

**WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL  
LEISURE AND RECREATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT**

**EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This document is an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) which West Wiltshire District Council (the Council) has prepared for the Leisure and Recreation Development Plan Document (DPD).
- 1.2 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires all local authorities to conduct and publish race equality impact assessments. Similar legislation has been introduced for disabilities and gender. Good practice indicates that all equalities decisions, that is race, gender, disability, religion/belief, age and sexual orientation, should be reviewed at the same time.
- 1.3 The Equality Standard for Local Government, which has been described as “a voluntary best value performance indicator”, also requires evidence for equality impact assessments to ensure that councils assess their policies, practices and procedures to determine whether they have an adverse impact on any section of the community. The Council has committed itself to the implementation of the Equality Standard across all areas of equality.

**2. Purpose of the Leisure and Recreation DPD**

- 2.1 The purpose of the DPD is to review open space and sport and recreation planning policies in West Wiltshire. It is intended to provide the spatial framework for the immediate and future provision of leisure and recreation open space in the District up to the year 2016. In particular, it seeks to deliver the following outcomes, to:
- (a) ensure that future provision of open space and sport and recreation facilities better meets local needs by identifying local standards of provision;
  - (b) ensure that the existing provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities better meets local needs, by putting in place a framework to review existing low value provision; and
  - (c) identify and deliver further provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities in areas of need.

### **3. Particular demographic characteristics with respect to leisure and recreation provision in West Wiltshire**

- 3.1 In terms of population distribution, approximately 89,500 people, or 75% of the total district population, are located in the five towns of Trowbridge, Bradford on Avon, Melksham, Warminster and Westbury (2001 Census figures). In consequence, leisure and recreation provision is principally focused on these urban centres.
- 3.2 The remaining 25% of the population is spread across the approximately 517 km of the District in villages and rural areas. These areas look to the main towns for their principal recreation and other higher order needs, such as shopping.
- 3.3 With regard to age profile, the District's growing population has a relatively high proportion (20.4%) of young people under 16. This proportion is increasing. In common with the country as a whole, it also has a growing proportion of people of aged 60 and above (22.4%).
- 3.4 The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population of the District amounts to 3.0%. The largest non-white group, black Caribbean, amounts to no more than 0.31%. In terms of religion, only 5% of residents are of faiths other than Christian.
- 3.5 In terms of gender, 51% of the population is female and 49% is male.
- 3.6 Recent research (2006) suggests that 23.6% of the population of Wiltshire as a whole has a long standing illness, disability or infirmity. In West Wiltshire in 2006, it was estimated that 14.5% of the population of working age were disabled.

### **4. The vision for West Wiltshire**

- 4.1 The vision for the District, which is set out in the DPD states:

*West Wiltshire will have a network of safe, accessible, high quality spaces and sport and recreation facilities that makes West Wiltshire a place to be proud of, meets local needs and enhances the "liveability" of the District, promotes health and wellbeing, promotes sustainability, supports biodiversity and makes the best use of land.*

"Liveability" is defined as *environmental qualities which make a place attractive to live and work in.*

- 4.2 In this context, the Leisure and Recreation DPD puts forward policies and proposals which address the following issues:
  - (a) levels of provision, including equality of provision for all residents to access recreational facilities;

- (b) provision for outdoor sport, including the need to address existing inadequate provision in Melksham, Trowbridge and Westbury;
- (c) maximising countryside recreation and access, where consistent with landscape quality and biodiversity;
- (d) better management and maintenance of green spaces, including ensuring safety and encouraging local communities to become more involved;
- (e) provision for indoor sports, including the need for refurbishment or replacement of facilities;
- (f) provision for children's play, including the need to address the need for more stimulation and excitement in equipment;
- (g) provision for young people, particularly in areas of deprivation;
- (h) provision for water-based recreation;
- (i) country parks, including increased access to the countryside through the rights of way network;
- (j) the need for more tree cover to improve amenity in both town and countryside;
- (k) working with schools, particularly to maximise the use of existing facilities for the wider community; and
- (l) funding, which is likely to prove problematic.

