

CHAPTER 6

OPEN SPACE

6.1 PART I POLICIES

POLICY (I) O1: TO SEEK IN REGARD TO OPEN LAND OUTSIDE THE GREEN BELT, TO BALANCE THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY FOR OPEN SPACE WITH USES INVOLVING SOME FORM OF BUILT DEVELOPMENT.

POLICY (I) O2: TO PROTECT AREAS OF OPEN LAND OF STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OUTSIDE THE GREEN BELT FROM INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT BY DESIGNATING SUCH AREAS AS METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND.

POLICY (I) O3: TO SEEK TO PROMOTE GREEN CHAINS WITHIN APPROPRIATE AREAS OF THE BOROUGH SO AS TO AFFORD ADDITIONAL PROTECTION TO THE OPEN SPACE, RECREATION AND NATURE CONSERVATION ELEMENTS WITHIN THOSE AREAS AND TO RESIST DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD DETRACT FROM OR SEVER AN EXISTING OR PROPOSED GREEN CHAIN.

POLICY (I) O4: TO SAFEGUARD AND TO TAKE OPPORTUNITIES TO ADD TO AREAS OF OPEN SPACE, APPROPRIATE TO THE STRATEGIC NEEDS OF THE REGION AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE BOROUGH.

6.2 OPEN LAND AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

6.2.1 All open areas, whether they are covered by designations such as Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land or Green Chains or whether they simply exist as other open areas, potentially have an important role to play in the structure and function of urban areas. These functions vary, depending for example on size, location and ownership. Generally, to function as "open space", areas will need to make some positive contribution to recreation or to the visual attractiveness of the area. They will also need to provide a break in the urban built environment. Where areas do not make such a contribution at the present time, they will be classified as "other open land".

6.2.2 Within an established built up area such as Enfield, open areas represent a finite and diminishing resource. Because its development costs are usually low, open land, whether in public or private ownership, is often regarded as a reservoir for future development. It is the Council's role to balance the community's long term needs for open space on the one hand and built development on the other. Playing fields which form part of under-used or redundant schools are the most obvious example of where this role needs to be exercised. In so doing the Council will have regard to the need not only for open recreational land, but also to conserve and enhance the character of the Borough, and to the fact that it may not be possible to replace areas of open land which are lost.

6.2.3 The Council's intention, therefore, is not only to protect open space adequately, but also to ensure that it is used as effectively and efficiently as possible. Maximising the degree of access to open space is integral to this aim.

6.3 METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND

6.3.1 Within the built-up area of the Borough, there are certain areas of major open space. These have been designated in the UDP as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and are identified on the Proposals Map. They are located at or in the vicinity of Bullsmoor Lane/Turkey Street, Albany Park, Durants Park, Jubilee Park, Enfield Playing Fields, Pymmes Park, Enfield Town, Bush Hill Golf Course, Enfield Golf Course, Oakwood Park, Grovelands Park, Broomfield Park, Arnos Park, Bramley Road/Oakhill Theological College, Norfolk Park, and four areas adjoining the A10 in West Edmonton.

6.3.2 MOL is defined in Strategic Guidance (para. 60) as any strategic open land within the urban area which is of significance to London as a whole, or is of more than borough-wide importance. Such land may contribute to the physical structure or character of London by providing attractive breaks in the built-up area. It may include open air facilities, especially for leisure, recreation and sport. It may also contain features or landscape of historic, recreational, nature conservation or scientific interest worthy of protection.

6.3.3 MOL may thus be regarded in much the same way as Green Belt land. It is important in both structure and function to the urban area which it serves. It is irreplaceable once lost and has experienced pressure for development. Unlike the Green Belt, however, it does not generally form part of an extensive tract of open land and, being more closely interwoven with the built fabric of an urban area, it may be regarded as more vulnerable to the threat of built or other undesirable development.

6.3.4 Given the important function of open land and its vulnerability to development, it is the Council's policy to designate, defend and to seek to enhance areas of MOL in the Borough. Moreover, certain areas of open land which may not be significant in themselves, may form part of larger corridors or groups of open space and thereby qualify for designation as MOL. Such areas in particular will require policies of enhancement and improved accessibility in order to fulfil adequately their MOL role.

POLICY (II) 01: TO RESIST WITHIN METROPOLITAN OPENLAND, EXCEPT IN VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, PROPOSALS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BUILDINGS, EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS, OR FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF LAND AND EXISTING BUILDINGS, FOR PURPOSES NOT NORMALLY APPROPRIATE IN METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND (SEE POLICY (II) 02).

