6. RECREATION AND LEISURE

6.1 Open Space

With its established woodlands and green areas, Corby is well provided with public open space. In total, and including playing fields, about 190 hectares are provided, giving about four hectares of open space per 1,000 residents.

6.2 Playing Fields

The provision of sports pitches in the Borough is barely keeping up with demand from local teams.

The National Playing Fields Association recommends a minimum standard of provision for playspace:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth/Adult Use (Playing Fields)</th>
<th>1.6-1.8 ha per 1,000 people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Use:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
<td>0.2-0.3 ha per 1,000 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal play space within housing areas</td>
<td>0.4-0.5 ha per 1,000 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2.2-2.6 ha per 1,000 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The standard does not include general open space, water-based open space or informal recreational areas for adults. These need to be provided in addition to the standard.

Children's playgrounds and playspace should be available within 200m of the home for young children and no further than 400m from the home for older children. All playing fields are of special significance both for their recreational and amenity value and, in Corby, for their contribution to the green open space of the urban environment.

The "Taking Shape" exercise carried out in 1989 in conjunction with the East Midlands Region Sports Council indicated that playing field provision was barely keeping pace with demand. This has been confirmed by the Council's most recent study (see below). The recommendations in "Taking Shape" included a programme of pitch improvements, the need for a floodlit synthetic pitch and the need to make more use of school pitches.

6.3 Playing Pitch Policy and Standards

The Corby Playing Pitch Policy Statement and Standards is published as Supplementary Planning Guidance to this plan. By 2006 there will be a need for 5 additional senior and 5 additional junior pitches to be made available. The demand for cricket pitches cannot be met by increased capacity. Although dual use is a possibility the most realistic option is for new provision. This could be met in conjunction with new soccer pitch provision. New general open space provision should be sufficient in terms of size, suitability and location to allow for the creation of additional sports pitches in order to meet potential demand.


The policy statement and standards identifies a requirement for the following numbers of pitches will be required at Snatchill:
6.5 Standards for Informal Open Space

Within new areas of development, there will be a requirement for open space to provide for:

- landscaping, including strategic planting
- playing fields
- amenity open space
- children's play areas.

Some areas will fulfil more than one function.

The location of landscaping areas is determined by the land form and existing features within an overall strategy. Playing fields are to be provided in accordance with a Playing Pitch Policy Statement and Standards.

Within housing developments, the Council's standards for open space will apply. Beyond this, and complementary to the provision of other community facilities, there will be a requirement for larger areas of open space to allow for informal recreation. Such areas should be attractive to children, families and older people, should make a positive contribution to the local landscape and may allow for nature conservation, green corridors and habitat creation. These areas may also serve as Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for play (NEAPs) as recommended by NPFA.

6.6 Open Space Requirements at Snatchill

At Snatchill, 16.6ha of informal open space will be provided. This includes amenity woodland, open space/green corridor and a local park/neighbourhood play area. (L5)

Given the commitment to dual use provision at the City Technology College and proposed City Industrial College there will be no requirement for sports pitches to be laid out or changing facilities constructed at the local park (L5) and the precise area, boundaries and layout of the local park can be the subject of negotiations with the Local Planning Authority.

6.7 Amenity and Children's Playspace

The following standards of provision will be required for local open space in new housing developments:

i) 700 sq.m. per 100 dwellings for informal community use

ii) 1100 sq.m. per 100 family dwellings for children up to 8 years of age
iii) 600 sq.m. per 100 family dwellings for children aged 8-15 years

6.8 Nature Conservation and Open Space

Much of the Council's open space supports little wildlife. Without reducing or detracting from formal sports facilities, it should be possible to create more diverse habitats and introduce a more conservation orientated management regime.

Management for nature conservation can not only improve visual amenity but also provides a valuable educational resource. The ornamental treatment of selected areas should continue, particularly in the Town Centre.

6.9 Built Facilities

The Regional Sports Council has identified a shortfall in built facilities in the Borough comprising:-

i) 9 hole golf course

ii) A 1 SASH unit sports centre i.e. four badminton court unit

iii) indoor bowling green

iv) full size synthetic sports pitch

Using the Sports Council standards for urban areas, a population of 63,700 at 2006 would require an additional 1.5 SASH units for unrestricted public use. The County Structure Plan seeks provision of three golf courses (18 hole) within the Kettering/Corby area. A site at Cowthick is proposed and golf course development should take account of the potential for habitat creation. A site near Cottingham has been developed for golf.

