

CHAPTER 8

Community Services and Utilities

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CHAPTER 8

Community Services and Utilities

Introduction

- 8.1 Earlier chapters of this Plan have sought to ensure that the environment of the town is protected and improved by new development being well located and well designed. The Council is also committed to making the best use of Southend's limited land resources to provide for all anticipated needs in a properly planned environment. An important function of the Plan will be to make certain that infrastructure provision, including public and private utilities such as gas, electricity, sewerage and drainage, is compatible with future development proposals. The Council is also concerned that all forms of pollution affecting the Borough are minimised, in accordance with the aims of the Council's Charter for the Environment, and that the health and welfare of its residents is enhanced by providing for all anticipated health care and community needs.
- 8.2 This chapter examines the various services and facilities involved, assesses the adequacy of existing provision and future land requirements, and sets out appropriate policies and proposals. It also examines the needs of the disabled in the built environment.

Objectives

(see Introduction, Aim 4)

- 8.3
1. To ensure that future development in the Borough is compatible with the level of infrastructure provided.
 2. To seek to reduce existing and prevent additional pollution and hazard risk in the Borough.
 3. To seek to achieve improvements to the sewerage infrastructure in the Borough, in consultation with relevant agencies.
 4. To ensure that the future land requirements of the local emergency services and utilities are adequately catered for.
 5. To seek to secure improvements to the design and layout of the built environment to provide safe and easy access for all members of the community.
 6. To seek to ensure the provision of appropriate local health care, education and other community facilities to meet the needs of local residents, subject to the safeguarding of the character and amenities of residential areas.

Infrastructure Provision

- 8.4 Where existing or proposed infrastructure provision, for example access, sewerage or education facilities, is inadequate to meet the needs generated by a development, the Borough Council will normally make any planning permission conditional upon such facilities being provided, where appropriate before the development commences, in the interests of good planning. However, it is not always possible to deal satisfactorily with these matters by way of a planning condition. Accordingly, the Council will in such cases normally require the applicant to enter into a legal agreement to ensure the provision of appropriate infrastructure facilities in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 12 (PPG12 - Development

Plans and Regional Planning Guidance, February 1992). The following policy will therefore apply:

POLICY U1 - INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

In assessing development proposals the Borough Council will have regard to the need for additional infrastructure provision, such as roads, sewerage, schools and community facilities, and may, in appropriate circumstances, only grant conditional planning permission and/or require the applicant to enter into a legal agreement to ensure the provision of such facilities to enable the development to proceed satisfactorily in accordance with the proper planning of the area.

Pollution Control and Hazardous Materials

- 8.5 The Council recognises that certain sites in the Borough and particular types of development could, if not adequately controlled, result in unacceptable levels of environmental pollution. In accordance with the Council's Charter for the Environment, specialist advice will be sought when assessing the potential impact of new proposals for development when they involve the storage of hazardous materials or where there is considered to be a threat to air, soil or water quality in the town. In appropriate situations planning permission may be refused or restricted to ensure that proposals are modified or restricted in operation to eliminate potential pollution risks.

POLICY U2 - POLLUTION CONTROL

In order to prevent or reduce soil, water, noise and other forms of airborne pollution in the town, and to control the storage or use of hazardous materials, the Borough Council will, where appropriate, refuse or restrict planning permission for those developments considered to involve a potential pollution risk.

- 8.6 Certain sites and pipelines are designated as notifiable installations by virtue of the quantities of hazardous substance stored or used. The area covered by this Local Plan already contains a number of installations handling notifiable substances, including high pressure natural gas transmission pipelines detailed in Appendix 5 (Table 12, page 208). The Borough Council will seek the advice of the Health and Safety Executive and other bodies on the suitability of development proposals in relation to the risks that the notified installations might pose to the surrounding population.

