

Recreation and tourism

- Introduction
- Strategy, objectives and targets
- Strategy
- Objectives and targets
- Policies and proposals
- RT1 - Existing provision for recreation in the urban area
- RT2 - New provision for recreation in the urban area
- RT3 - Recreation in the countryside
- RT4 - Recreation in the countryside

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades there has been a general trend towards greater participation in sport and recreation, both nationally and locally. Increasing amounts of leisure time, greater personal mobility, higher disposable incomes and health education have all contributed towards the increasing demand for sport and recreation facilities. At the same time, these factors have also contributed to the development of tourism, to the extent that tourism has become one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the national economy and is also increasingly making an important contribution to the local economy.

Looking first at recreational provision, in Bury, as elsewhere, demand for formal recreation facilities is likely to continue to grow in the future. A comparison of existing outdoor provision in the Borough with the National Playing Fields Association standard shows there to be a number of deficiencies. The most notable shortfall is in the provision of sports pitches, particularly in Prestwich and Whitefield. It is unlikely that there will be many opportunities to make major improvements in the amount of provision for formal recreation. It will, therefore, be important to protect existing sites from development and to encourage the upgrading of existing facilities. Some new provision may accompany large housing developments to cater for the demand generated by the development.

There has also been a growth in the demand for, and an increasing awareness of the need to provide for informal recreation in recent years. Derelict land reclamation and river valley improvement schemes in the Borough, have improved access and provision for informal recreation. Such schemes serve to enhance the image of the Borough as well as provide improved opportunities for both residents and visitors to participate in informal recreation. The demand for informal recreation is likely to continue in the future, and it is therefore important to ensure that provision is made and improved when and where possible.

Tourism in Bury is a new and rapidly expanding activity, which is bringing both economic and social benefits to the Borough. To date, tourism has centred on local heritage and the natural environment and it is envisaged that future developments will continue in this vein, which would be compatible with the overall strategy for tourism development in the Borough. It is important that the UDP makes provision for this growth to continue and allows the Borough's tourism package to develop.

Manchester Airport is a major factor in the development of tourism not only in the North West of England but the Country as a whole. The provision of improved facilities and infrastructure at the airport will be of benefit to tourism regionally and will also assist the development of tourism in the Borough.

The policies and proposals of the UDP will build on the developing trends in recreation and tourism and will aim to ensure that the future needs of residents and visitors are met in line with Strategic Guidance for Greater Manchester and the Council's adopted UDP Strategy. This recognises that recreation and tourism make an important contribution to the quality of life and the economic well-being of the Borough and its residents.

STRATEGY, OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

Strategy

The Strategy for the Plan has taken account of such issues as the increasing demand for recreation facilities and the growth of tourism as a local economic activity, as well as national planning policy and Strategic Guidance for Greater Manchester. The main aims for the recreation and tourism policies in the UDP are to safeguard and improve existing land and facilities used for sport and recreation, to improve provision and increase public access to the countryside for informal recreation and to encourage the further development of tourism in the Borough.

Objectives and Targets

To achieve the broad aims for the recreation and tourism policies set out in the Strategy, a number of more detailed objectives and targets have been identified below. Each of these objectives is listed, followed by the relevant targets. It should be noted that some of the targets may relate to more than one objective, and where this occurs the target has been listed with what is felt to be the most appropriate objective.

Objective 1: To safeguard and enhance existing facilities for sport and recreation in the Borough.

- Resisting proposals which would lead to a loss of public or private recreation facilities, unless adequate alternative provision is made as part of the proposal.
- Upgrading of existing recreation facilities.

Objective 2: To encourage the provision of additional facilities for sport and recreation.

- Giving favourable consideration to proposals involving the provision of recreation facilities.
- Ensuring that developers of new housing make suitable provision for the recreational demands of the prospective residents.
- Working towards an acceptable level of recreational provision.

Objective 3: To encourage the use of the Borough's river valleys and Green Belt for appropriate recreational pursuits.

- Maintaining and improving access to the countryside.
- Ensuring that recreation developments outside the urban area are compatible with the surrounding land uses.
- Improving existing facilities and developing additional countryside leisure and outdoor recreation facilities.

Objective 4: To encourage and facilitate the development of tourism in the Borough.

- Protecting existing and potential tourist attractions.
- Giving favourable consideration to the development of tourism related facilities of appropriate size and type in appropriate locations.
- Developing increased visitor accommodation.
- Giving favourable consideration to proposals which will build on the strengths of the East Lancashire Railway in particular, and the Irwell Valley in general.

POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

The detailed development control policies and proposals concerning recreation and tourism are presented below. Following each of the policies there is a reasoned justification. The appropriate general land use policies, or Part I policies, which can be found collectively in Part I of the Plan, are included in this section preceding the relevant Part II policies. The reasoned justifications for these policies are also included here.

RT1 - EXISTING PROVISION FOR RECREATION IN THE URBAN AREA

The Council will protect and give favourable consideration to the improvement of existing recreational land and facilities within the urban area.

Justification

The general trend towards increased participation in sport and recreation is likely to continue. Provision of adequate land and facilities for sport and recreation is a key ingredient in ensuring the well-being of the population and maintaining a good quality of life. However, with the lack of suitable sites and resources for new provision, and because demand is unlikely to decline, it is particularly important to safeguard and enhance existing provision. This approach is also in accordance with the recommendations made in "The Playing Pitch Strategy" prepared by the Sports Council, in conjunction with the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) and the Central Council for Physical Recreation.

This policy seeks to safeguard recreation provision which is considered vital to the quality of life enjoyed by local residents and visitors and is, therefore, consistent with the aims of the Strategy for the Plan and the advice given in PPG17 - "Sport and Recreation", both of which stress the importance of protecting existing recreational facilities.