6.10 Facilities in the Villages

Public playing fields are available at Gretton, Cottingham and Stanion with private provision at Weldon (football and cricket), East Carlton (cricket) and Rockingham (cricket). There are no sports facilities at Middleton. There is considerable demand for public provision at Weldon and suitable land is to be made available between Kettering Road and Hillside Crescent.

6.11 Pocket Parks

Pocket Parks have been established at The Glebe, Cottingham; Orchard Close, Weldon; Kirby Road, Gretton and Keebles Field, Stanion. An extension to the Pocket Park is proposed at The Leys, Weldon. Consideration should be given to further such parks in the villages.

6.12 Countryside Recreation

Countryside Recreation is mainly informal, but the East Carlton Countryside Park is an important facility and resource: it covers 40 hectares and attracts about 300,000 visitors each year. There are no major water facilities within the Borough. The Boating Lake is of limited use for organised activities, but is capable of further development for leisure uses. The River Welland forms the Borough’s northern boundary and the Welland Valley forms part of a Special Landscape Area. The river is used for angling but is not generally suitable for other water sports.
The Borough’s Public Footpath network forms an important resource and links to the Jurassic Way. The removal of obstructions and better waymarking is considered necessary. Implementation of the Recreation Policies will be co-ordinated with the relevant Transportation Policies of the Local Plan.

Many organised sports such as angling, orienteering and mountain hiking can be carried out in the open countryside, including the Special Landscape Areas, without harm to the environment. In many cases, the scale of activity would be such that planning permission would not be required. The Council is, however, concerned about the impact of some sports and recreational facilities on the character and appearance of the countryside, particularly in the Special Landscape Areas. In these areas proposals will be assessed in terms of a justifiable need, which cannot be met elsewhere, and in relation to their visual and environmental impact. Elsewhere in the countryside, proposals will have to be acceptable in terms of scale, design, materials, traffic generation and any other environmental impacts.

The Borough contains a substantial amount of derelict and restored land. It may be possible and desirable to locate recreational development and uses on this land rather than on better quality agricultural land or where there is a risk of damage to nature conservation interest or harm to the landscape.

When considering reuse of buildings in the countryside it is important to avoid disturbing bats or barn owls.

Major sports facilities which are likely to attract large numbers of visitors should be located to minimise journey lengths and times.

6.13 Future Provision

Some new provision, particularly tourist related, is likely to result from farm diversification. The following areas also have good recreational potential:

- Brookfield Plantation: suitable for leisure activities which are not detrimental to the nature conservation interest, with public access as appropriate. Shooting takes place in the plantation.
- Gullet north of Brookfield: with nature conservation, amenity and landscape value, this former mineral line would be appropriate as a linear park.
- South Wood: suitable for quiet leisure activities compatible with its conservation interest.
- Stanion Lane Plantation and the area north of Bandy Slade, have the potential for wider ranging leisure pursuits including educational and interpretive activities and suitably built facilities. The nature conservation interest of the wood must be protected and its value for timber production recognised. There should be public access to the woods.

Some of the proposals refer to private woodland where dedication agreements operate and public access will be the subject of discussion with the local owners.
6.14 New Woodlands

Although Rockingham Forest was not chosen as the site for the proposed New National Forest in the Midlands, the creation of new woodlands remains an objective. The new woodland would provide opportunities for leisure, recreation and nature conservation together with improved public access to the countryside.

6.15 Long Distance Footpaths

The Jurassic Way which extends from Banbury to Stamford passes through Corby Borough. It will be an important resource for recreation and tourism.

6.16 Wonderworld

The site previously allocated for the Wonderworld Themepark is now the subject of the Prior's Hall Development Brief which is available as supplementary planning guidance.

6.17 Allotments

Some 18 allotment sites have been identified in the Borough, occupying 11.4ha. This represents a decline of 17% over the amount of allotment land recorded in 1980 (Corby Town and Weldon Draft Local Plan). Within Corby, about 0.2 ha of allotment land is available per 1,000 residents. In the rural areas, this rises to about 1 ha. (The Allotments Advisory Committee recommended 1.6 ha per 1,000 people).