Contaminated Land

- 8.7 In determining planning applications on land which it has reason to believe is or may be contaminated, the Borough Council will, in appropriate circumstances, consider making any planning permission conditional upon site remedial works being undertaken. In accordance with the 1988 General Development Order, the Borough Council will also consult with the Essex County Council, the authority responsible for waste disposal, regarding any development proposal on or within 250 metres of land which has been used within the past thirty years for the disposal of waste by landfill.

Public and Private Utility Services

- 8.8 Development proposals in close proximity to utility service infrastructure, such as pipelines, cables, drainage and water courses, may be subject to additional limitations or controls. The Borough Council will liaise with the relevant authority in each case. The current and future land and operational requirements of these statutory bodies are set out below.

Gas, Water, Electricity and Telecommunications

- 8.9 The Borough Council is not aware of any supply limitations in these services which may restrict the levels of development proposed in this Plan. Nor is it aware of any land or other requirements of British Gas, the Essex Water Company, the Central Electricity Generating Board - including National Grid, National Power and Powergen - or the Post Office. British Telecom indicate that certain existing telephone exchanges may require building extensions to meet the service expectations of the local community. No specific land allocations in the Plan are deemed necessary for this requirement. (See also Policy C10 - Overhead Cables - Chapter 2, page 29).

Drainage and Sewage Disposal

- 8.10 Anglian Water Services have advised that the level of additional housing development proposed in the Plan is likely to require the provision of additional land for improvements at their existing works. It may be necessary to ask that development be subject to a phasing agreement between Anglian Water Services Limited, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and the developer to allow time for the necessary improvements to be carried out. Accordingly, the Borough Council will, in consultation with Anglian Water, seek the provision of appropriate improvements to the sewerage infrastructure, including a full sewage treatment plant for the Borough, to ensure both clean sea-water - in accordance with the aims of the Council's Charter for the Environment - and adequate sewerage infrastructure for the level of development proposed in the Plan, in accordance with the requirements of the EEC Municipal Works Discharge Directive.

POLICY U3 - SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The Borough Council will urge the responsible authority or company to improve the sewerage infrastructure, including the provision of a full sewage treatment plant for the Borough, to ensure clean sea-water and adequate capacity for proposed new development over the plan period.

Waste Disposal

- 8.11 There is a duty on the County Council to prepare a waste disposal plan for Essex under the provisions of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 and Environmental Protection Act 1990. There is no scope for waste disposal within Southend, although the Borough Council is not aware of any foreseeable difficulties in disposing of waste from the town.

Government Agencies

- 8.12 The Property Services Agency has advised that it has no operational or land requirements over the plan period. Any proposals by government agencies to dispose of land will be considered in accordance with appropriate policies in this Plan.

Police, Fire and Ambulance Services

- 8.13 The Essex Fire and Rescue Service has advised that the Shoebury Fire Station requires replacement and, as part of a review of facility requirements within the area, a new station of a size capable of serving the needs of East Southend and The Wakerings is needed. Essex Police have indicated that they wish to expand their operation in the Shoebury area and have also identified a need to replace the Leigh Police Station, subject to Home Office approval for the purchase of an alternative site. The North Thames Regional Health Authority require a site for an ambulance station to replace the present facility at Southend Hospital with one in a more strategic location. A satellite station at Shoeburyness may also be required in the Plan period. In the light of these factors, the Borough Council will assist in the search for suitable sites, having regard to the policies contained in this Plan, in order that adequate facilities are provided for the needs of the police, ambulance and fire services.