RT1/1 - Protection of Recreation Provision in the Urban Area

Development will not be allowed where it would result in the loss of:

- **existing and proposed outdoor public or private recreation facilities (as shown on the Proposals Map), including playing fields, sports grounds, parks and gardens, children's play areas, allotments and golf courses;**
- **recreation space within settlements located in the Green Belt (not shown on the Proposals Map);**
- **indoor facilities (not shown on the Proposals Map) for which there is a recreational need; and**
- **any other unidentified recreation provision such as playing fields, sports grounds, parks and gardens, children's play areas, allotments and golf courses, including sites created during the period of the Plan.**

Exceptions to this policy may be permitted where:

- **sports and recreation facilities can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site;**
- **alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available; or**
- **it can be demonstrated that there is an excess of sports pitch provision and public open space in the area, taking account of the recreation and amenity value of such provision.**

Justification

The success of policies restricting development in the Green Belt has led to increased pressure for the development of sites within the urban area, and recreational areas are often a target for development. This policy aims to safeguard the existing level of provision for recreation in the urban area. Analysis of the Borough's 1989 Recreation Survey, in the UDP Recreation and Tourism Topic

Study, showed Bury to have a shortfall of recreational land, compared with the NPFA standard. If urban regeneration is to be successful and not erode the quality of life in the urban area, it is important that existing recreational provision is retained and safeguarded. This is particularly important where there has been investment in the laying out of these areas for particular sports activities. Once lost, such facilities are difficult and expensive to replace.

In addition, development will not necessarily be permitted on pitches allowed to fall out of use and become derelict as they potentially have the same recreational value as existing sites. It is recognised, however, that some recreation sites may genuinely become redundant and, rather than leaving them to become derelict, the Council may permit them to change to an alternative use if there is no prospect of the site being required for recreational use, either now or in the future.

Recreation sites are valuable as greenspace in their own right, by providing a break in the urban form. Being located within the urban area, the majority of recreation sites are easily accessible and their relocation to the periphery is not desirable.

The policy is also intended to apply equally to indoor recreational facilities which could come under threat for development.

RT1/2 - Improvement of Recreation Facilities

The Council will give favourable consideration to proposals for the appropriate improvement of existing recreational land and facilities in the Borough.

The following sites are allocated for improved recreation provision:

RT1/2/1 - Land East of Kenyon Street, Ramsbottom.

To provide an informal recreation area for local residents. Tree planting on the steep slope would make use of land for which an alternative use would be difficult to find and would enhance the landscape of the Irwell Valley fringe.

RT1/2/2 - Summerseat Recreation Ground.

The site is partly disused, prone to occasional flooding and does not provide the range or quality of facility needed for the area. A refurbishment of the play area, improvements to the football pitch, a new changing facility, reconsideration of the allotments site and extensive landscaping are needed.

RT1/2/3 - Clarence Park, Bury.

The site has suffered from a lack of investment for many years. Recent work has improved a rose garden and a children's play area, however, considerable work is needed to improve tennis courts, football pitches, and infrastructure such as roads and footpaths.

RT1/2/4 - King George V Playing Fields, Elton, Bury.

The site comprises a junior and senior football pitch together with a large area of currently unusable space on a landfill site. Considerable investment would be required to provide a viable playing field with new changing facilities on the landfill site. Alternatively, the landfill area could be extensively landscaped and the existing sports facilities retained.

RT1/2/5 - Openshaw Park, Bury.

The site requires security measures around the bowling green, the relocation and enhancement of play facilities, and the redevelopment of the existing play area for an all-weather sports pitch.

RT1/2/6 - Manchester Road Playing Fields, Bury.

The playing surface is of poor quality and deteriorates rapidly during the soccer season. New drainage, levelling and reseeded is needed especially at the northern end which is prone to flooding. There is the opportunity for extensive perimeter planting as well as the provision of a neighbourhood play facility.

RT1/2/7 - King George V Playing Fields, Outwood.

The site is currently under consideration as part of a wider recreation scheme for the Outwood area, and will eventually form part of a larger park with a wide range of facilities. Part of the site is too wet to be used at present and requires drainage and resurfacing. New changing rooms are necessary and the site could be expanded to a 5 or 6 pitch facility. Replacement of a totally derelict play area is a high priority.

RT1/2/8 - Land off Lindale Avenue, Sunnybank, Bury.

The site comprises an area of undeveloped land some of which is mown. It has no facilities but could be developed for various recreational activities subject to local demand.

RT1/2/9 - Land off Roch Crescent and Oak Lane, Whitefield.

This large, generally flat grassed area could be developed as playing fields, with the possibility of sports pitch facilities and changing rooms being provided later. The existing children's play area could also be expanded.

RT1/2/10 - Thatch Leach Lane Open Space, Whitefield.

The existing grassed area is often waterlogged and the play area is poorly designed with bad access. The site would benefit from drainage works and the redevelopment of the play area.

RT1/2/11 - Land off Derwent Close, Whitefield.

This derelict play area needs redeveloping and landscaping.

RT1/2/12 - Land North of Simister Lane, Simister.

At present the site is a poorly drained field grazed by horses. The site requires draining, levelling and reseeded with fencing to control access. There are also extensive opportunities for tree planting.

RT1/2/13 - Brooklands, Prestwich.

Former school playing fields now surplus to education requirements. It is intended that this site should be protected for continued recreational use. The Council is currently investigating the recreational potential of the site with a view to bringing forward possible improvements.

Justification

The improvement of existing recreation facilities will allow greater use to be made of them and thus enable a larger demand to be satisfied. This is particularly important because of the acknowledged difficulties of providing new facilities, mainly because of lack of finance and shortage of suitable sites.

Improvements range from the refurbishment of existing facilities and investment in all-weather pitches, to the provision of floodlights to increase the hours during which sports pitches may be used.

RT2 - NEW PROVISION FOR RECREATION IN THE URBAN AREA

The Council will encourage the provision of additional land and facilities for recreation in the urban area.

