

## INTRODUCTION

- 8.1 Nationally the demand for leisure and recreation facilities has been growing as a result of general increases in disposable income, mobility and “free time”. The availability of such facilities is increasingly seen as essential to the “quality of life”. Leisure centres, golf courses, rivers, lakes for water skiing, sailing and fishing and playing fields and play areas are all examples of the wide variety of facilities and resources in West Oxfordshire. The high environmental quality of the District is also an important resource for leisure and recreational pursuits, especially informal ones like walking, riding or simply enjoying the countryside.
- 8.2 West Oxfordshire is a tourist attraction of regional significance, greatly benefiting the local economy. It is estimated that the annual tourism spend is worth over £100 million, and across the District tourism supports about 11% of the District’s workforce, either directly or indirectly. As agriculture continues to decline leisure and tourism becomes even more important to the rural economy.
- 8.3 It is not always possible to differentiate between those activities, facilities and resources which are available to the local community on a day-to-day basis and those which are available essentially for visitors or tourists. This is particularly the case with the area’s environmental resources. Many visitors come to West Oxfordshire to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the countryside, to walk its footpaths, drive through its lanes and to see its historic towns and villages. Most of the specific visitor attractions have an affinity with the area in terms of its rural character, historic associations or social background, and are of educational as well as recreational value, for example, Blenheim Palace, North Leigh Roman Villa, Minster Lovell Hall, the River Thames and its tributaries and the Cogges Farm Museum in Witney. The District Council has, therefore, adopted the same general planning approach to tourism, leisure and community facilities.
- 8.4 This chapter first sets out the overall objectives and policy approach to tourism, leisure and community facilities. Specific policies and

issues related to each of these topics are then addressed as follows:

### Tourism

- Tourist Accommodation

### Leisure

- Protection of existing leisure facilities
- New provision
- Countryside Recreation
- Water-based Recreation

### Community Services and Facilities

- Protection of existing community services and facilities
- Provision of new facilities

## OBJECTIVES AND POLICY APPROACH

### Objectives - Tourism

To maintain West Oxfordshire’s attraction to tourists through:

- promotion of its intrinsic qualities;
- protection and support of local culture, heritage and environmental quality;
- encouragement of facilities which complement and, where possible, enhance the existing character of the District.

### Objectives - Leisure and Community Facilities

To make available throughout West Oxfordshire a range and mix of leisure, recreation, arts, cultural and community facilities through:

- the retention and improvement of existing facilities;
- the securing of new or improved facilities;
- the protection and support of local culture, heritage and environmental quality.

# Tourism, Leisure & Community Facilities

## **POLICYTLCI -**

### **New Tourism, Leisure and Community Facilities**

Permission will be granted for:

- a) visitor-related proposals which respect and enhance the intrinsic qualities of the District;
- b) community facilities to meet local needs;
- c) the recreational and cultural use of land on a small-scale to meet local needs;
- d) new recreational and cultural buildings where they are essential to the existing use of the associated land and are appropriate in scale, design and siting.

Proposals for leisure, tourist and community developments will not be allowed where they would have an adverse impact on the character or environment of the countryside or on towns and villages within the District or would generate unacceptable levels of traffic on the local highway network.

- 8.5 There are common themes emerging from government advice and regional strategies (for example, "A Tourism Strategy for the Southern Region of England") which re-affirm the Council's approach to leisure, recreation, community facilities and tourism development. The emphasis on sustainable development (particularly the protection of an area's intrinsic qualities), encouraging the use of alternative forms of travel and strengthening the linkages between tourism, heritage and cultural assets, all accord with the Council's long-held approach of encouraging small-scale, low-key facilities which respect the area's qualities and minimise any impact on the environment.
- 8.6 In terms of tourism, since the early 1980's the overall aim in West Oxfordshire has been to strike a balance between maintaining the benefits of tourism while minimising the adverse local effects of tourist-related development. The main thrust of tourism policy has been to encourage development that concentrates on the appreciation and utilisation of the District's heritage and countryside, rather than the introduction of large scale visitor attractions

unrelated to the area.

- 8.7 Similarly, with recreation, the Council has wished to see the optimum use made of existing facilities and only encouraged the further provision of facilities when they are of a scale compatible with the conservation of the character and appearance and needs of the District.
- 8.8 In recognition of the importance of community services and facilities (such as schools, local shops, halls and public houses) to the quality of life of local residents and to the character and vitality of the District's settlements, the Council has endeavoured to retain existing services and facilities and, where possible, to facilitate new and improved provision, including maximising the potential of existing community buildings. For essential services and facilities the social and economic benefits of their retention and/or provision may be so great as to over-ride, for example, adverse environmental impacts. A balance will need to be struck.
- 8.9 Policy TLCI sets out the Council's permissive approach to low-key proposals which are usually small in scale. This approach is supported by other Council Strategies and the provision of grant-aid. Whilst generally encouraging tourism and further recreation provision within the District, the environmental quality of the District means that large scale proposals are unlikely to be acceptable (other than in the larger towns where there is no conflict with the Environment Policies) and that many of the settlements need special protection. The character of Woodstock, Burford, Bladon and Great Tew, for example, needs to be protected from the unfettered expansion of tourist orientated facilities.
- 8.10 It is recognised that tourism and leisure has the potential to be a major generator of traffic. In line with Structure Plan Policies G1 and E4 and Local Plan Policy T1, the Council will, therefore, particularly encourage proposals which are accessible by foot, cycle or public transport. Recreation, leisure and especially tourism, by their very nature, can involve a wide range of land uses and, therefore, the employment and shopping policies of this Plan may also be relevant when considering development proposals, as well as the environment policies.

The District Council's Tourism, Sport and Recreation, and Arts Strategies also provide valuable background information to the Council's approach to these issues.

## TOURISM

- 8.11 In 1999 the District Council published a five year Tourism Strategy, the overall aim of which is:

"To manage Tourism in a way that contributes to the conservation of the environment, recognises that the great attraction of the District lies in its natural and built environment, generates employment and supports the local economy."

The Strategy sets out a series of values, aims and objectives. This Strategy underpins planning policy approach to tourism in the Local Plan.

- 8.12 Tourism-related proposals will be considered against Policy TLCl and, in most cases, against the general policies in this plan, in particular the environment policies. The one tourism issue that requires specific planning policies is that of tourist accommodation.