**5. In what ways might the above policies contained in the DPD affect some groups of people differently?**

**Location**

- 5.1 By virtue of the geography of the District, as well as the distribution of the population, the majority of the major recreation facilities are, and will continue to be, located in the five principal towns. This is because it is inherently more sustainable to focus on minimising the journey times of three quarters of the population, especially where the public transport networks are most extensive. This practice accords with the general principles set out in PPG17, and will also ensure that such facilities are located closer to the areas of deprivation in the District, which are also in the towns, particularly Trowbridge.
- 5.2 Policy CR3, Greenspace Network, seeks to develop extensive linked areas of open space, wildlife habitats and walkways in and around the urban areas within the District. This should both address the general need for additional leisure and recreation facilities, and also target the areas of greatest need, serving the greater proportion of the population.
- 5.3 At the same time, the Council seeks to provide, and maintain, lower order facilities such as children's play areas, in rural as well as urban locations. In addition, it will sometimes be necessary to provide new extensive facilities, such as playing fields, on the edge of the major towns, since the larger sites necessary for these may not be available closer to the town centres. However, such facilities will be located in

accordance with the sequential approach, as is made clear in Policy LP5.

### **Age**

- 5.4 The DPD seeks to address the recreational and open space needs of all age groups in the District equitably, by ensuring that all facilities provided are equally accessible, of high quality, and service a wide range of leisure and recreational needs.
- 5.5 In recognition of the increase in the number of young people as a percentage of the total population, specific policies are proposed to accommodate young people's needs. For example, Policy YP1 sets out a strategy for the development of children's play areas, and Policy YP2 aims to produce a network of facilities that caters for the recreational needs of teenagers.

### **Disability**

- 5.6 The DPD should not have a negative differential effect on this equalities group. A core aim of the Council is to improve accessibility to leisure and recreational facilities for all sectors of the community, including the physically impaired. For example, the Council's indoor sports and play facilities are designed to be appropriately accessible to those with disabilities, and this includes the provision of specific sessions at leisure centres for this group. In addition, the Council is starting to install equipment suitable for use by disabled children in all its children's play areas throughout the District.

### **Gender**

- 5.7 The Council adheres to a policy which ensures that all its leisure and recreational facilities are accessible to all without regard to gender. For example, the Council's indoor leisure centres offer a range of separate sessions for males and females. In addition, separate changing facilities are provided, although this will not help people with transgender issues. To assist parents, childminding facilities are available at a number of centres, for example Castle Place, Trowbridge, Warminster and the Christie Miller Sports Centre, Melksham.

### **Race**

- 5.8 The Council adheres to a policy which ensures that all its leisure and recreational facilities are accessible to all without regard to racial identity.

### **Religion/belief**

- 5.9 The Council adheres to a policy which ensures that all its leisure and recreational facilities are accessible to all without regard to their religious belief. At the same time, it makes special provision to accommodate special needs wherever possible. For example, the Council makes special swimming provision available for Muslim women and children.

### **Sexual orientation**

- 5.10 The Council adheres to a policy which ensures that all its leisure and recreational facilities are accessible to all without regard to their sexual orientation.

### **Conclusion**

- 5.11 The DPD is intended to address the need for leisure and recreation facilities. Insofar as there is a need for specific provision, for example for children or young people, this is addressed directly through the policies. However, the delivery of leisure and recreation services is mainly a matter of management practice, for example the provision of special opportunities and sessions for disabled people. In either case, this EIA has sought to demonstrate that none of the target groups should in any way be disadvantaged by the DPD.

## **6. Actions proposed as a result of this EIA**

### **Preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

- 6.1 Following the adoption of the DPD, it is proposed to prepare an SPD. This will set out the financing of the additional and/or improved quality leisure and recreation provision proposed in the DPD, which in turn will be designed to provide for an improved and more equitable spread of facilities.

### **Monitoring Framework**

- 6.2 A Monitoring Framework has been constructed, and is illustrated in Table 1 on page 50 of the DPD, in order to assess the effectiveness of the delivery of the DPD objectives. As stated on page 49 of the DPD, a priority will be to monitor the impact of development, in order to ensure that policies do not have an unfavourable impact on any equalities group.

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