

# Chapter 11

## RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The South Somerset Local Plan (SSLP) was adopted on 27 April 2006 and “saved” until 26 April 2009 pending the preparation of replacement Local Development Framework (LDF) documents.

The Government Office for the South West have agreed to extend most Policies and Proposals beyond the 3 year saved period”.

**Policies** that have not been extended are struck through in the text. For ease of reference these are:

Chapter 6: Utilities	Policy EU1	Renewable Energy
	Policy EU2	Wind Turbines
	Policy EU5	Flooding
Chapter 10: Housing	Policy HG5	Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside
	Policy HG13	Sites for Travelling Show People
	Policy HG14	Sites for Travelling Show People

A number of **Proposals** have also not been extended as they have already been implemented or have Planning Permission and are under construction. These are:

Chapter 12: Area East	Proposal ME/CACA/3(ii)	Torbay Road, Castle Cary
Chapter 13: Area North	Proposal HG/SOME/4	The Mill House, Sutton Road, Somerton
	Proposal HG/SOPE/2	Land at Lightgate Lane, South Petherton
	Proposal TP/SOME/5	Widening of Cartway Lane, Somerton
	Proposal TP/SOME/6	Pedestrian Priority in West Street, Somerton
Chapter 14: Area South	Proposal CR/FIVE/1	Land at existing playing field, Fivehead
	Proposal HG/YEOV/2	Former Factory site, west of Larkhill Road, Yeovil
	Proposal HG/YEOV/3	Former Jewsons Yard, Newton Road, Yeovil
	Proposal ME/YEOV/6	Land east of Buckland Road, Pen Mill, Yeovil
Chapter 15: Area West	Proposal CR/BRYM/3	Land at Abbey Farm, Yeovil
	Proposal HG/CHAR/2	Land off Lower Touches, Chard
	Proposal HG/ILMI/1	Land north of Summervale Medical Centre, Wharf Lane, Ilminster
	Proposal MU/ILMI/2	Land off Shudrick Lane, Ilminster



## CHAPTER 11: RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### RECREATION

#### INTRODUCTION

- 11.1 Increasing leisure time is a feature of modern life and this section of the plan aims both to protect existing recreation areas and to enable the provision of further recreation facilities for both formal and informal recreation. Formal recreation facilities, both indoor and outdoor, are those which have fixtures and fittings e.g. sports halls, tennis courts, pitches, and where organised activities tend to take place. On the other hand, informal recreation such as walking or fishing usually takes place on land where public access is provided but there is no provision of facilities except perhaps car parking or picnic areas. Assuming that trends noted by bodies such as Sport England continue, there will be increased demands for, and on, all types of recreation facilities. The provision of play space, both equipped and informal 'kick about' areas, in new developments is also addressed in this section of the plan.
- 11.2 During the preparation period of this plan, surveys have been carried out to identify the level of provision of different recreational facilities across the District and a shortfall in provision has been identified in several parts of the district. A Leisure Strategy has also been prepared to review existing policy and practice and to develop new approaches to the provision of facilities.
- 11.3 Specific proposals to provide new facilities are included in the plan only where there is firm local commitment to achieving new facilities. The Local Plan will only put forward proposals which are realistically achievable.

#### LOCAL PLAN OBJECTIVES

- 11.4 The Local Plan has the following objectives in respect of recreation:
1. To enable the provision of new recreation facilities and opportunities across the District through the inclusion of enabling policies which:

- a) Support the provision of such facilities, and
  - b) Set standards for the provision of both formal and informal recreation/open space for new developments of substantial scale.
2. To protect existing recreation facilities, both formal and informal.
  3. To improve on existing opportunities for access to the countryside, including the selective development of footpaths, bridleways and the creation of recreation routes.
  4. To promote and enable access to facilities and the countryside for people with disabilities.
  5. To enable the development of varied recreation uses in the countryside in a manner sensitive to the needs of the environment and other users.

#### POLICIES

##### Existing Playing Fields/Recreation Areas

- 11.5 Existing outdoor playing space, recreation fields and recreation areas are an important community resource which the Local Plan seeks to safeguard in accordance with PPG17 (Sport and Recreation).

