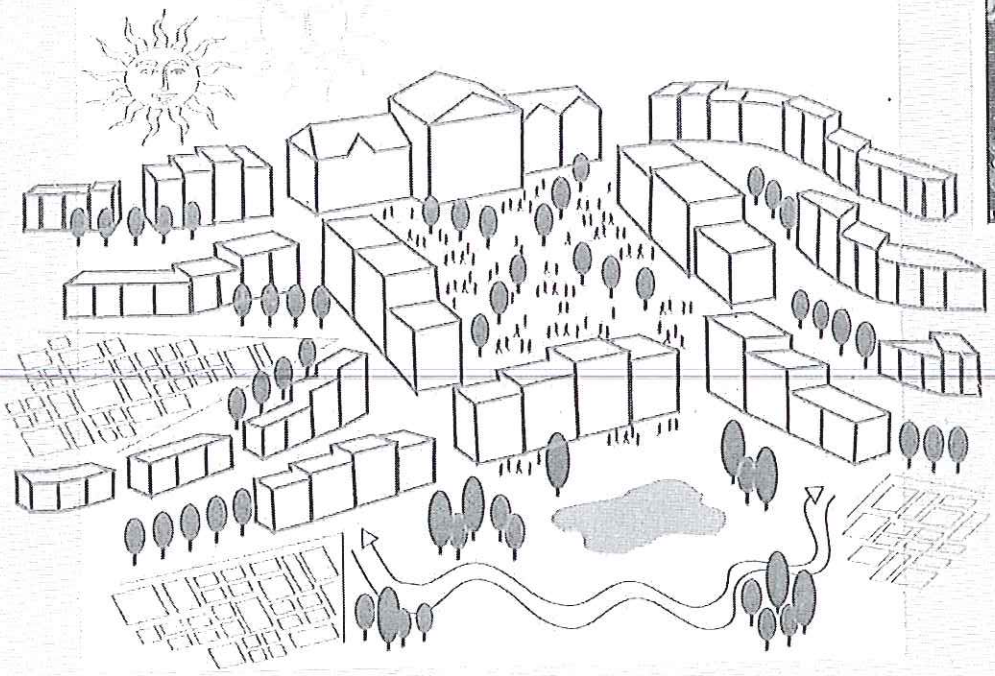
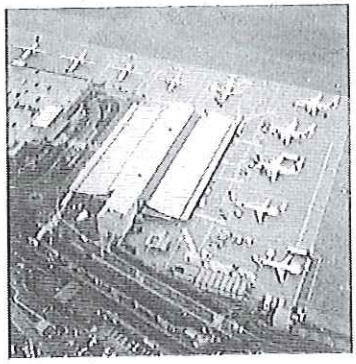
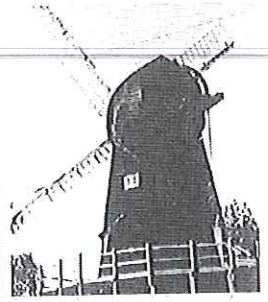
Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011)







Adopted May 2006

EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

9 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION (OS)

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION CONTEXT

Open spaces, sport and recreation facilities play a key role in achieving national and local government aims for public health and the environment, and make a major contribution to the Council's urban renaissance aims. Public Open Space includes those types of greenspace which are available for children's play, outdoor sports and informal recreation, including country parks and gardens, urban parks, playing fields, children's play areas, woodland, allotments and green corridors. It also includes nature reserves where public access may be restricted in order to preserve valuable habitats.

Eastleigh also has a wide range of informal recreation facilities which serve residents of the Borough and those from neighbouring settlements. These resources collectively take the pressure of the more popular sites within the County such as the New Forest and the coast, fulfilling the requirements of the adopted Hampshire County Structure Plan.

The government expects that existing public open space should be of high quality and accessible to everybody. One purpose of the Local Plan is to set down its own public open space standard based on the National Playing Fields Association Six Acre standard, which is the basis for the public open space policies in the Adopted Hampshire County Structure Plan Review. It is also the purpose of the Local Plan to identify sports and recreation opportunities and to protect existing facilities.

There are significant links between public open space sports and recreation provision, and other policies of this local plan.

- C policies: countryside
- NC policies : nature conservation
- BE policies: general design, noise
- LB policies: archaeology, listed buildings
- T policies: environmental impact of traffic
- H policies: residential development
- TA policies: tourism and arts
- ES policies: environmental sustainability

Public Open Space Objectives

9.1 The key objectives for open space, which are derived from the national and strategic framework and the Borough's Sport and Recreation Strategy 2002-2007, are as follows:

- to ensure the adequate provision of high quality, and accessible public open space, sports and recreation facilities;

- to allow only less intensive recreational activities, or to discourage public access, in sensitive areas;
- to protect and improve existing public open space and recreational facilities;
- to establish a green network of public open space;
- to improve cycle and pedestrian links to appropriate categories of public open space.

