

# Basildon Borough Local Development Framework

## Topic Paper TP1 Environment

February 2012



## Introduction

- 1 The natural environment is a fragile resource comprising a complex series of dependent and independent systems. They can become unbalanced by human activities, threatening ecosystem services<sup>(1)</sup>, our health and well-being, economic and social mobility and in irretrievable damage to the natural environment.<sup>(2)</sup>
- 2 In this Topic Paper, we explore the Borough's:
  - Landscape, Biodiversity & Marine Conservation;
  - Air Quality & Noise Pollution;
  - Green Belt;
  - Waste Management;
  - Green Infrastructure;
  - Heritage, Design and Local Character.

## Policy Context

### International/ European Context

- 3 There are several United Nations (UN) agreements and European Union (EU) directives relating to the environment. They have been translated into English legislation, are embedded into national planning policies and must be taken into consideration when formulating local policies. Those of most relevance to Basildon Borough are:
  - UN Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat 1971;
  - UN Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife & Natural Habitats 1979;
  - UN Bonn Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals 1979;
  - UN Rio Convention on Biological Diversity 1992;

- UN OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic 1998;
- UN Nagoya Convention on Biological Diversity 2010;
- EU Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora Directive 1979;
- EU Conservation of Wild Birds Directive 1979;
- EU Hazardous Waste Directive 1991;
- EU Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna & Flora Directive 1992;
- EU Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy 1995;
- EU Landfill Directive 1999;
- EU Landscape Convention 2000;
- EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001;
- EU Environmental Noise Directive 2002;
- EU Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive 2002;
- EU Bathing Water Directive 1976 & 2006;
- EU Shellfish Waters Directive 2006;
- EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008;
- EU Integrated Pollution, Prevention and Control (IPPC) Directive 2008;
- EU Ambient Air Quality Directive 2008; and
- EU Waste Framework Directive 2008.

### National Policy Context

- 4 The Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>(3)</sup> indicates that the LPAs should set out strategic priorities for their area in their Local Plan to deliver:
  - The provision of of community infrastructure and other local facilities;
  - The provision of infrastructure for waste;

1 The products of natural systems which people derive benefits, such as pollination of plants, water capture and purification, etc  
2 HM Government, The Natural Environment White Paper -The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature, June 2011.  
3 DCLG, 2011

- The protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape and where relevant coastal management; and
- High quality design to ensure places function well, and add quality to an area, optimise site potential, respond to local character, create safe and accessible environments and ensure developments are visually attractive.

**5** These should be pursued on the basis of:

- protecting valued landscapes by creating, protecting, enhancing and managing networks or biodiversity and green infrastructure;
- Minimising impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity by taking a landscape-scale approach to their planning; identifying and mapping local ecological networks and areas for habitat restoration or creation; promoting preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the recovery of certain species;
- Preventing unacceptable risks from land, air, water or noise pollution and land instability;
- Assess the quality and capacity of waste infrastructure and its ability to meet forecast demands;
- Setting out a strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including how new development could make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- Taking into account marine plans;

**Landscape, Biodiversity & Marine Conservation**

**6** The Government's Biodiversity Strategy<sup>(4)</sup> expects the planning system conduct a more strategic approach for nature.

Priority 1 - A more integrated large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea - through coherent and resilient ecological networks, including:

- Encourage adoption of integrated landscape-scale approaches to ecological restoration
- Enable partnerships to establish new Nature Improvement Areas based on a local assessment of restoring and connecting nature on a significant scale, including identifying them in Development Plans
- Encourage local authorities to take a more active and positive role in the management of Local Sites
- Establish a well-managed coherent network of Marine Protected Areas
- Ensuring species are given sufficient protection
- Ensure that agricultural genetic diversity is conserved and enhanced wherever possible

Priority 2 - Putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy, including:

- Improving public health by making high quality green space available to everyone
- New green areas designation empowering communities to protect local environments that are important to them
- Taking better account of the values of biodiversity and ecosystem services in decision making

Priority 3 - Reducing environmental pressures, including:

- Guiding development to the best locations
- Encouraging greener design

# 4 Topic Paper TP1: Environment

- Enabling development to enhance natural networks
- Protecting and improving the natural environment

Priority 4 - Improving our knowledge through:

- Research and development
- Monitoring and surveillance
- Improved data sharing and clear communication of evidence

7 PPS9: Biological & Geological Conservation sets out guidance to ensure that the potential impacts of planning decisions on biodiversity and geological conservation are fully considered. Importantly, Development Plan policies should maintain, enhance and restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests<sup>(5)</sup>. The LDF is expected to include a Proposals Map which indicates the location of all designated sites and identifies areas or sites for restoration or creation of new UK BAP Priority Habitats<sup>(6)</sup>.

8 The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 created new protection areas called Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ). These protect nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology.

## Air Quality & Noise Pollution

9 PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control<sup>(7)</sup> recognises that the planning and pollution control systems are separate but complementary. The planning system is tasked with determining whether development itself is an acceptable use of the land and the impact of those uses, rather than the control of processes or emissions themselves. Local Development Documents are expected to set out the criteria against which applications for potentially polluting developments will be considered.

## Green Belt

10 PPG2: Green Belts<sup>(8)</sup> sets out the general intentions of Green Belt policy and confirms its specific purpose. There are five purposes of including land in the Green Belts:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
2. To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

11 Green Belts can be used in positive ways to fulfil the following objectives:

- To provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- To provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- To improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
- To secure nature conservation interest; and
- To retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

12 PPG2 confirms that once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved, it should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. Detailed boundaries should not be altered or developed allowed merely because the land has become derelict. Where existing local plans are being revised and updated, existing Green Belt boundaries should not be changed unless

5 PPS9: Biological & Geological Conservation, 2005, Paragraph 1  
6 PPS9: Biological & Geological Conservation, 2005, Paragraph 5  
7 PPS23: Planning & Pollution Control 2004  
8 PPG2 Green Belts, 2005

alterations to the structure plan have been approved, or other exceptional circumstances exist, which necessitate such revision.

## Green Infrastructure

- 13 PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) expects all development to be of an appropriate mix of uses, including incorporating green space, if appropriate. PPS1's Supplement on Climate Change (2007) reiterates the important role that Development Plans have in helping to deliver green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements as part of a wider local strategy to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 14 PPS9 states that policies to conserve or create open spaces are important in maintaining and protecting networks of natural habitats, link together sites of biodiversity importance, as well as providing routes for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species in the wider environment. This is emphasised further in PPS12: Spatial Planning, (2008) which expects Core Strategies to be supported by evidence of what green infrastructure is needed to support the amount of development proposed for the area.
- 15 PPG17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002) requires all local authorities to have undertaken assessments of local needs and qualitative, quantitative and accessibility audits of open space, rather than adopting national standards. It echoes the messages in other national policy that well-designed and implemented planning policies for open space are fundamental in delivering broader national objectives of supporting urban renaissance, rural renewal, social inclusion and community

cohesion, overall health and well-being, and promoting sustainable development. Complementary to this, the National Play Strategy<sup>(9)</sup> reaffirms the role that parks and open spaces have in the development of children and young people.

- 16 Whilst the role open spaces have in making places more attractive is commonly cited<sup>(10)</sup> medical sources also mention their importance as 'interventions', encouraging engagement in physical activity<sup>(11)</sup>, in promoting the health and well-being of people<sup>(12)</sup>, reducing health inequalities<sup>(13)</sup>, and the development of motor skills in children through play and increase workplace productivity<sup>(14)</sup>.
- 17 The Thames Gateway Parklands' Spatial Framework includes a proposal for a new Thames Estuary Path, linking the north and south banks of the Estuary from the Isle of Dogs out to the coastal path network in Kent and Essex.

