

CHAPTER 12: COMMUNITY SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

- 12.1 Community services are concerned with many aspects that are important to the promotion of people's quality of life. They are often essential if people are to live in a civilised society. They cover areas such as health and education services, religious, ethnic and community groups, local clubs and societies. They also include emergency and regulatory services such as the fire service, the courts and the police. In many instances, community facilities and organisations can serve a recreational function as well.
- 12.2 Most services are still provided by the public sector. However, the Borough Council has a limited statutory role in the provision of these services, with the health service, the County Council and national government departments having the greatest responsibility. The Borough Council as local planning authority does, however, have an important enabling role through identifying opportunities and sites for the development of community services. The voluntary sector also has an important role. The private sector's role, although relatively small, is expanding, either through operating a service on behalf of one of the community services, or by offering a service to rival the public sector equivalent.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

- 12.3 As a planned New Town, Crawley was provided with a range of purpose built facilities for community services, both within the town as a whole and within each neighbourhood. Local facilities are commonly within walking distance of homes. Since then, Crawley has grown to be an important sub-regional centre. Many of the community services provided now serve an area much wider than just the borough and its resident population.
- 12.4 Despite recent improvements, shortfalls exist for some services. Some facilities, such as the library, are no longer large enough while others such as the hospital, are not designed to meet contemporary needs. With the expansion in Crawley's population and the forecast growth in the numbers of the elderly and very young within the borough, a number of facilities are under-supplied. Facilities such as residential day care centres for the elderly and buildings for respite care are also in demand due to the Government's community care policies.

PLANNING CONTEXT

- 12.5 There is very limited legislation, Government advice or strategic guidance about how town planning can help meet community service needs and the advice there is tends to be concerned with general principles. Of particular note, Planning Policy Guidance Notes 13 "Transport", and 1 "General Policy" advise that many developments should be located within existing neighbourhoods wherever possible so as to reduce the need to travel.
- 12.6 These principles are echoed in the 1993 Structure Plan which aims to protect and improve the environment and the quality of life within it. Policy G3 encourages new development to be within the built-up-area in order to conserve countryside resources and to minimise the energy used for transportation.
- 12.7 While most community service legislation is not directly town planning related, it can have an effect upon land use and other environmental objectives. Over the past years, legislation has encouraged the provision of more services within the community. The implication of such a policy is that some services may now need to

be provided by a number of small units distributed throughout the borough, rather than being on one large, centralised site.

STRATEGY, ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

12.8 Policy STRAT 1 states that the aim of the Local Plan is to improve the quality of life for those living and working in Crawley whilst protecting the environment. Community services have a considerable role to play in improving quality of life within Crawley. However, Policy STRAT 3 notes that where facilities are provided it is important that they do not have a detrimental impact upon the environment, either because of their location or the amount of non-renewable resources that are used in their development or operation.

12.9 The following objectives set the framework for the policies of the chapter:

Objectives for Community Services

Objective 1

To encourage, through the allocation or release of sites, provision of community services to meet the needs of the local population.

12.10 Although the Borough Council provides only a few community services, it can contribute towards this objective by ensuring that adequate land is allocated in the right location for such uses. In certain cases, it may even wish to release sites currently in its ownership for a community use. As a sub-regional centre of growing importance, Crawley is expected increasingly to be the location of services to serve an area which extends beyond the borough boundary. The uses concerned include, for example, a county court and a major general hospital. Accommodating such large land use demands is often very difficult given the existing environmental constraints upon the borough.

Objective 2

To ensure the protection of existing community facilities where they still provide a useful function.

12.11 Some community service facilities are found in locations where they may experience pressures for redevelopment. Where a service still performs a useful function, there is a need to protect it from redevelopment or to allow redevelopment of the site only if the service can be performed as well or better in another location.

Objective 3

To ensure the allocation of community services sites in an environmentally sensitive manner.

