities except in very special circumstances, where it can clearly be shown that improved alternative facilities are being provided in a convenient and appropriate location and the proposals are in accordance with Policy C15. Such alternative provision will normally be required to be laid out and available for use before existing facilities are lost.**

**In addition, the Borough Council will seek the optimum use of its own land holdings and public open space facilities, in accordance with identified needs, and will have regard to the Borough's requirements for additional playing fields in considering all proposals for the use of vacant or under-used land in its area.**

**Policy Cross Reference : C15 Retention of Open Spaces, page 33.**

- 7.10 In order to give practical effect to this policy, a number of specific proposals for additional playing fields are contained in this Plan where it is considered that opportunity exists to achieve new facilities economically, usually in partnership with the private sector or other public bodies. These proposals are detailed at the end of the Chapter. The dual use of education playing fields is not, however, explored further. School playing fields are heavily used during school time, and additional usage may not be acceptable to the school authorities except in very limited and specific circumstances.

### **Roots Hall Stadium**

- 7.11 In the light of recent legislation requiring improvements to the layout and facilities offered at existing football grounds, an alternative site to Roots Hall has been sought by Southend United Football Club. Having regard to current Government advice (PPG17 - Sport and Recreation, September 1991) that football stadia are not normally appropriate within the Green Belt and other policies in the Plan, the Borough Council considers that there is no suitable site available within the Borough capable of satisfactorily accommodating a new football stadium. As the Borough Council would wish to see the Football Club remain at its present site in these circumstances, the Roots Hall site is shown on the Proposals Map as an area for sport and leisure, the future use of which will be considered further, should the Football Club relocate during the plan period, in accordance with a systematic site appraisal. The use of the site for retailing purposes would not, however, be acceptable.

### **Indoor Sports**

- 7.12 Indoor sports facilities cover a wide range of activities, many of which can be provided through commercial operations, private clubs or incorporation within multi-purpose sports centres. Consideration of this topic is therefore limited to those facilities normally supplied by the public sector for use by the community in general, these being indoor sports centres and swimming pools.
- 7.13 The Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation (ECSR) has indicated in its document "Sport In The East - A Strategy For The Nineties", a need for five additional four-badminton-court halls, in accordance with its minimum recommended level of provision of one such hall per 25 - 30,000 population. There is currently only one public indoor sports hall in Southend, located at Francis Sports Ground. This facility is, moreover, of a quality which falls below that now being provided - and expected - elsewhere. Regardless of detailed standards, there is manifestly a severe deficiency in indoor sports hall facilities in the Borough, both quantitatively and qualitatively.
- 7.14 The Borough Council has already taken a major step towards remedying this situation, through its commitment to a joint provision scheme at the new Prittlewell High School. This scheme will, when completed, provide an indoor sports hall, gymnasium, two activity rooms and a weight training room available to the public in the evenings and throughout the weekend and school holidays.

- 7.15 Whilst this development will represent a major new facility serving residents in the central parts of Southend and Westcliff, further provision is clearly needed, in particular to serve the residents of the eastern and western most parts of the town. The Borough Council's adopted strategy for sport has identified three possible opportunities for such provision, as follows:
- (i) the dual use of the existing sports hall, swimming pool, gymnasium and weight training room at Eastwood High School;
  - (ii) the provision on a joint basis with Essex County Council of a new sports hall alongside the existing joint provision swimming pool at Shoebury High School, involving either a joint provision or dual use partnership with Essex County Council;
  - (iii) the promotion of a high quality indoor and outdoor sports complex, possibly involving partnership with the private sector, on Borough Council-owned land at Francis Sports Ground. Land to the north of the Francis site which is held in trust, has recently been made available for recreational use. This would provide a major sports and leisure complex for the town (see Proposal P7d, page 124).
- 7.16 These proposals are set out in more detail at the end of the Chapter. In addition, the following policy will apply:

#### **POLICY R2 - INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

**The Borough Council will seek to remedy the deficiencies in indoor sports facilities identified by the Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation by:**