##### Policy CR1

**Development which would result in the loss of playing fields will only be permitted where:**

1. Sports and recreation facilities can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site;
2. Alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available;
3. There is an excess of sports pitch provision and public open space in the area, taking account of the recreation and amenity value of such provision.

11.6 In accordance with legislation, the District Council will consult Sport England as statutory consultees on any application which:

- a) Is likely to prejudice the use, or lead to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field,
- b) Is on land which has been:
  - i) Used as a playing field in any time in the five years before the application and which remains undeveloped,
  - ii) Allocated for use in as a playing field in a development plan or in proposals for such a plan or its alteration or replacement,
  - iii) Involves the replacement of the surface of a grass playing pitch with a synthetic turf pitch.

11.7 For the purposes of consultation, a playing field is defined as the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch which in turn is defined as 0.4 hectares (the recommended size of a junior playing pitch).

11.8 As explained in the chapter on the Historic and Built Environment, recreation areas can also serve an important visual role in towns and villages and many recreation areas are also designated as "No Development Areas". As such they receive additional protection from development under Policy EH10, paragraph 4.31.

11.9 Churchyards can also perform this dual function and provide valuable areas for quiet recreation. The District Council encourages the wildlife sensitive management of churchyards and cemeteries and advice is available from the Council's Conservation Unit.

Provision of Outdoor Playing Space and Amenity Space in New Development

11.10 The District Council's Leisure Strategy has identified the need for adopted standards regarding provision of playspace. It recommends the provision of outdoor playing

space comprising 2.4 hectares (approximately 6 acres) to 2.8 (approximately 7 acres) per 1,000 population. This figure is based on local population characteristics applied to national participation rates. The requirement is made up of children's equipped play space and informal play space and formal sports pitches. Due to the popularity of "wheeled sports" a demand has arisen for the provision of facilities for skate boarding, roller blading, BMX riding etc. A need has also been identified for casual meeting places for young people. With careful siting and consultation these facilities can be considered as part of the recreation provision for new developments as recognised in the National Playing Field Association literature.

11.11 New housing developments should make provision for sufficient outdoor playing space for future residents and the above standard will be applied having taken into account existing provision in the area. In each case the calculation of outdoor playing space provision should be firmly based on population and will need to take account of the particular make-up of the individual housing proposal, including the size and type of dwelling, and up-to-date trends in household size. With regard household size, South Somerset's average has been getting smaller, reflecting a national trend. In 1991 the figure was 2.48, which by 2001 had reduced to 2.32, and is projected to fall to 2.25 by 2011. Translating these figures into dwellings per 1,000 population, the respective numbers would be 403, 431 and 444. Use of average household size can therefore only be as a general guide and provision of playing space should be based on population.

11.12 However, it is recognised that not all developments will generate the same need for outdoor playing space and this will be taken into account. Rest homes, nursing homes, sheltered accommodation, special needs housing and single bedroom units will not be expected to provide children's play areas but will be expected to provide open space appropriate to the nature and location of the development.

**Policy CR2**

Where new housing development generates a need for additional formal and informal recreation facilities, provision will be made pro rata in accordance with the following standard per 1,000 population:

1. Youth and adult use: 1.8 - 2.0 hectares (4.5 - 5.0 acres) of which 1.4 hectares (3.5 acres) should be playing pitch provision.
2. Young people and children's use: 0.6 - 0.8 hectares (1.5 - 2 acres) comprising:
  - a) Outdoor equipped playgrounds: 0.2 - 0.3 hectares (0.5 - 0.75 acres)
  - b) Casual or informal play space: 0.4 - 0.5 hectares (1.0 - 1.5 acres)

Sheltered housing schemes, rest homes, special needs housing and developments of one bedroom dwellings will be exempt from this standard but will be expected to provide informal open space.

Provision should be made for future maintenance to ensure its continued availability as outdoor playing space.

- 11.13 The quality and location of open space is of equal importance to the quantity provided. It is therefore necessary to ensure that all space which counts towards this minimum standard is suitably located and fit for the purpose. Further advice is available from the District Council. The Greenspace Module of the Council's Leisure Strategy contains advice on the nature and location of children's play areas in particular.

