

# APPENDIX A

## Executive Summary of PPG17 Assessment

### Introduction

This document provides a summary of the various chapters within the PPG17 Assessment.

### Chapter 4: Review of Existing Plans and Strategies

There are four key messages from our review of existing plans and strategies:

- The state of local environments is seen as increasingly important by the Government. It is requiring local authorities to take effective action to deliver what these days is known as “liveability”. Moreover, it is beginning to measure the performance of local authorities in terms of the quality of environment they deliver for their area’s residents and visitors.
- Both the Community Strategy and the Council’s Corporate Strategy contain a number of “hooks” on which to hang this assessment, and policies and proposals arising from it, including enhancing the local environment and local lifestyles and the promotion of healthy eating and exercise.
- The main open space or sport and recreation needs already identified by the Council relate to the pitch sports – more grass pitches and more floodlit pitches for midweek training and matches – and facilities for teenagers.
- The Mid Sussex countryside is a major asset. At present countryside recreation is dependent to a significant extent on the network of rights of way and other paths and bridleways, complemented by paths and rights of way within settlements. However, there is growing pressure for more infrastructure in the form of car parks and picnic sites.

Our document review has also highlighted a number of issues which the Council’s planning and management policies for open space, sport and recreation will have to tackle. They include:

- Using development to deliver enhancements to existing spaces and facilities. This will help drive up the proportion of spaces of Green Flag Award standard and should also help to make development more acceptable

to existing residents. In broad terms, across much of the District, enhancement is likely to be a higher priority than additional provision.

- Providing the Council with a tool it can use to monitor the proportion of green spaces which meet Green Flag Award standard
- Promoting access to and recreational use of the countryside
- Planning policy and guidance for open space sport and recreation in the Council's Local Development Framework, including a specific Supplementary Planning Document, in order to provide adequate protection to existing spaces and facilities, where necessary; and help the Council and its partners deliver both the enhancement of existing spaces and facilities and new provision where it is needed
- Resolving the possible need for more pitches in an area with very high land values
- Assessing the extent to which there is sufficient demand to make it possible for a significant level of community use to help school sports facilities achieve their financial target of at least breaking even
- Evaluating and if appropriate finding ways of meeting the local needs identified by the various community fora
- Facilitating greater access to and use of the countryside without changing its character in any unacceptable ways

## **Chapter 5: Local Needs**

We have identified local needs in three main ways:

- Through a survey of Parish and Town Councils
- By reviewing the results of community consultations undertaken by the Council as part of the preparation of the Community Strategy
- Through a survey of local stakeholders, supplemented by telephone interviews

### **Community Forum Views**

The priorities identified through the District Council's community consultations included:

#### *District-wide Priorities*

- More youth provision, such as skateboard areas
- Better accessibility to facilities
- More sports provision, including swimming pools, athletics tracks, all weather playing surfaces, ice-skating rinks
- More challenging and exciting play equipment for slightly older children (12-16 yrs)
- More play space for young children
- More youth provision and youth clubs
- More cycle ways and horse riding facilities
- More shared use of school facilities and land

#### *North Area Forum Priorities*

- More pitches and courts
- More provision in the villages

#### *South Area Forum Priorities*

- More open spaces in towns, especially public parks
- More affordable pitches use with easier access
- More youth provision – especially kickabout spaces for 8 – 16 year olds
- More shared use of facilities – for example with schools
- More facilities in new developments

#### *Central Area Forum Priorities*

- More informal meadows rather than golf courses; open space is being too “squeezed”
- More safe countryside cycle tracks

#### **MSDC Residents’ Consultations, 2002**

A questionnaire survey undertaken by the District Council in 2002 found that local parks are valued community assets with 43% of respondents using them regularly and 61% classing their local park as good or very good and only 9% thinking it is poor. However, this consultation also found that residents would like to see a number of improvements to parks, including:

- Better security eg lighting/supervision
- Measures to reduce vandalism
- More seating
- More youth provision
- Better toilets
- More gardens/shrubs/wild areas
- Less litter/broken glass

