

**Providing for Our Communities**

- 1.1 Meetings of the Development Plan Working Party are being scheduled to take place each month up until April 2022. Each meeting will be introduced to different sections of the emerging draft Stockport Local Plan.
- 1.2 This report details what is currently the first topic-based policy chapter of the draft plan, titled "Providing for Our Communities."
- 1.3 Our local communities have been the lifeblood of Stockport as we have come through the Covid-19 crisis together. Active and vibrant communities and social infrastructure are a vital part of the future of Stockport in which everyone can lead healthy and happy lives. The policies in this chapter will allow the Council to manage development so that it supports or contributes, in particular, to achieving Stockport Local Plan objectives 2, 3, 4 and 8 (see report titled 'Strategic Policies', on this agenda).

**2. OUTLINE OF "PROVIDING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES"**

- 2.1 The policies in this chapter are intended to:
  - i. work to reduce health inequalities and create an environment which supports healthy and active communities across all ages;
  - ii. support the development of a comprehensive network of community and social infrastructure across the borough in accessible locations;
  - iii. help provide the facilities needed to give all children in Stockport the best start in life;
  - iv. seek to manage development of early-years and education facilities so they meet local demands but don't have an unacceptable impact on nearby properties;
  - v. set out the mechanism through which new development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of pupil places, when additional capacity is needed as a result of the development;
  - vi. seek to manage health care facilities to be in accessible locations and provide flexibility for future expansion;
  - vii. set the principles for how development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of increased health facility capacity;
  - viii. set out the mechanisms through which new development will be expected to contribute towards meeting the future recreational needs of the borough;
  - ix. safeguard and enhance our open spaces for the benefit of recreation, accessibility, visual amenity, and our resilience to climate change; and
  - x. set out a criteria-based approach for assessing future proposals for new cemetery or crematorium provision.
- 2.2 A copy of the working draft chapter "Providing for Our Communities" is set out as Appendix 1 to this report

**3. STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

- 3.1 Members will recall that the Council meeting on 15th July 2021 considered a report providing an update on the Stockport Local Plan. That meeting resolved, amongst other things:
  1. That the refreshed approach to developing a Local Plan for Stockport, including the principles set out in an appendix to the report, be endorsed; and

2. That the approach set out in the report to engaging with communities across Stockport during the Summer to assist in developing a draft Plan be endorsed and supported.
- 3.2 The Local Plan key principles engagement phase, undertaken between July and September 2021 with some continued stakeholder feedback up until the present time, has resulted in engagement and information sharing with over 2,000 residents through presentations, meetings, briefings, workshops, sharing information and an online survey.
- 3.3 This early engagement phase has contributed to our aims by:
- Increasing the understanding of our communities about the Local Plan, why we're doing it, and what it is trying to achieve;
  - Creating opportunities for our communities to input to the Local Plan and provide their views on our key principles through an online survey and through group meetings;
  - Increasing knowledge amongst our communities about future formal public consultation periods and how they will be able to submit their views. The engagement period has resulted in groups, forums and boards expressing that they want to be kept informed and asking for the Local Plan team to revisit them during the consultation phase;
  - Encouraging a broad range of stakeholders and communities with different experiences to input into the engagement period. This has included reaching into underrepresented communities through the Stockport Homes Roadshow, Planning Aid England workshops, and dissemination of information by key networks such as the Cross Sector Forum and
  - Ensuring that all engagement activities are accessible for all and are relevant and proportionate to different groups.
- 3.4 Most stakeholders are supportive of the 6 key principles set out (see <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/our-key-principles>) including that, through the Local Plan, the Council will:
- "build our plan around our neighbourhoods, celebrating and reflecting what makes our communities unique";
  - "put local infrastructure and communities at the heart of our approach, recognising the needs of our neighbourhoods and areas"; and
  - "contribute to the good health and wellbeing of our communities."

## 4. EVIDENCE

- 4.1 Draft policies in the "Providing for Our Communities" chapter have been informed by monitoring of existing Core Strategy policies, the Stockport Ageing Well Strategy (2019) as well as work to inform the Stockport One Health and Care Plan<sup>1</sup>. Community and stakeholder engagement on the One Stockport Borough Plan, and continuing engagement on the Local Plan principles have reiterated the importance and value of social and community infrastructure to our residents.
- 4.2 The need for education infrastructure to reflect the borough's growing population and changing demographics is evidenced by ongoing collaborative work with officers

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<sup>1</sup> Stockport One Health and Care Plan: see <https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/documents/s194476/Enc%201%20-%20One%20Health%20and%20Care%20Plan.pdf>

responsible for schools and education, and informed by the emerging School Sufficiency Investment Plan<sup>2</sup>. Considerable work has been undertaken to better understand the potential 'pupil yield' from development, exploring how the borough's needs will likely change over time, at a strategic and local level, and ensuring that new (residential) development is able to contribute towards meeting the additional educational needs that it generates. It is considered that this work will enable considerable strides towards resolving issues that previous development plans have been unable to address due to a lack of robust evidence.