Health and Social Services

- 8.14 The Borough Council is not aware of any additional land requirements for the Social Services Department of the Essex County Council, the Southend Health Care Trust or the North East Thames Regional Health Authority. Any such requirements seem unlikely in the foreseeable future in view of present policy to move many care services into small facilities within the community. All applications for such facilities will be assessed in accordance with policies contained elsewhere in this Plan.
- 8.15 However, the Southend Health Care Trust is currently pursuing major development at Southend Hospital as part of a comprehensive relocation package to incorporate the facilities of Rochford Hospital onto the site. Clearly, this will significantly increase the level of activity, traffic and parking generated by the hospital.
- 8.16 Southend Hospital and its immediately surrounding area already experience some environmental pressure as a result of existing levels of activity. In particular, there is evidence to suggest that parking facilities are inadequate to meet peak demands. Whilst the Borough Council would wish to support any improvement to the medical services provided for the people of South-East Essex, it is concerned to ensure that any development or consolidation within the Southend Hospital site not only does not increase this environmental pressure but also provides the opportunity to improve the existing unsatisfactory traffic and parking situation. The Borough Council will therefore be guided by these considerations in responding to any further proposals from the Health Care Trust.

POLICY U4 - SOUTHEND HOSPITAL

The Borough Council will support the improvement, expansion or consolidation of patient services within the Southend Hospital site provided that this secures improved traffic and parking arrangements to overcome existing deficiencies and meet additional requirements in accordance with Policy T11, and would not increase environmental pressure on the surrounding area.

Policy Cross Reference : T11 Parking Standards, page 155.

Access and Safety in the Built Environment

- 8.17 In a densely developed town such as Southend, not only is it important to ensure that a good urban environment is maintained when assessing the suitability of future development schemes and changes, but that safe and easy access is provided for all members of the community in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Notes 1 and 12 (PPGs 1 and 12 - General Policy and Principles, March 1992, and Development Plans and Regional Planning Policy, February 1992).
- 8.18 People with impaired hearing or sight, and those who cannot walk easily or need wheelchairs often encounter unnecessary difficulties with the man-made environment. As medical treatment and care advances and social attitudes change, it is increasingly important to have regard to the particular needs of people with disabilities. It is also important to ensure that the needs of mothers, babies and families are catered for when considering access to and use of public places.
- 8.19 Part M of the Building Regulations 1991 requires that reasonable provision shall be made for people with disabilities to gain access to and to use all buildings (other than dwellings) including the provision of suitable toilet facilities and audience seating, where appropriate. In considering planning applications for all places to which the public have access, the Borough Council will also ensure that priority parking spaces are provided for the disabled, if necessary by imposing conditions on permissions (see car parking standards in Appendix 8, page 222).
- 8.20 Rising crime rates, particularly domestic burglaries and attacks on vulnerable members of the community in public places, have focused attention on identifying ways in which the potential for crime can be minimised. The Borough Council recognises, through consultation with the Police Architectural Liaison Officer (ALO), the benefits of incorporating features designed to reduce crime in public and residential areas. These include measures that increase the risk for potential offenders, such as improved lighting in places where crime or fear of crime is prevalent, and good design of buildings which enables public areas to be more visible. The Borough Council will therefore encourage developers to liaise with the Police ALO when drawing up new development schemes, and will seek to ensure that access to public places is designed to be safe and easy to use by all members of the community.
- 8.21 Having regard to the above considerations, the following policy will apply. Guidelines on access and safety in the built environment are set out in Appendix 7.

POLICY U5 - ACCESS AND SAFETY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

In accordance with the guidelines set out in Appendix 7, the Borough Council will seek improvements to the design and layout of the built environment to provide safe and easy access for all members of the community (see also Policy H5).

Policy Cross Reference : H5 Residential Design and Layout Considerations, page 51; and Appendix 7 Guidelines for Access and Safety in the Built Environment, page 219.

Community Facilities

- 8.22 The Borough Council recognises the importance of making adequate provision for community based services, such as doctors surgeries and day nurseries, to meet local needs. However, as the majority of these have sought to locate within the residential community they serve, this has led to concern about the impact of such proposals on the character and amenities of residential areas and loss of low-cost housing. Therefore, in accordance with Policies H3 (Chapter 3, page 48) and E5 (Chapter 4, page 74) and in addition to the criteria detailed in the sections which follow, the Borough Council will wish to ensure that the undue concentration of such uses in residential streets is avoided and that the stock of small single family dwellinghouses is safeguarded.