#### **Parish and Town Council Views**

- Most of the rural Parish Councils are generally of the view that the quantity or amount of most forms of provision in their areas is “about right”. The forms of provision that parishes are most critical of are green spaces in housing areas, village greens, play areas for 8-12 years olds, supervised adventure play areas, grass sports pitches and teenage facilities.
- East Grinstead Town Council believes that the amount of several forms of provision is slightly inadequate, notably green spaces in housing areas, recreation grounds, parks and gardens, play areas for 8-12 year old children, adventure play areas and teenage facilities. It also believes there is a significant deficit in terms of grass pitches and youth centres. Ashurst Wood Parish

Council has identified shortfalls in allotments, bowling greens and teenage facilities.

- Haywards Heath Town Council sees a need for more trees, adventure play areas, teenage facilities and youth centres, but regards the level of other forms of provision as about right. Lindfield Parish Council is of the view the amount of most forms of provision is about right, but would like to see more play provision for 8-12 year olds, teenage facilities and youth centres.
- Burgess Hill Town Council is of the view that there is a significant shortfall in most forms of provision in the town, but only a slight shortfall in allotment provision.

The District-wide priorities we have identified through our survey of town and parish councils are:

- A floodlit third generation artificial turf pitch in or close to each of the main towns. These pitches will substitute for more grass pitches and (to a lesser extent, given their multi-functional nature) recreation grounds – which are of course land intensive but can accommodate only low levels of pitch sport use. These ATPs will be able to accommodate high levels of use for football and rugby training and min-soccer and adult football matches.
- Teenage provision at appropriate locations more or less throughout the District. This should consist of areas where teenagers can “hang out” without causing annoyance to others, coupled with skateboard/BMX facilities and possibly floodlit ball courts.
- Developing a new approach to children’s play
- Improving access to the countryside and the improvement of bridleways and off-road cycleways.
- Opening up access to school tennis courts in Burgess Hill and Worth. Given that the Burgess Hill School for Girls is planning to build an 8-court sports hall, partly for netball, it would seem to be a good location for community tennis in Burgess Hill.
- Improving the quality of greenspaces in housing areas, especially in Burgess Hill and East Grinstead as it is not normally practicable to increase the quantity of provision in established housing areas.
- Managing appropriate existing greenspaces in such a way as to promote nature conservation better

### **Sports Bodies**

The pitch sport clubs and leagues from whom we have obtained information believe that the level of grass pitch provision across the District is about right, but with three important caveats:

- There is a need for additional capacity during the “shoulder” seasons. At the end of the football season, cricket clubs are sometimes unable to get pitches because grounds are still being used for football; and at

the end of the cricket season, football clubs cannot book pitches because grounds are still being used for cricket. The answer to at least the second part of this problem is for the football clubs to be able to access artificial turf pitches as it would be unrealistic to provide a number of new grass pitches primarily for pre-season friendly matches and training.

- There is a need for a ground suitable for “show games” such as cup finals. While spectator interest varies, it gives teams a fillip to play finals and other show games on a “special” ground. The most recent Sussex Sunday League final was played at Redhill as this was the nearest affordable ground with suitable spectator provision. There should be an opportunity to negotiate a planning agreement which will allow a limited number of such games to be played at affordable cost if East Grinstead Hill Football Club re-locates to another site.
- If teams are successful and win their leagues, they are naturally keen to gain promotion to a higher league and better competition. However, promotion can also have its drawbacks, as governing bodies require clubs to have a minimum range and standard of facilities at different competitive levels. This leads to clubs wanting to develop spectator accommodation, floodlights and other facilities which can bring them into conflict with nearby residents and, in some parts of the District, planning policy relating to floodlighting. There is no easy answer to this problem, although the number of clubs requiring “higher league” facilities will always be limited as the best players gravitate towards the best clubs. One solution may be for the District Council to take the lead in finding one or more locations where these facilities will be acceptable, seeking Football Foundation money to develop them, and then leasing them, on a year to year basis, to appropriate clubs for as long as they are in a league that requires them. If a club using one of these higher level grounds is demoted it can then “swap grounds” with a team that is promoted.