Off site provision

- 11.14 Although most new housing developments are likely to generate future recreational needs, there may be occasions where it is difficult or undesirable to provide playing space facilities on site. This may be because of the topography of the site or because the site is simply too small to provide a worthwhile or usable area. There may also be other opportunities or proposals in the locality which

could better meet the recreation requirement of the development. In these circumstances all or part of the provision will be off site, either on land in the developer's ownership or through a commuted sum for the provision of land and/or facilities. The District Council will normally expect the Town or Parish Council to be involved in discussions as they will usually take over long term responsibility for any areas that may be provided.

**Policy CR3**

There may be circumstances when, because of the size or particular circumstances of a site, it is considered inappropriate to make on-site provision for outdoor playing space facilities. In such cases such provision should be made off site and should:

1. Be fairly and reasonably related in scale to the needs generated by the development;
2. Be appropriately located to serve the new development; and
3. Have provision made for future maintenance to ensure its continued availability as outdoor playing space.

Any planning consent granted in these circumstances will be subject to conditions securing the off-site provision. Alternatively the council will seek a Section 106 Agreement with the developer securing the off-site provision or a commuted payment made to the district council to allow off-site provision.

- 11.15 Where off site works or contributions towards recreation provision are required, the applicant will need to satisfy the District Council that arrangements can be made to secure provision. This will usually be implemented through a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 between the Council and the developer. The extent of the contribution required will depend on the amount and type of outdoor playing space to be provided and the costs of purchasing, laying out and/or equipping the land. Amenity open space in accordance with Policy CR4 below will continue to be

necessary for satisfactory site development in all cases.

- 11.16 Maintenance of on-site or off-site play or recreation areas and amenity open space will be taken over from the developer by either the District, Town or Parish Council and to this end a sum may be sought from the developer to cover maintenance costs for a period of ten years. Detailed guidance on these maintenance sums can be obtained from the District Council's Community & Leisure managers.
- 11.17 It has been noticed that when either on-site or off-site recreation space is provided, less vandalism takes place when the play areas and recreation facilities are provided at an early stage of the development. This also applies to the provision of amenity open space. Therefore developers will be encouraged to make early provision of such amenities.

#### Provision of Amenity Open Space

- 11.18 The play areas covered by the standard in Policy CR2 are not the only open space which should be provided in new developments. Communities also benefit from landscaped amenity areas which enhance the visual aspect of the environment and from conservation areas such as nature reserves and "pocket parks" which add to the diversity of wildlife habitats in the District. The scale, nature and location of amenity open space will be subject to the characteristics of the site in question, the proposed layout and any existing landscape or wildlife features of importance.

#### **Policy CR4**

**In new developments, land of conservation, wildlife, historical or amenity value should be safeguarded and provided as amenity open space which contributes to the character of the development and also the diversity of wildlife habitats within the district.**

**The scale, nature and location of such open space will be subject to site characteristics, proposed site layout and the nature of existing features.**

#### Community Woodland

- 11.19 Since 1992 the Forestry Commission has offered a Community Woodland Supplement in addition to the basic English Woodland Grant Scheme. The purpose of this supplement is to encourage the creation of new woodland close to towns and cities which will be of value for informal recreation. A community woodland can be defined as a woodland where public access and recreation are actively encouraged and facilitated. It can actually be existing woodland or newly created woodland.
- 11.20 Whilst the public have unrestricted access it is expected that a woodland manager would have to use management techniques to ensure that pressures of access do not damage the woodland ecology or impinge on general public enjoyment of the woodland. The District Council has produced a "Community Woodland Strategy for South Somerset" and this document and further information are available from the Council's Conservation Unit. The Council's commitment to the provision of Community Woodland is expressed in the following *Statement of Intent*.

- ***The District Council will support initiatives to establish Community Woodlands.***

#### Golf Development

- 11.21 Recent years have seen a significant increase in interest and participation in golf. Modern golf courses require large sites of about 50 hectares (125 acres) and development and change on this scale inevitably has a pronounced local impact. Such developments may also affect sites of nature conservation, archaeological importance and areas of high quality agricultural land. When considering proposals for golf development, the District Council will take account of the overall impact including related facilities such as car parking and club houses. Wherever possible, existing buildings should be reused or converted. Particular attention will be paid to proposals in areas subject to special protection in the Plan i.e. national and local sites of historical,

landscape, archaeological or ecological interest. A water management plan will be sought for golf developments to ensure there is no adverse impact on the water environment either from the demand for water or the run off from the proposal. Where it is considered that the proposal would have significant effects on the environment, an Environmental Assessment will be required.