### Tourist Accommodation

- 8.13 Since the early 1980's the District Council has been keen to see the provision of additional tourist accommodation in the form of bed and breakfast accommodation, hotel development and self-catering units, and additional caravan and camping sites. There has been a steady increase in the amount of tourist accommodation available in West Oxfordshire.
- 8.14 One of the aims of the Council's Tourism Strategy is to market the District so as to increase the value of tourism without increasing visitor pressures. A positive policy of encouraging overnight visitors has been adopted. In general, the Council continues to be keen to see additional and improved visitor accommodation, including the provision of tourist accommodation as part of farm diversification schemes. With care, such farm-based accommodation can have little negative impact on the landscape and, at the same time,

have the positive advantage of helping develop sustainable tourism activities – offering visitors close contact with local culture, products, heritage and environment and the ability to discover and enjoy the area more intimately.

### POLICY TLC2 - Use of Existing Buildings

Proposals for the change of use/conversion of existing buildings to visitor accommodation or the extension or upgrading of such accommodation will be permitted provided:

- a) there is adequate off-street parking or other public parking available and that any such works required to provide such parking will not have a detrimental effect on the amenities of the area;
- b) the scale of the proposals does not generate a level of activity which would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the area or the reasonable amenities of adjoining dwellings;
- c) the existing building should be capable of conversion to visitor accommodation without excessive alteration or rebuilding which would damage its character or setting; and,
- d) the character and setting of the existing building is not damaged.

Where the proposals are for the use of rural buildings such as barns and chapels, the building or group of buildings should make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, be of substantial construction and be capable of accommodating the proposed use without major reconstruction or significant enlargement.

In locations where residential accommodation would not normally be permitted the Council will impose planning conditions or seek legal agreements restricting the buildings to holiday use.

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- 8.15 The use of all or part of an existing building for tourist accommodation can provide a valuable source of accommodation, often with minimum impact upon the surrounding area.
- 8.16 Bed and breakfast accommodation forms an important part of the total provision of tourist accommodation in West Oxfordshire, providing in particular for inexpensive short-stay visits and for touring holidays.
- 8.17 The Council does not consider that planning permission is required for use of one or two rooms of a private dwelling for bed and breakfast purposes, provided that the number of habitable rooms used does not exceed 50% of the total. (Habitable rooms include sitting rooms, dining rooms, bedrooms and studies).
- (The issue of whether planning permission is required or not can be complicated. Anyone intending to provide bed and breakfast is recommended to contact the District Council's Planning Department for informal advice).
- 8.18 As the use of a dwelling for bed and breakfast accommodation will generally have a greater impact on an area than when used simply for residential purposes, consideration will be given to the effect on the amenities of local residents in cases where planning permission is required for such accommodation.
- 8.19 With farmers being encouraged to diversify their farm economy, farmhouse bed and breakfast is one way they can enter the tourism sector. The conversion of farm buildings for holiday accommodation is another way. The provision of holiday units, especially for self-catering, can often be a valuable alternative use for traditional agricultural buildings, contributing to the farmer's income and the rural economy in general and adding to the supply of this increasingly popular sector of domestic holidays.
- 8.20 This Plan allows the conversion of appropriate buildings to residential use provided they lie within existing built-up areas. Generally a building with consent for housing would also be appropriate for self-catering holiday accommodation (and in many cases can be used under present legislation without requiring further planning approval).
- 8.21 Outside built-up areas existing non-residential buildings are not normally allowed to be converted to housing but employment, recreational, community and tourist uses may be appropriate. In terms of tourist accommodation, such a use will often not need to be designed with the same requirements as permanent homes. Much of the paraphernalia of residential use, such as garages, fenced garden areas, sheds and greenhouses, are not necessarily needed and the internal layout can be simpler. The result can be a more sympathetic and architectural successful conversion. In some circumstances permitted development rights may be withdrawn in order to protect the rural character of the area and/or the setting of the building. Proposals for the conversion of historic buildings will be considered against both Policy BE10 and Policy TLC2.
- 8.22 The conversion of existing large houses, or similar buildings, to tourist accommodation, either serviced or self-catering, can also provide a valuable source of accommodation. Favourable consideration will be given to such conversions, both within settlements and in the open countryside, provided there are no highway, amenity or planning objections. Proposals to extend and upgrade existing tourist accommodation will also generally be supported. The Tourism Strategy for the Southern Region of England highlights the need to improve, in particular, the quality of accommodation.
- 8.23 There will be many situations where the use of a building for short-term holiday lets is appropriate under Policy TLC2 but would not be suitable for permanent residential use. The detailed internal or external arrangements could make them unsuitable or, particularly when the buildings lie outside existing towns or villages, their conversion to permanent residential use would create a development contrary to the objectives and housing policies of the Plan. In such cases, the Council will impose conditions, and where appropriate a planning obligation, to ensure that the accommodation remains in holiday use only.

## **POLICY TLC3 - New Build Tourist Accommodation**

The construction of new hotels or other visitor accommodation in the open countryside and in smaller settlements will only be permitted when they are proposed:

- a) in association with acceptable wider leisure and sporting facilities which either
  - i already exist, or
  - ii are being proposed on land that has been damaged or scarred by development, where the proposed leisure and sporting facilities will enhance and improve the visual qualities of the area; or
- b) as part of a farm diversification project, where the visitor accommodation will remain ancillary to the farm business, will be small in scale and will be integrated within a group of existing farm buildings which are also being converted.

- 8.24 Policy TLC3 applies to a wide range of new-build tourist accommodation, for example, hotels, motels, guest houses and self-catering cottages and cabins. Proposals will also be considered against other policies in the Plan, especially the Environment Policies. Careful attention will, for example, need to be given to the siting and design of the new buildings so as to integrate them with existing building groups and local landscape features.
- 8.25 In recognition of the important role of tourism to the local economy the Council has long been keen to see additional purpose-built holiday accommodation within the larger settlements of the District. In the early 1990s the Witney Lodge Hotel was completed off the A40 at the Ducklington Lane interchange and a Travel Lodge was built at Burford which have helped to cater for the growing demand for holiday and business accommodation in the Witney area and along the A40.
- 8.26 The establishment of suitable purpose-built visitor accommodation will, in general, continue to be encouraged in the medium and large settlements of the District. The

West Oxfordshire Tourism Strategy specifically identifies the need to investigate the potential for a large hotel/conference venue within the Witney area. Proposals for new-build tourist accommodation in larger settlements will be considered against Policy TLC1 and, in particular, the Built Environment Policies.