Local Health Care Facilities

- 8.23 The number of planning applications for non-residential health care facilities, such as doctors and dentists surgeries, vets, etc. has increased significantly in recent years. This has been due principally to the number of partnership dissolutions in group practices, leading to a growth in small-scale surgeries.
- 8.24 Following an extensive survey of local practitioners, patients and adjoining residents in 1989, a comprehensive planning policy has been adopted. This seeks to strike an appropriate balance between the provision of modern well located surgeries and the preservation of the local environment. The policy also takes into consideration the differing levels of activity that can be generated between single practitioner and group practices, particularly in terms of parking and traffic, and the need to ensure that the premises are of an adequate size and that future extensions are adequately controlled in order to protect residential character and amenities.

POLICY U6 - NON-RESIDENTIAL HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

In assessing applications for the use of premises for non-residential health care facilities* the Borough Council will have regard to the following criteria:

- (i) to ensure that the character and amenities of residential streets are safeguarded, all proposals should meet the provisions of Policy E5.**
- (ii) schemes which involve the loss of residential accommodation will only normally be permitted where it can clearly be demonstrated that it is essential for the practice to be located within the area it serves and there is no other suitable property available. Such proposals will also only normally be permitted where the property is detached and has a gross floor area, as originally constructed, in excess of:**
 - (a) 160 square metres (1720 square feet) in the case of group practices, i.e. surgeries with more than one practitioner in attendance at the surgery;**
 - (b) 125 square metres (1345 square feet) in the case of small single practitioner surgeries.**

Any permissions granted for schemes which fall within (b) above will be subject to a condition limiting the surgery to not more than one practitioner being in attendance at any time;

- (iii) all proposals will be required to meet the Council's adopted design and layout criteria (Policies C11 and H5) and should achieve a satisfactory means of access and off-street parking facilities, together with adequate landscaping and screening of parking areas. In addition, schemes involving the conversion of all, or part of a dwellinghouse, should retain the external appearance of the property as a house;**
- (iv) applications for the extension or alteration of existing premises will only normally be permitted where the above criteria can still be satisfactorily achieved. In particular, where additional consulting rooms are proposed and/or an application seeks to remove the condition imposed under criterion (ii)(b) above, a commensurate increase of off-street parking facilities in accordance with currently adopted standards will be required. Where this cannot be provided in an acceptable manner the application will be refused.**

Policy Cross References : C11 New Buildings, Extensions and Alterations, page 30; H5 Residential Design and Layout Considerations, page 51; and E5 Non-Residential Uses Located Close to Housing, page 74.

Public Sector Education Facilities

- 8.25 The Essex County Council Education Department has indicated that there are no longer any additional land requirements in the Borough for education purposes, with the possible exception of two specific areas of the town. In the light of past and continuing intensification of development in central and west Southend, new primary schools may be required in these locations to meet future education needs. Accordingly, the Borough Council will consult with the Education Department regarding the need for such additional school facilities.
- 8.26 Elsewhere in the Borough, limited new housing development and restrictions on public sector resources dictate that all foreseeable requirements can and should be catered for within existing sites, which will normally be retained for education use. The Borough Council will also seek to retain existing playing fields and associated open spaces of amenity value in accordance with Policy C15 (Chapter 2, page 33) and will promote the effective use of existing establishments to provide for both education and community facilities where needed. The South-East Essex College of Arts and Technology, which has independent status, states that additional provision for higher education in the town will be required during the Plan period, and therefore will be seeking the Council's support in exploring options for achieving major improvements. In the light of this need, the Council will assist in the consideration of opportunities to expand higher education facilities in the town.