The demand for allotments within the urban area appears to be small, and many sites are poorly used. Where sites are well used, they should be protected from development. Where sites are poorly used, alternative uses may be explored, including use for nature conservation. Allotment sites within the rural areas should be protected.

6.18 Recreation and Land Leisure Policies

The Council believes there is a growing demand for good quality leisure and recreational facilities. This demand can be met by improvements to existing public facilities, by joint provision and dual use of school and community facilities and by mixed use developments with the private sector.

In particular, the existing central library is not conveniently located, and so provision of a new facility, with better access, will be encouraged. In the interim, access for disabled people to the existing premises needs to be improved. A direct lift access from the Queens Square level to the library is a priority.

The Council has been concerned about the loss of playing fields to development, with the consequent loss of both sports facilities and green space. Development which would result in further playing field loss would be opposed.

The Council believes that the provision of play space and sports pitches is very important to the life of the town, and where new housing development is proposed, there will be requirements to meet the Council’s standards and guidelines which are set out in paragraphs 6.4 and 6.7.

Corby has a growing population and, as well as formal sports and leisure facilities, there is a need for informal recreation in the countryside. The Council will encourage the provision of public access.
The policies aim to reflect a more environmentally aware approach to the provision and management of Leisure facilities, especially open space. As part of its Recreation Strategy the Council will be preparing proposals for Rockingham Triangle with a view to increasing and improving sports and leisure facilities.

RECREATION AND LEISURE POLICIES

Public Facilities

P1(L) A programme of improvements to public leisure and recreation facilities will be implemented in accordance with the Recreation Strategy. Where appropriate the opportunity will be taken to enhance or introduce nature conservation interest.

Corby Library

P2(L) Alterations to Corby library will be permitted to enable improvements to be made to existing access arrangements for disabled people. The provision of direct lift access is considered a priority. The Council will assess suitable sites for the provision of a new central library in Corby and planning permission may be granted for the relocation of the library to a more convenient and accessible position within the town centre.

P3(L) Provision of a new central library in Corby will be encouraged by assessing suitable sites and allocating for this use.

New Facilities

P4(L) Proposals for new leisure and recreational facilities on appropriate sites in Corby will normally be permitted, and mixed use developments will be encouraged. Particular regard will be given to areas of identified need.

Play Space

P5(L) Proposals for new housing development will be required to make provision for public open space and play areas, in accordance with Local Planning Authority's standards.

Allotments

P6(L) Allotment sites in the villages will be retained for this use, and protected from other development.

The use of allotments within Corby will be assessed and where there is demand for their continued use, they will be retained as allotments. Where allotments are underused, they will be assessed for their potential for other use as open space, including management for nature conservation, before any consideration is given to other development.

Retention of Playing Fields

P7(L) Proposals for development which would result in the loss of existing playing fields will not normally be permitted except where:
- sports and recreation facilities can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site; or

- alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available.

Access to the Countryside

P8(L) Where possible, a network of rights of way will be developed and publicised including:

- public access to the countryside for informal recreation which will be encouraged with the co-operation of landowners;

- the use of footpaths, bridleways and by-ways, for walking, horse riding and cycling;

- public access to archeological sites where this will not conflict with the conservation of historic features.

Access to the Countryside

P9(L) Proposals for recreational facilities in the open countryside will be permitted only where the development:

(i) relates to the reuse or adaptation of existing rural buildings provided that the proposed use, form, bulk and general design of the converted buildings are in keeping with their surroundings and the buildings can be reused or adapted without complete or substantial reconstruction.

(ii) In the Special Landscape Areas, relates to limited recreation facilities for which a specific need exists and which will not harm the character and appearance of the SLA, including country parks, pocket parks, picnic sites and small scale playing fields associated with rural settlements.

(iii) In the remainder of the open countryside, relates to proposals which are compatible with a rural location including country parks, pocket parks, picnic sites, golf courses, facilities for sailing, rowing and canoeing and small scale playing fields associated with rural settlements or to proposals for indoor or outdoor sports and cultural facilities on appropriate 'edge of town' sites.