Justification

New provision for recreation will be welcomed, particularly as analysis of the Borough's Recreation Survey (1989) has shown that there is a shortfall in both formal sports provision and children's playspace, compared with the NPFA standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population. Although the Council recognises that it will not be possible to attain the target level of provision within the Plan period, all opportunities to extend existing provision will be explored, particularly in those areas identified as having deficiencies.

RT2/1 - Provision of New Recreation Sites

The Council will give favourable consideration to proposals involving the provision of additional recreational facilities throughout the Borough.

In particular, the following sites are allocated for new recreation provision:

RT2/1/1 - Land South of Ramsbottom Swimming Pool (0.07 ha.).

This site is allocated for the future expansion of Ramsbottom Swimming Pool by the addition of a sports hall, squash courts, health studio and gymnasium.

RT2/1/2 - Land North of Bridge Street, Ramsbottom (0.65 ha.).

This little used piece of land adjoins a public garden area and the River Irwell, and is close to Ramsbottom Station on the East Lancashire Railway Line. An informal riverside recreation area is proposed.

RT2/1/3 - Land North of Holcombe Brook Primary School (1.00 ha.).

This slightly sloping site, which is currently used for sheep grazing, could provide a valuable linked extension to the Summerseat Lane Recreation Area through the provision of a sports pitch and ancillary facilities. Public footpath no. 92 crosses the site. This site will be brought forward in conjunction with Housing Proposal H1/1/5 (Garden City). The boundary shown between the proposed recreation and new housing areas is indicative and the 1 hectare site is intended to accommodate a full size football pitch (95m x 65m), associated car park and clubhouse. Amendments to the boundary may be necessary to integrate the recreation requirement with the adjoining housing development.

RT2/1/4 - Land North of Rochdale Old Road, Bury (2.70 ha.).

This former clay pit site is to be reclaimed under a derelict land scheme as an informal recreation area.

RT2/1/5 - Land off Broad Oak Lane, Bury (3.10 ha.).

This site would provide an extension to the existing informal play area.

RT2/1/6 - Land off Dow Lane, Bury (14.20 ha.).

This site is allocated for both playing fields, and public open space (comprising children's play area and casual/informal play area). The implementation of this site will be undertaken in conjunction with the adjacent residential development.

RT2/1/7 - Land Adjacent to Goshen Park, Bury (5.30 ha.).

This area of land could provide an extension to the existing park, requiring a bridge to be constructed over the River Roch for access. Any development of the site for recreation should take account of the importance of the river as a wildlife corridor. Proposals should incorporate measures to create/preserve wildlife habitats.

RT2/1/8 - Land Adjacent to Barlow Recreation Ground, Blackford Bridge, Bury (6.50 ha.).

This site may be required to extend the existing recreation ground and therefore enable better provision to be made in this area. Proposals should incorporate measures to create/preserve wildlife habitats.

RT2/1/9 - Land to the Rear of Hawthorn Avenue, Radcliffe (1.95 ha.).

This site of mixed gradients could be landscaped to provide a casual/informal play area. Part of the site is designated a Site of Biological Importance (SBI), and any proposal should ensure its protection along with the creation of a buffer zone around it. The implementation of this proposal should be carried out in conjunction with Housing Proposal H1/1/36.

RT2/1/10 - Land off Albert Road, Whitefield (1.04 ha.).

The provision of this site for casual/informal play will enable a link to be maintained to the Thatch Leach Lane open space site from Albert Road.

Justification

The Council is keen to encourage new recreation provision and will consider all opportunities which arise, not just those listed. When considering proposals for new recreation facilities in the urban area the Council will be concerned to ensure that the proposal would not conflict with the uses and amenity of the surrounding area, and that where necessary adequate car parking is provided.

Outside the urban area, proposals will be judged against Green Belt and other open land policies, as appropriate.

RT2/2 - Recreation Provision in New Housing Development

Developers of new housing on sites of 10 or more dwellings will be expected to provide for the recreational needs of the prospective residents, by providing and laying out recreational open space within or adjacent to the development, equivalent to a standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population. Development proposals will be assessed and considered in accordance with the following criteria:

- **for larger developments, generally 50 or more dwellings, such provision would normally be expected to be by the allocation of land in accordance with the above standard. Provision should, wherever possible, be in a single plot, with a minimum site size of 0.4 hectares;**
- **for smaller developments, generally those of 10 to 49 dwellings (inclusive), the developer may alternatively, by negotiation, provide a commuted sum to the Council for the equivalent enhancement of public open space or the implementation of an outstanding recreation allocation in the nearby area;**
- **in the case of phased developments on adjacent sites, the total amount of recreational open space to be provided shall, whenever possible, be determined at the earliest application stage, in accordance with the above standard. Again, provision should be in a single plot, and laid out in accordance with a phasing programme to the satisfaction of the local planning authority.**

Justification

New housing developments can put additional pressure on existing public recreation facilities, particularly in those areas where a shortfall of provision already exists. The analysis of the Borough's Recreation Survey (1989) has shown that Prestwich and Whitefield have the lowest level of existing provision and it is in these areas that the Council will be most concerned to ensure that additional provision is secured, though this is not to say that local deficiencies do not exist elsewhere. Generally a decision as to whether or not recreation provision will need to be made within a development shall be made after taking the local circumstances into consideration.

The exact location, size and type of open space to be provided will be subject to an agreement, between the local authority and the developer, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Provision should normally be made as a single plot, in a location which will encourage its use. In some cases it may be more appropriate for developers to finance the refurbishment of nearby play spaces or the implementation of an outstanding recreation allocation.

Also, whilst it will not be a requirement for planning consent, it should be noted for information that for recreation provision made under this policy, which is to be maintained by the Council, a 20 year commuted sum for maintenance will be sought by the Council's Competitive Services Department through negotiation.