Other sports needs include:

- At least one additional pitch for rugby for the Haywards Heath Rugby Club
- Artificial cricket wickets, probably mainly for juniors
- Floodlighting for tennis courts

## **Chapter 6: Qualitative Assessment**

The results of our audit of existing provision result in the following strategic conclusions:

- The quality of provision in Mid Sussex compares favourably with provision in the other areas, broadly similar in nature to Mid Sussex, where we have undertaken other audits using the same basic audit forms and methodology.
- The value of Mid Sussex’s greenspaces – to the local

community and in relation to wider issues such as wildlife and biodiversity - is also generally good, but there are many sites where it will be desirable to enhance value if at all possible.

- Possibly the one area in which the various Town and Parish Councils in the District most need to rethink their present approach is in relation to children's play. With an average value score of only 52%, the play value of many sites is quite limited - especially in the context of the often high maintenance costs of play areas.
- It will also be desirable to work with allotments associations to identify the improvements that plot holders would most like to see to sites. On the basis of the audit, there could be merit in seeking to develop a shared approach to composting and rubbish collection, while it may be desirable to provide toilets on at least the larger sites.

## Chapter 7: Quality Standards

The purpose of quality standards is to set out the quality of provision the Council wishes to see in its area. Such standards have two main uses:

- They provide a benchmark for the Council to assess and compare the quality of different facilities of the same type within its area as an aid when determining priorities for improvement or changes to management regimes. Given that it will not always be possible to achieve all aspects of the quality standards - for example because of a lack of resources - in relation to existing provision quality standards are an aspiration. As such they should be challenging, but broadly achievable, and the Council should aim to achieve them wherever it is practicable to do so.
- They set out the Council's requirements as a guide for developers on the quality of provision the Council will expect them either to provide or fund. In this context, quality standards are a requirement, although they must obviously be applied in a way which is reasonable given the specific circumstances of a proposed development.

We have prepared draft quality standards:

Greenspaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible natural greenspace</li> <li>Allotments</li> <li>Amenity greenspaces</li> <li>Green corridors</li> <li>Equipped play areas</li> <li>Sports pitches</li> <li>Athletics training facilities</li> <li>Bowling greens</li> <li>Tennis courts</li> <li>Urban parks and recreation grounds</li> <li>Teenage Facilities</li> </ul>
Indoor provision	Community centres and halls

Indoor Bowls facilities  
Indoor sports halls and swimming  
pools

Each of the quality standards is derived from examples of best practice, such as the Green Flag Award criteria for parks, or published guidance, for example from English Nature or Sport England, and links directly to the KCA audit forms.

## Chapter 8: Distance Thresholds

Selecting the most appropriate distance thresholds for Mid Sussex is a process of using the available information to determine an appropriate policy aspiration. Unnecessarily short distance thresholds will result in an uneconomic level of provision, with low levels of use; unnecessarily high ones in a pattern of provision which may either cause some residents not to bother travelling or result in high use of cars for visiting spaces and facilities.

While it would be desirable that every resident of the District should be within walking distance of "local" provision such as allotments, bowling greens and tennis courts, this is unrealistic for Mid Sussex with its three main settlements and network of fairly small villages. This means it is necessary to have both walking and driving distance thresholds for most forms of local provision plus, of course, driving thresholds for "strategic" provision such as indoor sports facilities. In addition, because of the desirability of promoting cycling as a sustainable form of travel it is desirable also to have a set of cycling thresholds.

Accordingly we suggest three broad policy aspirations:

- At least 90% of dwellings in the three main towns should be within the walking distance threshold of local provision meeting the quality standard in all respects
- At least 90% of dwellings throughout the District should be within the cycling distance threshold of local provision meeting the quality standard in all respects
- At least 90% of dwellings throughout the District should be within the driving distance threshold of strategic provision meeting the quality standard in all respects

In order to establish straight line distance thresholds, we recommend the following parameters:

- Average walking speed 80 metres/minute
- Average cycling speed 200 m/minute
- Average driving speed 500 m/minute (30 km per hour)
- Straight line distance 75% actual distance