- 8.27 In recent years there has been an increase in proposals for new holiday accommodation in the open countryside, particularly associated with golf courses and other leisure facilities, such as public houses and restaurants. The overall strategy for development and the high environmental quality of the District means that, as a general principle, new purpose-built holiday accommodation will not normally be allowed in the open countryside and in smaller settlements (ie. not in those areas where new-build residential accommodation would normally be unacceptable under locational housing policies).
- 8.28 There are however two exceptions to this approach and Policy TLC3 applies to these. Firstly, outside the Oxford Green Belt, the construction of new tourist accommodation may be acceptable where it is proposed as part of, or ancillary to, wider leisure or sporting facilities. In order to avoid a proliferation of new buildings in the open countryside and the consequential erosion of the existing character, the acceptance of such schemes will be confined to areas where the leisure or sporting facilities already exist or where new facilities would enhance or improve land scarred by development, such as parts of the Lower Windrush Valley (see Policy TLC11 and the Environment Chapter) and a disused airfield.
- 8.29 The second exception, again outside the Green Belt, is where the new tourist accommodation is proposed as part of farm-based diversification. While a proliferation of tourist development in sensitive locations is not desirable, small-scale farm diversification proposals, which remain ancillary to the farm business, can represent a good opportunity to provide new holiday accommodation. In these cases, in order to control new development in the open countryside new build tourist accommodation will be limited to appropriate scale development within existing groups of

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farm buildings which are also being converted for holiday accommodation. In locations where residential accommodation would not normally be permitted, the Council will impose planning conditions or seek legal agreements restricting the buildings to holiday use.

## **POLICY TLC4 - Touring Holiday Caravan and Camping Sites**

Proposals for touring caravan and camping sites will be permitted provided:

- a) there are no overriding environmental or amenity objections. The proposed development should be well screened and should not have a substantial adverse effect on the locality in terms of noise and other disturbance;
- b) in the Lower Windrush Valley they take account of the comprehensive after-use proposals for the areas of gravel extraction as set out in the County Minerals and Waste Local Plan;
- c) existing buildings worthy of retention are utilised for the provision of associated facilities. Where new buildings are essential these must be designed to a high standard and be sensitively sited.

Additional sites for static holiday caravans are not generally considered appropriate in West Oxfordshire because of the landscape quality of the countryside and special character of the built environment. The extension or intensification of existing sites will only be permitted where the scheme would result in positive environmental improvements.

- 8.30 Touring caravans, however, tend to have less of an impact. Certified sites, for no more than five vans, are scattered throughout the District. These tend, by their size, to cause no visual or other environmental problem.
- 8.31 Larger sites for touring caravans and tents make some impact on the surrounding countryside. Special care should be taken, therefore, in the design, location and screening of new sites. In order to minimise the amount of new

development, any associated facilities should be accommodated in existing buildings which are worthy of retention (such buildings should normally be structurally sound and constructed of traditional materials). Where such buildings are not available essential new buildings must be designed to a high standard and be sensitively located.

- 8.32 Particular care needs to be taken when considering touring caravan and camping sites in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where the high environmental quality means the overriding priority is the protection of landscape character, and when the proposals are associated with water, especially the lakes and river valley of the River Thames and its tributaries. In these locations the landscape setting and ecology of the area can be very important. They are also often areas of tranquillity. Consideration will need to be given to the environmental impact of the proposal, particularly looking at the effect of noise and any change in landscape character. For the proposals in the Lower Windrush Valley see also Policy TLC11.

## **LEISURE**

- 8.33 In 1999 the District Council reviewed and amended both its Sport and Recreation Strategy and its Arts Strategy. Together these two documents set out the aims and objectives for participation in leisure and the provision of facilities in West Oxfordshire. The strategies have informed the policy approach to leisure in the Local Plan.
- 8.34 Many proposals for leisure facilities will only need to be considered against the general policy of Policy TLC1 (and possibly other policies in the Local Plan, for example the Environment Policies). There are some specific proposals which will also need to be considered against the following leisure policies. Overall, the general approach is one of protecting the existing leisure facilities within the District and encouraging new provision when appropriate.

## PROTECTION OF EXISTING LEISURE FACILITIES

### **POLICY TLC5 - Existing Outdoor Recreational Space**

Development proposals should not result in the loss of existing recreational open space (including school playing fields, allotments and amenity areas) unless:

- a) the development is for buildings and/or facilities ancillary to, or enhancing, the amenity or recreational value of the open space; or
- b) alternative provision of at least equivalent suitability and accessibility, particularly by foot, is made; or
- c) there is clear evidence that now, and in the future, the land will no longer be needed for its current purpose or for recreational uses by the wider community.

8.35 Existing recreational and amenity open space within or adjoining settlements is an important resource for the local community. By acting as space for formal and informal recreational activities it provides health benefits but it also performs a wider role acting as ‘green lungs’ in urban areas and adding generally to the local quality of life. The Government attaches great importance to the retention of such open space and stresses the need for people – particularly children and the elderly – to have access to open space close to where they live.

8.36 Policy BE4 sets out the Council’s general policy of protecting open space within or adjoining settlements. Policy TLC5 addresses the specific issue of the recreational value of such open space. For the purposes of both policies open space includes outdoor sports facilities (playing fields, sports grounds, tennis courts, etc.); children’s playing spaces; and other public open space and land with recreational value, for example allotments and village greens.

8.37 It is difficult to provide new open spaces within an existing built-up area, and yet demand is concentrated in such areas. It is for this

reason the Council will protect existing open space with recreational value. Policy TLC5 will apply to proposals for the development of non-recreation uses on both private and public playing fields, even if the land is surplus to the specific organisation’s requirements. For the avoidance of doubt, this equally applies to school playing fields. The Government advises in PPG17 that very careful consideration should be given to any planning application involving development on playing fields.

8.38 The Council’s policy does not rule out the development of ancillary buildings and facilities on existing recreational open space, such as changing rooms at the side of sports pitches. Such facilities will often improve the functioning of the open space. In some circumstances, development of buildings and facilities of more than an ancillary nature may allow a more intensive recreational use of the land. Careful consideration will need to be given to the contribution made by the existing open space to the character and appearance of the locality.