## Environmental Quality

- 18 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 provides overarching legislation to control emissions into the environment<sup>(15)</sup> and regulates and licenses controlled waste in England, Wales and Scotland. The Environment Act 1995 also places additional duties on Local Authorities to identify and remedy contaminated land.
- 19 The Cleaner Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 deals with many of the problems affecting the quality of the local environment including anti-social behaviour, vandalism, disorder, abandoned trolleys/vehicles, levels of crime and dog control.
- 20 PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control (2004)<sup>(16)</sup> covers the quality of land, air, water and health impacts from development/land use and states that

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9 Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008  
 10 Green Spaces, Better Places - The Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, DTLR, 2002  
 11 HM Government Mental Health Outcomes Strategy: No Health without Mental Health, Department of Health, Feb 2011  
 12 Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment  
 13 Great Outdoors: How our Natural Health Service Uses Green Space to Improve Wellbeing, Faculty of Public Health, 2010  
 14 Bird, W. Natural Thinking: Investigating the Links between the Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Mental Health, RSPB, 2007  
 15 Section 9 defines several statutory nuisances including smoke, fumes, gases, dust, steam, noise from animals, premises, vehicles, machinery or highway  
 16 PPS23 Planning & Pollution Control, 2004 - Appendix A

when preparing Development Plan Documents Local Planning Authorities should:

- Assess air polluting proposals, including in any Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) or other areas where area quality is likely to be poor;
- Address potential contamination of development proposals and subsequent remediation;
- Consider any potential sensitivities in the surrounding area from polluting developments;
- Consider whether it is appropriate to separate potential polluting schemes from other land uses;
- Consider the environment benefits a development might bring, together with its economic and wider social need; and
- Consider the need for compliance with any statutory environmental quality standards or objectives;

**21** PPG24: Planning & Noise (1994)<sup>(17)</sup> sets out guidance on minimising the adverse impact of noise from new development. It states that:

- Noise sensitive developments should, wherever practicable, be separated from major sources of noise;
- Noisy activities should, if possible, be sited away from noise-sensitive land uses (generally housing, offices, hospitals and schools);
- Development plans policies should provide certainty about the areas in which particular types of development will be acceptable and those in which special measures may be required in order to mitigate the impact of noise;
- If noise policies apply to specific areas, relevant boundaries should be illustrated on Proposals Maps<sup>(18)</sup>;
- Special consideration should be given to noisy development in or near to SSSIs, SPAs, SACs or RAMSAR

sites; and in some cases livestock farms;

### Waste Management

**22** The Waste Strategy for England (2007) aims to decouple waste growth from economic growth, set national landfill diversion targets to meet and exceed EU targets, facilitate the development of necessary waste infrastructure and increase levels of recycling and energy recovery.

**23** PPS10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management (2005) establishes the framework around which local authorities must base their planning policies relating to waste management and disposal. The Waste Hierarchy is central to the Statement placing greater emphasis on waste as a resource and helping communities take more responsibility for their own waste; moving further towards net self sufficiency. PPS10 will be replaced in time by the National Waste Management Plan as stated in the Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

### Heritage, Local Character & Design

**24** PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) requires that a clear vision is established for the pattern of development. High quality inclusive design of buildings, spaces and the public realm is promoted to make places better for people, with robust policies required in LDFs on design and access, which are safe, visually attractive, based on the area's future objectives and its current defining characteristics, including promoting local distinctiveness<sup>(19)</sup>.

**25** PPS5: Planning and the Historic Environment (2010) states<sup>(20)</sup> that LDFs should set out a positive, proactive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in their area, taking into account the variations in type and contribution of heritage asset, as well as the contribution made by the historic environment, by virtue of:

- Influence on sense of place

17 Planning & Noise (1994) Paragraphs 2-5 & 20

18 Not applicable to detailed noise contours, as they can change over time

19 DCLG (2005) PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

20 DCLG (2010) PPS5: Planning and the Historic Environment

- Catalyst potential for regeneration
- Stimulus to inspire imaginative and high quality design in new development
- The re-use of existing fabric
- Mixed and flexible pattern of land use - sustainable LDFs are encouraged to consider the quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment and how they can contribute to the development of the spatial vision of the Core Strategy.

26 The Manual for Streets (2010)<sup>(21)</sup> outlines the five functions of a street as being:

- As a place
- For movement
- For access
- For parking
- For drainage, utilities and street lighting

27 Better designed streets contribute significantly to the built environment, where pedestrians should feature at the top of the street user hierarchy. They are important to community function by providing spaces for social interaction.

## Regional Policy Context

### Landscape, Biodiversity & Marine Conservation

28 The East of England RSS (2008) determines that development in or near the urban fringe should enhance its biodiversity/recreational value and avoid harm to EU/International sites. Green infrastructure should be developed to maximise its biodiversity value and have regard to the need for habitats and species to adapt to climate change. Development should avoid damage to Local Wildlife Sites and wherever possible achieve net gains by the retention, enhancement or creation of new habitats. Wildlife corridors should be managed and expanded with Local Development Documents taking into account Biodiversity Action Plan targets and priorities, identifying areas in the Borough to safeguard for habitat restoration or re-establishment.

29 In September 2011, the Balanced Seas Regional Stakeholder Group submitted its final recommendations for a South East England Marine Conservation Zone to Natural England, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the Science Advisory Panel.<sup>(22)</sup> It would designate the nearby Crouch, Roach and Thames Estuaries and Holehaven Creek (the latter of which passes through the south of the Borough) as a "Reference Area" to manage and mitigate against potentially disturbing or damaging activities that pose a threat to marine life. The Secretary of State will make a final decision on whether to award the area a designated status in 2012/2013; which would mean that particular attention would be needed to ensure land-based or terrestrial planning does not negatively effect the objectives of the marine designation.

### Green Belts

30 The East of England RSS Green Belt policy SS7 stated that the broad extent of Green Belts was appropriate, however it indicated areas in the regional where a strategic review of the Green Belt boundary were needed to meet regional development needs. None of these affect Basildon Borough.

### Green Infrastructure

31 The East of England RSS includes policies on Green Infrastructure (ENV1), Biodiversity & Earth Heritage (ENV3), the Urban Fringe (SS8), Provision and Location of Strategic Cultural Facilities (C2) and Walking, Cycling and Non-Motorised Transport (T9).

32 These policies stress that multi-functional green infrastructure contributes to quality of life, whilst delivering biodiversity and other benefits including flood relief and carbon neutrality (by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) or capturing additional carbon emissions arising from a development).

33 Green infrastructure needs to apply to all scales of development, and is particularly important in settlements and surrounding areas proposed for regional significant

21 Department for Transport, (2010) Manual for Streets  
 22 <http://www.balancedseas.org/page/news/68.html>

development, notably the Key Centres for Development and Change, like Basildon Town Centre.

- 34 The RSS expects LDFs to set policies which respond to local identified needs, including increased demand for recreational open space associated with planned development, and identify the scale and location of green infrastructure required to ensure that existing, extended, and new communities are attractive places to live and work.
- 35 Green infrastructure provision should aim to extend and enhance existing infrastructure to create linked networks of green space, balancing tensions between multiple demands for the new housing and economic development with environmental enhancement that are managed and maintained appropriately into the future.