All the above need to be implemented to achieve an urban renaissance, promote healthier lifestyles and counteract dispersed patterns of travel in the Borough, as recommended by the Urban White Paper and RPG9 South East.

Public Open Space Standards

9.2 Open space and sport and recreation facilities can make a major contribution to ensuring that urban areas are places in which people will choose to live. The main role of the planning system is to ensure that there are sufficient of them and they are in the right places. However, this is not enough. There is also a need to ensure they are of high quality, attractive to users and well managed and maintained.

9.3 PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation (July 2002) advises that development plans should contain policies which protect and enhance sporting, open space and recreational provision on sites of particular quality, function or value. This guidance recommends that an assessment of quantity, quality and accessibility of existing facilities is undertaken so that existing and future need can be established.

Protection of Existing Open Space

9.4 Existing open space which performs a sporting, educational or other formal or informal recreational function should be protected and other new types of development should not result in the loss of attractive and accessible recreation facilities.

9.5 The Borough Council's locally derived open space standard is 2.8 hectares per 1,000 population. Existing public open space should be protected even in areas which meet or exceed the minimum level of provision required, as advocated by Sport England's 'Planning Policies for Sport' guidance (1999).

9.6 The Department of Education and Skills (DfES) has requirements for school playing fields, set out in The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and Circular 29/2000. Any proposals that might result in the loss of school playing fields will only be allowed where the requirements of the 1999 regulations and the Circular have been met

and the land cannot reasonably be used to meet local public open space needs and all the criteria of policy 162.OS are met.

145.OS The Borough Council will refuse any proposals that would result in the loss of land currently used for children's play, sports pitches, open space or outdoor sports, whether in public or private ownership unless:

i. the proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site and does not adversely affect the quality and quantity of pitches and their use; or

ii. the proposed development only affects land which is incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch; or

iii. the open space that would be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by open space of equivalent or better quality and quantity in a suitable location, prior to the commencement of the development; or

iv. the proposed development is for an outdoor or indoor sports facility of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field; or

v. in the case of school playing fields, the land is surplus to educational requirements and there is no local shortage of open space in the locality, for which the land could reasonably be used.

9.7 Many areas of open space in the grouping of 'accessible natural greenspace' are also protected by policies in the chapter on 'Nature Conservation', particularly European nature conservation sites (21.NC), SSSIs (22.NC), and SINCs (23.NC).

9.8 The Urban White Paper (December 2000) recommends that local planning authorities should recognise the importance of open space and the quality of the public realm. RPG9 states that open spaces, green corridors and trees improve the quality of life in urban and suburban areas. To achieve more public open space in our urban areas that is of high quality and accessible, the Council will seek to secure increased provision wherever appropriate. Where increased provision cannot be achieved, or is not considered appropriate, contributions towards environmental improvements of existing areas of public open space, or the public realm, will be sought, such as in the Renaissance Quarter in Eastleigh (policy 53.BE). Existing sites which require environmental improvements have been identified in the Public Open Space Background Paper and sites for which contributions to

improvements will be sought are listed in the Background Paper on Developers' Contributions.

Green Network of Public Open Space

9.9 In accordance with the recommendations of the Countryside Agency, in the consultation research document 'the effectiveness of PPG17 on Sport and Recreation', a green network will be defined in the Borough.

9.10 This green network of open/undeveloped land, including the categories below, is proposed to maintain and create areas and routes for the use and movement of people and wildlife.

- urban parks and gardens, amenity greenspaces and play areas;
- playing field and sports pitches;
- green corridors;
- allotments, churchyards and cemeteries;
- country parks and natural / semi natural greenspaces;
- privately owned land in the above categories to which public access for informal recreation exists or is to be sought.

9.11 The green network seeks to create links between significant areas of open space, such as the Country Parks, in order to connect these environments. The green network compliments the Wildlife Network proposed in the Nature Conservation chapter, which seeks to deliver significant biodiversity gains.

9.12 Public access and recreation will be encouraged and provided for where this does not conflict with the other aims for the areas concerned. In particular the Council will encourage the provision of appropriate additional public access to the River Hamble. Access may be restricted or discouraged within sensitive sites or areas. Public access along the green network will be improved by the provision of single or multi-use pedestrian, cycle or equestrian links as appropriate. These routes also link into wider regional routes, including the Solent Way along Southampton Water, and the proposed National Cycle Network route. Appropriate contributions will be sought to enhance the network, with further guidance provided in the Background Paper on Developers' Contributions.