### *Notes*

- 80 m/minute is a typical walking speed

- 200m/minute is a realistic cycling speed for a reasonably flat area
- 30 km/hour driving speed allows for slow travel through villages or towns and time spent parking

The distance thresholds we recommend are:

### *Local Provision – Walking and Cycling Distance Thresholds*

	Minutes	Walking (m)	Cycling (m)
Multi-functional greenspaces	5	300	N/a
Play areas – young children	5	300	N/a
Natural Greenspaces	10	600	1500
Play areas – older children	10	600	N/a
Teenage areas	10	600	1500
Allotments	15	900	2250
Parks and Gardens	15	900	2250
Bowling greens	15	900	2250
Grass pitches	15	900	2250
Tennis/multi courts	15	900	2250
Artificial turf pitches	20	1200	3000
Athletics facilities	20	1200	3000
Indoor bowls halls	20	1200	3000
Indoor tennis courts	20	1200	3000
Sports halls	20	1200	3000
Swimming pools	20	1200	3000

#### **Notes**

1: The walking thresholds relate only to the three main towns and not the rural areas of the District

2: Multi-functional greenspaces (MFGS) are amenity greenspaces, parks and gardens, playing fields and recreation grounds. All of these spaces serve an amenity purpose for local communities. For the purposes of assessing accessibility, we have included all of them within a single category of MFGS. As everyone should be able to access at least one such space on foot, and at least one children's play area, there is no need for cycling or driving thresholds.

### *Driving thresholds*

	Minutes	Driving (m)
Allotments	15	5,625
Bowling greens	15	5,625
Grass pitches	15	5,625
Tennis/multi courts	15	5,625
Artificial turf pitches	20	7,500
Athletics facilities	20	7,500
Indoor bowls centres	20	7,500
Indoor sports hall	20	7,500
Indoor swimming pool	20	7,500
Indoor tennis courts	20	7,500

Note: there is no need for a driving distance threshold for teenage facilities as teenagers will generally access them on foot or by bicycle

## **Chapter 9: Quantitative Assessment**

We have reviewed the existing level of provision in the light of identified local needs and our quality and accessibility assessments and as a result recommend the following

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quantity standards:

Allotments	1.75 sq m/person
Artificial turf pitches	0.50 sq m/person
Bowling greens	0.17 sq m/person
Equipped play areas	0.65 sq m/person
Grass Pitches	12.25 sq m/person
Parks and gardens	2.00 sq m/person
Teenage areas	0.30 sq m/person
Tennis courts	0.44 sq m/person

### Application of the Quantity Standards

By applying these standards across the District, and comparing the results with the existing level of provision, we have identified a need for a limited amount of additional provision. The main elements of this are:

- Allotments in Burgess Hill, Ardingly, Turners Hill, Haywards Heath, Balcombe, Cuckfield Rural, Bolney and Hassocks
- An additional artificial turf pitch in each of the main towns
- Bowling greens in North Mid Sussex, Central Mid Sussex and Burgess Hill
- Artificial cricket wickets, mainly on school sites
- A need to open up school pitches for greater community use
- More rugby pitches in Haywards Heath/Cuckfield
- A pitch sports centre at the St Paul's Catholic College
- More teenage provision across the District
- More floodlit tennis courts

## Chapter 10: Accessibility Assessment

Our analysis of the accessibility of existing provision results in the following conclusions:

- Overall, the accessibility of provision across the District, and particularly in the three main towns where most residents live, is reasonably good. This said, there are some areas where accessibility is poor, and this tends to fit into a pattern with these areas being poorly served by several forms of provision rather than just one or two.
- The District-wide priority for enhancing greenspaces must be Burgess Hill. Overall, provision there has the lowest quality and value amongst the three towns.
- District residents lack ready access to indoor tennis facilities and are likely to be deprived of their only indoor bowls facility before the end of 2006. The nearest provision that they can use is well outside the District; the same goes for full scale athletics facilities.
- Looking to the future, there is likely to be a need for more artificial turf pitches, especially "third generation" ones designed for football. The most appropriate location for these pitches will be on school or community college sites.