12.12 The protection of the environment is an important element of the strategy. It is therefore vital that in allocating land for such purposes, the environmental implications of such a development, including the implications of providing access to it, are borne fully in mind.

Objective 4

To ensure that, through appropriate location and design, new community facilities are easily accessible for all members of the community.

- 12.13 For Crawley's residents to make use of public buildings, they must be easily accessible. This is important as many of those using certain community services experience mobility problems, for example, through disability, lack of access to a car or by having to take children in a pram or pushchair. The most effective way of achieving good accessibility is by ensuring that facilities are well designed and located conveniently for the catchment they are intended to serve. Some facilities will need to be in neighbourhoods, whilst others should be where they can be reached by a variety of modes of transport.

Objective 5

To encourage, through appropriate location and design, the efficient and effective use of community services facilities and resources.

- 12.14 Site opportunities and public resources for community facilities are likely to remain limited. Furthermore, many community groups' resources do not match their needs for new premises. It is, nevertheless, common for many community buildings to be used for their main purpose only on occasional days or for short periods. If appropriately designed and located, there is often scope for greater use of such buildings by groups lacking their own premises. In Crawley, community, scout, church and sometimes, school halls are used for a variety of purposes. Elsewhere in the country, it is common practice for school facilities like playing fields, gymnasias and libraries to be widely used for non-educational community purposes. Such practices normally represent a more efficient use of limited resources for community services.

POLICIES

Provision and Retention of Community Services Facilities

Policy COM 1

The Borough Council will support proposals for the provision of new community services facilities which will add to the range of community services within the borough provided that:

- (i) they are accessible by a variety of means of transport;**
- (ii) they are appropriately located for the catchment population they serve;**
- (iii) if appropriate, the facility is capable of being used for a variety of community uses.**

- 12.15 The Borough Council recognises that community services can play an important part in determining the quality of life experienced by residents of the borough. It will, therefore, support proposals for community service facilities to meet the needs of Crawley's residents. However, in order that such facilities are of benefit to the community as a whole, they should be appropriately located and designed. Facilities serving a mainly local catchment can be located within or adjacent to neighbourhoods, but those serving the whole of the borough, or a wider area, should normally be located centrally where there is a choice of public transport. The proposals for a new neighbourhood (see Chapter 13) include a requirement for the provision of facilities for local community services.

Implementation: CBC development control process; public, voluntary and private sector agencies.

Policy COM 2

Proposals for development involving the loss of community services facilities will not normally be permitted unless:

- (i) the facility is clearly surplus to requirements; or**
- (ii) shared use of the facility with other activities is not possible; or**
- (iii) the existing use cannot be accommodated on the site after redevelopment; or**
- (iv) alternative provision, accessible by a variety of means of transport, can be made within the built up area.**

12.16 When community services are lost, the quality of life for many citizens can be diminished. Accordingly, the Borough Council will normally oppose the loss of community services, unless they are surplus to all requirements and, therefore, there will be no loss in the quality of service provided. In such instances, the Borough Council will need to be satisfied that all options to share the facility with another community or recreational activity have been exhausted. If this is not possible, the provision of a new facility of the same standard or better, may be acceptable, provided that it is appropriately located within the built up area.

Implementation: CBC development control process; public, voluntary and private sector agencies.

Sites for Community Uses**Policy COM 3**

Land at the following sites is allocated for small scale community uses:

- (1) St Sampson Road, Broadfield;**
- (2) Bewbush neighbourhood centre;**
- (3) Overdene Drive, Ifield;**
- (4) The Ridings, Crabbet Park, Pound Hill;**
- (5) Rackham Close, Southgate;**

Land at the following sites will be reserved for a mixed use development including small scale community uses:

- (6) Dobbins Place, Ifield;**
- (7) Turners Hill Road, Pound Hill;**
- (8) Oak Road / Denne Road, Southgate.**

12.17 There is a wide range of community groups that desire their own premises. These include, amongst others, youth, elderly, first aid and religious groups. Some of these groups use existing facilities that no longer suit their needs. Some share facilities and are looking for their own premises, while others are relatively new groups who lack their own facilities. The Borough Council recognises it is unlikely that enough sites will become available on the open market to meet the requirements of all community groups. Therefore, it has identified a number of sites in its own or other authorities' ownership to contribute to meeting these needs.