POLICY (II) 02: TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING GENERAL USES, TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED BUILDINGS, AS BEING APPROPRIATE IN METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND, PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSALS OR

ANCILLARY BUILDINGS DO NOT DAMAGE THE OPEN NATURE OR CHARACTER OF METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND:

- (a) Public and private open space and playing fields;
- (b) Agriculture, woodlands and orchards;
- (c) Canals, reservoirs and other areas of open water;
- (d) Golf courses;
- (e) Allotments and nursery gardens;
- (f) Cemeteries and associated crematoria;
- (g) Nature conservation;
- (h) Educational and institutional uses.

POLICY (II) O3: TO INCREASE OPEN RECREATIONAL USE AND PUBLIC ACCESS, AND TO CARRY OUT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS, HAVING REGARD TO NATURE CONSERVATION, WITHIN METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND.

POLICY (II) O4: TO PREPARE AND IMPLEMENT DETAILED STRATEGIES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND.

POLICY (II) O5: TO ENSURE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT IN PROXIMITY TO METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND, OR VISIBLE FROM IT, DOES NOT DETRACT FROM, AND WHERE POSSIBLE MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING, THE CHARACTER AND SETTING OF METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND.

6.4 GREEN CHAINS

6.4.1 The concept of "Green Chains" involves interlinking and improving access between open spaces, footpaths, river corridors, canals, bridleways and disused railways. In this way important structural, recreational and nature conservation areas and facilities can be created and better protected than where these elements exist as separate entities. Links can also be forged between the Green Belt and the urban area, and between the Green Chain and other footpaths, open spaces and leisure facilities outside its immediate vicinity.

6.4.2 Within the Borough the major possibility for the creation of a Green Chain is afforded by the New River. Opportunities will also be sought to create river corridor Green Chains linking the valleys of the Turkey, Salmons and Pymmes Brooks with the Lee Valley Park, and to link Boxer's Lake to the Green Belt. These corridors are shown diagrammatically on the Proposals Map. Realisation of the full potential of Green Chains will require a detailed strategy to be developed by the Council in consultation with all interested parties, including Thames

Water Utilities, the National Rivers Authority and others as appropriate. Such a strategy will give full consideration to all matters affecting the security of sites and dwellings in the vicinity of the proposed Green Chain.

6.4.3 Thames Water has confirmed the future of the present course of the New River in the Borough as an operational watercourse. The Council welcomes this decision, and will have appropriate regard to the operational requirements of Thames Water in the application of its UDP policies to the New River, in particular Policies (II) O6, O7, O8 and O9. The Council's current aspirations for the New River are, within the constraints imposed by its operational status, to:

- (a) See the historic watercourse, redundant loops and associated structures protected through appropriate statutory recognition;
- (b) Have the watercourse, its banks, fences, bridges and associated structures maintained substantially in their existing form (this to include provision of a water supply adequate for the proper protection of amenity and ecology) in perpetuity, at minimum direct cost to Enfield's rate/community charge payers;
- (c) Secure appropriate public use of the banks of the watercourse as part of a "Green Chain" connecting Inner London and its suburbs both to the Green Belt and with intervening parks, other open spaces and pedestrian routes, having given consideration to the security of adjacent sites and dwellings.
- (d) Secure the repair/reinstatement of the redundant loops as amenity features, as practicable.

The Council considers that these considerable and complex responsibilities are best undertaken by a large, well-resourced and technically proficient organisation. Consequently, it is of the view that Thames Water Utilities PLC (or any successor) should be managing agent, although ownership and management policy could well be vested in and decided by a specially constituted Trust (consonant with the powers and obligations delineated in the Royal Charter and subsequent statutes), should the New River be threatened with operational redundancy.

6.4.4 In many respects the Lee Valley Park already fulfils the functions of a Green Chain, and in particular it resembles the original Green Chain concept which was promoted in South East London in the 1970's. It therefore differs substantially from the other Green Chains designated in this UDP which are for the most part narrow corridors where continuous footpaths or linked open spaces do not exist at present. The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority has recently designated the whole area of the Park as a Green Chain and the Council will, therefore, support the work of the Park Authority and other agencies in seeking to promote the role of the Park as a Green Chain; for example, by seeking to ensure that neighbouring development makes a positive contribution to the improvement of the Lee Navigation towpath, and by the creation of the Park path, in accordance with Policy (II) G30.