8.39 Exceptions to the policy of protecting existing open space may also be made if an alternative site of at least equivalent suitability and accessibility (in terms of size, quantity, usefulness and attractiveness) can be provided within or immediately adjoining the same settlement or neighbourhood (eg. within the same village, or in the same part of a larger settlement, within easy walking distance of the original site so that it is accessible to the same catchment population). In the case of replacement allotments, it is Government advice that they should not normally be more than three quarters of a mile from the centre of demand. Only where it can be proven that a facility is grossly underused now, and will not be needed for recreation in the future, might the Council be prepared to accept its loss without the compensation of a replacement facility elsewhere.

### **Built Sports Facilities**

8.40 While open space provision is fairly well distributed throughout the settlements of West Oxfordshire, purpose-built indoor sports facilities are more limited in supply and tend to

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be concentrated in just the three largest towns: Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton.

- 8.41 The Leisure Centres in Witney, Chipping Norton and Carterton, provide full public access to a range of indoor sports facilities. Elsewhere limited access is available to a variety of school sports halls, village halls, etc. With limited resources available it is essential to retain and develop existing facilities.
- 8.42 Wherever practicable, the District Council encourages the increased community use of existing sporting facilities which are owned by public organisations, eg. sports facilities in schools and on defence establishments. Dual-use agreements are in operation at Carterton and Witney. Making fuller use of existing resources contributes to sustainable development objectives by reducing the need for additional facilities and the potential loss of scarce resources such as open space. (Shared use sites, particularly schools, are normally also well located in terms of access on foot or by public transport to the local community making them potentially very sustainable locations).

## NEW PROVISION

### Large-scale leisure and entertainment facilities

- 8.43 Proposals for new large-scale commercial leisure and entertainment facilities, such as cinema, night-club, ten-pin bowling, etc., will be considered against Structure Plan Policy TC2 (see also the Local Plan Town Centres and Shopping Chapter). A sequential approach will, therefore, be adopted.
- 8.44 Historically, most commercial leisure facilities have been located in town centres but, as with retail development, there has been a trend towards out-of-town locations. In order to maintain and enhance the viability and vitality of town centres, the Council's preferred location for the development of new commercial leisure facilities is in town centres. Such locations generally have optimum accessibility on foot or by public transport for the largest number of potential customers. The presence of leisure facilities can be an important component of the mix of town centre uses. Proposals will,

however, also be considered against Policy TLC1. Large scale proposals, for example providing facilities to cater for an area far larger than the District, are unlikely to be acceptable in West Oxfordshire.

- 8.45 Following the sequential approach, if town centre locations are not available for new commercial leisure facilities, then the next preference is for edge-of-centre sites, district and local centres, and only then out-of-centre sites that are accessible by a choice of transport.

### Local leisure facilities

- 8.46 Traditionally, the Council has taken the view that in general both the identification of need and subsequent provision of new small-scale local leisure facilities is best left to Parish Councils with their particular knowledge of their own areas. In support of this approach, the District Council has long operated a system of grant aid to encourage Parishes to improve facilities (eg playground grants). The role of the District Council as enabler, through for example the provision of grant aid to Parish Councils and other bodies, continues to be an important element in the creation of new facilities. Between 1996 and 1999, for example 30 new community leisure facilities benefited from input from the national lotteries board and grant aid from the District Council. Specific objectives, policies and priorities of grant aid is now provided within the context of the Council Plan and the Sport and Recreation and Arts Strategies.
- 8.47 The existing and emerging Strategies also provide the context for the provision of strategic, large-scale facilities. The original Sports and Recreation Strategy in 1997 set out the main deficits in strategic recreational facilities. The Council has now produced a capital funding strategy which identifies the key facilities, their estimated cost and method of funding. Such funding includes a combination of lottery money, local funding and developer contributions. For example, in 1999 an Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) was opened at the Carterton Community College, built with money from the District Council and Sport

England National Lottery Sport Fund; and an ATP was also secured and built in Witney, being funded through developer contributions and the District Council.

## Provision of Facilities in Relation to New Development

### **POLICYTLC6 - Provision of Facilities in Relation to New Development**

Policy deleted

- 8.48 The provision of new facilities through grant aid, lottery funding and direct provision by the Council, either directly or in partnership with others, helps to address some of the existing deficiencies. In order to ensure that existing deficiencies are not exacerbated, the County and District Councils seek the provision of sporting, recreational, cultural, social, educational and other community facilities, as appropriate, in association with new development. Thus, this Plan seeks to ensure that supporting facilities are secured as part and parcel of the development of the main areas of growth or through financial contributions from other sites that come forward. See Policy BE1 which is the key policy that seeks to achieve appropriate supporting facilities.
- 8.49 The residents, employees and customers of new housing, employment and retail development will generate additional demand for recreation, arts and community facilities and public open space. In large development areas, particularly those of predominantly new housing, it is vital that adequate social and community facilities are provided as an integral part of the development and not as an afterthought. This can help such areas develop into sustainable communities. The government accepts (in PPG17) that planning obligations can be used to secure the provision of public open space and sporting, recreational, social, educational or other community facilities, including remedying local deficiencies where a detailed assessment has been undertaken. The District Council is seeking the provision of such facilities through the development proposals in this Plan.
- 8.50 Development on other sites, particularly

for housing, that come forward during the plan period will also create demand for facilities. However, it is not always possible or appropriate to provide these within or adjoining the development site. The amount and type of facilities needed will depend on the size and type of the development and the availability and accessibility of the existing provision. As a general principle, in the case of smaller developments, a commuted payment may be sought towards provision of new or improved facilities elsewhere, especially where existing deficiencies have been identified. Such provision will need to be provided as close as possible to the development site.

- 8.51 The previous section on built sports facilities explains the importance of making greater public use of existing school recreational facilities. For playing pitches, for example, in West Oxfordshire there is not a problem of lack of provision but one of lack of access to existing school pitches. Achieving dual use agreements with schools could help to meet the existing and future levels of demand. Where appropriate, therefore, financial contributions securing effective dual use of existing facilities and improving such facilities will be sought from new development which creates increased recreational needs.

