

## 17 LEISURE AND SPORT

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### Leisure and Sport Facts

- o There is a trend away from team sports towards individual pursuits.
- o There is a growing participation by older age groups in sports activity.
- o Most sports participation of the Island is based on small clubs and organisations.

### Introduction

17.1 In common with other areas of Britain, the Island has experienced a dramatic rise in the numbers of people participating in sporting activities. Reduced working hours have increased leisure time which, along with a greater awareness of health and fitness, has resulted in increased use of the Island's existing facilities and given rise to pressure for more to be provided. Over the last ten years there has been a number of major leisure and recreational developments completed on the Island, including the ice rink and bowling alley at Ryde, the athletics track at Sandown, a new football ground at Newport and facilities at Smallbrook, Ryde, including an artificial floodlit pitch, table tennis centre and gymnasium. Furthermore, the upgrading and improvement of existing facilities have taken place at Sandown Bay Leisure Centre, for example, to cater for modern leisure and sporting needs. There has also been a move from team to individual sports, along with increased participation by both women and older age groups

17.2 Unlike many mainland urban and metropolitan areas however, the Island is well catered for in terms of informal open space,

coast and countryside. In addition there is a wide range of outdoor organised sport and recreational facilities, often based around local clubs. In recent years, there has been increased pressure for year round or wet weather facilities.

17.3 Although there is a recognised need to provide for sports provision in the countryside, the increased participation in sports such as mountain biking, orienteering and horse riding can threaten the most sensitive areas of the Island and the continuing emphasis is to direct recreational activity, where possible, in and around existing settlements. In the towns, provision for more formal sports such as athletics and football continues to be required where access is easy for local people, particularly those who do not have a car, thereby reducing further requirements on the countryside.

17.4 Pressure for development proposals within settlements often leads to recreational land being considered an easy option for the provision of housing and other uses, but this needs to be viewed against the potential impact of having to allocate alternative sites in the countryside as well as the local

recreational and amenity value of urban open space itself. Government guidance on sport and recreation laid down in PPG17 suggests it is an important function of the development plan to ensure land and water resources are allocated for both informal recreation and formal sport. Plans should include specific policies on the protection of public and private open space, the availability of public rights of way, playing fields and the needs of elderly and people with disabilities.

for sport and leisure is provided by the Sports Council for the Southern Region. Its broad principles have been developed by the Council in the production of Sporting Horizons - A Sports Strategy for the Isle of Wight (1995), which includes a section on the role of the development plan. This details the important link between sports provision and land use planning and the need for any further facilities to be identified through the UDP process.

#### 17.5 Strategic guidance on the provision

### **“ Sporting Horizons” - The Sports Strategy of the Isle of Wight Council, 1995**

The aims of the strategy are to provide improved access to sport for all and to create more opportunities for the individual to take part in and enjoy sport at whatever level suits them. The strategy is in full accord with the responsibility given to local authorities and local Sports Councils through “Sporting Futures”, the Regional Strategy for Sport and Recreation 1994 - 1999 and deals with:

- Planning for sport;
- The management of sport;
- Facilities;
- Equal opportunities;
- Coaching;
- Information and Communication;
- Sports events.

It recognises the inextricable link between land use planning and sports provision as well as the competition between other land uses and recreational facilities in built up areas of the Island. The strategy concludes that sports and planning can serve compatible and complementary purposes by identifying needs and the most efficient and sustainable use of land and resources.

### **Objectives:**

The aims of this section are:

- o to provide for a comprehensive range of recreational and leisure facilities appropriate to the Island's needs;
- o to promote leisure, sport and recreation with an emphasis on groups where participation is traditionally low, ie, the disabled and elderly;
- o to take account of the natural recreational assets of the Island, while recognising the importance of nature conservation;
- o to promote the efficient and effective use of existing facilities through dual uses.

#### Informal Recreation Provision in the Countryside

*L1 Planning proposals for informal recreational uses in the countryside will be acceptable in principle, provided they do not conflict with the need to protect the natural and built heritage of the Island. Proposals which make use of existing buildings, particularly those of architectural or historic interest will be preferred.*

17.6 The Council recognises the value of encouraging public enjoyment of the countryside. Outdoor recreational activities normally considered appropriate to the countryside include informal recreation and sporting activities such as walking, running, nature trails and study, horse and cycle riding, fishing and certain water-based activities. Informal recreation involves activities which can be undertaken without

the need for a marked-out pitch or court. The use of the countryside by the public may require some development such as supporting interpretative facilities, small car parks, refreshment or picnic areas, toilets and other buildings directly related to outdoor activities, but in general these will be ancillary to the recreational use and not essential for it to happen.