12.18 Suitable uses for these sites are those which serve a local community function and with a catchment area which does not extend far beyond the immediate neighbourhood. The Dobbins Place facility could be used as part of a mixed development. All the sites are close to existing housing and the uses must therefore be compatible with the character of the area in which the site is located. The proposals for a new neighbourhood (see Chapter 13) include a requirement to make provision for premises for youth, religious and other local groups.

Implementation: CBC development control process; CBC Property and Construction Services; other public, voluntary and private sector agencies.

**Policy COM 4
Land at Apple Tree Farm, Langley Lane, is allocated for a community use.**

12.19 The site at Apple Tree Farm is capable of accommodating a larger community services development. Due to its size, access to a distributor road between neighbourhoods, and the fact that it is not entirely surrounded by residential properties, the development of this site offers the opportunity for premises to serve more than just the immediate local neighbourhood. In view of the wide area from which it is likely to draw patronage, substantial and sufficient car parking for this use will need to be provided on the site in order to avoid causing problems for the surrounding areas.

Implementation: CBC development control process, CBC Property and Construction Services, other public, voluntary and private sector agencies.

**Policy COM 5
Land at Dower Walk and Dunsfold Close, Gossops Green is allocated for a mixed use development of housing and community services facilities.**

12.20 A need has been identified for a new day centre facility to serve the south and west part of the borough. This site has the capacity to accommodate a community service facility within new housing development. However, it is particularly suitable for a facility serving mainly the elderly, given the proximity of local services and existing elderly persons' housing.

Implementation: CBC development control process; CBC Housing Services and Property and Construction Services, other public, voluntary and private sector agencies.

Policy COM 6

The Borough Council will support proposals for a day centre for the elderly within, or close to, the town centre, provided that:

- (i) the site is accessible by a variety of means of transport;**
- (ii) it is appropriately located for the catchment population served; and**
- (iii) there is no adverse impact on the environment and amenity of the surrounding area.**

12.21 A deficiency in the provision of community care and support facilities close to the town centre has been identified. In several instances, the residential areas around the town centre were developed before the New Town and were not well provided with buildings suitable for community services and community groups. Such areas would benefit from the provision of more community and recreational facilities, particularly as Policy H3 makes provision for further residential development within and around the town centre.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes; CBC Property and Construction Services; WSCC as social services authority; other public, private, voluntary and private sector agencies.

Health Care

12.22 Primary health care is concerned with the provision of services locally rather than hospital based, secondary health care. Primary health care normally requires relatively small sites serving the immediate neighbourhood. The Borough Council recognises the importance of providing accessible facilities for primary health care and will therefore reserve land for such purposes where appropriate. A large new general practitioners surgery has been constructed at the Maidenbower neighbourhood centre to serve the neighbourhood. The proposals for a new neighbourhood (see Chapter 13) include a requirement to make provision for a primary health care facility to serve this area.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes; Crawley Primary Care Group.

Policy COM 7

The Borough Council will support proposals for facilities for secondary health care and related activities within the existing hospital site and outlying buildings provided that:

- (i) there is no adverse impact upon the amenity and environment of the surrounding area or upon highway conditions and safety by virtue of any resulting increase in traffic or general activity;**

(ii) when ancillary uses are displaced, they can be accommodated elsewhere within the hospital's grounds without any adverse impact upon neighbouring properties.

12.23 The hospital has been on its existing site since the 1950s. With changes in practice, buildings are continually being redeveloped to suit modern needs. If further changes are to occur on the current site, it is important that they do not adversely affect the surrounding residential area.

Implementation: CBC development control process; Surrey / Sussex Healthcare Trust.