### **Outdoor Playing space**

- 8.52 The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) recommend standards for outdoor playing space (i.e. space, safely accessible and available to the general public, and of a suitable size and nature, for sport, active recreation or children's play). The objective is to ensure that every person has access to playing space within easy reach of their homes. These standards are that at least 2.4 hectares (6 acres) should be provided for every 1,000 population (1.6 hectares for outdoor sports, including 1.2 hectares for pitch sports, plus 0.8 hectare for children's playing space).
- 8.53 In July 2002 a revised PPG17 on Open Space, Sport and Recreation was published. The Government stresses the need for local authorities to undertake robust assessments of existing and future needs of their communities

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for open space, sports and recreational facilities and then set local standards for future provision. Until such detailed work has been completed, the District Council will continue its commitment of ensuring that the NPFA's minimum standards are achieved in West Oxfordshire both through the provision of new space and the protection of existing (see Policies BE4 and TLC5). Proposals for additional public playing fields are specifically identified in this plan for Witney and Carterton. In addition to this provision, the Council will require new development to provide conveniently sited incidental amenity areas/casual play spaces and equipped play spaces.

- 8.54 Play space for children is vital to their health and social development. Proposals for housing development, in particular, should include appropriately sited, designed and equipped play areas. The NPFA sets standards for the provision of different types of play areas for a range of age groups. They provide detailed guidance on the siting, accessibility, content and layout of such sites. (A summary is set out at Appendix 3). Based on their Standards, there should be 0.8 hectare of playspace per 1,000 population. Where appropriate the Council will expect this provision to be made on-site by the developer, together with provision of suitable equipment, landscaping and commuted sum to cover future maintenance.
- 8.55 Equipped and casual play areas are only two elements of outdoor play space for children. Private gardens, amenity open space, urban parks, the surrounding countryside etc, can all contribute to their play experience. Of particular importance in this experience are the physical connections between each of these areas and the home. A safe and convenient footpath and cycleway network, especially in residential areas, can be invaluable in facilitating outdoor play. Special attention will be given to this issue when considering development proposals. Attention will also need to be given to the outdoor recreational requirements of teenagers.

## Provision for Public Art

### **POLICY TLC7 - Provision for Public Art**

The Council will seek a contribution for art provision to comprise:

- a) specific art provision within or as part of the development;
- b) an agreed art provision in the public realm; or
- c) an appropriate financial contribution towards an identified major public art project(s) within West Oxfordshire.

This policy shall apply to the following forms of development:

- i. residential
  - new build units of ten units or more;
  - significant conversions or refurbishment of existing buildings;
- ii. significant retail, commercial or leisure proposals, where the gross floor area is 1000 square metres or more;
- iii. significant development proposals by utility operators and Local Authorities.

- 8.56 West Oxfordshire has a variety of cultural facilities, such as the Chipping Norton Theatre, the Cogges Farm Museum and Woodstock County Museum. Such facilities are an asset to local inhabitants and visitors alike and other uses of this type have long been encouraged by the Council, for example through grant aid to arts and museum services. The District Council's Arts Strategy has widened the Council's involvement in cultural issues to incorporate art in its widest sense – encompassing music, dance, drama, art, architecture and literature. While many of these aspects are not directly related to planning, the Council will generally adopt a positive approach, through Policy TLC1, to proposals for cultural/arts-related development, for example an arts and craft centre or building for performing arts. In agreement with developers, the introduction of 'art' will also be

sought in areas of new development, particularly in town centre sites and residential areas.

8.57 Policy TLC7 seeks to provide ‘public art’ through development. It is based on the ‘percent for art’ concept promoted by the Arts Council. While public art can include the more ‘traditional’ idea of a sculpture it can also encompass a wide range of features, for example:

- specialist treatment of some aspects of a building – stained glasswork, mosaics, floor/wall design, lighting, timberwork;
- provision of hard or soft landscaping, paving, gates, arches, seating, play areas, bridges;
- provision of space for artistic use; and
- major landmark or urban design features.

The key factors are that the ‘art’ is specific to the site and relates to the context of that site.

8.58 Promoting and securing public art can enhance the quality of development, enrich the built environment, help create a ‘sense of place’ and local distinctiveness and provide opportunities, particularly for local artists and craftspeople, to add to the quality of life in West Oxfordshire for residents and visitors.

8.59 The provision of public art should be an integral part of a development scheme, not an after thought. The Council wishes, therefore, to work in partnership with developers, architects, designers, artists and Arts Development Officers at an early stage of the development process to identify and work up possibilities for art provision. The means of provision and its funding or maintenance would be a matter of detailed discussion. The ‘percent for art’ concept normally seeks a one percent contribution or agreed cost equivalent from the total development value of a proposal for an agreed art provision.

## COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION

8.60 National surveys highlight the importance of the countryside for recreation. The countryside offers a wide variety of opportunities to people of all ages and skills, from peaceful walks to more active pursuits like cross country running and mountain biking. The high demand for countryside recreation, coupled with the encouragement of diversification of the rural economy, are leading to widespread interest in the development of additional recreational opportunities. While generally welcoming the increased use of the countryside for recreation, it is essential that any development is compatible with the rural environment of West Oxfordshire and maintains or improves its character and appearance.

8.61 Although much publicity has been given to the growth in new activities and sports, the recreational use of the countryside is still dominated by informal activities represented by drives, outings, picnics and walks. The Countryside Agency and Sports Council have long emphasised the need to make the countryside more fully accessible to the public.

8.62 Unfortunately, in West Oxfordshire, and indeed in Oxfordshire as a whole, there is a comparative absence of extensive areas of countryside with general open access to the public. Public access to the District’s countryside is limited to a few small areas of common land, none of which totals more than about 15 hectares (36 acres), plus the normal access rights of way. This is supplemented by controlled, but nonetheless welcome, access to some parkland, with Blenheim Park being the most extensively used.

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## Footpaths and Bridleways

### **POLICYTLC8 - Public Rights of Way**

The existing public rights of way network will be safeguarded and, where appropriate, improved access to the countryside will be sought, with additional public rights of way for walkers, horseriders and cyclists.