#### Formal Recreation Provision

**L2 Planning proposals for new buildings, extensions or improvements to formal sports facilities, including all-weather, floodlit pitches, will be acceptable in principle provided that they are located within or adjacent to, existing settlement boundaries and:**

- a there are no unresolvable traffic problems;**
- b conditions limiting hours of use are applied where necessary;**
- c they do not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity.**

17.7 Formal sports can best be defined as those activities requiring facilities or laid out pitches and grounds, ie. football, squash, cricket and golf. Island residents, particularly those with restricted mobility and no access to a car, require sports facilities within easy reach of their homes. Proposals well beyond the boundaries of existing settlements can have an adverse impact on the countryside, and are often difficult to reach, particularly for children. As far as possible, sport and leisure activities should be catered for within the communities that they serve. Where provision within a defined settlement is not possible, however, proposals should be directed to sites adjacent to existing built-up areas, and away from the most sensitive countryside and coastal areas. Where it is not possible for proposals to be developed adjacent to existing settlements, any

proposals should be sited so that they relate to existing buildings, ie. not isolated from existing development on areas of open countryside or undeveloped coast. Such development should be kept low key, which means, in effect, a minimal number of facilities kept as unobtrusive as possible for the activity to take place.

17.8 There is currently a lack of all-weather floodlit outdoor facilities on the Island which the Council is seeking to encourage and promote in appropriate locations, whilst ensuring these do not create problems particularly for nearby residents and road traffic users. Particular attention needs to be taken with floodlighting which can affect adjoining occupiers.

17.9 In line with the strategic aims, it is

#### Indoor Sports Facilities

**L3 Planning applications for new indoor sports facilities will be approved where:**

- a they are appropriate in scale and character to the surrounding buildings and area;**
- b there is no adverse environmental effect;**
- c they are located within or adjacent to existing settlements;**
- d there is good access by public transport.**

considered that development of such facilities should be located in and around centres of population, where the developed form is appropriate and access by local people is easiest. Government advice is to encourage leisure uses as part of a mixed development in town centres as a way of encouraging vitality and viability during and outside normal

shopping hours. The Council therefore considers it important to explore opportunities for the development of in-town sites, and those within, and adjoining, the principal residential areas of the Island's settlements, before considering sites outside the development boundaries. Where an in-town site is not practical, a site outside the

settlement may be considered, provided it can be developed in accordance with the general policies of this plan and is well served

by public transport.

17.10 The Council recognises the

#### Protection of Open Spaces, Village Greens and Allotments

**L4** *Planning applications for development resulting in the loss of established, proposed or future public or private open spaces, village greens and allotments will only be approved in exceptional circumstances where:*

- a** *development for community purposes would be of greater benefit than retaining the open space and allotments and there are no other suitable sites available; and*
- b** *suitable alternative provision is provided prior to the development taking place.*

contribution that existing open spaces (both public and private) and allotments make to informal and formal recreational activities, as well as their general amenity value. In addition, PPGL7 outlines the need for policies which seek to promote open spaces and a number of sites previously allocated in former local plans for development have now been subject to Council resolutions to be either wholly, or partially, retained for open space purposes, including village green designations. There is a need to retain these facilities and development of such land will not normally be permitted. In exceptional circumstances, the prior provision of alternative open space or allotments, of at least equivalent standard in terms of quality, accessibility and size, may make the development of such facilities for community facilities acceptable. Open spaces are an

important part of our urban areas as they represent breathing spaces between developments. Open spaces have informal, formal recreation or general amenity value, but areas do not include car parks, under-used or vacant sites which are within the development envelope.

17.11 The criteria for identifying open space is as follows: Land or water within defined settlement boundaries having informal or formal recreation value or general amenity value, whether public or private (but excluding gardens of residential properties). In order to reduce pressure for their development, it is essential that this plan makes adequate provision for development needs.

17.12 Many parks, gardens, playing fields

#### Development Within Parks and Gardens

**L5** *Planning applications for a limited amount of leisure and recreational development within existing parks, recreation grounds, sports grounds and gardens will be permitted provided that:*

- a** *the use is complementary to the open space;*
- b** *the development is appropriate to the scale and character of the open space;*
- c** *there is no overriding environmental objection;*
- d** *appropriate landscaping is proposed;*
- e** *it cannot be accommodated by the re-use or refurbishment of existing buildings.*

and sports grounds have only a limited range of facilities for their users. Changing rooms, pavilions and associated indoor facilities can be appropriate to the nature and activity of recreational uses within open spaces, and provided they are sensitive to the

surrounding environment, could be approved. Where such development is considered appropriate, full consultation with potential users will be undertaken.

17.13 There is a need to retain school

## Loss of School Playing Fields

*L6 Planning applications which would result in the loss of school playing fields will only be approved where:*

- a the proposed use is associated with the educational function of the school;*
- b equivalent or better replacement open space, with good, safe access from the school is provided, prior to development taking place.*

playing fields which are important in their own right and can also have a dual community use. However, expansion of school and educational or community uses, crèches, etc shall be considered where the need arises and provided overall loss of such space does not occur. The Council does not wish to encourage sports facilities (including indoor

sports halls), on school playing fields where the educational establishment does not benefit from the additional provision. Consideration needs to be given to any lost space being re-provided prior to the development taking place.