Policy COM 8

The Borough Council will support, if a need is identified, proposals to relocate Crawley Hospital elsewhere within the borough. Should the hospital be relocated on to a suitable new site, the Borough Council will require the existing site to be redeveloped in accordance with a development brief.

12.24 It is possible that future secondary health care services would be better provided on a new site, designed and located to meet current standards. If so, the Borough Council will support, in principle, proposals to relocate the hospital on a new hospital site within the borough which is easily accessible to all residents. However, finding a suitable site may prove difficult and the Council may have to examine the use of a site which would not normally be considered for development.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes; Surrey / Sussex Healthcare Trust

Education

Policy COM 9

Land at Sedgefield Close, Crabbet Park, Pound Hill, is allocated for a first school.

Policy COM 10

Land within Maidenbower is allocated for a further first school, a middle school and a secondary school.

12.25 It is forecast that the number of school age children will increase during the period up to 2006. The provision of primary schools near homes is an important element of the neighbourhood principle used in developing Crawley.

12.26 West Sussex County Council is the statutory education authority. It has a policy of normally providing first and middle schools within neighbourhoods. Secondary schools are provided to serve a catchment area of several neighbourhoods. The Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Schools Commission runs the Catholic schools. In 1993, it published a consultation document which proposed to close Notre Dame Middle School and Holy Cross Primary School, both of which are now being redeveloped for housing. Two catholic primary schools and one catholic secondary school have been retained to serve the whole of the borough.

12.27 The site at Sedgefield Close has been allocated for a school for some time, although the County Council has not allocated monies under its Capital Programme for it. Population forecasts, however, suggest that there may eventually be a need to expand school capacity in this part of the borough. In Maidenbower, one first school has already been developed, and the middle school is under construction. The

proposals for a new neighbourhood (see Chapter 13) include a requirement to make provision for new first and middle schools to serve this area.

Implementation: CBC development control process; WSCC as education authority.

Policy COM 11

Proposals for the whole or partial redevelopment of schools or their playing fields within the built up area, will not normally be permitted unless:

- (i) the facility has been demonstrated to be surplus to requirements;**
- (ii) adequate provision to meet educational needs is made elsewhere;**
- (iii) adequate green space is retained within the neighbourhood;**
- (iv) it is not possible to share the facility with another community or recreational use;**
- (v) there is no detrimental effect upon the character of the neighbourhood;**
- (vi) the proposed development will allow for public access to and public use of any area to be retained for recreational use.**

12.28 Most schools perform a valuable community function beyond that of providing an education service. Many school buildings are used by a variety of community groups outside school hours. Their playing fields add to the borough's green space and make an important contribution to the environment of the neighbourhoods. In some instances school playing fields are used formally or informally for public recreation and by local groups. School rolls tend to fluctuate and although a school may sometimes have low numbers, this does not mean it is necessarily surplus to requirements as rolls can easily rise in a few years. Accordingly the loss of either schools or their playing fields within the built up area should be resisted. If development is to take place, it must be compatible with the surrounding environment (see also Policy RL22).

Implementation: CBC development control process; WSCC as education authority; private sector and other developers.

Policy COM 12

Where the whole or partial redevelopment of schools is permitted, it will normally be required to be for a use compatible with a residential area such as:

- (i) local community services;**
- (ii) residential development, particularly social or affordable housing;**
- (iii) small scale employment workshops, suitable for the needs of local residents.**

12.29 As a result of the neighbourhood principles which were adopted for the New Town, almost all schools and their playing fields are located within or close by residential areas. Consequently, when it is accepted that part or all of a school or its playing field is to be redeveloped this must be for a use which is compatible with such a residential location.

Implementation: CBC development control process; WSCC as education and social services authority; other public, voluntary and private sector agencies.

Policy COM 13

Proposals for the whole or partial redevelopment of schools or their playing fields beyond the built up area will not normally be permitted. In the instances where redevelopment is permitted, it must be for a use which is compatible with the countryside and strategic gap objectives.