- In the three main towns, increased community use of indoor sports facilities may result in lower levels of use of District Council facilities, especially if the schools set lower charges than the District. The District Council should therefore monitor demand levels closely and seek a sensible agreement with schools over the programming and promotion of community use of school facilities.
- In East Grinstead, the priorities are for better provision in the western and north-eastern areas. The western area lacks good quality natural greenspaces, play areas and teenage facilities, while the north-east Stonequarry area of deprivation requires teenage facilities and better play provision.
- In Haywards Heath, the north-western sector is generally the least well served by existing provision. However, the main priority should generally be to enhance existing provision
- In Burgess Hill, the south-eastern sector to the east of the railway line is generally the least well served by current provision. There is also a lack of good quality greenspace in the Leylands area. However, as in other parts of the District, enhancing the quality of existing greenspaces should have a higher priority than making more provision.

## Chapter 11: Issues and Opportunities

The main issues and opportunities facing the District Council and its partners are:

- Quality versus quantity
- Countryside Provision
- Indoor sports and leisure provision
- Provision for Bowls
- Play provision for Children
- Provision for Tennis
- Provision for Teenagers
- Provision for the Pitch Sports
- Public Parks
- Wasted Spaces

### Quality vs Quantity

Broadly speaking, there is sufficient of most forms of provision across the District for the present population, although there are specific shortfalls in some areas. In terms of quality and value, provision is generally of reasonable quality and slightly better than in other areas where we have undertaken similar assessments. However, it will still be desirable to enhance many spaces in order to improve "liveability" and enhance biodiversity.

### *Recommendations*

- In established settlements and developed areas, the Council should generally protect existing provision and therefore require compensatory provision if it decides to

allow existing spaces or facilities to be redeveloped for some other purpose.

- The Council should draw up a greenspace strategy designed to deliver quality and value enhancements to priority sites, but especially urban parks, using our audit results as a guide.
- The Council should require developers of infill or windfall sites to fund the enhancement of existing spaces or facilities within the relevant distance thresholds in preference to requiring on-site provision
- The Council should ensure that any new on-site provision by developers in new housing areas complies with the quality standards suggested in this assessment in all respects.
- For major new developments, the Council should generally require developers to make on-site provision in accordance with the quantity and quality standards set out above. However, it should require contributions to off-site provision:
  - \* When it will be more in the public interest to require developers to contribute to the enhancement of existing poor quality or value spaces or facilities within the distance threshold of their development
  - \* For artificial turf pitches or parks and gardens

### **Countryside Provision**

Mid Sussex contains very attractive countryside and so it is not surprising that residents and visitors enjoy visiting it. A number of the District's town and Parish councils have identified a need for additional or (particularly) higher quality paths and cycleways.

#### *Recommendations*

The Council should concentrate primarily on four main policy objectives for countryside provision:

- To make it possible for residents to commute between the main towns in the District, and to and from the commuter villages within a few km of them, by bicycle. The obvious priority is to link Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath as they are only a relatively short distance apart.
- To link the main settlements to popular visitor attractions in the countryside such as Ardingly reservoir, the scheduled ancient monuments, the National Trust properties at Wakehurst Place and Nymans Garden and the South Downs National Park.
- To link the main settlements in the District to the long distance paths passing through it
- To make it possible for as many school children as possible to cycle or walk to school, but particularly the secondary schools.

## **Indoor Sports and Leisure Provision**

The Triangle and Dolphin Leisure Centres are well used and provide a good service to local residents. Some of the facilities provided by the independent schools are also well used, usually without any formal community use agreement. The King's Leisure Centre, however, is past its "sell-by date". In addition, the District is facing a significant increase in school sports hall provision likely to be made available for community use.

### *Recommendations*

- The District Council should work closely with schools and the County Council to develop a realistic strategy for community use of school sports facilities
- The District Council should investigate the options for upgrading or replacing the King's Centre, taking full account of any planned new sports hall provision on school sites
- The District, Town and Parish Councils should engage more with the independent schools to ensure a high quality service for the residents of the District's rural areas

## **Provision for Bowls**

There is an identified need for additional outdoor bowling greens, based on our accessibility analysis and the views of Town and Parish Councils. In addition, the proportion of older people in the District's population is rising so the demand for bowling greens is likely to increase over time.