6.4.5 While not appropriate for designation as a Green Chain since it follows a major vehicular route, the A10 corridor nevertheless contains a number of areas of MOL, playing fields, and local open spaces. The result is a series of attractive open vistas along the A10 within the Borough which it is desirable both to maintain and enhance. The Council will therefore seek both to safeguard these open spaces and to promote environmental improvements along the A10 corridor as part of its overall improvements programme (Policy (II) EN17).

POLICY (II) O6: TO PROMOTE THE NEW RIVER AS A GREEN CHAIN AND, IN ASSOCIATION WITH RIPARIAN BOROUGHES AND THAMES WATER UTILITIES PLC, TO PROMOTE PUBLIC ACCESS, NATURE CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE NEW RIVER CORRIDOR.

POLICY (II) O7: TO PREPARE AND IMPLEMENT DETAILED STRATEGIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEN CHAINS ALONG THE NEW RIVER, TURKEY, SALMONS AND PYMMES BROOKS, AND IN THE VICINITY OF BOXER'S LAKE, HAVING REGARD TO THE NEED TO PREVENT INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT, PROTECT OPEN SPACE (INCLUDING THE AREAS OF ASSOCIATED OPEN SPACE IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP), INCREASE PUBLIC ACCESS, ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL APPEARANCE AND PROMOTE THE NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE OF THESE CORRIDORS.

POLICY (II) O8: TO CONSIDER CAREFULLY PROPOSALS IN OR ADJACENT TO THE NEW RIVER, TURKEY, SALMONS AND PYMMES BROOKS, AND IN THE VICINITY OF BOXER'S LAKE, IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD THEIR ROLE AS GREEN CHAINS, AND TO IMPOSE SUITABLE CONDITIONS, INCLUDING THE NEED FOR LANDSCAPING, ON PLANNING CONSENTS.

POLICY (II) O9: TO ENCOURAGE DEVELOPERS, WHERE APPROPRIATE, TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROVISION, IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE FACILITIES AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE GREEN CHAINS AND TO TAKE ANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CREATION OF FURTHER LINKS.

6.5 URBAN OPEN SPACE

6.5.1 The urban part of the Borough contains numerous important open spaces. Some of these have been designated as strategically important, but many others also fulfil an important open space function, and they all need to be rigorously protected. Furthermore, where open land does not currently fulfil its potential contribution to urban quality, or where open space deficiencies exist, the Council will use its powers to realise improvements to facilities and to the environment.

6.5.2 The standards of publicly accessible local open space provision contained in the Greater London Development Plan, as amended by LPAC in Strategic Advice (page 54), refer to a hierarchy of parks and open spaces. These are set out in full in Appendix 1.3. Adequate open

space provision, therefore, may be defined as the existence of such a hierarchy within the prescribed distances of all parts of the Borough.

6.5.3 Whilst the Borough enjoys a good distribution of such parks and open spaces, some deficiencies do exist. The Lee Valley Regional Park and the other parks in the Green Belt fulfil the Regional Park function for the whole Borough, and also act as Metropolitan Parks for much of the north and east of the Borough. Thus more than half of the Borough's population are within the recommended distance for Metropolitan Parks, as they are for the District and Local Parks. The extent of local open space deficiency (Fig. 7) has been reduced in recent years. It is this sort of small-scale local improvement which the Council is most likely to be able to secure.

6.5.4 It is thus the Council's intention to safeguard and enhance parks and areas of open space, and to promote their use for open recreational activities. The Council will also pursue opportunities to bring other areas of land into use as open space, particularly in areas of deficiency. Development schemes, such as those for residential or commercial purposes may require complementary open space or the improvement of local open space facilities, in order to be acceptable in planning terms. The Council will therefore seek to ensure that appropriate development proposals include improvements to local open space provision. In order to provide a sound basis for assessing these matters, the Council will undertake a survey of open space within the Borough, so as to distinguish between open spaces which need to be protected from development, sites allocated for temporary recreational use, and unused open land which may be suitable for development.

6.5.5 The Council recognises the need for appropriate formal and informal play areas for children, and will seek to retain all the suitable existing play areas within the Borough. In those parts of the Borough where play areas are not easily accessible, the Council will encourage the provision of new play areas in order to meet any deficiency. Where appropriate, the Council will also seek to secure suitably located new play areas when new residential development takes place. Matters concerning the quality, safety and attractiveness of play areas will also be important considerations.