- (i) **giving priority in the provision of new recreation facilities to indoor sports facilities located so as to be easily accessible to all local residents. As part of this approach, the Borough Council will explore with the Education and School Authorities the opportunities for both the dual use of existing education sports halls in the Borough and the joint development of new indoor facilities for both education and local community needs;**
- (ii) **encouraging the retention of existing and the provision of additional private indoor sports facilities. The Borough Council will not give permission for the redevelopment or change of use of existing private indoor sports facilities unless improved alternative provision is made in a convenient and appropriate location;**
- (iii) **exploring the opportunities for making more intensive use of the Borough Council's existing land holdings and recreation facilities to provide additional indoor facilities, if necessary in conjunction with the private sector as part of commercially viable leisure developments;**
- (iv) **investigating and keeping under review the précis needs of local residents for indoor sports facilities.**



- 7.17 The Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation's (ECSR) adopted minimum standard of swimming pool provision (7 square metres of pool space per thousand population) yields a theoretical shortfall in the Borough of approximately 300 square metres. This shortfall is not considered significant, particularly in the light of the proposed dual use facility at Eastwood High School and the teaching pool facilities at the town's existing three swimming pools, Warrior Square, Belfairs and Shoebury. No further proposals are therefore made in this Plan. Nevertheless, Southend has a strong tradition of competitive swimming, and it is clearly necessary to safeguard and enhance existing facilities.

### **POLICY R3 - SWIMMING POOL FACILITIES**

**The improvement and expansion of existing swimming pool facilities in the town will be supported. Permission will not be granted to proposals involving the loss of such facilities unless adequate alternative provision is made in a convenient and appropriate location.**

### **Golf Courses**

- 7.18 There are currently two 18-hole golf courses in Southend, one public and one private. The ECSR document "The Future for Golf" recommends a requirement for one 18 hole course per 20,000 population in the County and identifies Southend as a priority location for additional facilities, especially "pay and play". The problems of high demand currently being experienced at existing courses in the Borough - and especially at the Belfairs public course - support these views.
- 7.19 The need to safeguard existing and secure additional courses - and in particular additional public courses - within or close to Southend seems clear. Provision within Rochford District is currently in balance with Sports Council standards whilst a shortfall in provision of two 18-hole courses exists in the Borough of Castle Point (see Appendix 6, Table 15, page 214). Existing facilities within these Districts are for the most part both private and remote from the Borough, even within the context of the mobility of participants. Additional facilities within or more immediately adjacent to the town and available to the public are therefore required.
- 7.20 As a contribution towards the demand for new golf course provision, the Borough Council has recently granted planning permission for an 18-hole private course at Bournes Green (see Proposal P7c, page 123), and also for "pay and play" facilities at Eastern Avenue, comprising an 18-hole and 9-hole course with driving range, as part of a wider sports and leisure complex (see Proposal P7d, page 124). In order to be able to assess further proposals within Southend and to respond to consultations on proposals elsewhere, the Council will pursue the following policy, which has been prepared having regard to the ECSR guidelines and the Essex Golf Report published by the Essex Planning Officers Association (April 1992). In addition, the Council will normally only consider granting permission to proposals within the Borough itself where the applicant is willing to enter into a legal agreement to secure facilities for public use on a "pay and play" basis.

## **POLICY R4 - GOLF COURSES**

**The Borough Council will seek to achieve and thereafter maintain Sports Council standards for golf course provision within or adjacent to the Borough. It will therefore support the provision of additional golfing facilities, particularly where these include improved facilities for public use on a “pay and play” basis, provided that the proposals would not:**

- (i) involve land affected by Policies G5 and G6;**
- (ii) result in substantial disturbance to the soil structure thereby reducing the long-term agricultural quality of the land or its potential for reverting to agricultural use in the future;**
- (iii) adversely affect residential amenities;**
- (iv) adversely affect highway safety;**
- (v) result in the construction of substantial buildings in the Green Belt.**

**In addition the Borough Council will wish to ensure that existing footpaths and bridleways are retained and that opportunities for providing additional facilities are fully exploited.**

**Permission will not be given to proposals involving the loss of existing golfing facilities unless improved alternative provision is made in a convenient and appropriate location and the proposals are in accordance with Policy C15 and the above criteria. Such alternative provision will normally be required to be laid out and available for use before existing facilities are lost.**

**Policy Cross References : G5 Special Landscape Area, page 16; G6 Nature Conservation, page 18; and C15 Retention of Open Spaces, page 33.**