- 8.63 The absence of large areas of countryside open to the public means that the network of footpaths and bridleways provides an important recreational resource for the benefit and convenience of residents and visitors to the area. It is, therefore, essential that the District's public right of way network is retained. In addition, because walking, cycling, and horseriding are growing in popularity, the network should be extended wherever possible and the full potential use of the network achieved by, for example, good sign posting and maintenance, and provision for walking with dogs. Where appropriate, every endeavour should be made to allow people with access difficulties an opportunity to use our rights of way. Management of the existing network is the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council.
- 8.64 The longer distance footpaths – the Oxfordshire Way and the d'Arcy Dalton Way – pass through West Oxfordshire. A series of shorter circular routes have been created and are publicised by the County Council, for example through the Evenlode Valley and in the Wychwood area. The main areas of additional provision are the Thames Path National Trail and in the Lower Windrush Valley, especially the Windrush Way (see below).
- 8.65 Cycling and horseriding are best directed towards bridleways and quiet roads. The Oxfordshire Cycleway does just this, with twelve cycle routes specifically within West Oxfordshire. New routes are also being investigated, for example, with the feasibility of creating a cycleway between Bampton and Witney utilising the dismantled railway and between Bampton and the Thames Path. 2000 saw the opening of Oxfordshire's section of the National Cycleway Network, passing through Woodstock.

8.66 While access to the countryside as a whole is important there has been increasing recognition that some of the most valuable countryside for recreation is that in and around towns. The former Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency) in their 1999 publication "Linking town and country", highlighted the immense opportunities for improving the quality of life for people living in towns, of having good quality, accessible countryside within a quarter of a mile of their home. Maximising the opportunities available for residents to enjoy local countryside without using a car can provide a sustainable approach to countryside recreation. The Council seeks to achieve this by, for example:

- protecting and enhancing locally accessible footpaths, bridleways, and cycle routes in the vicinity of settlements;
- viewing public rights of way in the context of a network so, wherever possible, opportunities will be taken to link paths to towns and villages and to urban footpaths and cycleways, to provide circular routes and to co-ordinate the provision of facilities to serve these routes (e.g. circular routes have been created from numerous towns and villages e.g. Carterton, Eynsham and Witney);
- supporting the creation and promotion of public rights of way linked to public transport (e.g. walks into the Wychwood Forest from Charlbury Railway Station; and the proposal to develop Kingham Railway Station as the cycling gateway to the NE Cotswolds);
- where built development is allowed, and in particular if urban areas expand, protecting existing rights of way not simply as access routes but also as attractive 'green corridors' to ensure that links connecting the existing urban area to adjoining countryside are attractive and pleasant to use (e.g. the existing public footpath at NE Witney has been incorporated into a linear park within the Development Area; the existing bridleway at the West Witney Development Area has become

a footpath/cycleway adjoining the playing fields, connecting the housing area with a Windrush Valley circular route);

- ensuring that large scale development areas have their own internal footpath/cycleway systems and that these connect to existing networks (see Policy T2); and
- making the countryside within or immediately abutting settlements more accessible by the creation of new routes, the use of access agreements and more appropriate land management and the creation of new areas of open space (e.g. 20 hectares of land for a country park has been secured as part of the NE Carterton Development Area; public access is being improved south of Witney, in conjunction with the restoration of gravel pits in the Stanton Harcourt area; both Carterton and Witney Town Councils have purchased land – Carterton Water Meadows and Witney Lake – to increase the opportunities for countryside recreation in these towns).

## **POLICY TLC9 - The Thames Path**

Development along the Thames riverside will only be allowed if it can be demonstrated that the proposal would not remove, narrow or materially impair the Thames Path National Trail.

- 8.67 The Thames Path National Trail was approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment in 1989 and officially opened in 1996. This nationally important long distance footpath, following the River Thames from its source at Kemble in Gloucestershire to the Thames Barrier near Greenwich, aims to provide continuous high quality public access adjacent to the river. Existing rights of way are being improved, new links created where necessary, and sign posting and publicising of the path taking place. The Thames Path is expected to become this country's most used National Trail. A recent survey of the whole of the route has shown that during the six months of the survey over half a million people visited the Trail for up to a day. The District Council supports the

designation of the route, will protect it from inappropriate development and improve access to it where possible. The route of the trail in West Oxfordshire is shown on the Proposals Map.

### **Small-scale recreational facilities**

- 8.68 The improvement or provision of small-scale facilities that promote the public's enjoyment or understanding of the countryside, particularly that close to existing settlements, is an important factor in the development of informal recreation. Where opportunities arise for the development of, for example, small country parks, picnic sites, roadside parking areas and interpretation facilities, the Council will, under Policy TLC1, generally view them favourably, provided they do not detract from the rural character of the area or from sites of nature conservation importance. Care needs to be taken in the size and location of such sites and in their sensitive landscaping, in order to minimise their impact.

- 8.69 Waymarking, signposting and furniture along the Thames Path National Trail should be provided in accordance with design guidance from the National Trails Office.

### **Golf course development**

- 8.70 Farm diversification and 'surplus' agricultural land is increasing pressure for recreational facilities in the countryside. In the 1990s there was a dramatic growth in the popularity of golf, creating an acceleration in the number of planning applications submitted for golf course development. Two new courses have been constructed, at Lyneham and Witney, bringing the total in West Oxfordshire to four (ie including the courses at Burford and Chipping Norton). All are 18-hole courses. This number conforms with the standard suggested by the Sports Council as appropriate for a population the size of West Oxfordshire's and may help to explain why other sites granted consent have not yet been constructed.
- 8.71 A golf course can have a significant effect upon the landscape of an area with, for example, an 18-hole course occupying in the region of 55 hectares of land. The introduction of manicured

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greens, bunkers, tees and fairways can, on certain prominent sites be out of keeping with the surrounding countryside. A golf course can also have a potentially damaging effect on the water resources of the area, for example, by increasing surface water run-off and reducing flood plain storage. Any golf course proposed will, therefore, need to be considered against the Environmental Policies of this plan.

- 8.72 Golf course proposals will also be considered against Policy TLC1. Provided a demand can be demonstrated, schemes which, for instance, make sensitive use of existing topography, hedgerows and trees, and traditional buildings; introduce substantial amounts of new native tree planting; are next to the main road network; and only propose new buildings which are directly related to golf, may be acceptable. (Any proposal affecting a public right of way will need to comply with the adopted policy of the Oxfordshire County Council on Rights of Way and Golf Courses).
- 8.73 Wherever possible the Council will seek improved access and wildlife habitats as part of new golf course proposals.
- 8.74 Larger scale proposals which result in the introduction of high volumes of traffic to narrow country roads, incorporate general leisure development, visitor over-night accommodation or conference development, make extensive use of artificial lighting and so on, are more difficult to assimilate into the countryside. Such large scale proposals would be contrary to policy TLC1 and the general policies of this plan in the majority of West Oxfordshire, but in particular the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Oxford Green Belt. Larger golf-course development proposals may only be considered sympathetically in locations where the landscape could be enhanced or improved by a golf course, specifically where land has been damaged or scarred by development, for instance in the Stanton Harcourt gravel area or a disused airfield, and the built development will remain ancillary to the golf course. (See also Policy TLC3).