Open Space. Great Oakley

P10(L) Land adjoining the Great Oakley Cricket Club shall be reserved as green open space and used for agriculture, grazing or public open space.

New Playing Fields

P11(L) Playing fields in the proposed new neighbourhoods are made necessary by new housing and should be provided by the developers of nearby housing or commercial facilities. The Council will seek to enter into planning obligations for the provision of these facilities.
RECREATION AND LEISURE PROPOSALS

The following sites are proposed for public open space and playing fields:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snatchill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Woodland</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>General Open Space</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>Playing Fields Snatchill/Oakley</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L4</td>
<td>Local Conservation Area &amp; Open Space</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L5</td>
<td>Local Park/Neighbourhood Play Area</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L6</td>
<td>Playing Fields Snatchill Central</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Locations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L7</td>
<td>Landscape &amp; Upgrading (Exeter Estate Action)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L8</td>
<td>Parkland West of Stanion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L9</td>
<td>General Open Space off Stanion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L10</td>
<td>Public Open Space Tamar Green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L11</td>
<td>Public Playing fields adjoining Rockingham Triangle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L12</td>
<td>Playing Fields, Sower Leys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L13</td>
<td>Amenity Open Space Princewood Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L14</td>
<td>Former Firdale School Playing Fields Pocket Parks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pocket Parks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PP1</td>
<td>The Leys, Weldon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP2</td>
<td>Keebles Field, Stanion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP3</td>
<td>Kirby Road, Gretton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP4</td>
<td>The Dale in Cottingham</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L15</td>
<td>Proposed Extension of Pocket Park, Weldon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proposals and Planning Requirements

**L1**  Woodland and Tree Belts, Snatchill

The woodland and tree belts proposed will form part of a comprehensive scheme for structural landscaping at Snatchill to be prepared and implemented in consultation with the landowners.

**L8**  Parkland west of Stanion

The severed strip of land between the village and the proposed Geddington Bypass is included within the Proposal.
Sower Leys
Playing fields and open space at Sower Leys will be retained.

Former Firdale School
The playing fields will be retained as open space and provision will be made for sports pitches.

Country Parks
A linear Country Park at the gullet and former mineral railway north of Brookfield Plantation. Management for nature conservation will be a priority.

Country Park including playing fields and other sports facilities, tree planting and nature conservation area will be provided off Kettering Road, Weldon.

Leisure and Recreation Uses
Brookfield Plantation - Leisure activities which would be compatible with nature conservation interest and with timber production.

South Wood - quiet activities, leisure and conservation. The important conservation interest of the wood will need to be protected. There should be compatibility between leisure uses, timber production and nature conservation.

Stanion Lane Plantation - quiet, active leisure pursuits and facilities which recognise the conservation interest and are compatible with timber production.

Golf course on land north of Cowthick Plantation subject to environmental assessment including the potential for habitat creation.

Indoor bowling green at West Glebe Park

Sports Centre (including 2 SASH unit hall) at Snatchill

Full size synthetic pitch at a site to be identified to serve the northern part of the town.

Rockingham Forest
Suitable leisure and recreation facilities will be included in any proposals for the expansion and promotion of Rockingham Forest.
**Long Distance Footpath**

The Jurassic Way.

**Prior's Hall**

L26 Countryside recreational uses will be acceptable provided that they meet the requirements of the Prior's Hall Development Brief and do not adversely affect the local environment or setting.

The creation of a major woodland area is proposed on the eastern part of the site. The existing landscape and habitat features, including the gullet and wetlands, will be retained and enhanced.

The area has been identified as a ‘prime site’ of nature conservation interest. Development proposals should respect this and areas of new woodland planting should comprise mainly native species to create a structural landscape framework for the whole Prior's Hall site.

**Touring Caravans**

L27 Provision of a touring caravan site - site to be identified.

**Allotments**

L28 Woods End Allotments

Part of the site has been developed for a doctor's surgery and part remains available for development which would not affect the environment or setting of the surgery.

L29 Existing allotments in Larratt Road and Water Lane, Weldon, will be retained for this use.

**Leisure Development**

L30 A leisure complex is proposed at the Phoenix Centre.