## **Parks, Gardens and Children's Playgrounds**

- 7.21 An amenity open space standard of approximately 1.5 acres per thousand population appears to be generally accepted, as does a standard of 0.5 acres per thousand for children's playgrounds. Existing provision of parks and gardens within and immediately adjoining the Borough totals some 923 acres, or 5.6 acres per thousand (see Appendix 6, Table 16, page 216), although this includes some dual purpose open spaces which also provide formal sports facilities. The town is therefore generally well supplied with parks, gardens and amenity open space, reflecting its traditional role as a seaside resort and the age structure of its population. In contrast, there are only 18 acres of children's playgrounds (see Appendix 6, Table 17, page 218), or 0.1 acre per thousand population. Many of these playgrounds are located within much larger areas of general open space, in particular within the major parks, allowing substantial areas of informal play as well as fixed equipment.
- 7.22 In recent years, such "quantitative" standards of amenity open space have given way to other measures of provision. Parks, gardens and playgrounds need in general to be more closely related to the home than facilities for active sport, for which there is a greater willingness to

travel. As a result, adequacy of provision is increasingly measured in terms of distance and accessibility from the home. In this approach, it is generally advocated that no home should be more than a quarter of a mile from a children's playground or more than half-a-mile from a neighbourhood park providing informal play facilities and attractive landscaping and seating, to meet the needs of children, parents with children and the elderly. In addition, all homes should be within one mile of a local park providing facilities to serve all sections of the community for both active and passive recreation, and within five miles of a large district park attracting special outings.

*Priory Park: one of the several local parks in the Borough. Prittlewell Priory, a scheduled ancient monument, is located in the centre of the photograph (see page 22).*

- 7.23 The current distribution of children's playgrounds is shown on Map 3 (overleaf). It can be seen that many homes in the Borough are not within a quarter of a mile of a playground and that it would in fact be impractical to attempt to achieve such a standard at the present time. Even taking a half-mile catchment area (as illustrated) reveals several parts of the Borough deficient in children's play facilities, including large areas of Leigh, Westcliff, Eastwood, Central Southend, Thorpe Bay and Shoebury.
- 7.24 Map 3 also shows the distribution of open space areas serving as neighbourhood parks, together with their half-mile catchment areas. Again, two major areas of deficiency are indicated:
- (i) Westcliff - Prittlewell : the residential area lying between Prittlewell Chase, Southbourne Grove and Southend Airport;
  - (ii) Southchurch : an intensively developed housing area between South Avenue, Temple Sutton School and Eastern Avenue.



- 7.25 Analysis of the distribution of open space areas serving as local parks indicates that there are very few homes in the Borough more than one mile from such a facility. In addition, with the implementation of Gunners Park, Shoebury to match Belfairs Park and Woods on the western edge of the town, there are no longer any parts of the Borough outside the five mile catchment area of those public open spaces of district park status.
- 7.26 In the light of the deficiencies identified above, proposals are made in this Plan for additional neighbourhood park and children's playground facilities, as detailed at the end of the Chapter and on the Proposals Map. These proposals do not, however, remedy all the identified deficiencies, particularly with regard to those areas where there are no readily identifiable opportunities for additional amenity open space. The following policy will therefore also apply:

#### **POLICY R5 - PARKS AND GARDENS**

**The Borough Council will seek to ensure that no home within the Borough is more than half a mile from a neighbourhood park and from a children's play area containing fixed play equipment, and no more than one mile from a local park providing active and passive recreation facilities for all sections of the population.**

**Where these standards are not achieved, the Borough Council will give priority in the provision of new open space facilities to additional neighbourhood parks and children's playgrounds, and will positively promote the optimum use of its existing land holdings and open space facilities to overcome these deficiencies. The Borough Council will also have regard to the need to overcome these deficiencies in considering all proposals for the use of vacant or under used land.**

**Permission will not normally be given for any proposal involving the loss of existing public open space facilities unless alternative provision is made to a standard at least equal to that provided by the facilities, the above standards are not prejudiced and the proposal is in accordance with Policy C15. Such alternative provision will normally be required to be laid out and available for use before existing facilities are lost.**