12.30 A few schools are located at the edge of the urban area. Their playing fields, therefore, appear to be part of the surrounding countryside. Their open nature often makes a considerable contribution to the character of the countryside and helps ensure that an undeveloped gap exists between Crawley and other built up areas. The development of such sites would have a detrimental effect upon the environment and will therefore normally be resisted.

Implementation: CBC development control process; WSCC as education and social services authority; other public, voluntary and private sector agencies.

Policy COM 14

The Borough Council will support proposals for nurseries and creche facilities, including those associated with a place of employment.

12.31 It is generally considered that pre-school education can have a beneficial impact upon a child's educational attainment and social development from an early age. It can also benefit parents who need to work while the child is at the nursery or creche. At present there are only a limited number of such facilities within the borough. Accordingly, the Borough Council will support, in principle, proposals that will contribute to meeting residents' needs for such services provided that it is considered they are in an appropriate location for such activities. Work place facilities could be

particularly valuable for they could help improve working mothers access to employment.

Implementation: CBC development control process; WSCC as education authority; other public, voluntary and private sector agencies.

Mixed Use of Community Sites

Policy COM 15

The Borough Council will encourage appropriate community services facilities to be suitably designed and available for dual use by a range of community groups.

12.32 Many community facilities are only used during certain hours and on certain days. When not in use they could be hired out to meet currently unmet needs within the community and to provide revenue for their owners. The shared use of facilities could relieve some of the need to identify further sites for community facilities.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes; public, private and voluntary sector agencies.

The Police

12.33 The growth in Crawley's population and its strategic location within central Sussex means that a divisional police headquarters is justified within the town. Land at the junction of Northgate Avenue and Woodfield Road has, therefore, been developed for a divisional police headquarters. The proposals for a new neighbourhood (see Chapter 13) include a requirement to make provision by some means for a local police office in this area.

Implementation: CBC development control process; Sussex Police Authority.

The Courts

Policy COM 16

The Borough Council will support proposals for a combined courts facility and / or the extension of the Magistrates Court facilities within the town centre provided that the buildings are of a design and scale to complement the town centre.

12.34 The Lord Chancellor has consulted the Borough Council on the provision of a combined court facility on various sites within the town centre which is an appropriate location for such a facility. A high quality design will be required on any site in the town centre to ensure that the facility reflects the importance of the town within the sub- region.

12.35 The Magistrates Court Committee has expressed an interest in expanding onto the previous police station site should this site be redeveloped.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes; Home Office; Magistrates' Court Committee.

Cemeteries

Policy COM 17

Land to the north of Snell Hatch Cemetery is allocated for use as an extension to the cemetery.

12.36 Most of the plots in the existing cemetery have now been used so there is only another seven to eight years capacity left. The site to the north offers the opportunity to expand the cemetery.

Implementation: CBC development control process, CBC Leisure Services.

Libraries

Policy COM 18

The Borough Council will support proposals by the County Council for the provision of a new public library within the town centre to replace the existing Crawley library provided that:

- (i) the design of the facility complements Policy SH2 which aims to consolidate Crawley's role as a sub-regional shopping centre; and**
- (ii) sufficient capacity is provided to meet anticipated future demand.**

12.37 The existing library is no longer large enough to cope with a population the size of Crawley. Accordingly, it is necessary to find a site for larger premises. The new library will need to be on an appropriate site within the town centre, to ensure that it is accessible to all sectors of the community. Attracting the public into the town centre, particularly in the evening, will also add vitality to the centre. The library could be mainly on an upper floor level, provided that its ground floor entrance is prominent enough to attract users and it is fully accessible to those with disabilities.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes; WSCC as library authority; landowners; private sector and other developers.