#### Waste Management

- 36 Policy WM1 of the RSS (2008) requires sufficient facilities for the collecting, sorting, treating and disposal of waste should be provided throughout the Region to enable waste to be managed in a sustainable way.
- 37 Policy WM2 of the RSS seeks that all authorities adopt challenging, but achievable targets to minimise waste and provide the basis for implementing the overall aim of recycling, composting and recovering value from waste.
- 38 Policy WNM5 of the RSS requires LDF policies to identify the additional capacity required to manage their apportioned wastes, including sites and areas suitable to accommodate the required facilities.
- 39 Policy WM6 of the RSS requires that development should be designed and constructed to minimise the creation of waste, make maximum use of recycled material and facilitate the collection, separation, sorting, recycling and recovery of waste arising from the development and surrounding areas, where appropriate. It goes on to say that for major developments, provision should be made for waste management facilities to enable the sustainable management of waste

through innovative approaches to local waste reduction, recycling and management.

#### Heritage, Local Character & Design

- 40 Policy ENV7 of the RSS states that LDDs should require new development to be of high quality, complementing the distinctive character and best qualities of the local area. New development should:
- Propose buildings of scale, founded on clear site analysis and urban design principles;
  - Make efficient use of land;
  - Achieve the highest possible net density of development appropriate to the character of the locality and public transport accessibility;
  - Provide a mix of uses and building types where appropriate;
  - Have regard to the needs and well-being of all sectors of the community;
  - Address crime prevention, community safety and public health;
  - Promote resource efficiency and sustainable construction, including maximum use of re-used or recycled material and of local and traditional materials;
  - Reduce pollution, including emissions, noise and light pollution;
  - Maximise the opportunities for the built heritage to contribute to physical, economic and community regeneration.

#### Local Plans, Programmes and Policies

##### Landscape, Biodiversity & Marine Conservation

- 41 The Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policy BAS C1, C2, C5 and C7 <sup>(23)</sup> do not permit development which will adversely affect the nature conservation, landscape value and character of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Wildlife Sites, Country Parks, Trees and Woodland, the Coastal Protection Area.

42 The Essex Biodiversity Action Plan (EBAP)<sup>(24)</sup> (subject to review in 2011/2012) contains actions for 25 species and 10 habitats, of which the following are relevant in Basildon Borough:

- Brown Hare, Dormouse, Pipistrelle Bats, Water Vole, Grey Partridge, Skylark, Song Thrush, Great Crested Newt, Native Black Poplar, Shriill Carder Bee, Ancient and/or Species Rich Hedgerows and Green Lanes, Ancient Woodland, Cereal Field Margins, Coastal Grazing Marsh, Heathland, Reedbeds, Urban Wildlife Areas.

43 The Basildon District Biodiversity Network Guidance<sup>(25)</sup> is based on the general principles set out in the Pan European Ecological Network<sup>(26)</sup>. It sets out how various mechanisms, including the how LDF can maintain and enhance a biodiversity network in the Borough using:

- Local Wildlife Sites;
- Clusters of high value wildlife habitat in core areas;
- Vulnerable areas that contain habitats of high quality, but are more sensitive to change in a fragmented landscape due to isolation;
- Enhancement Areas represent areas of low quality habitat that would require strategic conservation before significant benefit to wildlife could be realised; and
- Wildlife Corridors and stepping stones to provide interlinking habitats and improve connectivity.

## Green Belt

44 Policy BAS GB1 the Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies, 2007 establishes the Green Belt boundary in the Basildon Borough. It is supported by five criteria based policies which manage development within the Green Belt.

## Green Infrastructure

45 The Essex Rights of Way Improvement Plan<sup>(27)</sup> is a 10 year strategy setting out how Essex County Council will improve access to the countryside through Public Rights of Way (PRoW), making better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with mobility problems.

46 There are over 6,200km of PRoW in Essex and around 142km in Basildon Borough. In addition, 135km of remote cycle tracks contribute to the specialist provision for pedestrians and cyclists; they are mostly located in urban centres in Essex such as Basildon.

47 The most common issues and problems of PRoWs are overgrown paths, poor signage, excessive dog fouling, fly tipping or litter and blocked paths. Countywide the greatest priority for the Improvement Plan is better maintenance, closely followed by tackling the illegal use of PRoW by motorised vehicles.

48 The Plan identifies key destinations in Basildon Borough where the PRoW network should be extended to:

- Wat Tyler Country Park
- Langdon Hills Nature Reserve
- Parts of Basildon Town Centre

49 The Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid Strategy<sup>(28)</sup> is a long-term project to develop a network of open spaces and green links throughout South Essex.

50 Its objectives are to enhance the image and confidence in South Essex as a high quality place to live, work and invest through embracing different habitats and land uses across rural and urban boundaries, connecting new communities with existing neighbourhoods through extended green spaces and green corridors and providing improved 'access for all'.

24 Essex Biodiversity Partnership, 1999, Essex BAP

25 BDC, 2008

26 As established within the Pan-European Biodiversity and Landscape Diversity Strategy 1995

27 Essex County Council, 2009

28 Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) Partnership, 2007

- 51** The Grid is a proactive concept that will help to conserve and enhance existing sites, links and biodiversity by creating well-designed and high quality new elements in identified areas of opportunity and need, contributing to improved environmental sustainability and enhancement through flood-risk management, improved air and water quality and noise abatement. Its network of open spaces will create a distinctive 'sense of place' through engaging with communities, whilst enhancing and celebrating its diverse landscape character and heritage.
- 52** The Green Grid has the potential to become a network to promote recreation and tourism, education, healthy living, sustainable movement, employment creation, as well as learning and skills development through environmental activity.
- 53** The TGSE Green Grid Strategy sets out specific tasks for the Basildon elements of the Grid, which can be explored in the development of the Core Strategy and other DPDs. These are to:
- Utilise the geological legacy of Basildon by re-using waste disposal sites to expand Wat Tyler Country Park and create new greenways to follow the Langdon Hills escarpment
  - promote agricultural heritage by maintaining and interpreting the history and workings of the Fobbing and Bowers Marshes;
  - enlarge and enhance the open space and educational value of Wat Tyler Country Park, which has the potential to become a Regional Park;
  - create distinctive bridging structures across railway corridors, the A127, the A130, and the A13 to reconnect urban areas to marshlands and countryside;
  - incorporate flood risk and water management schemes based on Strategic Flood Risk Assessments in green spaces associated with the Thames and waterways associated with the River Crouch;
- improve landscape quality of the urban fringe area between South Benfleet and Basildon and between the marshlands and countryside north of the A127;
  - recognise and enhance land use history of the area; and
  - maintain and enhance the ecological value of c2c railway corridor, improve visual and environmental qualities of, and connectivity to, stations at Pitsea, Basildon and Laindon.
- 54** The Basildon District Cultural Strategy: Cultural Counts <sup>(29)</sup> sets out how the Council has proposed to support culture and recreation in the local area. It affirms that it will be important to:
- promote the benefits of outdoor exercise and activity;
  - work in partnership with the Voluntary, Commercial and Education sectors to ensure that cultural facilities are developed to meet the needs of the community and are not in competition;
  - seek to co-operate with other Council and statutory service providers to improve cultural and community life in Basildon through the provision of integrated facilities; and
  - Seek to extend the provision of art and culture into countryside and urban areas to enhance the visitor experience and encourage "wildlife highways" within and through the urban area.
- 55** The Basildon Borough Playing Pitch Strategy 2003-2013 was prepared in accordance with Sport England guidance <sup>(30)</sup> to establish a strategic approach to playing pitch provision and priorities for the Council, local sports clubs

29 Basildon District Council, 2006

30 Towards a Level Playing Field, Sport England, 2003

and land owners. The Strategy (as reviewed in 2006, 2009 and 2011) provides a robust evidence base for capital funding and developer contributions, as well as improving the Council's asset management responsibilities, such as enhancing provision where it is necessary to do so.