## Potential pollution – Light and noise

- 8.75 While the quiet informal enjoyment of the countryside is the main objective of the Council's approach to countryside recreation, it is recognised that there is a growing interest in pursuits that can create environmental problems, particularly noise, such as clay pigeon shooting, rallycross, go-karting and motor-cycle scrambling. The Council considers that because of the damage such activities can cause to the environment they are not normally suitable sports for the Cotswolds AONB or sites of nature conservation importance.
- 8.76 The impact of noise from sport and recreation will depend on the frequency of use and the design of facilities. Some noisy sports may be able to be accommodated outside environmentally important areas provided there is not a major impact on the landscape and on the amenity of local residents (in terms of traffic, noise and other disturbance), neighbouring uses or biodiversity. Planning conditions and obligations restricting such activities to specific times may be imposed where permission is given in order to reduce the impact of the sport upon the area. Proposals will be considered against the Environment Policies of this Plan, particularly Policy BE19 on noise, as well as Policy TLC1.
- 8.77 In addition to potential noise problems, recreation facilities can also create pollution through their use of lighting, particularly floodlighting. Floodlighting is now an integral part of many sports facilities, especially hard-surfaced areas such as synthetic turf pitches and tennis courts, and practice facilities such as golf driving ranges. Floodlighting can allow sports facilities to be used to their full capacity. Such lighting and the intensification of use it can bring can, however, be intrusive in some locations. This can be an issue in both urban and rural locations. Proposals will be considered against the Environment Policies of this Plan, particularly Policy BE21 on lighting, as well as Policy TLC1.

## WATER-BASED RECREATION

- 8.78 The District contains two valuable water based recreation resources, namely, the River Thames and the Lower Windrush Valley south of Witney (the Stanton Harcourt gravel area). The upper reaches of the Rivers Windrush and Evenlode are also used for informal recreation, eg for canoeing and fishing.

### POLICY TLC10 - River Thames

The further provision or extension of permanent base moorings and associated facilities will only be allowed in suitable locations off the main river channel of the River Thames.

- 8.79 The County Structure Plan identifies the River Thames as an asset in terms of its environmental quality and recreational resource and, through Structure Plan Policy R3, seeks to protect and, where appropriate, enhance the character and environment of the River Thames and its immediate valley. Proposals for development which will adversely affect the character of the river and its setting will not be permitted. In West Oxfordshire the River Thames generally flows through open countryside.
- 8.80 The remoteness and tranquillity of the Upper Thames would soon be ruined by further development of water based activities and riverside facilities. The conservation, and where appropriate, enhancement of the landscape and general character of the area is, therefore, the main objective for this area (see Policy NE8). The sensitivity of the landscape and limited water space available means that the District Council will continue its long held approach of being generally restrictive on development proposals along the River Thames.
- 8.81 In 1995 the National River Authority (now part of the Environment Agency) and Sports Council published a recreation strategy for the Thames. This strategy aims to optimise the recreational potential of the River Thames and land alongside it, while conserving and enhancing the ecological landscape and heritage value. It provides guidelines for the management of the

river as a recreational resource. Review of the Strategy (through the Thames Waterway Plan) began in 2003; many of the aspirations in the 1995 Strategy remain equally valid today.

- 8.82 The Recreation Strategy and its Review identify numerous issues, most of which are beyond the remit of this local plan. Two key issues identified which are of particular relevance for the stretch of the Thames in West Oxfordshire are: poor access and lack of recreation facilities.
- 8.83 In the Strategy and the Thames Waterway Plan much of the Upper Thames is considered under exposed and therefore under utilised as a resource for countryside recreation. The important consideration is how the area can be positively used without causing unacceptable damage to the environment. Certainly some recreational activities can be compatible with the aim of protecting the quality and character of the river's environment and landscape. Informal recreational activities such as fishing, walking and other quiet riverside pursuits, and associated small-scale facilities, will continue to be encouraged, particularly where associated with the Thames Path National Trail (see Policies TLC1 and TLC9).
- 8.84 The Strategy and Thames Waterway Plan identify a need for additional permanent and overnight moorings. This is a sensitive issue in the Upper Thames. The Strategy accepts that "new permanent moorings on the main channel will not be allowed because of their impact on the flat, rural landscape". If there are to be new moorings on the Upper Thames they must be located off the main channel, be unobtrusive and not adversely affect sensitive wildlife habitats.
- 8.85 There has been a decline in the hire craft business on the Thames. The NRA's Strategy and River Thames Alliance's Waterway Plan wish to see this component of the river economy protected and encouraged, particularly the provision of small craft for day hire in the riverside towns and villages. The rural nature of the Thames in West Oxfordshire means that suitable locations for new hire bases in the District are very limited.

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## **POLICY TLC I I - Lower Windrush Valley**

Proposals for leisure after-uses in the Lower Windrush Valley Project Area\* will be allowed where:

- a) the rural character of the area or waterside setting and any nature conservation interest is not adversely affected eg. ribbon development around a lake will not be permitted;
- b) any buildings are well designed and sensitively located and are of modest scale to ensure that the development does not create an intrusive or discordant feature in the landscape;
- c) the proposed development takes account of the comprehensive after-use proposals for the area, as set out in the County Minerals and Waste Local Plan and would not prejudice proposals to secure new rights of way.