### *Recommendations*

- The Council should seek to allocate sites for new bowling greens in North Mid Sussex (including one in East Grinstead/Ashurst Wood); Central Mid Sussex (including at least one in Haywards Heath); and Burgess Hill (possibly two greens).

## **Provision for Tennis**

Mid Sussex has a significant number of outdoor tennis courts but no indoor ones, nor are there any around the periphery of the District. Given the socio-economic nature of the District's population, indoor tennis is likely to be a popular activity although it probably does not have enough population to attract one of the major commercial indoor tennis clubs.

### *Recommendations*

- The Council should work with Crawley Borough Council to try to attract one of the commercial leisure club operators to the Crawley/East Grinstead area

- The Council should promote the floodlighting of good quality tennis courts wherever possible

### **Play Provision for Children**

To date the Council has followed the recommendations of the National Playing Fields Association in relation to play areas for children and used it as the basis for “playing space” provision standards in its Local Plan. This leads to a very high level of provision of small sites, with limited play value and low levels of use by young children; high maintenance costs as a result of abuse and vandalism; and fairly characterless amenity and other greenspaces in housing areas.

#### *Recommendations*

The District Council should adopt a new approach to children’s play provision based on:

- Designing local greenspaces in such a way as to maximise their play value for children of different ages with opportunities to hide, climb, run around, see nature at work, handle sticks and stones and get dirty or wet
- Fewer but larger play facilities as part of new developments, coupled with requiring developers to design greenspaces in housing areas in such a way that they provide stimulating play environments for children
- Rationalising existing play provision as and when major repairs or refurbishments are needed and “retro-fitting” this new approach to those existing housing areas with an unnecessarily high level of provision, including the upgrading of local greenspaces to make them more stimulating for play
- Requiring developers to design housing environments in which children and other pedestrians have priority over vehicles
- Planning traffic calming schemes with the objective of making streets child-friendly rather than simply slowing down traffic

### **Provision for Teenagers**

Making better provision for teenagers is one of the significant provision issues facing the District Council. The need for it is widely supported by the Community Strategy, the local community and Town and Parish Councils.

#### *Recommendations*

- Mid Sussex should have a network of teenage areas with at least two major facilities in each of the three main towns, supported by “second tier” provision in the rural settlements.
- The Council, in partnership with the town and parish

councils, should identify sites for additional teenage provision on the basis primarily of the distance thresholds recommended earlier in this report.

- The Council, in partnership with the town and parish councils, should engage and work with local teenagers to ensure that provision meets their needs

### **Provision for the Pitch Sports**

The nature of pitch provision in the District is failing to keep up with trends in the pitch sports. The main elements of this are:

- A shortage of floodlit artificial or grass pitches suitable for football and rugby training that can be used mid-week.
- A need to upgrade the facilities that successful teams will need if they are to be able to accept promotion to higher leagues.
- A lack of at least one ground for "show games" such as cup finals.
- A need for more junior and mini-soccer pitches
- A need for better ancillary or changing accommodation
- A need for more rugby pitches and changing suitable for mixed sex use.

### *Recommendations*

- The Council should continue the allocation of land at Bolnore Village for grass pitches for the period covered by its first Local Development Framework, but review the need to develop it for grass pitches once it has experience of the use of the proposed new artificial turf pitches.
- The Council and Cuckfield Parish Council, together with the club, should investigate the potential for providing an additional pitch for the Haywards Heath Rugby Club
- The Council should take a positive and constructive approach to planning applications by clubs which have the potential significantly to expand
- The Council should support the upgrading of a limited number of football and other pitch sport sites in order to allow local teams to accept promotion to higher leagues
- The District Council should identify and allocate sites for at least three floodlit artificial turf pitches across the District
- All new ATPs should be complemented by good quality social and changing accommodation designed for community use and large enough to allow the development of multi-team mixed sex clubs.
- New ATPs should be planned from the start as "central venues" for mini-soccer coaching and matches and the Council should also seek to develop mid-week floodlit football leagues
- The Council should investigate the potential for

developing the artificial pitch at St Paul's Catholic College into a venue for show games and work with the College to secure funding for this from the Football Foundation