- 56 Policy BAS R1 of the Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies, 2007 protects open space within urban areas by ensuring planning permission will not be granted for development of open space which would cause significant harm to the recreation or amenity value of it, or to the contribution it otherwise makes to the character of the area within which it is located.
- 57 BAS R4: Proposed Open Space, allocated 2.02ha of land as public open space for Billericay by a southern extension of the Hannakins Farm Recreation Ground. This policy has yet to be implemented and the site remains in private ownership.
- 58 BAS R11: Sports Facilities allocated the land behind St Nicholas Church, Laindon and west of Church Road for formal sports purposes. This allocation policy secured land to relocate sports clubs from the Comprehensive Development Area (BAS C1) at Gardiners Lane South. As the latter policy has not resulted in any related development owing to viability issues, site allocation R11 has not been put into effect.
- 59 These open spaces were reviewed as part of the Basildon Borough PPG17 Open Space Assessment 2010 and both were found to be in areas with different open spaces needs. The LDF needs to determine whether these locations should be carried forward as open space allocations in the future or whether they could be better utilised at meeting the Borough's other development and environmental needs.

## Waste Management

- 60 The Saved Policies of the Waste Local Plan<sup>(31)</sup> forms part of the Development Plan for the Basildon Borough. It sets out waste planning policies to guide waste related development in accordance with sustainability principles. It outlines how

planning applications for waste management facilities will be considered by the Waste Planning Authority (Essex County Council) and identifies key waste management locations which will be the focus for future waste managed related development in Essex and Southend on Sea, including one in Courtauld Road, Basildon.

- 61 The Waste Local Plan will eventually be replaced by the Essex Waste Core Strategy (WaCS) due to be adopted in 2014 and the Essex Waste Non Strategic Site Allocations Document (NSSAD) which is due to be adopted by in 2015.
- 62 The Joint Municipal Waste Strategy<sup>(32)</sup> established the joint vision for the future management of Essex's waste in a sustainable manner. The Waste Disposal Authority and the 12 Waste Collection Authorities have agreed to:
  - Work hard to reduce the amount of waste produced in the first place and re-use more of the waste that is produced;
  - Collectively aspire to achieve 60% recycling of household waste by 2020;
  - Favour composting technologies including anaerobic digestion for source segregated organic waste;
  - Explore innovative disposal solutions based on Mechanical Biological Treatment family of technologies to assist in diverting waste to landfill and to recycle and recover more value from residual waste;

## Heritage, Local Character & Design

- 63 Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007 seek to avoid harm to the surrounding areas and the occupants of neighbouring dwellings by implementing a series of policies for development control in the Borough.
- 64 The Basildon Community Safety Partnership Plan, prepared annually fulfils the requirement of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 in having due

31 Essex and Southend on Sea Saved Waste Local Plan 2001/2007  
 32 Essex Authorities Joint Municipal Waste Strategy 2007-2032

regard to the likely effect in exercising functions and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area; measures which could include incorporating Secured by Design principles into developments.

- 65 The Billericay Design Statement<sup>(33)</sup> to ensure that the continued evolution of Billericay, Great Burstead and South Green actively protects and enhances their distinct characters as individual places to live and work.

## Portrait

### Landscape & Countryside

- 66 The Borough's landscape reflects the natural environmental features and human influences over thousands of years<sup>(34)</sup>. It consists of three urban settlements, separated by arable farmland, pasture, environmentally sensitive areas of ancient woodland, salt and freshwater marshland and river tributaries. The Borough has over 120 listed buildings which help to preserve the area's historic character and surviving remnants of the traditional Essex vernacular architecture.
- 67 Topographically, the Borough's land generally falls away to the south and east from a ridge in north west Billericay, rising at the Langdon Hills and Kingston Ridge in the southwest (one of the highest points in Essex), before falling away southwards towards the River Thames.
- 68 The Borough's landscape is nationally recognised as being within two National Character Areas of the Northern Thames Basin and the Greater Thames Estuary<sup>(35)</sup>. An Essex wide assessment sub-divided the Borough between four broader landscape character zones: the Brentwood Hills (Billericay), the South Essex Farmlands (Upper Crouch Valley),

the South Essex Coastal Towns (Wickford and Basildon) & Crouch & Roach Farmland (north-east Wickford), all of which have different issues and challenges if they are to be effectively managed in the future<sup>(36)</sup>. At a more micro scale, four Living Landscape areas have been identified as part of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts Living Landscape Project<sup>(37)</sup> to promote more proactive localised management of the Borough's special areas of landscape.

### Biodiversity

- 69 Biodiversity is a term commonly used to describe the variety of all life on Earth. It encompasses the whole of the natural world including plants, animals, bacteria, etc., which, together, interact in complex ways, to create living ecosystems<sup>(38)</sup>. There are no International or European protected habitats within the Borough, however, there are Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and a Ramsar Site within 5km of the Borough's boundary<sup>(39)</sup>.
- 70 The Basildon Borough SA/SEA Local Contextual Baseline Report 2007 sets out the location of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves & Country Parks. They are complemented by 1068.4ha of Local Wildlife Sites, a non-statutory biodiversity designation<sup>(40)</sup> and 867ha of UK BAP Priority Habitat. Not to be viewed as additional - 82% of UK BAP Priority Habitat is also designated as a LoWS<sup>(41)</sup>.

### Marine Environment

- 71 Whilst the Basildon Borough has no shoreline, its creek and river system connects to protected marine environments. The Thames Estuary, Crouch and Roach Estuaries, and Vange and Pitsea Creek all fall within one of the four regional Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) identified in the United Kingdom.

33 Billericay Design Statement Association, 2010 -

<http://www.billericaytowncouncil.gov.uk/Uploads/Site234/Files/BillericayDesignStatementfinal.pdf>

34 Essex County Council, Basildon District Historic Environment Characterisation Report, 2010

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/landscape/englands/character/areas/southeast.aspx>

36 Essex & Southend on Sea Landscape Character Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates, 2003

<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/living-landscape/what-living-landscape>

38 Natural England <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/default.aspx>

39 Relevant SACs & SPAs include the Roach & Crouch Estuaries, the Blackwater Estuary, Abberton Reservoir and the Dengie Peninsular

40 Latest survey by Essex Ecology Services Ltd Biodiversity & Habitat Study, December 2009

41 Basildon District Biodiversity and Habitat Study, EECOS Ltd, December 2009

MCZs seek to balance the importance of biodiversity conservation with economic activity and the Local Development Framework must ensure that land based activities in the Borough do not detract from marine conservation principles.

## Air Quality

**72** The Essex Air Quality Consortium<sup>(42)</sup> is the lead agency addressing air quality issues in Essex. Pollutants come from a wide range of sources which could have a diverse negative impact on health. There are several air quality monitoring units spread across the Borough which measures NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, & SO<sub>2</sub> levels, which alerts the Council when set targets are exceeded. Given the Borough's largely separated land uses, industrial/residential air quality conflicts are not a major problem and no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) have yet been declared pursuant to the EU Ambient Quality Directive 2008.

**73** Through its regulatory powers, the Council monitors 'Permitted Installations' including Service Stations, waste oil burners, crematoria and dry cleaners to ensure their emissions are not exceeding permitted levels. As of March 2011, a number of locations close to major roads in the Borough were at risk from entering 'borderline status', which might lead to AQMAs being declared in the future. Should an AQMA become necessary they would become a material consideration in the planning process and elements of them could be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents depending on the action required.

## Noise Pollution

**74** There are no EU monitored Noise Agglomerations in the Borough, the nearest is in Southend on Sea and London.

**75** PPG24's Noise Exposure Categories (NECs) are used in the Borough to inform the distance development should be set back from noise pollution sources that could impact upon the scale of development possible.