- 11.22 Golf developments inevitably lead to increased traffic in the location and will therefore require associated car parking and possibly signing, lighting and road improvements. Proposals should include details of all such parking and highway requirements so that a full assessment can be made of the potential impact on local roads and nearby settlements. In remote rural locations, the scale of change and increased activity may be considered unacceptable.
- 11.23 Golf driving ranges are not considered an essential part of a golf course. Simple driving ranges or practice areas in conjunction with golf course proposals will be considered on their merits. However, commercial driving ranges involving lighting, fencing, covered tees and additional buildings are likely to be too intrusive in the countryside and will not normally be permitted in rural areas. Edge of town situations will be preferred to minimise visual intrusion and the need to travel.

#### Policy CR5

Proposals for golf development will be permitted provided that:

1. Opportunities to provide new habitat landscape design, water features and additional woodland cover using indigenous trees and shrubs are maximised;
2. They do not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of nearby residents from noise, lighting, loss of privacy or danger from flying golf balls;
3. The necessary infrastructure, including car parking can be provided; and
4. Proposals can be shown to have no adverse impact on the water

environment or include environmentally acceptable safeguards which would protect the water environment.

- 11.24 It is important that golf courses are designed and landscaped to the highest specifications. Golf course development can provide opportunities for the creation of new habitats through the use of water features and hedgerow, copse and general tree planting using indigenous tree and shrub species. Proposals will need to incorporate sufficiently detailed information, including management plans where appropriate, to demonstrate that the proposal does not conflict with the Council's primary aim of protecting the environment. Details should include detailed landscape, ecological and archaeological assessments, and mitigation measures or design solutions to address any issues arising from the assessments. Details of ground levels and surface water drainage should also be included. Preference will be given to proposals which provide new features of landscape or conservation in addition to any which are in existence on the site, and which are accompanied by a management plan.

#### Horses and Development

- 11.25 Horse riding and the keeping of horses is a traditional and popular pastime in Somerset and when small in scale is not incompatible with the aim of enhancing and protecting the countryside. However there has been a steady increase in the number of non-agricultural commercial horse related activities and whilst the use of land for horse keeping can bring some employment and economic benefit, it must be ensured that such development does not have an adverse effect on the countryside.
- 11.26 The grazing of horses kept for recreational purposes generally lies outside planning control, but beyond the curtilage of a dwelling, associated development such as stables, tack rooms or menages are subject to planning control.
- 11.27 Stables erected in the curtilage of a private dwelling for horses "kept as pet animals for the domestic needs or personal enjoyment of the

occupants of the dwellinghouse " enjoy permitted development rights under Part 1 of the GPDO. Small scale development to provide stabling outside domestic curtilages for horses or ponies kept as pets can also be acceptable provided that the site is closely related to an existing settlement or, preferably, makes use of existing buildings.

#### Policy CR6

Proposals for the erection of stables for horses kept for private recreational use will be permitted provided that they are closely related to existing settlements or groups of buildings or reuse existing buildings. However field shelters will be preferred in sensitive locations.

- 11.28 Whilst stabling may be acceptable in situations well related to existing settlements, field shelters will be a preferable option in sensitive locations away from built-up areas. Field shelters are simple three sided timber structures with earth floors which can be completely removed from the site and provide an environmentally acceptable alternative to stabling. Although not providing enough shelter for many horses, they can meet the shelter requirements for native breed ponies. Planning permission is required for field shelters.

#### Commercial Development Involving Horses

- 11.29 Applications for stabling and associated development for commercial undertakings e.g. studs, livery stables, racing or eventing establishments or riding schools, obviously tend to be of greater scale and as such pose more serious problems of ecological and visual impact on the countryside. Wherever possible existing buildings in the countryside should be reused and the development of unsuitable, large scale buildings in the countryside will be generally resisted. The use of narrow, country lanes by larger vehicles used for horse transportation and deliveries and by horses being exercised can be a source of conflict between road users.