**Policy Cross Reference : C15 Retention of Open Spaces, Page 33.**

#### **Informal Countryside Recreation**

- 7.27 The built-up nature of Southend provides little opportunity for informal countryside recreation within the Borough itself. Nevertheless, on its undeveloped edges and immediately adjacent land, there are a number of opportunities in terms of footpaths, bridleways and attractive countryside. These must be safeguarded and promoted if the population of South-East Essex is to have access to such countryside recreation.
- 7.28 The Essex County Council has recognised the potential for informal countryside recreation in the area in Policy L3 of the Essex Structure Plan First Alteration. This identifies the Upper Roach Valley - an attractive wooded area immediately to the north of Southend between Eastwood and Hockley/Hawkwell - and South Benfleet to Two Tree Island as areas of opportunity for informal countryside recreation provision. Such recreation depends on the provision of footpaths and bridleways to give access to these areas. Footpath provision both

within and adjacent to the Borough is reasonable. The bridleway network is, however, severely limited. Coupled with the growth of horse ownership in recent years, this has caused horse-riders to suffer restrictions and conflict with walkers, farmers and road traffic.

- 7.29 In consultation with other relevant bodies and interests, the Council will support the development of such informal countryside recreation facilities, including improved opportunities for horse-riding, subject to certain safeguards. In addition, the Borough Council has long-standing proposals to use land in its ownership at Two Tree Island, within the administrative area of Castle Point Borough Council, for recreation purposes. The location and nature of this land renders it appropriate for informal recreation as part of the Hadleigh Castle Country Park.
- 7.30 Where the Council is required to assess relevant proposals within its area, or its views are requested on proposals in adjoining areas, the following policy will guide its response:

#### **POLICY R6 - COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION**

**Facilities for informal countryside recreation which provide for increased public access will be supported and encouraged within the Green Belt areas surrounding Southend, particularly within the Upper Roach Valley and the South Benfleet to Two Tree Island/Belton Hills area, provided that this would not adversely affect land of nature conservation, landscape or archaeological importance.**

**Development proposals which would prejudice the informal recreation value of these areas or the footpaths and bridleways within them will be opposed by the Borough Council.**

**Where appropriate, the Borough Council will use its own landholding to provide greater public access to the countryside, including the further provision and extension of country parks. The Borough Council will also work with other local authorities, landowners, horse-riding and walking interests to create additional footpath and horse-riding opportunities within Southend and adjoining areas and will seek to incorporate such facilities within the definitive rights of way network.**

#### **Allotments**

- 7.31 Increases in home ownership and living standards generally have led to an apparent decline in recent years in the demand for allotments. As a result, supply may now exceed demand in the Borough, with vacancies occurring on many sites. In the light of this, no proposals are made in this Plan for additional sites. Nevertheless, use as allotments may be a valuable way of bringing vacant, derelict or under-used sites - in particular backland sites incapable of more intensive development - into productive use.

**POLICY R7 - ALLOTMENTS**

**Subject to the maintenance of satisfactory residential amenities, the Borough Council will normally support the laying out and use as allotments of those vacant, derelict or under-used site which are incapable of more intensive development. The redevelopment of existing allotment sites for other uses will only be permitted where it can clearly be shown that the facility is no longer required or can be adequately and conveniently provided elsewhere, and the objectives of Policy C15 would not be prejudiced.**

**Policy Cross Reference : C15 Retention of Open Spaces, page 33.**

**Proposals**

- 7.32 To help achieve the above policies and remedy identified deficiencies, the following proposals are made:

***PROPOSAL P7a - NORTH SHOEBURY***

*This represents the last major area of new development in the Borough. In 1979, the Borough Council adopted proposals to guide its proper development. Included within these proposals were two areas of additional public open space, allocated primarily to serve the needs of the new housing areas in North Thorpe Bay and North Shoebury and reflecting the proposals of the Approved Review Development Plan. One of these areas, a 5.5 hectare extension to Shoeburyness Park recreation ground to serve active recreational pursuits and contribute to the playing field needs of the Borough, remains to be implemented and is confirmed in this Local Plan.*

***PROPOSAL P7b - SHOEBURY HIGH SCHOOL, DELAWARE ROAD***

*The Borough Council will explore the opportunities to provide a sports hall alongside the existing swimming pool, to enable public use outside school hours, either as a joint provision or as a dual use partnership with the Essex County Council.*