**76** Fortunately, as the Borough has largely separated land uses, industrial / residential noise quality conflicts are not a major problem for the Borough. There are however localised problems in some parts of the Borough with industrial areas which predate the New Town and modern planning principles and contain some businesses which conflict with neighbouring residential areas.

## Green Belt

**77** There is 6,951ha of land in the Borough which is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt, amounting to some 63% of its land area<sup>(43)</sup>.

**78** In addition to being the location of agricultural land, it is also the location of major local habitats such as Norsey Wood SSSI and LoWSs, as well as biodiversity complexes in the South Essex Marshes and Country Parks.

**79** The Borough's Green Belt is also the location of several recreation facilities such as golf courses and private sports clubs offering the Borough's residents leisure opportunities.

**80** The Green Belt is also home to about 5,000 people, the majority of whom live within three serviced villages, fifteen unserved settlements (including Plotlands) and a few isolated farms and homesteads.

## Waste Management

**81** As indicated by the national policy context section, there is an overriding need to deal with waste in a sustainable manner, moving away from a throwaway society and using landfill, to preserving and protecting our natural resources and environment. The planning system has an important role to play in enabling this move towards a more sustainable way of managing and disposing of the waste produced.

**82** The Council has signed-up to challenging recycling targets<sup>(44)</sup>. In 2010/11, 47% of the Borough's waste was recycled and through changes to its waste collection

42 <http://www.essexair.org.uk>

43 As designated on the Basildon District Local Plan Proposals Map 1998

44 It adopted the Joint Waste Management Strategy in 2009

services (such as introducing weekly mixed recycling collections to all Borough residents in 2011 and withdrawing the free provision of refuse sacks) it will try and increase this to at least 54% in 2011/12<sup>(45)</sup>.

- 83** Whilst the Essex and Southend on Sea Waste Development Document will establish the strategic policy for waste management in the Borough up to 2031, it will need to be supported by secondary policy in the Borough LDF. Any waste allocations will need to be shown on the Basildon Borough LDF Proposals Map to conform with other elements of the Development Plan.

### Green Infrastructure

- 84** Green Infrastructure (GI) is the term used to describe a strategic network of high quality green spaces and other landscape or environmental features. Natural England encourages it to be provided, designed and managed as a multi-functional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities<sup>(46)</sup>. GI most notably includes:

- Public and private open spaces;
- Local Wildlife Sites;
- Public Rights of Way;
- River corridors;
- Hedgerows;
- Woodland; and
- Common Land.

- 85** The Borough's has an extensive GI network covering an area of over 1,300ha. It comprises of a series of multi-functional spaces of different size and purpose, linked by green corridors and/ or public rights of way<sup>(47)</sup>, in the urban areas, urban

fringe, villages, plotland settlements and countryside. Its key elements are the strategic green corridors that follow natural assets such as the River Crouch Valley, the South Essex Marshes and the Langdon Hills/ Kingston Ridge, which stitches the Borough's landscape into that of its neighbours.

- 86** The GI network provides opportunities for exercise, sport and active recreation, whilst the relative tranquillity and low levels of noise, air and light pollution aids people's wellbeing and supports biodiversity. The network is, in part, a legacy of the Borough's New Town history, natural environmental assets, and large 20th Century parkland acquisitions<sup>(48)</sup>. The network is an integral part of the high quality environment that has, over the years, helped attract people and investment to the Borough, whilst providing essential and integrated space for flood storage, drainage and urban cooling, which makes the Borough's urban landscape distinctively green. It has also had a pivotal role in connecting local people with the Borough's historic past in providing the setting for local churches, the remains of moated farms, manors and Victorian industries, many of which also benefit from complimentary conservation designations.

- 87** The Borough benefits from a range of outdoor recreational facilities which provide locations for activities such as team sports, walking, cycling, nature conservation, horse-riding, fishing and golf. With a view to improve upon this existing provision, which provides a regional, as well as a local function, £11.5m was invested by the Government in 2008 into the Thames Gateway Parklands in South Essex.

- 88** Bowers Marsh is being restored by the RSPB to create a new bird reserve twice the size of London's Hyde Park<sup>(49)</sup>, which will in time be connected to the enhanced Wat Tyler Country Park, with its new Heritage Centre in the former Nobel

45 Report to Cabinet on Introduction of Weekly Mixed Recycling Service, 2 June 2011

46 Natural England, NE176 - Green Infrastructure Guidance, 2009

47 Over 147km in the Borough in January 2009 - Essex Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Essex County Council, July 2009

48 Hill House Farm in Billericay was acquired by the former Billericay Rural District Council in 1930's and turned into Lake Meadows and Westley Heights Country Park, part of the Langdon Hills Country Park complex, was acquired at a similar time by Essex County Council.

49 <http://rspbbowersmarsh.co.uk/>

Explosives Factory and an innovative Green Centre showcasing sustainable construction technologies<sup>(50)</sup>.

**89** From 2017, the nearby Pitsea landfill site will gradually be transformed into a new nature reserve, opening up for the first time in decades over 200ha of Thameside landscape to local communities and visitors.

**90** There are however parts of the Borough where improvements to open space provision need to be explored even further. In Billericay, whilst it is rich in natural and semi-natural open spaces, such as Norsey Wood and Mill Meadows, there are open spaces which fall below desirable quality standards. It also lacks any allotment provision, despite there being indicators of need<sup>(51)</sup>. The Council will need to continue to work in partnership with Billericay's Town and Parish Councils to help address local needs, whilst supporting their endeavours to make improvements to open spaces and secure future allotment provision<sup>(52)</sup>.

**91** Likewise, Wickford has the lowest supply of accessible open space per head of population in the Borough<sup>(53)</sup> and the presence of man-made barriers (e.g. the two railway embankments and Golden Jubilee Way dual-carriageways) inhibit physical access to what is otherwise good quality open space. Whilst it may not be economically or physically possible to rectify all of these issues, the principle of securing a new strategic open space in North-West Wickford was approved by the Council in 2010<sup>(54)</sup>, along with an acceptance that improvements, when resources permit, will need to be made to certain open spaces in the town.

**92** In Basildon, Laindon and Pitsea, whilst there are pockets of the towns which have less accessible or poorer quality open spaces, the New Town's layout and estate design has meant that overall, its residents enjoy the best access to open space in the Borough.

## Expanding and Enhancing the Green Infrastructure Network

**93** The long-term security of the GI network will mean that open spaces which offer the most strategic and localised benefit receive protection, and where feasible, enhancement. In addition, access to better quality open spaces in the parts of the Borough where provision is not sufficient could be improved through providing new green corridors, open spaces and rights of way as part of development proposals, as well as seeking and supporting environmental enhancement through partner initiatives such as the Essex Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Essex Biodiversity Action Plans and the Wildlife Trust's Living Landscapes Project.

**94** To make the most of the Borough's GI network and to ensure that it continues to provide for its growing population, there is a need to adopt new standards for open spaces, as set out below:

<b>Standard LCR1 : Open Space Accessibility Standard<sup>(55)</sup></b>		
	<b>No more than 400m from</b>	<b>No more than 2,000</b>
	<b><u>at least one</u> of:</b>	<b>from <u>all</u> of:</b>
<b>Urban Parks &amp; Gardens</b> <b>(including Country Parks)</b>	✓	✓
<b>Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces</b>	✓	✓

50 <http://www.wattylercountrypark.org.uk/>

51 PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part I, March 2010

52 Section 29, paragraph 9 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that where an area of land falls within the jurisdiction of both Parish and District councils, the responsibility for ensuring sufficient provision is transferred to the Parish Council.