- 4.3 Other policy areas are evidenced by the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (2020), Open Space Assessment (2017) (to be updated in early 2022) and indoor sports facilities assessment (Community Indoor Needs Assessment, 2017) (see <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/evidence-planning-policy/open-space-sport-and-recreation> for all of these). Elements have also been shaped by the Greater Manchester Moving Strategy (2021) (see <https://www.gmmoving.co.uk/about/our-strategy>).
- 4.4 Policy elements dealing with health and care are informed by ongoing collaborative work with officers working within public health and through the Stockport Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) together with key evidence including the Joint Strategic Needs' Assessment<sup>3</sup> and the CCG strategic plan 2019-2024<sup>4</sup>.
- 4.5 The final policy element, on cemeteries and crematoria, is informed by ongoing collaborative work with officers responsible for provision of such facilities and seeks to respond to long term trends with regards to need and future capacity.

## 5. DISCUSSION

- 5.1 Member are invited to comment and provide feedback on the draft "Providing for Our Communities" policies.
- 5.2 It is important to note that the draft policies in Appendix 1 are set out purely to enable transparent member deliberation and discussion. No comment is sought at this stage from the public or other interested parties; the time for that will come at the next formal stage of consultation as per the schedule established in the Local Development Scheme (see [www.stockport.gov.uk/stockport-local-development-scheme](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/stockport-local-development-scheme)).

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

See links to documents given within report and associated footnotes.

Anyone requiring further information should contact Richard Wood on 07800617505 or by email to [richard.wood@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:richard.wood@stockport.gov.uk)

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<sup>2</sup> School Sufficiency Investment Plan: see <https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ielssueDetails.aspx?IId=95633&Opt=3>

<sup>3</sup> Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: see <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing-board/joint-strategic-needs-assessment>

<sup>4</sup> Stockport Clinical Commissioning Group strategic plan: see <https://www.stockportccg.nhs.uk/about-us/what-are-our-plans-and-priorities/>

**APPENDIX 1 – Working draft "Providing for Our Communities" Local Plan chapter.**

## Providing for Our Communities

Our local communities have been the lifeblood of Stockport as we have come through the Covid-19 crisis together. Active and vibrant communities and social infrastructure are a vital part of the future of Stockport in which everyone can lead healthy and happy lives.

The policies below will allow the Council to manage development so that, in particular, it supports or contributes to achieving **Error! Reference source not found.** 1, 2, 3 and 4.

### Communities 1: Healthy and Active Across all Ages

1. The Council will work with its partners to integrate public health principles and planning. This will help reduce health inequalities and create an environment which supports healthy and active communities for all, across all ages. This will be enabled by:
  - a) locating health, education and other community facilities and services together or in close proximity to each other, including through the creation of community hubs;
  - b) facilitating access to a range of high quality, well-maintained and accessible open spaces, public realm, play, sports, leisure and cultural facilities;
  - c) increasing access to green spaces and green infrastructure to promote physical and mental health and wellbeing;
  - d) the creation of more active environments increasing opportunities for more sustainable travel choices whilst benefiting physical and mental health and wellbeing;
  - e) working with health care commissioners to support and improve health care infrastructure;
  - f) supporting the development of new health facilities in accessible town and district centre locations;
  - g) supporting initiatives which enable or improve access to healthy food, for example land for local food growing, allotments or community gardens;
  - h) working with partners to manage the location of hot-food takeaways, particularly in areas experiencing health inequalities;
  - i) supporting energy efficient design and location of development to reduce fuel poverty and its associated impacts on health; and
  - j) supporting initiatives which seek to address poor health indicators and anti-social behaviour in the borough.

#### ***Explanation:***

Chapter 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) sets out a range of considerations regarding the promotion of healthy and safe communities. This includes an expectation that, amongst other things, planning policies and decisions should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community

Stockport faces a number of health and social care issues including:

- an ageing population with increasingly complex care needs and at higher risk of isolation and loneliness. This is because more people live on their own without direct family support;
- a population where birth rates have risen, especially in areas of deprivation. This has led to more children and young people living in low income households where health outcomes are poorer;

- changes in the most common health issues experienced by the population, to those which are linked to lifestyles or are otherwise preventable;
- a period of economic challenge that affects the incomes and entitlement to the most vulnerable people in Stockport;
- fragmented services which are complicated to access, have duplications and aren't as focussed on individual needs as they could be;
- a system where too many people are admitted to hospital when they would be better and more appropriately cared for at home; and
- increasing financial pressures with deficit forecasts for Stockport as demand growth continues if service delivery is not improved.

Stockport's One Health and Care Plan<sup>5</sup> sets out the ways in which we'll develop the borough's health and social care system. The strategy is informed by our local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which comprehensively maps health and care needs in the borough and identifies trends in health and wellbeing.