RT2/3 - Education Recreation Facilities

Development will not be allowed where it would result in the loss of education recreation facilities. Exceptions to this policy will only be permitted where each of the following requirements are satisfied:

- **it can be established that the site will not be needed in the longer term to meet educational requirements;**
- **it can be established that there is no significant demand for the use of the facility by the Council, voluntary groups or sporting bodies either at present or in the foreseeable future;**
- **there is an adequate supply of sports pitches and other recreation space within the neighbourhood.**

Justification

Education recreation facilities require special consideration because they are an important component of recreational open space. Government advice in PPG17 "Sport and Recreation" expresses caution over the disposal of land surplus to educational requirements. With the projected increase in school rolls in the 1990's and the continuing importance in terms of the recreational and amenity value which these sites provide, it is considered that education playing fields should not be disposed of unless it can be established that the sites will not be required in the longer term for school or community use. If they are genuinely redundant from educational requirements, it may be appropriate to retain them as either playing fields or for informal open space. Their location generally within residential areas, ensures accessibility, and makes these sites particularly valuable for recreation.

RT2/4 - Dual-Use of Education Facilities

The Council will support an increased level of recreational provision by looking favourably on proposals for the dual-use of education facilities and playing fields by the community.

Justification

Encouraging the dual-use of school sports facilities may help to off-set the shortage of formal sports pitches in the Borough. At present, two schools, Coney Green High School, Radcliffe and Philips High School, Whitefield, make their indoor and outdoor all-weather facilities available under dual-use arrangements. Any extension of dual-use will be dependent upon the agreement of the Governors of individual schools.

RT3 - RECREATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The Council will encourage the use of the river valleys, moorland fringe and other open land outside the urban area, for appropriate recreational pursuits.

Justification

Some 60% of the Borough is classed as open land. The majority of this is Green Belt and river valley land, which offers many opportunities for recreation. Whilst much of this recreation will be of an informal nature, particularly in the moorland and river valley areas, there may be some scope for formal recreation, but not at the expense of the important rural character of an area. Appropriate recreational pursuits should not alter the character of the landscape or affect the enjoyment of the area by others. In considering proposals for recreation in the countryside, it will be important that they do not conflict with policies on wildlife (Environment Policies EN6, EN6/1, EN6/2, EN6/3 and EN6/4), agriculture (Open Land Policies OL4, OL4/1 and OL4/3), river valleys (Open Land Policies OL5, OL5/1 and OL5/2), or noisy sports (Recreation and Tourism Policy RT3/5).

RT3/1 - Protection of Existing Recreation Provision in the Countryside

Development will not be allowed where it would result in the loss of, or prejudice the use of, areas predominantly used for recreation outside the urban area.

The following locations and areas are recognised as being particularly important focal points for informal recreation and thus should be especially safeguarded:

RT3/1/1 - Holcombe.

An area based around Holcombe Hill/Peel Monument, and Holcombe Moor to the north.

RT3/1/2 - Nuttall, Ramsbottom.

An extensive area within the Irwell Valley including Nuttall Park.

RT3/1/3 - Redisher.

An important area for informal recreation centred on Redisher Wood and the valley of Holcombe Brook.

RT3/1/4 - Burrs Country Park, Bury.

A developing country park in the Irwell Valley.

RT3/1/5 - Chesham.

Chesham Woods, a group of six woodlands on the edge of Bury, is not only important for wildlife, but also for walking.

RT3/1/6 - Elton Reservoir, Bury.

The reservoir and its surroundings are popular for both water-based activities and walking.

RT3/1/7 - Springwater Park/Radcliffe Ee's.

A developing informal recreation area in the Irwell Valley, based on the existing Springwater Park and the future potential of Radcliffe Ee's, which is to be restored for recreational use.

RT3/1/8 - Prestwich Forest Park.

A developing country park area under the Red Rose Forest initiative. Located in the Irwell Valley, it is based on the areas of Philips Park, Prestwich Clough, and Drinkwater Park.

Justification

Levels of participation in recreation have increased throughout the 1980's and this trend looks set to continue, as people increasingly find themselves with more leisure time. The Borough's river valleys and moorland fringe provide important local opportunities for informal recreation. The attractive natural environment of Bury, and particularly the major areas for informal recreation, are also considered to be some of the Borough's most valuable tourism assets.

Any proposal for recreational use of the countryside should not result in damage to the environment or areas of ecological value (e.g. SBI's), nor alter the character of the landscape or affect the enjoyment of the area by others.

The Council has produced a Countryside Recreation Strategy which outlines the main aims for the development of opportunities for informal recreation outside the urban area. Safeguarding existing focal points for informal recreation is an important element of this Strategy.

RT3/2 - Additional Provision for Recreation in the Countryside

The Council will encourage the recreational use of the Borough's countryside, and will, in particular, encourage the re-use of vacant or derelict land or water areas for this purpose. Favourable consideration will be given to proposals for appropriate recreational uses, provided that they would not:

- **have a significant detrimental effect on the environment of the area;**
- **have a significant detrimental effect on features of ecological value and wildlife importance;**

- result in an unacceptable increase in road traffic in the area;
- adversely affect the amenity of local residents or users of recreational open space;
- conflict with agricultural interests.

The following sites are allocated for countryside recreation provision:

RT3/2/1 - Nuttall, Ramsbottom (22.23 ha.).

The formal recreation area of Nuttall Park lies within this area. To enhance the significance of this area for recreation there is the opportunity to improve adjoining areas to the north and south for informal recreation. To complement the existing formal park, the former Ocean Chemicals land to the south of the park, and land between Nuttall Park and Bury New Road to the north, could be used to provide informal recreation areas, taking advantage of the riverside location and nature conservation interest. It will be important that any plans for recreation do not have a detrimental effect on the SBI to the south of the site.

RT3/2/2 - Former Ramsbottom Sewage Works and Surroundings, Summerseat (11.91 ha).

This site, known locally as Summerseat Island, has excellent potential as an informal recreation area. It is bounded by the River Irwell and the East Lancashire Railway line.