***PROPOSAL P7c - LAND NORTH OF BOURNES GREEN CHASE***

*As a contribution to the identified need for additional facilities to serve the Borough (Policy R4), an area of approximately 78 hectares to the north of Bournes Green Chase, currently in agricultural use, is proposed for the provision of golfing facilities. In furtherance of this proposal, the Council has recently granted outline planning permission for a scheme comprising an 18-hole golf course with two practice areas, clubhouse, maintenance buildings and car parking facilities. Development will need, in particular, to meet the requirements of Policies G1, G2, G3, C1 and R4, and to maintain the site's rural character. Any built development and hardsurfacing should be restricted to that essential for a golf course and should be located on the western part of the site, on land of lower agricultural quality (grades 3a and 3b) adjoining existing built development in Wakering Road. Retention or satisfactory replacement of the public footpath (no. 202) crossing the site will be necessary, together with extensive planting around and within the site as an integral part of the golf course layout. Before development commences, a comprehensive survey will be required to identify the extent of brickearth deposits on the site, and any workable deposits safeguarded. In addition, provision for archaeological excavation, monitoring and recording, both before and during development, will be necessary.*

Policy Cross References : G1 Green Belt and Natural Resources, page 13; G2 Land of High Grade Agricultural Quality, page 14; G3 Landscape Protection and Improvement, page 15; C1 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites, page 22; and R4 Golf Courses, page 118.

**PROPOSAL P7d - LAND NORTH OF EASTERN AVENUE**

*The need for substantial refurbishment of the existing Francis Sports Hall, together with its close relationship with land to the north held in trust for recreation purposes, and its accessibility to a wide community, provides a major opportunity for the development of a wide range of high quality indoor and outdoor sport and recreation facilities for the residents of Southend. There is an acknowledged need in the town for the provision of a comprehensive range of participatory sports facilities, both indoor and outdoor, for which no suitable sites or opportunities are available within the existing urban area. Outline planning permissions were therefore granted in May 1991 and October 1992 for the provision of such facilities on parts of the site. In particular, this proposal would help to meet the substantial shortfall in playing-field and indoor sports hall provision in the Borough, whilst replacing the unsatisfactory running track in Southchurch Park with an all-weather athletics track and field events arena as an integral part of a wider sports complex for the town. It would also accommodate additional golfing facilities in accordance with Policy R4 and provide an improved showground. Built development associated with the indoor elements of the scheme and the athletics track will be concentrated towards the south of the site, on land excluded from the Green Belt and adjoining other substantial developments to the west, and will be provided in accordance with a planning brief prepared by the Borough Council. Because of its location on the edge of the town and the present lack of planting on the site, extensive planting will be required. Two existing public rights of way will also need to be diverted and satisfactorily incorporated in the development, whilst the Borough Council will seek to ensure that public transport services to the site are improved. A total area of 85 hectares (210 acres) is identified on the Proposals Map for this development.*

**PROPOSAL P7e - CLUNY SQUARE CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND**

*Additional facilities appropriate to a neighbourhood park will be provided, as resources permit, in order that this public open space area may fulfil a limited neighbourhood park function in addition to its existing children's playground function.*

**PROPOSAL P7f - LAND ADJACENT TO THE FRANCIS SPORTS GROUND, EASTERN AVENUE**

*An area of approximately 7.5 hectares of lower grade agricultural land (mainly 3b) to the north of Eastern Avenue and adjoining the Council owned Francis Sports Ground, was granted planning permission in September 1992 for public open space use, and is defined more precisely on the Proposals Map. This will be implemented in parallel with Proposal P5e (Chapter 5, page 97) and will provide replacement playing fields for those affected by the latter Proposal, together with a new purpose built pavilion and associated car parking. To maintain the site's open character, this limited amount of building and hardsurface development should be located in the western part of the site adjoining the existing built development at the Francis Sports Ground on the Eastern Avenue frontage. Vehicular access to the site will be via the Francis Sports Ground. The proposal will be required to safeguard a road access to Fox Hall Farm, which bisects the site, and provide for an attractive pedestrian link with the adjoining Southend Leisure Park (Proposal P7d - see above). Planting will be required to ensure that the proposal is well integrated with adjoining land uses to give the impression of forming part of a wider landscaped area. Built development within the site should be appropriately screened.*