*NB. For the purposes of this policy 'leisure after-uses' includes holiday accommodation. No permanent non-holiday residential use should be established outside the residential areas of existing settlements in the Lower Windrush Valley unless an essential operational need can be demonstrated.*

*\*The Lower Windrush Valley Project is shown in Figure 3.5*

- 8.86 Within the Lower Windrush Valley, south of Witney, there is an extensive area of former and current sand and gravel workings. Most of the pits are left as water bodies which, together with the surrounding countryside, provide a valuable recreational resource. A variety of recreational uses already exist, particularly in the Stanton Harcourt/Standlake area, including fishing, horseriding, windsurfing, sailing, banger racing, power boating and water skiing. These are largely club-based activities. The pits themselves cover an area of about 324 hectares. The vast majority are used for angling, with intensive and low key water sports on most of the rest of the pits. Only a small part of the area is used solely for nature conservation and
- public amenity.
- 8.87 Although the recreational uses and ancillary development in the Lower Windrush Valley provide important facilities for both local people and visitors, some development has become established as a result of ad-hoc decisions to the overall detriment of this area's quality. A co-ordinated policy framework for the restoration and after-use of the gravel pits in the Lower Windrush Valley has now been established and is set out in the County Minerals and Waste Local Plan. In essence, the more intensive water based recreation activities will continue to be concentrated in the Standlake area, with lower key recreation interests such as angling, walking and non-intrusive water uses, as well as separate provision for nature conservation interests, being accommodated in the Ducklington, Stanton Harcourt and Northmoor areas.
- 8.88 Policies NE3 and TLC I emphasise the need for proposals to respect and enhance the intrinsic qualities of the District. Whilst accepting that sand and gravel extraction has made, and is likely to continue to make, the Lower Windrush Valley an area of change, its character is still one that is rural in nature and essentially quiet. In terms of recreational potential, the District and County Councils are in particular, therefore, encouraging those uses which are compatible with this rural landscape. No proposal should have an unacceptable impact on settlements or residential properties, particularly from noise generated by recreational activities. A detailed study – the Lower Windrush Valley Project – has been undertaken of the area, identifying the key nature conservation, landscape, cultural and low-key recreational features and recommending a range of practical projects to safeguard, manage and extend this resource. The Project Report sets out a series of proposals to help achieve landscape and nature conservation objectives (see the Landscape and New Habitats sections of the Environment Chapter) and recreational objectives. The latter objectives relate in particular to the need for improved public access within the area. The Project Area is identified on Figure 3.5.

- 8.89 A key part of the overall strategy is the provision of a long distance path, linking Witney with the Thames – the Windrush Way - and a series of circular paths linking local villages with the gravel pits and the long distance path. Parts of these have already been secured in relation to new permissions in the area for gravel working. The Project Report will help to inform the review of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
- 8.90 In addition to their recreational and nature conservation value the former gravel workings in the Lower Windrush Valley have been identified as a potential area for tourism development in the District Council’s Tourism Strategy. Policies TLC3 and TLC4 relate specifically to tourist accommodation and generally direct the provision of new permanent holiday accommodation and caravan and camping sites to the Lower Windrush Valley. This area already contains a considerable amount of accommodation, in particular in the Standlake area around the Hardwick Leisure Park and the 3TTT’s complexes. There are also a large number of permanent holiday caravans which the Council does not wish to see increased in number. However, the Council would be sympathetic to an appropriate number of well-designed (non-caravan) holiday units, provided they form part of a comprehensive scheme, which enhances the quality of the local environment and existing holiday facilities.
- 8.91 Policy TLC11 sets out the overall policy for leisure uses, including holiday accommodation, in the Lower Windrush Valley, within the context of the need to respect the generally rural character of the area and the sensitivity of the landscape and its nature conservation value.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

- 8.92 The quality and convenience of everyday life is greatly affected by the nature and extent of community services and facilities. Public halls, local shops, public houses, post offices, doctors’ surgeries, public toilets, crèches and places of worship are all examples of facilities which are often an essential part of the social and economic life of towns and villages. They can provide, particularly in villages, important local services and form the focal point of many group activities. They can be especially important for elderly and disabled people and for those who do not have easy access to private or public transport. The loss of such facilities can fundamentally undermine the character of the community.
- 8.93 The District Council’s overall approach is to protect existing community services and facilities and to encourage new provision wherever appropriate.

### POLICY TLC12 - Protection of Existing Community Services and Facilities

Development proposals should not result in the loss of useful local services and facilities unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a) the existing use is not viable; or
- b) adequate and accessible alternative provision remains or will be provided.

- 8.94 The Local Plan Background Paper “Housing and Services in West Oxfordshire” identifies a significant loss of shops, post offices and public houses from settlements in the District since 1975. It is important, therefore, that wherever practicable the remaining facilities are maintained and every encouragement given to proposals that would improve provision. The District Council will resist development proposals involving the loss of existing community services and facilities, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are appropriate alternative facilities locally. Policy TLC11 will also be applied on occasions where important local tourist facilities would be lost

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as a result of new development proposals. In the case of a commercial venture, the applicant will need to satisfy the Council that the existing use is no longer capable of being maintained, either commercially or through local social enterprise. In order to assess this, a wide range of information will normally be required from an applicant, including, for example, evidence of sustained marketing of the premises over a reasonable period, and at a fair price, and accounts showing returns/losses, again over a reasonable period of time (normally over at least 3 years). (See also Policy SH5 which is a specific policy on the retention of local shops and post offices).

- 8.95 When assessing proposals for the loss of community services or facilities, consideration will be given to a variety of factors, including the wider community role of the service or facility, its contribution to the character of the area, whether it provides a specialist facility, its provision of local employment opportunities and its contribution to the neighbourhood's well-being.
- 8.96 Whilst it is desirable to maintain, as far as is practicable, supporting services and facilities in all settlements, Group C settlements have a wider role than Group A and B villages. In addition to providing services and facilities for their own population they also act, in varying degrees, as local centres serving smaller villages around them. Generally they provide a wider range and variety of shops, pubs and recreational facilities etc than the other settlements. In maintaining this wider role, it is important that a reasonably comprehensive range and choice of services is retained within these communities. This factor will be taken into account in determining applications under this policy.
- 8.97 The Council joint funds a Village Shop Fieldworker who provides business advice and grant aid to rural shops. In some circumstances, Business Rate Relief is available for rural shops and post offices.

## Provision of new facilities

- 8.98 Proposals for new community services and facilities will be considered against Policy TLC1 (and in some cases other Local Plan policies, such as employment and shopping). Subject to the Environment Policies, especially Policy BE2, proposals for services and facilities which meet the needs of local residents will be encouraged.
- 8.99 The District Council offers advice and support to assist in the provision of new and improved community facilities, including a grant scheme for village halls. (Contact the Leisure Services Team for further details.)
- 8.100 Policy BE1 sets out the Council's intention to secure the provision of community facilities as an integral part of new development. For many of the development sites allocated in this Local Plan a specific area is identified for community facilities. For smaller sites a commuted payment may be sought towards the provision of new or improved facilities elsewhere.