RT3/2/3 - Burrs Country Park, Bury (40.79 ha.).

This developing country park is based on the former site of two early industrial settlements. The derelict land, buildings and water features are being reclaimed for countryside recreation, including water sports and for their industrial archaeological interest.

RT3/2/4 - Kirklees Valley, Tottington (76.90 ha.).

Much of the industry which used to occupy this valley has now moved out, leaving large amounts of derelict land. The main features of the valley are the network of water courses and lodges, and the disused Holcombe Brook railway line. Along with some of the adjoining farmland, these features provide an area with considerable potential for informal recreation. The disused railway line in particular, could provide a valuable link to the Irwell Valley. Much of this area provides important habitats for wildlife and is designated as a SBI.

RT3/2/5 - Chesham, Bury (23.30 ha.).

An area of six small woodlands on the edge of Bury. Chesham is situated adjacent to the formal recreation area of Clarence Park. Various works to manage and improve the woods have been undertaken, and any future works should enhance the importance of this area for wildlife and walking.

RT3/2/6 - Elton Reservoir Area, Bury (122.34 ha.).

Centred on Elton Reservoir, this site includes part of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal, Withins Reservoir and a network of footpaths through the surrounding farmland. The area is already popular, but could be developed further to provide an important focus for informal recreation. It will be important that any proposals take account of the presence of SBI's within this area.

RT3/2/7 - Wilton Wood, Pilsworth (approx. 37.00 ha.).

This area includes land where substantial tree planting has already taken place and where further extensive areas will be planted following mineral extraction and restoration by backfilling at Pilsworth Quarry. The area will progressively provide a woodland setting for informal recreational activities.

RT3/2/8 - Radcliffe Ee's Area (82.88 ha.).

Both Close Park (formal) and Springwater Park (informal) are included in this area. To consolidate the provision for recreation, the existing waste tip on the Ee's is to be restored for recreation purposes. There is the possibility that parts of the site could also be suitable for recreational developments funded by the private sector, provided that these are compatible with the general landscape and overall recreational use of the wider area. (See also Recreation Proposal RT4/5/2).

Other adjoining areas are to be reclaimed for informal recreation. It will be important that any proposals take account of the presence of SBI's within this area.

RT3/2/9 - Outwood Area (83.85 ha.).

This area includes the existing King George V Playing Fields, and a vast amount of the surrounding land, much of which is derelict. The area is presently being considered as a whole with a view to working up a detailed scheme for informal recreation to include footpaths/tracks, tree planting and wildlife habitats and, although part of it has been reclaimed, additional reclamation work is required before its recreational potential can be maximised.

RT3/2/10 - Prestwich Forest Park (approx. 214.00 ha.).

An extensive area within the Irwell Valley, including Philips Park, Drinkwater Park and Prestwich Clough, where major tree planting will take place over the next five years. When mature it will provide a woodland setting for many formal and informal recreation activities, and will become a focus of interest within the Red Rose Forest. It will be important that any proposals take account of the presence of SBI's and the Historic Park within this area.

RT3/2/11 - Singleton Brook, Prestwich (3.24 ha.).

An untidy, neglected valley area in need of tree planting and landscaping improvements to open up the area for informal recreation and to provide a more direct pedestrian route to the Irwell Valley.

Justification

The urban fringe and river valley areas are easily accessible to much of the Borough's population and offer great potential for fulfilling informal recreation needs. The above list of sites represents those areas currently under consideration for informal recreation provision. Other opportunities may arise during the period of the Plan.

A range of recreational facilities can be accommodated in the countryside, including provision for formal recreational activities. Special consideration of the effect that they will have on the site and on existing adjoining land uses needs to be made. Particular regard will be given to noise, and the effect on the character and visual amenity of the site. Proposals for recreational activities will only be acceptable where they would not have a detrimental effect on the mainly informal open character of the Borough's countryside.

Within the Irwell Valley many areas of derelict land have been reclaimed for recreational use. Other opportunities to increase and improve informal recreation provision in the Borough should be taken as and when they arise.

RT3/3 - Access to the Countryside

The Council will seek to improve and extend opportunities for all to gain access to the countryside, in particular at focal points identified for informal recreation, by:

- **maintaining, improving and, where appropriate, extending the existing network of Public Rights of Way, footpaths, bridleways and cycleways;**
- **improving signposting and waymarking;**
- **improving facilities for the mobility impaired;**
- **providing car parks and bus facilities, where appropriate;**
- **creating new access points and areas of public access.**

Justification

The Council recognises that it is important to improve and increase access to the countryside for all members of the community. The Rights of Way network, in particular, ensures that people have access to the countryside. Maintenance and signposting of paths, the provision of car parking in appropriate locations, and consideration of the requirements of the mobility impaired, will help to ensure that access to the countryside is available for all members of the community.

In those areas listed earlier, in Recreation and Tourism Policy RT3/1, access for informal recreation is an important consideration. Whilst it is not possible to detail future proposals at this stage, it is at these focal points where recreation is concentrated, that the provision of car parking and facilities for the mobility impaired would be of greatest benefit.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all the Borough's residents and visitors are able to gain access to the countryside. Where access is poor, this policy enables new access points to be created. Encouraging increased access to the countryside must be compatible with the character and amenity of the area.

The car parking requirements in factor (d) should accord with the Council's car parking standards referred to under Highways and Transportation Policy HT2/4 - Car Parking and New Development and set out in Appendix 4 of the Plan.

RT3/4 - Recreational Routes

In promoting access to the countryside, the Council will seek to establish a network of designated recreational routes to provide access, where appropriate, for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. These routes will be safeguarded and any development which would prejudice their establishment or use will not be permitted.

The following routes are presently identified as having potential for recreational use:

RT3/4/1 - The Kirklees Valley.

A route linking Bury Town Centre and Greenmount primarily following a former railway line.