Private Education Establishments

- 8.27 The Borough Council recognises that the existing private education establishments in the town play a valuable role in widening the range of schools available and in helping to meet current and future educational needs. In considering proposals for such establishments the Borough Council will, in particular, wish to ensure that the character and amenities of residential streets are not adversely affected. Having regard to the above factors, the

following policies will guide the Borough Council in assessing applications received and in responding to consultations with other authorities.

POLICY U7 - EXISTING EDUCATION FACILITIES

Subject to the maintenance of satisfactory environmental conditions and residential amenities, the Borough Council will normally support the improvement or extension of existing public and private education establishments and will encourage the use of their facilities for community purposes where this would meet identified requirements. The Borough Council may accept the need for relocatable classrooms for a temporary period but will seek more permanent structures in the longer term in the interests of visual amenity.

POLICY U8 - PROVISION OF NEW EDUCATION FACILITIES

Proposals for the provision of additional public and private education facilities will be addressed in accordance with the following criteria:

- (i) permission will only normally be given where the site or property is of a size and nature that can satisfactorily accommodate the use - including playing fields, means of access, off-street car parking and other associated facilities - without detrimentally affecting the character of the area.**
- (ii) where proposals involve the use or development of premises within residential streets, the Borough Council will have regard to Policy E5 in order to ensure that the character and amenity of these streets are safeguarded. Permission will only normally be given where the use is small-scale in nature and where detached property is involved;**
- (iii) schemes which would result in,
 - (a) the irreversible loss of agricultural land where this is of Grades 1, 2 and 3a quality, and/or**
 - (b) the construction of substantial buildings in the Green Belt (see Policy G1),****will normally be refused.****

All proposals will be required to meet the Council's adopted design and layout criteria (Policies C11 and H5) and the provisions of Policy H3 to retain an adequate stock of small family houses.

Policy Cross References : G1 Green Belt and Natural Resources, page 13; C11 New Buildings, Extensions and Alterations, page 30; H3 Retention of Small Family Houses, page 48; H5 Residential Design and Layout Considerations, page 51; and E5 Non-Residential Uses Located Close to Housing, page 74.

Playgroups, Day Nurseries and Other Child-Minding Facilities

- 8.28 With increasing numbers of mothers seeking to return to work, demand for facilities for the care of pre-school children is increasing. Whilst there is a growing need to provide for such facilities, it is equally important to ensure that they do not detrimentally affect the character and amenities of residential areas. Considerations such as the type, location and suitability of the premises, parking provision, control of children numbers, general landscaping and other environmental controls will be of particular importance. Consultations with the Essex County Council Social Services Department, who under the provisions of the Children's Act 1989 require the majority of these establishments to be registered in accordance with their own standards, will also be of relevance in assessing the merits of a proposal.

Day Nursery, Clifftown Parade : the Borough Plan seeks to meet the need for community facilities whilst retaining the character of residential areas.

POLICY U9 - CHILDMINDING FACILITIES

Applications for the use of premises for playgroups, day nurseries and other child-minding facilities will be assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

- (i) **permission will only normally be given where the use is small-scale in nature, respects the character of the area, and meets the provisions of Policy E5. In particular where the premises are located in a residential street, any permission will normally be limited to a maximum of 25 children. Having regard to the property's location, nature and size, larger scale operations may exceptionally be permitted up to a maximum of 50 children per property, where this would not detrimentally affect residential amenities of the character of an area;**

- (ii) **within residential areas, in order to ensure the suitability of the property for such a use, permission will normally be limited to detached properties which have a minimum private rear garden amenity area of 100 square metres (1076 square feet) in a reasonably spacious layout;**
- (iii) **all proposals will be required to meet the provisions of the Council's adopted design and layout criteria (Policies C11 and H5) and the provisions of Policy H3 to retain an adequate stock of small family houses. In particular proposals should achieve a satisfactory means of access and off-street parking facilities together with adequate landscaping and screening of outdoor play and parking areas. In addition schemes involving the conversion of all, or part of, a property originally constructed as a single family dwellinghouse should retain the external appearance of the property as a house.**

The Borough Council will also have regard to the adopted standards of the Essex County Council Social Services Department in assessing the merits of all schemes.