53 PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part I, March 2010

54 PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part I, March 2010

55 PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part I, March 2010

Standard LCR1 : Open Space Accessibility Standard <sup>(55)</sup>		
Amenity Green Spaces	√	
Outdoor Sports Facilities		√
Allotments and Community Gardens		√

Standard LCR2: Open Space Quantity Standard <sup>(56)</sup>
<p>A minimum of <b>5.7ha</b> of accessible open space should be available per 1,000 population of each Settlement Area in the following proportions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.6ha of Natural Green Space</li> <li>• 3.1ha of Urban Parks &amp; Gardens (including Country Parks)</li> </ul> <p>Or Amenity Green Space</p> <p><b>FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN AREAS</b></p> <p>New development in urban areas should contribute a minimum of 46m<sup>2</sup> of accessible open space in the following proportions, calculated by projected occupancy and the number of new net residential units, having considered the specific requirements of the Settlement Area and subject to the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21m<sup>2</sup> of Natural and Semi Natural Green Space</li> <li>• 25m<sup>2</sup> of Urban Parks &amp; Gardens (including Country Parks)</li> </ul> <p>Or Amenity Green Space, and</p>

Standard LCR2: Open Space Quantity Standard <sup>(56)</sup>
<p>(a) For developments that would achieve the applicable Accessibility Standard to open space, without the need for new on-site provision, contributions will be required to enhance the quality standard of open spaces in the vicinity and/or making improvements to the links between them and the development site.</p> <p>(b) For development sites of 1ha or greater, that do not meet the Accessibility Standard, new open space provision will need to be made on-site and integrated into the development's layout and design, so long as its size can be equal to or greater than 0.1Ha; and</p> <p>(c) Where new on-site open space provision would otherwise be smaller than 0.1Ha (and therefore discouraged), equivalent contributions for the enhancement of open spaces in the vicinity will be required.</p> <p><b>FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE URBAN AREAS</b></p> <p>New development outside the urban boundary will contribute to the provision of open space in line with the expected standards, having taken account of the specific needs and Priorities of the Settlement Area. This will be based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26m<sup>2</sup> of Natural and Semi Natural Green Space</li> <li>• 31m<sup>2</sup> of Urban Parks &amp; Gardens (including Country Parks)</li> </ul> <p>Or Amenity Green Space.</p> <p><i>(Each of these standards cannot be read in isolation and must be balanced with the other provision standards to establish an appropriate level of provision based on the prevailing needs of a location.)</i></p> <p>A Qualitative Vision Standard for open spaces was also adopted to ensure existing and new open spaces could be designed and managed</p>

55 PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part I, March 2010  
 56 PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part I, March 2010  
 56 PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part I, March 2010

**Standard LCR2: Open Space Quantity Standard<sup>(56)</sup>**

to a minimum standard. Due to their more extensive use and range of functions, Urban Parks and Gardens and Civic Spaces are expected to be of a higher quality than all other open spaces.

Any new or improved open spaces should seek to add multifunctional, quality spaces to the GI network to provide informal and formal recreational opportunities, wildlife habitats and open spaces to help achieve the standards and deliver future Open Spaces Strategies.

**Allotments**

- 95 Allotments are a specific form of open space, divided into plots that are rented by individuals for growing fruit and vegetables. Although allotments are used by less than 0.5% of the Borough's population, they remain an important specialist feature of the Borough's GI network<sup>(57)</sup>.
- 96 They have direct and indirect benefits including providing a healthy physical and mental activity, personal satisfaction from growing produce, the fostering of social relationships and providing an alternative place to relax. Residents who have an allotment value them immensely<sup>(58)</sup>. Almost a quarter of people who rent an allotment cited it as their favourite open space anywhere and over half report that they want these spaces to be a focus for improvement in the future<sup>(59)</sup>.

Supply

- 97 8.9ha of land is set aside for allotments in the Borough, equal to 0.41ha/1000 population. In 2010, this was split between six allotment sites, two of which were run by the Council with the remainder by allotment associations, providing around 450 allotment plots. Spatially, they are

concentrated to the north and south-west of the Borough, with no provision in the west<sup>(60)</sup>

Future Provision

- 98 In 2012, a new 40 plot Council allotment will be provided in the south of Victoria Park, Laindon, which will help to address some of the unmet demand and rectify uneven distribution in the south-east of the Borough. The Council will continue to lend its expertise to Town and Parish Councils to assist in their efforts to secure allotment provision for their residents<sup>(61)</sup>.

**Burial Space**

- 99 Churchyards and cemeteries provide significant value to people and communities and are recognised as specialist open spaces in their own right<sup>(62)</sup>. They are commonly situated alongside historic churches or other religious buildings and provide a sombre, tranquil setting for memory and reflection.
- 100 There are seventeen churchyards and cemeteries in the Borough and each is an important site within its locality, if not the wider area. Most are maintained directly by Parochial Church Councils or private operators rather than Basildon Council and are controlled in accordance with specific rites, ecclesiastical laws and customs<sup>(63)</sup>.
- 101 The Council maintains three public cemeteries; Great Burstead (opened 1971); Wickford Cemetery (opened 1928) and Pitsea New Cemetery (opened 1947), which in area terms amount to 68% of all churchyards and cemeteries in the Borough.
- 102 While the churchyards are intrinsically civilised places, they are also biodiversity-rich with mature trees, hedgerows and well established habitats including grassland, woodland and scrub. It is these habitats which attract species such as bats, beetles and butterflies, as

56 PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part I, March 2010  
 57 PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part I, March 2010  
 58 Basildon District Open Space Survey 2009  
 59 Basildon District Open Space Survey 2009  
 60 Draft PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part II, 2011.  
 61 S. 29 (9) Local Government Act 1972  
 62 PPG17: Open Space, Sports and Recreation  
 63 Draft PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part II 2011.

well as foraging animals. The memorials and headstones of older churchyards provide unusual 'masonry habitat' similar to rocky outcrops which are rare in the urban areas but provide homes to ferns, invertebrates, lichens, fungi and mosses.

- 103** For many years, burial space has been provided in response to demand from the public, private providers and faith groups. The Government has ascertained that there is no evidence of any lack of willingness for this to continue and therefore legislation has not been necessary to ensure space remains available<sup>(64)</sup>. There is **no legal duty** therefore on the Council to provide burial space; although it is appropriate for the LDF to consider future burial needs in terms of any spatial implications.

#### Demand

- 104** In 2009, just over 73% of all deaths in Britain resulted in a choice of cremation, which represents a steady rise since 1970<sup>(65)</sup>. This has reduced the pressure on the take-up of space in burial grounds, although cemeteries are more commonly setting aside areas for the interment of ashes with smaller memorial markers.
- 105** The Council has for many years worked to a general principle of being able to identify sufficient burial land capacity for the needs of a generation<sup>(66)</sup>. There will continue to be a steady demand from the Borough's communities for this type of open space and planning for future provision should be based on a close examination of burial and cremation rates alongside the expected growth of the local population.
- 106** Based on mortality rates, the national average for cremations and a decade of annual burial figures, the Council handles approximately 1/5th of all burials arising

from deaths in the Borough<sup>(67)</sup>. In 2009-2010<sup>(68)</sup>, there were an estimated 900 burials, with 303 new graves opened at Council sites. With each grave<sup>(69)</sup> being around 4.5m<sup>2</sup>, this equates to almost 0.14ha of land (1400m<sup>2</sup>) being used for burial purposes in 2009-2010.