#### Policy CR7

Proposals for development involving the keeping of horses for commercial purposes

including provision of stabling, tack and feed rooms, menages or jumps will only be permitted provided that:

1. The proposal utilises existing buildings as far as possible or is closely related to an existing group of buildings,
2. The proposal would not be unacceptably harmful to highway safety.

- 11.30 When considering planning applications, attention should also be paid to the recommended standards for the safety and comfort of horses as well as other material considerations.

#### New Recreational Uses in the Countryside

- 11.31 New forms of recreation in the countryside have become increasingly popular due to a combination of the increased leisure time enjoyed by the general population and farmers and other landowners seeking alternative means of creating income. A number of these activities, such as motor cycling, quad bikes, war games/paintball and gun sports, can cause nuisance through noise, dust, increased traffic on narrow country roads and have an adverse impact on the landscape and wildlife. Therefore proposals for these types of activities in the countryside will be strictly controlled.

#### Policy CR8

Where the effects of a development proposal for new recreation development in the countryside are unclear, temporary planning permission may be granted for an appropriate period to allow assessment of the impact and may be subject to conditions restricting the scale and hours of operation.

- 11.32 The granting of temporary planning permission for an appropriate period will enable the Council to review the operation and effects of the activity before considering the granting of a permanent permission. During this period, the scale and hours of activity may be controlled through the application of planning conditions.

Public Rights of Way and Recreation Routes

11.33 Public rights of way i.e. footpaths, bridleways, by-ways, are an important recreation resource and provide links within and between communities. The District has an extensive range of public rights of way totalling some 1,100 miles. However, not all rights of way are well used and the District Council will seek to promote use of the network. Wherever possible, improvements to the network will be sought provided that proposals do not conflict with other particular interests such as wildlife sites or the amenity of nearby residents. Before proposing new rights of way, the District Council will consult with other interested parties with the intention of achieving an agreed scheme. The Council's commitment to the protection and improvement of the Rights of Way Network is expressed in the following *Statement of Intent*.

- *The District Council will continue to encourage the improvement and increased use of the public rights of way network and will seek to increase access to the countryside through the provision of new rights of way and upgrading the status of existing routes.*

11.34 The District Council has published a number of circular footpath routes and has promoted the Leland, Liberty and Parrett Trails as regional trails. The Council will continue to develop and promote walking, horse riding and cycling routes in conjunction with the appropriate interested parties such as landowners, the County Council and the Countryside Agency. The Council is also a participant in the Parish Paths Partnership scheme.

11.35 Where development proposals affect footpaths and other rights of way, care will be taken that no paths are lost from the network and that any possible improvements to the network which can be gained from the development will be sought. Therefore development proposals which involve the closure or diversion of a right of way will not be permitted unless an alternative route is provided which is

equally convenient for users. This is a statutory obligation and any application to close or divert a right of way will be considered on its merits under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The District Council has a duty to consider such matters and consult with statutory consultees.

**Policy CR9**

**Development proposals which involve the closure or diversion of an existing public right of way will not be permitted unless an alternative public right of way will be made available which will be equally convenient to users.**

11.36 Disused railway lines can play an important part in the provision of recreational routes and the creation of rural links. This is recognised in PPG17, which encourages local authorities to make use of any opportunities in their districts. Such opportunities exist in the plan area along the lines of the former Somerset & Dorset and Taunton to Chard railways, the latter of which forms part of the proposed Coast to Coast Cycle Route. However, in many cases the land is in multiple ownerships and some land will already have been built on or backfilled. The intention is, therefore, to create the routes with links which, where possible, will accommodate walkers, cyclists and horse riders. These links would by-pass sections of the former railway where problems of implementation exist. The following policy seeks to protect the land in question and thereby facilitate provision of the routes.

**Policy CR10**

**Proposals for development which prejudice the potential to provide recreation routes on disused railway lines will not be permitted.**

Inland Waterways

11.37 The Rivers Parrett and Yeo and the Westport Canal were once important for navigation and are still used occasionally by small craft. The remains of structures formerly associated with navigation on these waterways and the River Isle can still be found and are of historic and industrial archaeological interest.