RT3/4/2 - Former Bolton to Bury/Radcliffe Railway Line.

Routes from Bradley Fold to Bury and from Bradley Fold to the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal in Radcliffe along a former railway line.

RT3/4/3 - The Roch Valley.

A route from Springwater Park in the Irwell Valley along the valley of the River Roch to link with the Ashworth Valley in Rochdale. For a part of its length the proposed route lies within the Borough of Rochdale and is, therefore, not shown on the Proposals Map.

RT3/4/4 - The Irwell Valley South of Bury Town Centre.

This route follows the canal towpath and a former railway line linking Prestwich Forest Park with Radcliffe and Bury Town Centres.

Justification

This policy reflects the Council's intention to improve opportunities for all users to gain access to the countryside (see Policy RT3/3). It is envisaged that the recreational routes defined have the potential to be developed to provide access for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders (See also Highways and Transportation Policy HT6/3).

Some sections of the routes identified on the Proposals Map are already established Rights of Way, though gaps and obstructions do exist. In implementing this policy the Council will ensure that, where appropriate, both new footpaths and improvements to existing footpaths, take account of the need to minimise the conflicts between different user groups. The Council will ensure that both reclamation schemes and new development proposals along the proposed recreation routes make satisfactory provision for public access.

RT3/5 - Noisy Sports

Development proposals involving the use of land or buildings for recreational pursuits which generate noise or nuisance will not be allowed, unless it can be demonstrated that the following criteria are satisfied:

- **the use would not have an unacceptable detrimental effect on the environment of the site and surrounding area or endanger people or property;**
- **the use would not have an unacceptable detrimental effect on the amenity of surrounding areas, particularly residential areas;**
- **the use would not have an unacceptable detrimental effect on the users of adjacent sites;**
- **any increased traffic flows generated would not have a significant detrimental effect on the surrounding area;**
- **where appropriate, adequate car parking can be provided.**

Justification

The Council is keen to ensure that proposals for noisy sports activities cause minimum conflict with other existing land uses. PPG17 "Sport and Recreation", states that the most suitable sites will include degraded land, former mineral sites or redundant farm land. Consideration will only be given to such sites where these comply with the criteria listed above to ensure minimum conflict with adjacent land uses and nearby residents.

RT4 - Tourism

The Council will promote and facilitate the development of tourism in the Borough.

Justification

Tourism is one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the economy. As tourism develops it has the potential to create and support employment, generate local income and diversify the economy, as recognised in the aims and objectives of the Draft Tourism Strategy (approved by Council, 1987). It helps to improve the image of an area both for visitors and local residents, and helps to support the arts, heritage, sport and local services. Tourism also stimulates improvements to the local environment and infrastructure. In encouraging tourism development, it is important that proposed developments respond sensitively to the local environment.

Tourism is listed as one of the key strategic topics for UDP's in PPG12 "Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance". Advice on tourism and planning is given in PPG21 "Tourism", which recommends that UDP's should include positive and realistic policies and proposals for tourism. Guidance for the North West region as a whole comes from the Regional Tourism Strategy which was reviewed in 1991.

Bury's developing tourism role has been concentrated on the upper Irwell Valley, in line with the recommendations of the Irwell Valley Initiative marketing report, which was prepared for the Council by the North West Tourist Board in 1987. The re-opening of the East Lancashire Railway as a visitor attraction, and the general upgrading of the Irwell Valley through derelict land reclamation, have greatly enhanced the Borough's attractiveness to visitors.

RT4/1 - Tourism Development

The Council will encourage and support proposals for the development of appropriate visitor related attractions and facilities throughout the Borough, but particularly in the upper Irwell Valley.

In accordance with this policy the following sites are allocated for leisure/tourism provision:

RT4/1/1 - Land Bounded by Railway Street/Irwell Street and Square Street, Ramsbottom (1.27 ha.).
An edge of centre site situated alongside the East Lancashire Railway and close to Ramsbottom Station. The site has been identified as an Opportunity Site on the Ramsbottom Town Centre Inset

Map and would be considered suitable for leisure/tourism provision, business (B1) and offices or shopping, or a mixture of these uses. See also Economy Proposal EC1/2/1 and Shopping Proposal S3/1/5.

RT4/1/2 - Mill Site, Square Street/Kay Brow, Ramsbottom (0.43 ha.).

This site contains an existing mill building which could be refurbished or redeveloped. The site is identified as an Opportunity Site and leisure/tourism use, housing, business (B1) and offices or a mixture of these uses would be considered favourably on the site. See also Economy Proposal EC1/2/2 and Housing Proposal H1/1/3.

Justification

The Council has identified the upper Irwell Valley between Bury and Ramsbottom as an area where preference will be given to locating tourist attractions and facilities, in line with the Draft Tourism Strategy (approved by Council, 1987). New attractions will help to increase the number of visitors to the area.

Tourism developments should be of a scale and style appropriate to their locations and should conform with the aims and objectives of the Draft Tourism Strategy, which can provide helpful guidance for those preparing planning applications. In the Upper Irwell Valley, development proposals will be particularly encouraged where they build on existing strengths, such as the East Lancashire Railway, and places of interest including Ramsbottom town centre, Summerseat and Burrs Country Park. It is important that tourism developments respond sensitively to the local environment and have regard to the generally open and informal landscape of much of the Irwell Valley and other countryside areas.

New developments should, therefore, complement the existing tourism themes based on the Borough's heritage, the East Lancashire Railway, markets and speciality shopping, and countryside and recreation activities.

RT4/2 - Safeguarding Tourism Assets

The Council will not permit proposals for development which would prejudice existing tourism assets or areas which have potential for tourism development.

Justification

The importance of tourism in the Borough and its part in the wider economic development context has been recognised by the Council in its Draft Tourism Strategy. This policy is intended to control any development proposals which could prejudice tourism in the Borough. The loss of existing facilities could serve to hinder tourism development, therefore, it is important that they should be safeguarded. In particular, the Council will be concerned to safeguard the East Lancashire Railway as a major tourist attraction in the Borough.