- 107** Rates are not constant or typical year-to-year with analysis<sup>(70)</sup> showing that there has been greater demand for public sites in times of adverse weather or national health emergencies. Overall, the trend in Basildon Borough over the previous decade has been an increase in demand for burial plots of about 2.5% per annum.
- 108** Population growth will inevitably impact on the need for more burial space, proportional to the amount of people living in the area, factoring in average mortality rates<sup>(71)</sup> there is a need for at least 3.1ha of land to accommodate all burials until 2040.<sup>(72)</sup>
- 109** It is estimated there will be a demand for just under 7,000 public burial plots up to 2040; with approximately 28,000 burials taking place at private sites over the same period<sup>(73)</sup>. Only 1.8ha of land is currently set aside for future public burials, leaving a deficiency of 1.3ha which could be provided by the private sector, through extensions to existing public cemeteries or new public cemeteries where resources permit.
- 110** The privately run section of Pitsea Cemetery has 3ha of land set aside for burial space adjacent to Basildon Crematorium, which based on the above, could play a substantial role in accommodating the Borough's future demand for burial space if extensions or additions to the public cemetery estate are not pursued. It is clear that the options currently available to local people for burial

64 Ministry of Justice (June 2007) Burial Law and Policy in 21st Century: The Way Forward

65 Cremation Society of Great Britain, 2010, <http://www.srgw.demon.co.uk/CremSoc/>

66 Report to the Leisure and Health Scrutiny Committee, 24 February 2011: The Future of Cemeteries in the Borough

67 Draft PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part II 2011.

68 An assessment of interments is made every financial year, through a return to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accounting (CIPFA)

69 A grave = 3m x 1.5m and accounts for grass boundaries and pathways separating each headstone/ grave marker.

70 Draft PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part II 2011.

71 1.8% of the population - calculated from NOMIS mid year population estimates and ONS known deaths averaged over 1996-2007

72 Draft PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part II 2011.

73 Draft PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part II 2011.

in the Borough will reduce over time as public cemetery space runs out, signalling a move to private cemeteries in and outside the Borough over the plan-period where space is otherwise available.

## Catering for Outdoor Sports & Play

**111** Outdoor sports space in the Borough includes seasonal and fixed sports spaces, openly accessible to the public. Facilities include seasonal sports pitches for football, cricket and rugby and fixed sports spaces for synthetic turf pitches (STP) for football and hockey, netball and tennis courts and bowling greens. Some of these pitch facilities are located alongside other open space facilities in the Borough's urban parks or larger recreation grounds, rather than being dedicated sites.

**112** The Government's Chief Medical Officer (CMO) confirmed the benefits of regular physical activity to health, longevity, well being and protection from illness have long been established, easily surpassing the effectiveness of drugs or other medical treatment. In 2009, the CMO concluded that<sup>(74)</sup>:

- Inactivity affects 60-70% of the adult population; more than obesity, alcohol misuse and smoking combined;
- the physical fitness of children has been declining by up to 9% per decade;
- by increasing the risk of developing more than six major diseases, inactivity poses a significant risk to the population's health; and
- Physical activity tends to decline with age, but this decline is not inevitable.

**113** The CMO makes it clear that "the challenge for everyone, young and old alike, is to build these benefits into their

daily lives", therefore the availability of space in any locality is an important factor in facilitating this.

**114** One in four people will experience some kind of mental health problem in the course of a year<sup>(75)</sup> and medical practitioners are advised to encourage patients to take part in structured group physical activity to improve fitness and help treat mild to moderate depression<sup>(76)</sup>.

**115** The Active People Survey<sup>(77)</sup> shows that the proportion of the Borough's population which take part in sport and active recreation is 20.6%, greater than the national average of 16.6%. It is higher than neighbouring areas of Thurrock and Castle Point, lower than Chelmsford and Brentwood, whilst being similar to Rochford. These results represented an increase in participation rates since 2005/2006. However, the Active People Survey also showed that half of the Borough's population did not undertake any sport or active recreation sessions lasting 30 minutes. Overall, it confirms that there has been a decline in the satisfaction of sports provision in the area provided by local authorities, schools and the public sector.

## Supply & Demand

**116** The Basildon Borough Playing Pitch Strategy - Technical Assessment<sup>(78)</sup> identified that the Borough had 60 adult, 37 junior and 20 mini football pitches, 11 rugby pitches, 3 hockey pitches, 7 cricket squares, 12 netball courts, 12 outdoor tennis courts and 3 bowling greens. Cricket, rugby and football teams rely on playing on club and private sites (or Council sites managed by clubs), which is in line with national trends.

**117** The same assessment found that education establishments in the Borough also provide a significant contribution to community use, and there remains the potential to expand this in the future to meet needs, subject to the schools' agreement. A significant share of sports

74 2009 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health  
 75 <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/mental-health-statistics/>  
 76 Treatment and Management of Depression in Adults, 2009, NICE, p5  
 77 IPSOS Mori (for Sport England), 2009  
 78 RQA Ltd, 2011i

pitches for local and sub-regional clubs are also provided at various locations in the Borough's Green Belt<sup>(79)</sup>.

- 118** Demand modelling using cross-sector data suggests that as the Borough's population rises, more adult and junior football pitches, over and above any other sport, will be need to be provided to meet local needs. There is relatively less interest in the sports of rugby, cricket and hockey<sup>(80)</sup>. Standards have been developed drawing from audit analysis and benchmarking with neighbouring authorities to assist in securing additional and enhanced facilities to meet the Borough's growing needs.

**Standard LCR3: Playing Pitch Standard<sup>(81)</sup>.**

- i) 1.5ha/1,000 population (or 15m<sup>2</sup> per person) of sports pitches
- ii) 257m<sup>2</sup> /1,000 population of Synthetic Turf Pitches (1 pitch/ 25,000 population)
- iii) 0.8 courts/ 1,000 population of Outdoor Tennis Courts (2 courts/ 2,500 population)

- 119** A qualitative audit of changing rooms<sup>(82)</sup> and sporting pavilions which provide supporting facilities to playing pitches indicates that those owned by clubs tend to be of a better quality, whilst those in need of refurbishment or replacement tend to be publicly owned. Users of Green Belt pitch locations, which account for around 50% of the current supply have to use temporary changing rooms, toilets and store rooms, often housed in portacabins or shipping containers, which do not meet desired quality standards and affect the general play experience of all users.

Reviewing Play Space Provision

- 120** In accordance with PPG17<sup>(83)</sup>, the provision of children and young people's spaces in the Borough has been reviewed

with a view to adopting new standards for the continued provision of meeting the needs and demands of younger residents.

- 121** The Council's Play Strategy 2007-2012 was produced with the help of the Essex Play Partnership. It concluded that when comparing Basildon Borough with other local authorities of a similar size, it has a relatively high number of designated play areas. The review of play provision in the Borough concluded that many of the Borough's play areas were not up to an acceptable standard and were not benefiting the local community as they should be, principally owing to a lack of play equipment.
- 122** The Play Strategy proposed to resolve this by creating large play hubs with multiple activities that encourage mass participation. These would then be complemented by smaller more localised play areas of a quality compliant with national standards for play areas, rather than focusing on the number of areas provided.

Provision

- 123** There are 151 play areas for children and young people across the Borough of which can be classed as:
- Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAP)
  - Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP)
  - Local Landscaped Areas of Play (LLAP)
  - Local Areas of Play (LAP)
  - Multi Use Sports Areas (MUSAs)
  - Skate & BMX Parks
  - Youth Shelters

79 Basildon Borough Playing Pitch Strategy Review - Technical Addendum 2011, RQA Ltd

80 Basildon Borough Playing Pitch Strategy Review - Technical Addendum 2011, RQA Ltd

81 Basildon Borough Playing Pitch Strategy Review - Technical Addendum 2011, RQA Ltd

82 RQA Ltd 2010

83 PPG17 recognises within its broad set of typologies that open spaces including provision for children and teenagers including play areas, stakeboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops and other more informal areas such as 'hang out' shelters

**124** Play space provision varies by types and quality across the Borough. The rural area separating the three main towns has relatively good overall provision with a high proportion of LEAPs. Billericay and Wickford have similar overall provision, although the breakdown in Billericay is more focused on LAPs rather than NEAPs or LEAPs, which is the opposite in Wickford.