Fire Stations

12.38 The location of the existing fire station in Ifield Avenue enables a good service to be provided to most parts of Crawley, especially the town centre and surrounding areas. Continuing development in the outlying parts of the town and general increases in traffic and congestion, however, are making it more difficult on occasions to guarantee response times for some areas. For the eastern and northern parts of the borough, one solution could be to provide a second fire station within the development of the North East Sector. The proposals for a new neighbourhood forming part of Chapter 13 include a requirement to provide a site or sites for an additional fire station, (see Policy NES 5). The existing fire station would then serve mainly the town centre and the southern and western parts of the borough.

Implementation: CBC development control; WSCC as fire authority.

Waste Disposal

Policy COM 19

The Borough Council will support proposals for the provision of local waste collection sites, provided that:

- (i) they are accessible by a variety of means of transport;**
- (ii) they are appropriately located for the catchment population they serve; and**
- (iii) there is no adverse impact on the environment and amenity of the surrounding area.**

12.39 The Borough Council relies on residents bringing their most common recyclable waste to a collection point. It is important that waste collection sites for this are convenient to use, yet also do not give rise to problems for neighbouring development. The proposals for a new neighbourhood (see Chapter 13) include a requirement to make provision for local recycling centres and points.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes; CBC Planning and Environmental Services; WSCC as refuse disposal authority.

Policy COM 20

The Borough Council will encourage West Sussex County Council to identify a site capable of accommodating most, or all, of the following borough wide services:

- (i) recyclable material store;**
- (ii) scrap recovery and re-use store;**
- (iii) waste transfer station;**
- (iv) civic amenity site.**

12.40 It is understood that West Sussex County Council has identified a need for certain of these elements to be located in the Crawley area, which could require a site of at least 1/2 - 1 hectare. The Borough Council is supportive of an integrated waste management site, as this will ensure that these operations are dealt with efficiently. However, in searching for an appropriate site, the Borough Council will bear in mind the following criteria:

- the need to ensure the facility has good vehicular access;
- the benefits of removing waste by other forms of transport;
- the site's capacity to accommodate a variety of sheds, skips and hoppers, without adversely affecting its surroundings; and
- the need to ensure good public access.

Implementation: CBC forward planning and development control processes; CBC Planning and Environmental Services; WSCC as refuse disposal authority.

Public Conveniences

Policy COM 21

Proposals for development involving the loss of well used public conveniences will not normally be permitted unless:

- (i) the facility is clearly surplus to requirements; or**
- (ii) the existing use cannot be accommodated on the site after development; or**
- (iii) alternative provision can be made at a suitable nearby location.**

Policy COM 22

All major developments which are likely to result in a significant increase in public activity will be encouraged to provide public conveniences within or in conjunction with the development.

12.41 Public conveniences provide a most important service, particularly in areas which attract the public in great numbers. It is vital that facilities be retained and, if possible, extended in areas such as the town centre. However, in some instances, public conveniences have been costly to maintain due to vandalism and their limited use. The loss of such facilities, although regrettable, may be acceptable if demands can be met nearby.

12.42 Developments which attract the public in large numbers will be encouraged to provide public conveniences which should be designed and managed to meet all users' needs. Facilities should include separate baby changing facilities which are available and accessible to all members of the public, including people with mobility difficulties. The nature of the development will determine whether the facilities should be in a separate building or part of the development itself.

Implementation: CBC development control process; CBC Planning and Environmental Services; private sector and other developers.

MONITORING

12.43 The main test of the strategy adopted in this chapter and of the effectiveness of its policies and proposals is the extent to which the objectives set out in paragraphs 12.9 - 12.14 are met. The basic aim is to allow community services to play an important role in improving the quality of life for those living and working in Crawley, while avoiding any detrimental impact upon the environment.

12.44 Most policies require monitoring through regular analysis of planning decisions and implementation. In addition, periodic assessment is required of:

- progress on the preparation of a development brief for the proposed new neighbourhood (see Chapter 13);
- progress on site identification for certain specific land uses such as a day centre for the elderly, new hospital, combined courts facility, public library and integrated waste management site.