RT4/3 - Visitor Accommodation

The Council will encourage and support proposals for development which would extend the range of visitor accommodation in the Borough. Any development proposals will be assessed and considered against the following factors:

- **the appropriateness in terms of the design, scale and setting and the effect on the character, quality and visual amenity of the locality;**
- **the provision of satisfactory access;**
- **ability to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and landscaping within the site;**
- **the satisfactory compliance with development control policies for Green Belt areas and other open land policies, where appropriate.**

In accordance with this policy, the following sites are allocated for hotel/conference facilities:

RT4/3/1 - Land off Knowsley Street, Bury (1.30 ha., including existing car park).

This Council owned site occupies a prominent position in the town centre and offers the potential to accommodate a quality hotel/conference facility. The site is identified as an Opportunity Site and other uses considered appropriate for the site include business (B1) and offices, see Economy Proposal EC1/3/1. Any development of this site will also have to meet the following criteria:

- due to the prominent position of the site any development will have to reach a high standard of design;
- the existing car park should either be retained, or an equivalent number of spaces should be provided elsewhere;
- proposals should have regard to any development brief subsequently issued by the Council. Any such development brief will be issued solely for the guidance and assistance of planning applicants and will be consistent with the Plan.

RT4/3/2 - Bury Ground, Bury (13.40 ha.).

This Council owned site occupies a prominent position to the north of the town centre and has a pleasant, open character, with a river frontage and footpaths. The site is shown as an Opportunity Site and is considered to be primarily suitable for business (B1) and office use, see Economy Proposal EC1/3/2. However, combined with this use, the site is also considered to have potential for the incorporation of a hotel/conference facility. Any development of this site will also have to meet the following criteria:

- uses will be limited to B1 in the 1987 Use Classes Order, offices or hotel/conference facility;
- due to the prominent position of the site any development will have to reach a high standard of design and should attempt to minimise its affect on the Irwell Valley by careful attention to siting, design, layout, materials and landscape design;
- the open character of the site and the existing network of footpaths should be retained in a low density development;
- access to the riverside area should be maintained, and the existing river frontage remain intact or be improved;
- the showground site should be retained;
- the existing water area should be retained as a natural feature;
- access to the site will have to be provided to the satisfaction of the local planning authority;
- proposals should have regard to any development brief subsequently issued by the Council. Any such development brief will be issued solely for the guidance and assistance of planning applicants and will be consistent with the Plan.

RT4/3/3 - Crostons Road, Bury (7.00 ha.).

This site to the north west of the town centre is currently occupied by a mixture of uses, including industrial, many of which are in poor condition. The location of the site offers an opportunity for redevelopment for business (B1) and offices, and the prominent frontage of the site, on a main approach road to the town centre, also presents an opportunity for a hotel/conference facility to be incorporated in the overall redevelopment of the area. The site is shown as an Opportunity Site see Economy Proposal EC1/3/3. Any development of this site will have to meet the following criteria:

- achieve a high standard of design, especially on road and river frontages;
- access to the site should be provided to the satisfaction of the local planning authority.
- any development will have to take suitable account of any archaeological remains found on site, see Environment Policies EN3/1 and EN3/2.

RT4/3/4 - Land at the Junction of the M60 and Bury New Road, Prestwich.

This site is allocated for hotel development following the granting of outline planning permission (April 1993).

Justification

It is recognised that the provision of visitor accommodation can cause problems, particularly with possible effects on amenity in urban areas, and the controls of Green Belt policy outside the urban area. Nevertheless, this policy aims to encourage the provision of additional visitor accommodation, as there is a general shortage in the Borough, across all types from quality hotels to camping and caravan sites. An increase in visitor accommodation is considered to be important in facilitating the success of the Borough's Draft Tourism Strategy (approved by Council 1987), which can provide helpful guidance for those preparing planning applications.

Bury Town Centre, in particular, lacks hotels offering good quality accommodation and conference facilities and a number of sites have been put forward with the potential to accommodate such provision. A development of this nature would complement other initiatives aimed at enhancing the status of the town centre.

Extensions to existing accommodation and conversion of existing buildings to provide further bedspaces will be viewed favourably, where other development criteria are met.

Conversion of buildings in the Green Belt may allow accommodation to be provided in areas where new build would not be appropriate. See Open Land Policy OL1/4.

Camping and touring caravan sites may be allowed in the Green Belt, provided that sites are appropriate in size, visually unobtrusive and will not lead to unsatisfactory traffic conditions or other nuisance.

RT4/4 - Tourism Support Facilities

To aid the development of tourism in the Borough, the Council will seek to improve facilities for tourists by:

- **ensuring adequate signposting of visitor attractions;**
- **ensuring adequate car and coach parking;**
- **establishing tourist information points;**
- **giving favourable consideration to proposals for visitor related facilities in appropriate locations.**

Justification

In looking to develop tourism, it is necessary to consider all visitor needs, and this involves not just the attraction itself but also the back-up facilities. Initially it is important that visitors are able to find their way around the Borough, so adequate signposting is necessary. On arrival at their destination, access to convenient visitor car parking facilities is often equally important. Whilst in the Borough, visitors should have easy access to facilities such as information outlets, toilets and catering facilities. These facilities are often as important as the tourist attraction which is being visited, and help to make visits to the Borough a pleasant and stress-free experience. The provision of visitor related facilities, including car and coach parking outside the urban area should not be at the expense of the open character of the countryside.

Detailed proposals within this policy are expected to come forward during the period of the Plan. Such proposals will be given favourable consideration where they would help to achieve the aims of this policy.

RT4/5 - Special Tourism and Leisure Provision

The Council will identify locations for the development of leisure and tourism uses which require large sites and/or buildings. The following areas have been identified:

RT4/5/1 - Woodfields, Bury (6.88 ha.).