**125** The Basildon, Laindon and Pitsea area has the greatest overall number and ratio of spaces to children, but a relatively high proportion of these are LAPs, with low ratios of the better equipped LEAPs. According to ONS, Basildon, Laindon and Pitsea are also home to more children compared with the rest of the Borough, which impacts on the provision required to meet local needs. The scale and elongated settlement pattern of the Basildon area will affect the number of spaces required to provide for the population compared to Billericay and Wickford, where centralised spaces can provide better coverage for a larger proportion of the population.

Future

**126** Fields in Trust (FIT)<sup>(84)</sup> recommends adopting different standards for play spaces. Whilst the FIT standard is a recommended benchmark for the whole country, it is more appropriate for inner city locations with higher population densities than to more suburban or rural locations<sup>(85)</sup>..

**127** Conversely, the Draft PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part II 2011 and the Play Strategy 2007 identify that the focus in the future should be to provide good quality, accessible provision based on the current needs of the Borough's residents, rather than continuing to maintain a legacy of spaces built for the greater number of young families that moved to the area from the 1950s. Adopting local standards for the Borough would therefore be more appropriate, as below:

<b>Standard LCR4 : Play Space Standard<sup>(86)</sup></b>	
<p><b>A minimum of 2.5 play spaces (NEAP, LEAP/LLAP and LAP) per 1,000 children in a Settlement Area and no less than:</b></p> <p><b>1 NEAP per 6,000 children</b></p> <p><b>1 LEAP/LLAP per 1,000 children</b></p>	

<b>Standard LCR5: Play Space Accessibility Standard<sup>(87)</sup></b>	
<b>Type of play space</b>	<b>Straight line distance (m)</b>
LAP	<b>200</b>
LEAP/LLAP	<b>350</b>
NEAP	<b>800</b>

**128** These standards reflect the demand for a greater number of equipped play spaces to act as play hubs with a higher play value in more accessible locations based on local views to have more equipped areas available near to where people live. They provide an aspiration for the Borough and achieve a balance between the need to provide a greater number of high quality play locations and the enhancement to existing facilities without being unrealistically demanding from a maintenance perspective.

**Heritage, Design and Local Character**

**129** The Borough's environment has been influenced by different people, industry and customs over the centuries which have made its mark on local character.

84 Formerly known as the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA)  
 85 Basildon Borough Playing Pitch Strategy Review - Technical Addendum 2011, RQA Ltd  
 86 Draft PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part II, 2011  
 87 Draft PPG17 Open Space Assessment Part II, 2011

- 130** The Borough's three Scheduled Monuments and 125 Listed Buildings are protected and enhanced through national legislation and policy<sup>(88)</sup>. A local "Heritage at Risk" register<sup>(89)</sup>, maintained by Essex County Council identifies those buildings which are in poor condition and are in need of repair by their existing owners, or through an appropriate development. In addition, there are around 600 heritage features of archaeological importance in the Borough on the Essex Historic Register; the most recent in terms of origin includes the World War II GHQ defence line which dissects the Borough's marshes.
- 131** A review of the Borough's historic landscape<sup>(90)</sup> has divided the area into thirteen Historic Environment Character Areas, subdivided into a further fifty-three Historic Character Zones. These can be used to inform how best to sympathetically manage change so that new development respects an area's historic character and context.
- 132** Four specific localities in the Borough have distinctive historic, archaeological, architectural, spatial and natural significance, that has warranted their designation as Conservation Areas, underpinned by Conservation Area Character Appraisals in 2010 and 2011<sup>(91)</sup>. New Conservation Areas, or alternations to existing Areas may be designated in the future where it will support regeneration or improve neglected townscapes. In the long term, Conservation Area Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be developed and adopted for each Conservation Area to help identify and manage key actions to improve their distinctive qualities.

## Drivers for Change

- 133** The borough's attractive environment is one of it's key strengths in many people's minds<sup>(92)</sup> and safeguards to protect and

enhance the best of its landscapes, wildlife and heritage - whilst encouraging responsible enjoyment of it must therefore be at the centre of the council's considerations for the future.

### Protecting and Enhancing the Borough's Built and Natural Assets, Landscapes and Heritage & Achieving Sense of Place

- 134** The different natural and built environments that make up the Basildon Borough help to form local identities and are often a cherished source for civic pride and belonging, consideration needs to be given to ensure that development is locally distinctive and contribute to the identity of the area. One factor which needs to be considered in securing local identity and sense of place is the retention of individual settlements and the avoidance of coalescence where development occurs as well as the safeguarding of natural and historical assets such as conservation areas and wildlife reserves. Consideration of the wider landscape character areas may also serve as a tool to help guide local design which identifies localised issues and factors unique to individual settlements or wider locations and these will need to be accommodated where development occurs.

### A valued Green Belt

- 135** With the vast majority of the Basildon Borough countryside designated as Green Belt steps will need to be taken to enhance its function and manage its role to ensure that it continues to serve the borough to the highest possible standard and to the highest quality. Included within the green belt are areas of significant biodiversity such as South Essex Marshes, areas of recreation such as Barleylands Farm and Wat Tyler Country Park, these alongside those identified within the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan will need to receive protection and enhancement for the benefit of wildlife and biodiversity levels in perpetuity. It is likely that the green belt

88 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, PPS5 2010

89 Listed Buildings may be at risk due to factors such as lack of regular maintenance, vacancy and vandals, theft of architectural features or arson.

90 Basildon Borough Historic Environment Characterisation Assessment, Essex County Council, 2011

91 Billericay Town Centre, Little Burstead and Great Burstead were appraised in 2010 by Beacon Planning Ltd and Noak Bridge was appraised in 2011 by Essex County Council

92 Basildon Citizen Panel Survey August 2011

will face increasing pressure from development going forward through the expansion of existing settlements and through infilling of the plotlands. These development pressures will need to be managed and balanced accordingly and an appraisal of the green belt, in its entirety, will be necessary to identify those areas that continue to serve their green belt function to high standards and those that are of poorer quality and struggling to retain their green belt roles.

Urban Drainage Schemes and in the consideration of waste management which may be as small an issue of suitable place for recycling bins through to the designation and allocation of land for a waste treatment facility. Basildon Borough has a role to play in these matters and the borough will need to take precautions to consider how environmental considerations can be factored into its strategies and development going forward.

## Green Infrastructure

**136** Following on from the legacy of the New Town, Basildon Borough continues to have a generous supply of open spaces, however some of these are of poor quality which acts as a barrier to their use and in parts of the borough, such as Wickford, communities find it difficult to access quality, 'fit for purpose' open spaces and a rational approach to improving open space provisions is necessary. Despite having a wealth of open space within the vast green belt, access to natural open spaces remains a problem. As a borough rich in countryside and waterways the opportunity to alter the approach to green space by redefining the approach to formalised open space exists and increasing access to natural open spaces through the promotion and upgrading of footpaths/public rights of way, green and blue corridors and bridle ways helps to promote healthier lifestyles which can be accessed via bicycle and sustainable modes of transport. When properly designed into and around develop, these strategic green infrastructure corridors can act as 'green fingers' into and out of the countryside allowing for more attractive development which benefits both communities and the wildlife that also use them.

## The Environment & Design

**137** Growing populations, modern living and changing climate is presenting new challenges for all areas of society, this is felt more keenly where development is a pressure as is the case for Basildon Borough. Going forward there is a need to be more environmentally conscious in design of any and all development to allow for increased rainfall, through Sustainable



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