**PROPOSAL P7g - LAND NORTH OF PRINCE AVENUE**

*Subject to the alignment of new road proposals in connection with the B1013 - A127 link road, two areas of public open space are allocated on land to the north of Prince Avenue (existing alignment), within an area identified as being deficient in both neighbourhood park and children's playground facilities. They will form part of and should be implemented in association with a wider integrated development on land declared surplus to requirements by the owner, for which a detailed planning brief will be prepared in accordance with Policy C20 (page 37). They comprise two hectares of land between the existing A127 and its proposed re-alignment, incorporating a children's playground, and nine hectares to the north and east of the proposed business park (Proposal P4h, page 78). The former area contains part of two existing businesses. Although affected by the proposed re-alignment of the A127, it may be feasible for these businesses to be consolidated on the site, allowing them to continue in operation. The Borough Council would, therefore, be prepared to accept a phased implementation of this public open space solely in order to permit the continued operation of these existing businesses for a limited period, following which their sites would be incorporated within the public open space. The larger area of public open space to the north of the re-aligned A127 will also provide for additional playing fields with vehicular access from Eastwoodbury Lane and a well landscaped buffer to residential properties to the east. Planting should have regard to the proximity of the site to the Public Safety Zone for runway 06 at Southend Airport. The Borough Council will consult adjoining residents through the North Crescent and Feeches Road Residents Association with regard to the proposal's detailed design and the location of a children's playground. (See also Proposal P7n below).*

**PROPOSAL P7h - EASTWOODBURY LANE PLAYING FIELDS**

*The construction of the B1013-A127 link road will sever an area of approximately 2.4 hectares from the existing private playing fields south of Eastwoodbury Lane. In view of the identified shortfall in playing field provision in the town, replacement land should be provided, and an appropriate allocation is therefore made on lower-grade agriculture land (mainly 3B) to the south of the remaining playing fields. The severed land would then more appropriately be used for agriculture.*

**PROPOSAL P7j - COCKETHURST PARK EXTENSION**

*Previous plans contained an allocation of 5.6 hectares for a College of Further Education on the north side of Snakes Lane. Part of this allocation has now been occupied by the Kingsdown School, whilst the remainder is currently under-used open space, lying immediately to the west of Cockethurst Park. This area (3.6 hectares) is therefore allocated as public open space, to be used as a playing field extension to Cockethurst Park.*

**PROPOSAL P7k - EASTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL, RAYLEIGH ROAD**

*Existing sports facilities at this school comprise a 4 badminton court sports hall, gymnasium, weight-training room and swimming pool. They are located in a self-contained, independently accessible unit with good on-site parking opportunities. Dual use of these facilities therefore appears most appropriate, requiring only the addition of a simple public entrance, reception, office and first aid area, together with some upgrading of the existing changing and circulation areas. The Borough Council will therefore seek the agreement of the school authorities and the County Education and Planning Authorities to the dual use of these facilities for both education and community purposes.*

**PROPOSAL P7m - HADLEIGH CASTLE COUNTRY PARK**

*Approximately nine hectares of land to the south of Belton Hills and 1.2 hectares to the west of properties in Tattersall Gardens, as delineated on the Proposals Map, are allocated for public open space for informal countryside recreation as part of the Hadleigh Castle Country Park.*

**PROPOSAL P7n - CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUNDS**

*Additional play equipment and facilities will be provided, as resources permit, in the following existing and proposed areas of public open space:*

- (i) Cockethurst Park*
- (ii) Prince Avenue Park (Proposal P7g)*
- (iii) Milton Road Gardens*
- (iv) North Shoebury*
- (v) Shoebury East Beach*

*Milton Road Gardens will be considered as a priority.*

*In addition, the Borough Council will seek future opportunities to remedy identified deficiencies in children's playground facilities in the Thames Drive/Sutherland Boulevard, Thorpe Hall Avenue, and West Leigh areas, within which no appropriate opportunities are currently apparent.*

**Note**

This chapter refers to areas of land in the Borough specifically set aside for general public open space, to be used by all sections of the community. It does not include small areas of amenity open space provided within new housing areas for the benefit of those living in these developments. The policies and proposals in this chapter will, therefore, apply in addition to any requirement which the Borough Council may impose for amenity open space in new housing areas (see Policy H5 - Chapter 3, page 51). They also complement the policies regarding amenity open space provision in Chapter 2.