POLICY (II) O10: TO HAVE REGARD, WHEN DETERMINING PLANNING APPLICATIONS, TO THE CONTRIBUTION THAT OPEN LAND MAKES TO THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE, CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF URBAN AREAS.

POLICY (II) O11: TO RESIST THE LOSS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, PARTICULARLY IN AREAS OF OPEN SPACE DEFICIENCY, UNLESS ALTERNATIVE PROVISION OF EQUIVALENT SIZE IS MADE WITHIN THE SAME NEIGHBOURHOOD.

POLICY (II) O12: TO SEEK ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS TO AND WITHIN EXISTING PARKS AND OTHER OPEN SPACES WHERE APPROPRIATE.

POLICY (II) O13: TO SEEK IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING OPEN SPACES, INCLUDING THE INSTALLATION OF PLAY AND OTHER EQUIPMENT.

POLICY (II) O14: TO REVIEW PERIODICALLY THE USE AND LAYOUT OF EXISTING PARKS, WITH A VIEW TO CARRYING OUT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS.

POLICY (II) O15: TO CONSIDER THE USE AND ACQUISITION OF LAND APPROPRIATE FOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE PURPOSES IN THE IDENTIFIED DEFICIENCY AREAS WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY ARISES.

POLICY (II) O16: NORMALLY TO RESIST THE LOSS OF PRIVATE RECREATIONAL LAND TO OTHER USES WHERE SUCH LAND WILL BE REQUIRED TO REMEDY AN OPEN SPACE DEFICIENCY IDENTIFIED IN THE UDP, AND TO ENCOURAGE THE BRINGING INTO PUBLIC USE OF PRIVATE OPEN SPACE WHEN THOSE AREAS COME UNDER PRESSURE FOR DEVELOPMENT.

POLICY (II) O17: TO CONSIDER, SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FINANCE, THE ACQUISITION OF PRIVATE OPEN SPACES WHICH COME UNDER PRESSURE FOR DEVELOPMENT, PARTICULARLY WHEN LOCATED IN PUBLIC OPEN SPACE DEFICIENCY AREAS.

POLICY (II) O18: TO SEEK IMPROVEMENTS, WHERE APPROPRIATE, TO LOCAL OPEN SPACE PROVISION, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS, IN CONJUNCTION WITH DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS.

Playing Fields

6.5.6 Government advice contained in PPG17 "Sport and Recreation" (September 1991) states that the planning system should seek to encourage the provision of a wide range of opportunities for recreation, to ensure that adequate land is allocated both for organised sport and for informal recreation, and to resist pressures for the development of open space which conflict with the wider public interest. The London Council for Sport and Recreation stated in their publication "A Playing Field Strategy for London" (September 1990) that the value of playing fields should be recognised in a London-wide context and that it could support this view by data which it holds on the demand for and supply of playing fields in London. Outer London Boroughs like Enfield generally possess a higher level of pitch provision than Boroughs in Inner London. Thus, to help meet some of the North London deficiency, and in accordance with Policy (II) O16, there will be a presumption against the loss of playing fields.

6.5.7 There is a continuing demand for facilities for active recreation. Improvements in changing accommodation and in the nature of pitch provision would enable more flexible and more extensive use of existing facilities. Examples of the latter might include, in appropriate circumstances, the dual use of school playing fields, the use of floodlights and the provision of artificial surfaces.

6.5.8 Private sports clubs are recognised as being an important element in the social and recreational life of the community. The Council will continue to encourage them through the Sports Advisory Council, by means of grants and loans, and by the leasing of publicly-owned land where this would not conflict with other recreational policies.

POLICY (II) O19: TO RETAIN AND IMPROVE EXISTING PUBLIC PLAYING FIELDS AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES TO MEET LOCAL DEMAND AND TO ASSIST IN MEETING SOME OF THE DEFICIENCIES EXPERIENCED IN NORTH LONDON.

Leisure Gardens (Allotments)

6.5.9 The Council takes the view that allotments are a leisure resource and may therefore be regarded as leisure gardens. In recent years, the demand for leisure gardens in the Borough has declined. In line with its established policies, therefore, the Council has reduced the overall level of provision, while at the same time taking the opportunity to rationalise the distribution of sites. The Council will, however, continue to monitor the need for leisure gardens, to make appropriate provision for them in line with the level of demand, and to encourage their use.

POLICY (II) O20: TO REVIEW AT REGULAR INTERVALS THE PRESENT DISTRIBUTION AND USE OF LEISURE GARDENS SO AS TO ENSURE THAT PROVISION MEETS LOCAL NEEDS.