Policy Cross References : C11 New Buildings, Extensions and Alterations, page 30; H3 Retention of Small Family Houses, page 48; H5 Residential Design and Layout Considerations, page 51; and E5 Non-Residential Uses Located Close to Housing, page 74.

Other Community Facilities

- 8.29 In addition to those community uses already discussed, the Borough Council recognises that there may be a need for other community-based facilities. Indeed, the Council has for a number of years sought to secure the provision of community meeting halls in new housing areas, and proposals for further facilities in the last remaining area of new housing development at North Shoebury are set out at the end of this Chapter. The Council recognises the important contribution which local societies, clubs and churches make to the community life of residents in the town and the particular needs of new housing areas such as those at North Shoebury.
- 8.30 In addition to multi-purpose halls, requests are occasionally made to use premises as a base for counselling support services for people experiencing particular social problems. The Council will support in principle proposals for such facilities in appropriate locations where there is an identified local need, and subject to certain environmental safeguards. Schemes involving the loss of existing meeting halls or other valued local community facilities will normally be resisted by the Council.

POLICY U10 - PROVISION OF OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Proposals for those local community uses not subject to Policies U6, U8 or U9 will normally be supported by the Borough Council subject to:

- (i) **the need to meet the provisions of Policy E5, in order to safeguard the character and amenity of residential streets, where permission will normally be limited to uses which are small-scale in nature and involve detached property;**

- (ii) **adopted design and layout criteria being satisfactorily met in accordance with Policies C11 and H5. In particular, schemes should achieve a satisfactory means of access and off-street parking facilities, whilst proposals involving the conversion of all, or part of, a property originally constructed as a single family dwellinghouse should retain the external appearance of the property as a house;**
- (iii) **the need to meet the provisions of Policy H3 relating to the retention of small family houses.**

Proposals involving the loss of existing community hall facilities will not normally be permitted unless alternative provision is made in a convenient and appropriate location, having regard to the above criteria, or there are over-riding environmental reasons for the development.

Policy Cross References : C11 New Buildings, Extensions and Alterations, page 30; H3 Retention of Small Family Houses, page 48; H5 Residential Design and Layout Considerations, page 51; E5 Non-Residential Uses Located Close to Housing, page 74; U6 Non-Residential Health Care Facilities, page 132; U8 Provision of New Education Facilities, page 134; and U9 Childminding Facilities, page 135.

Libraries

- 8.31 The County Librarian has indicated that the Library Service network in Southend is complete apart from the requirement for additional floorspace to enable a branch record office to be erected as an extension to the Central Library. Accordingly, the Borough Council will liaise with the Library Services to provide for such additional facilities.

Cemeteries and Crematorium

- 8.32 The Council's Registrar of Cemeteries and Crematorium advises that there will be a requirement for at least a further 4 hectares of land for cemetery and crematorium purposes throughout the plan period and beyond.

Proposals

- 8.33 The following proposals are made:

PROPOSAL P8a - SUTTON ROAD CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM

An area of four hectares of land to the north and east of the Crematorium Garden of Remembrance, Sutton Road, is allocated for cemetery and crematorium purposes.

PROPOSAL P8b - PROPOSED COMMUNITY HALL, SOUTH OF FROBISHER WAY

An area of approximately 0.3 hectares of Borough Council owned land is allocated for a new community centre and Scout headquarters.

PROPOSAL P8c - LAND NORTH OF PARSONS BARN, FROBISHER WAY

This site (0.2 hectares) has been dedicated to the Borough Council for community use and is proposed to be used by the Salvation Army for the construction of a hall, subject to covenants requiring continued community involvement at the premises.