- 11.38 The Somerset Waterways Project concluded in 1993 that the ambitious scheme then being examined for a comprehensive network of navigable waterways in Somerset was feasible in engineering terms but not feasible economically or environmentally.
- 11.39 The authorities (including South Somerset District Council) which formed the Somerset Waterways Consortium were recommended to explore the feasibility of smaller scale boating projects and other recreational activities. However, such projects and/or activities can be harmful to the ecology of rivers and other waterways and their banks. Proposals for these projects and/or activities should be accompanied by sufficient evidence to demonstrate that no unacceptable harm would be caused to the ecology of the watercourse and its banks.
- 11.40 No further work has since been done on the feasibility of additional boating activity, although the District Council is endeavouring to provide a landing stage at Langport. It is important, though, not to prejudice future opportunities to enable boating.

#### Policy CR11

Proposals for development will be permitted provided that the restoration of navigation on the rivers Isle, Parrett and Yeo and on the Westport canal is not prejudiced.

#### Percent for Art

- 11.41 The District Council supports the voluntary Percent for Art scheme as a means of achieving environmental improvement and introducing the potential to provide art and design initiatives as part of new developments and redevelopment schemes. A code of practice for promoting Percent for Art has been adopted. The scheme involves identifying a proportion, normally one per cent, of the capital budget of a development proposal for the provision of craft and/or art works in association with the development. Early commitment to this scheme can reduce the additional cost to developers as the “percent for art” can be used creatively in the initial concepts for the development; for

example through landscaping, elevation treatment or interior design. Although there is no compulsion for developers to participate in the scheme incorporating Percent for Art can create more attractive buildings and environments with greater interest, individuality and prestige. The following **Statement of Intent** underlines the Council's commitment to the Percent for Art Scheme.

- *The District Council has adopted a code of practice for Percent for Art and will encourage developers to participate in the scheme at the earliest possible stage in formulating development proposals.*

#### Allotments

- 11.42 Allotments are recognised as an important recreation resource and also play a modest role in local food production as encouraged by Local Agenda 21. However the demand for allotments is variable, with high demand and waiting lists for some areas and very little in others which suffer from problems of vandalism. Whilst the loss of allotment sites will be generally resisted, it is recognised that development proposals may sometimes offer the opportunity to provide better equipped sites in more suitable locations, and this should be borne in mind when considering any proposals. However, to protect this resource and encourage this form of recreation, the loss of allotments through development will be resisted unless alternative sites of equal or improved land quality and convenience are made available.

#### Policy CR12

Development on allotment sites will not be permitted unless alternative sites of equal or improved land quality and convenience to existing users are made available prior to the commencement of the permitted development.

#### Dual Use of Facilities

- 11.43 The dual use of education facilities has been expanded through the growth in Community Schools where the school has priority use of facilities but the community has access to the facilities at agreed times. The District Council

recognises the important contribution that this makes to recreation facilities across the District through the efficient use of resources, and will consider grant aiding of suitable schemes.

- 11.44 The dual use of education premises applies not only to sport and recreation use but also to community use of school halls and classrooms. Examples of such uses include meetings held by groups from the local voluntary sector and vocational and non-vocational classes for the general public. Even purpose built nursery premises can now be found on some Community School sites. Practices such as these enrich the place of a school in the local community and the daily life and atmosphere of the school.
- 11.45 Private sports and recreation facilities, provided by commercial activities and voluntary clubs, can also provide opportunities for dual use and increase public access to such facilities. The Council's support is expressed in the following *Statement of Intent*.
- *The District Council supports the dual use of all community, sports and recreation facilities and will encourage the public use of private facilities where possible.*

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### INTRODUCTION

- 11.46 This chapter also deals with the provision of, and support for, community facilities. A wide range of community facilities is provided across the district by a variety of public, private and voluntary organisations. Because of the difficulty and expense of providing community services and facilities in rural areas, the towns tend to have better provision than the villages. This is recognised in the Structure Plan and the policies and proposals elsewhere in this Local Plan are intended to ensure that development which would exacerbate existing deficiencies is not allowed, whilst encouraging and enabling the provision of appropriate community facilities in both rural and urban locations. The District Council also recognises that working in

partnership with the voluntary sector is a vital part of achieving community services and facilities in both the towns and villages. Where specific needs have been identified, the Local Plan allocates, and therefore protects, land to meet this need.