- The Council should seek contributions from developers towards the implementation of a District-wide strategy for floodlit ATPs in preference to requiring either on-site grass pitch provision or contributions to off-site grass pitches
- The District Council should encourage and work with each of the major clubs in the District (for example, the three rugby clubs, East Grinstead Sports and Social Club, East Grinstead Football Club, Haywards Heath Football Club, Burgess Hill Football Club and possibly the Boys Club based at Fairfield Recreation Ground in Burgess Hill) to formulate facilities and development plans and support their implementation as much as possible.

### **Public Parks**

Although there are spaces in the main towns which the local community regards as parks, such as Victoria Park and Beech Hurst in Haywards Heath, East Court and Mount Noddy Recreation Ground in East Grinstead, and St John's Park in Burgess Hill, only Beech Hurst is not dominated by sports facilities. Beech Hurst is also the only space with significant colour and horticultural interest. Local communities would clearly like to see better parks in the three main towns.

### *Recommendations*

- The Council should designate at least one site in each of the three main towns as an urban park. These sites should be accessible on foot by as many people as possible within a 10 to 15 minute walk.
- The Council, in partnership with the town councils and local communities, should ensure that each of the designated parks offers a range of facilities or features which will appeal to people of all ages. Ideally they should incorporate areas of water, colour, horticultural interest, play and teenage facilities, tennis courts and/or a bowling green, clumps of large trees, shrubs, toilets and seating areas. The Council should also manage and maintain each of the designated parks at least to the equivalent of Green Flag Standard. The Council has already achieved Green Flags for Beech Hurst in Haywards Heath and the Bedelands Farm Nature Reserve in Burgess Hill but is a park. As part of this process, it should continue to work with user groups and seek to foster the creation of a Friends Group for each park.

## **Wasted Spaces**

The District's Town and Parish Councils have identified a number of "wasted spaces", defined as spaces which in their present form are unused or underused and do not benefit the local communities close to them. The ownership of some of these spaces is unclear.

### *Recommendations*

- The District Council should review the future of each of the "wasted spaces" identified by the Town and Parish Councils

## **Planning Policy**

In broad terms, we recommend that the Council's policy approach to open space, sport and recreation provision should be:

- Protect those sites we have identified in this assessment as being of high quality/high value
- Protect and seek to enhance the quality of those sites we have identified as low quality/high value, seeking contributions from developments on infill and windfall sites for this purpose
- Review the acceptability of using those sites we have identified as being of low quality/low value or high quality/low value for some other purpose and if this is not going to be acceptable seek ways of enhancing their value to the local community in their vicinity or wildlife and nature conservation

## **Local Plan Allocations**

It will be sensible to retain most of the allocations in the existing Local Plan, with the following exceptions:

- Those which have been taken up and implemented
- Burgess Hill: recreation allocation north east of Sheddingdean and Leylands Park (note: this allocation is actually to the west of Leylands Park)
- East Grinstead: children's play area allocation on the Estcotts Estate, off Court Crescent
- Haywards Heath: children's play allocation in Colwell Gardens

In addition, the Council should reconsider the informal open space allocation at Southlands/Dunnings Mill and the leisure/recreation allocation of those parts of the adjacent Dunning's Mill Site currently occupied by the Indoor Bowls Club and the Snooker and Social Club. Together these make up a potentially useful development site for which housing or open space are probably the only realistic uses. There seems to be little need for the former land to be informal open space and access to it as a development site will be limited. However, it should be possible to achieve a significantly better access and better development if the Southlands/Dunning's Mill, Indoor Bowls Club and Snooker

and Social Club sites can be developed in an integrated way to a sensible masterplan. The site has some disadvantages which a comprehensive development should be able to resolve, including the need to culvert one or more of the water courses.