17.14 The previous Structure Plan identified

## Golf Course Development

*L7 Planning applications for golf courses and appropriate associated development will only be approved where:*

- a the development does not have a detrimental impact and consequently protects any designated wildlife habitat;*
- b existing landscape features are maintained;*
- c there is no loss of high quality agricultural land;*
- d within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the landscape is protected and enhanced.*

the need for an international standard golf course. As a result a number of approvals have been granted, but to date no development of this standard has been completed. Golf courses on their own are not currently considered to be self-financing on the Island and therefore any scheme may need associated development to ensure its viability. This should be directly related to the golf course, and could include a hotel. The Southern Region Sports Council has identified the main facility needed as a pay-as-you-play 18 hole course. This is given the number of members only facilities currently available, and the lack of a municipal venue.

Although gold course development will impact on the environment this can be minimised by the use of the existing topographical landscape features. Practice has shown that good management and layout can also create habitats for both flora and fauna, where none existed, thereby leading to environmental benefits

17.15 The plan no longer shows an allocation for golf course development at Scotland Farm, Godshill (known as Tresselwood) as the proposed scheme has been shelved and the land sold.

## Jetties, Pontoons and Slipways

*L8 Planning applications for jetties, pontoons, slipways, and similar proposals will be approved within defined settlements and other areas of development on the coast, provided there is no unacceptable impact on:*

- a other water users;*
- b the ecological, geological and archaeological value of the site;*
- c views and access;*
- d the possible effects on adjacent and/or adjoining land;*
- e the hydrology of the river flow.*

17.16 Bating in all its forms is an extremely important recreational activity on the Island. The Solent and adjoining waters are internationally important for recreational and sporting sailing and boating and commercial shipping with many competing interests in congested waters along the extensive shoreline. The Isle of Wight Council is a member of the Solent Forum, comprised of authorities and agencies involved in the planning and management of the Solent area. The Solent Forum has produced strategic guidance for the Solent to provide co-ordinated advice on issues relating to the

economic, recreational and environmental assets of the wider area. Water access in certain areas is limited and it would be desirable to improve access where it is inadequate. It has been recognised that there is a need for both pontoons and jetties, but they will only be considered appropriate where they can comply with the above criteria. The criteria will also be used when considering the possibility of developing moorings and piles. In general, new facilities will not be encouraged in areas of the undeveloped coast.

### Noisy Sports

**L9 Planning applications for the use of land for noisy sports may be permitted where:**

- a they do not adversely impact on sensitive areas, including the coast and inland waterways;**
- b they have a main road location and adequate access;**
- c they do not adversely affect nearby residents.**

**Existing mineral workings should be considered as a first option where the proposal will not prejudice the long-term extraction of material. In some cases, a temporary or time limited consent may be considered appropriate.**

17.17 At present there are only a few sites on the Island which have planning permission for the operation of noisy sports. Under planning legislation, noisy activities can operate for 14 days a year without needing planning permission. Many organ-ised events take place on a variety of sites, some of which cause neighbour problems.

activities to take place in potentially sensitive areas under the 14-day rule. This could potentially create more problems if allowed to continue in an uncontrolled way and the identification of acceptable sites may lead to the alleviation of noise and environmental disruption. Due to the topography, location, extraction and appearance of mineral workings, such locations may prove more suitable to noisy sports as they are likely to do little additional harm to the landscape and reduce noise nuisance by their location and features. Mineral workings tend to provide a natural amphitheatre which enable sites to be appropriate for various noisy sporting activities. These activities will then be more contained in terms of noise or environmental damage.

17.18 If a suitable site could be found, conditions could be imposed to regulate the use. There is a need to find acceptable sites for noisy sports such as speedway, moto-cross, shooting and waterborne activities which would then allow more stringent policies to be applied in other countryside areas. If a site is not identified it is likely that the Island will continue to accept such

### Open Space in Housing Developments

**L10 Housing developments will be permitted if they contribute towards the provision of:**

- a open space in the area to the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) standards;**
- b general amenity space as part of the scheme.**

17.19 The NPFA recommends a minimum standard for outdoor play space of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population. Included within this figure is a specific allocation of 1.2 hectares for pitch sports. Depending on the population

profile of the locality concerned, the total standard should be met by an aggregation of space within the following ranges:

- a outdoor sport (1.6 to 1.8 ha);

b children s play space (0.6 to 0.8 ha).

17.20 Such provision will be the subject of negotiation, having regard to the size and characteristics of the site, the type of housing proposed and the availability of existing open space provision.

17.21 Developers will also have to consider, in addition to this, the provision of informal and/or amenity open space as part of the scheme which contributes to the local environment and provides for an improved quality of development.

17.22 In the past open play space provision, particularly on large estates, has created problems due to poor management, lack of funding for on-going maintenance and poor location in the overall design resulting in crime, nuisance and neglect. This has often resulted in pressure for the spaces to be developed leading in some cases to the loss of the open space. This means people have

had to travel further for their recreational needs, often across busy highways.

17.23 In order to ensure proper provision the Council will negotiate with developers to provide sufficient open space and financial contributions towards the ongoing maintenance of that space for a specified period. In small schemes, the Council may be prepared, where there is already considered to be adequate levels of space accessible locally, to consider contribution towards improved facilities on an existing play area.

17.24 In the case of general amenity areas within schemes, design and planting can effectively reduce maintenance to negligible levels and in some cases could lead to the introduction of small local nature reserves.