### LOCAL PLAN OBJECTIVES

- 11.47 The Local Plan has the following objectives in respect of community facilities:
- To protect and enhance existing community facilities.
  - To seek the provision of appropriate community facilities in all new developments of a substantial scale.
  - To protect land for which a community need has been identified by the Education Authority, Health Authority, other public bodies or local communities.
  - To support development proposals for community facilities and to encourage and recognise the existence of special community need.
  - To encourage the development of community facilities in locations which reduce dependence on the private car and enable the use of public transport, walking or cycling.

#### Education - New Schools

- 11.48 The plan identifies land for the provision of new schools in relation to the major housing development sites identified for the plan period. Details of these proposals can be found under the following Proposals:
- Wincanton (see Proposal KS/WINC/1)
  - Thorne Lane, Yeovil (Proposal KS/YEWI/2)
  - Lufton, Yeovil (Proposal KS/BRYM/1)
  - Lyde Road, Yeovil (Proposal KS/YEWI/1)
  - Chard (Proposal KS/CHAR/1)
  - CLR, Crewkerne (Proposal KS/CREW/1).

#### Land for Education/Community Use

- 11.49 In consultation with Somerset County Council's Environment and Property Services department, land has been identified for

community and/or education use in several locations. Details of these proposals can be found in the respective Area chapters.

#### Community Centres and Village Halls

- 11.50 These facilities meet an important need by providing a focus for social activities taking place in the local community. Many villages now have new or refurbished village halls which has been achieved through a combination of local initiative and grant support from various public bodies. The local plan supports the provision, and improvement, of village halls and wherever possible will encourage the development of existing or new facilities. It is also desirable that where substantial new development is taking place, community centres are provided to enable local groups to form and meet at a location within walking distance. Proposals for new community centres can be found under the proposals for the key sites at Chard, and Thorne Lane and Lufton in Yeovil.

#### Health

- 11.51 Planning applications for the development of health centres and doctors' surgeries can be adequately considered under the general development policies in the Plan and therefore there are no specific policies to deal with such proposals.

#### Religious Meeting Places

- 11.52 Churches and other places of worship play an important part in the life of communities and often provide valuable ancillary community space in which a variety of activities can take place, e.g. Youth Clubs, Play Schools and Senior Citizens groups. The policy background for the provision of new premises for religious meetings is adequately covered in this local plan by the policies guiding development. These can be combined with a recognition of special need if appropriate.
- 11.53 The retention of existing places of worship will be encouraged and supported by the District Council. As with all community facilities, the District Council are keen to see the development of new premises in locations which are well served by public transport and

encourage walking and cycling rather than use of the private car. However, difficulties can occur in finding sites for new churches or chapels in suitable locations which meet these requirements, due to land prices in town centres and meeting modern requirements for parking. In these circumstances the reuse of existing premises which have fallen into disuse can present a viable option and should be explored before embarking on seeking new sites.

#### Public Houses

- 11.54 The school, church, village shop and public house have traditionally been seen as the core of village communities. The closure of village schools and shops has led to public houses in villages becoming a major focus for community activities and events and taking on a more multi-functional role. Therefore the loss of public houses in small settlements has taken on more significance for communities than previously. Across the country public house premises are used for crèches, locations for evening classes and generally as extra meeting space for local groups. The chapter on Town Centres and Shopping also addresses the loss of shops and local services such as pubs (Policy MS1, paragraphs 8.46 – 8.48).

#### Local Centres

- 11.55 The provision of local centres in substantial new housing developments is desirable not only from the point of view of convenience for the residents and helping to assist with the establishment of a new community, but also in achieving one of the fundamental environmental objectives of the plan which is to reduce reliance on the private car and promote cycling and walking. Local centres can be composed of any combination of shops, pubs, a health centre and community centres as mentioned above. Provision of such centres is particularly important to the elderly, mobility impaired or those on low incomes. Proposals to include local centres are included in the key site proposals for Chard, and Thorne Lane in Yeovil. Support for the provision of local centres is expressed in the following *Statement of Intent*.

- *The District Council will encourage and support the provision of community facilities, particularly those easily accessible by the use of public transport, cycling and walking*

Other Public Services

- 11.56 At the time of preparing the plan, no other specific land use needs were identified by any of the other public services i.e. fire and ambulance services, library service, social services.