This site may provide the opportunity to develop leisure uses which require large buildings, along with additional provision for retailing to complement activities within the town centre. It is intended that a development brief will be prepared for this site, which is identified as an Opportunity Site. See also Shopping Proposal S3/1/7.

RT4/5/2 - Radcliffe Ee's and Surroundings.

This site is allocated as an area of search for further consideration. This isolated area of Green Belt may have the potential to accommodate leisure and tourism uses. However, a case will have to be made by any potential developer to justify an exception to Green Belt policies (See also Recreation and Tourism Proposal RT3/2/8).

RT4/5/3 - The Asda Store , Green Street, Radcliffe (0.79 ha.).

The Council recognises that this site contains an existing retailing use. However, in the event that the focus of retailing activity within the centre changes to more up to date retailing accommodation (for example at Sion Street), the Council will encourage redevelopment or re-use of this Opportunity Site. Leisure uses requiring large buildings, along with business (B1) and offices would be considered appropriate on the site, as indeed would a mixture of these. See also Shopping Proposal S3/1/22, and Economy Proposal EC1/2/12.

Justification

Major leisure and tourism facilities requiring large sites or buildings present difficulties as they can rarely be located in the urban area. The intention of this policy is to indicate areas where the potential may exist to accommodate such leisure and tourism uses. However, where such proposals arise within the Green Belt, the relevant Open Land policies of the UDP and the provisions of PPG2 "Green Belts", will apply.

RT4/6 - East Lancashire Railway

The Council will encourage and support proposals for the further development and enhancement of facilities associated with the East Lancashire Railway.

In accordance with this policy the following sites are allocated for railway related development:

RT4/6/1 - Former Ramsbottom Sidings (1.66 ha).

This land is allocated for railway related development, which could include visitor attractions which build on the strengths of the East Lancashire Railway.

RT4/6/2 - Proposed Station Halt at Miller Street, Summerseat.

It is proposed to relocate the existing Summerseat Station Halt, from its current off-centre location, to this site closer to the village.

RT4/6/3 - Proposed Station Halt, Burrs Country Park.

A new station is proposed at this developing country park to facilitate access. The derelict land, buildings and water features are being reclaimed for countryside recreation, including water sports, and direct access to the East Lancashire Railway would greatly benefit the development of the area.

RT4/6/4 - East Lancashire Railway, Heywood Link Extension.

The former Bury to Heywood railway line offers the only opportunity for the East Lancashire Railway to maintain a link to the British Rail network, following the severing of the previous link at Buckley Wells due to the development of Metrolink. The Council, in conjunction with the neighbouring borough of Rochdale, is keen to ensure the protection of the currently disused line with a view to supporting its re-establishment as a preserved operational railway, giving the East Lancashire Railway a direct link to the British Rail network at Castleton junction in Rochdale. This will enable excursion trains both in and out of the East Lancashire Railway and will have major implications for the future growth and development of the Railway, the Borough's major tourism asset. The

establishment of the Heywood Link will also open up opportunities for the movement of freight and related business development on the East Lancashire Railway, see Highways and Transportation Policy HT7/1 - Freight Facilities.

RT4/6/5 - Buckley Wells, Bury (4.36 ha.).

This Opportunity Site to the south of Bury town centre was, until recently, used as a British Rail depot. The opening of Metrolink has led to the depot's closure. The north-eastern corner of the site is occupied by a former British Rail carriage shed which is now listed. As this building occupies a strategic part of the site the building's retention will determine to a large extent the scope to develop the site. The proximity of the site to the East Lancashire Railway could stimulate interest in the redevelopment of the site for visitor related attractions which build on the strengths of the railway. In addition, the proximity of the site to a proposed new "Park and Ride" Metrolink station at Buckley Wells, (Highways and Transportation Proposal HT3/4/1), will offer a unique opportunity to integrate a suitable employment use and a major new public transport facility, see Economy Proposal EC1/2/8. A mixed development accommodating both tourism and employment uses would also be considered favourably. Access to the site will have to be provided to the satisfaction of the local planning authority.

Justification

Large numbers of day visitors are attracted to the northern part of the Borough by the successful re-opening of the East Lancashire Railway. It is important that further development of the Railway is facilitated, to maximise the number of visitors attracted to both the Railway and the wider area of the Irwell Valley. The Council will positively encourage actions which are aimed at safeguarding, improving or developing this important resource, and proposals associated with it.

RT4/7 - The Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal

The Council will protect and safeguard the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal and support proposals for its restoration. Proposals for canalside development will be expected to enhance the canal environment and not prejudice its restoration.

In accordance with this policy, the following sites are allocated for canal related development:

RT4/7/1 - Land South of Daisyfield, Bury.

The northern end of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal now terminates south of Daisyfield and a site is allocated for the development of a boat turning area and terminus facilities at this point.

RT4/7/2 - Water Street, Radcliffe.

The canal has been culverted beneath Water Street in Radcliffe. It is proposed to reconnect the main lengths of the canal still in water by re-bridging Water Street to allow the passage of boats beneath.

Justification

For a number of years the canal has been seen as having an important role to play in the environmental improvement, recreational development and economic regeneration of the Irwell Valley, a belief which has been expressed in documents such as the Croal Irwell Valley Local Plan, the Radcliffe Renewal initiative, the Mersey Basin Tourism Strategy and the Croal Irwell Valley Land Reclamation Strategy.

The canal has considerable potential for recreational uses, as it passes through the Borough, in terms of a linear recreation route for walking and cycling and, as progressively restored to navigable status, boating. The canal is also important for fishing and represents the most important aquatic habitat in the Borough.

Restoration of the canal and towpath, where appropriate, will not only provide an important recreational resource, but should maintain and increase the wildlife interest in the waterway and will

attract visitors to the area. It will make an important contribution to the regeneration of the middle Irwell Valley.