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## Communities 2: Social Infrastructure

1. The council will work with its partners to support the development of a comprehensive network of community and social infrastructure across the borough. This will promote social interaction, health and wellbeing across all age ranges. A flexible approach will be taken over the plan period, recognising the changing needs of society.
2. Development proposals for community and social infrastructure will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal:
  - a) is in an accessible location, served by a choice of sustainable travel options;
  - b) is designed to provide flexibility for different future uses; and
  - c) makes efficient use of the site.
3. Develop proposals for community and social infrastructure should be designed in such a way to maximise shared use of the facility, particularly for recreational and community uses.
4. Proposals that would result in the net loss of community facilities will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer required.
5. New larger developments, and development contributing to a wider area of change such as within Stockport Town Centre, should demonstrate that they can be adequately served by community and social infrastructure through an Infrastructure Phasing and Delivery Statement. Where shortfalls are identified developers will be required to make appropriate provision for new facilities. This could be on-site or by making a suitable contribution towards new, improved and/or expanded community and social infrastructure.

### **Explanation**

Paragraph 20 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) sets out that a range of different types of infrastructure should be planned for, including sufficient provision for community facilities. Community and social infrastructure play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating inclusive communities, it is therefore vital that they are protected where they fulfil this function either now or over the plan period. The Council will work with communities to deliver their aspirations, ensuring that local facilities and services are retained where they are needed, or new or redeveloped facilities are provided where there is local need. The Council's approach is to encourage

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?Id=94681&Opt=3>

new community uses to locate in the borough's town, district and local centres as these places are best served by public transport, in particular the bus network which is more capable of serving local catchment needs.

In its consideration of applications for development, the Council will work with applicants to highlight at an early stage the potential needs for community facilities and services, drawing upon the evidence within the Infrastructure Plan and feedback from key providers of community facilities and services.

It is recognised that there are circumstances where loss of facilities and development for other uses may be appropriate, for example where existing community facilities are to be re-provided on an alternative site that is of an appropriate scale and quality, or where the facility is no longer required at that location. The Council will require appropriate evidence in support of any planning application if the loss of a community facility is to be justified. This will be particularly important where the proposal would lead to a shortfall in provision for the specific use within the catchment population.

In considering proposals, the Council will take into account the listing or nomination of 'Assets of Community Value'.

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## Communities 3: Educational Facilities

1. The Council will work with its partners to support the provision of a comprehensive network of educational facilities across the Borough. A flexible approach will be taken over the plan period, recognising changing educational needs.
2. Development proposals for early years, primary, secondary, further, higher and SEND education facilities will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:
  - a) the education facilities are required to meet local demands;
  - b) drop offs and pick-ups can be safely provided;
  - c) they are in an accessible location, served by a choice of sustainable travel options;
  - d) they will not give rise to unacceptable adverse impacts on neighbouring and nearby properties;
  - e) they meet statutory floorspace and premises requirements; and
  - f) they are designed in such a way to provide space to meet flexible teaching and learning needs.
3. Proposals for new educational buildings, or buildings being reused for education purposes, should provide sufficient land to cater for the outdoor curriculum needs, in particular opportunities for sport and recreation.
4. Opportunities to make educational facilities available for community use should be sought wherever feasible to do so, particularly sports and recreation facilities.
5. The provision of natural spaces on educational land is encouraged to enable children to learn personal, social and technical skills.
6. Proposals for development that create a potential increase in demand for early years places and school places will be required to make appropriate provision for early years and educational facilities either on-site, or by making a suitable contribution towards new, improved and/or expanded facilities elsewhere. Developer contributions will be sought for all school phases age 0-19 years, for special education and disability needs up to 25 years, and pupil referral units.
7. Where a new primary school is proposed, the Council will require provision of facilities to be made for early years, where there is an identified local need.

## ***Explanation***

Stockport is committed to ensuring its residents have access to good local schools, colleges, and early years' settings which offer a rich and varied learning experience. The Council believes all children have the right to enjoyable, inclusive and expansive education to enable every individual regardless of ability to achieve their full potential and to prepare for future life. Stockport will work in partnership with stakeholders, building on existing relationships, working with education providers to champion the needs of local children, young people and communities; recognising the important role education providers play as an anchor in those communities.

Paragraph 95 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) sets out that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting the needs of existing and new communities. This should include ensuring that development will widen choice in education. Authorities are expected to give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools. Our local policy builds upon the national policy to ensure that there is sufficient high-quality education provision available for every child and young person in the borough, from early years provision through to meeting post-16 educational needs. Doing this is considered an integral part of delivering sustainable development, and effective pupil place planning is a fundamental element of the local authority's role as strategic commissioner of good school places.

The majority of Stockport's schools were built in the 50s, 60s and 70s, and although most have been refurbished during their lifetime, many of the schools are now requiring significant investment. Where feasible, the Council will continue to focus its efforts on expanding or improving existing facilities that are in the urban area in accessible locations, as this makes the best use of land. The Council will work closely with the Department for Education, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Regional Schools Commissioner and potential sponsors to deliver school places where they are needed.

Stockport has experienced a significant rise in the demand for school places in recent years, which has been especially seen in primary schools. This pressure has been successfully managed through the expansion of existing schools. As the borough's population grows, demand for school places is projected to increase, placing further pressure on facilities, particularly secondary and special education needs and disability (SEND). Where housing development results in increased demand, investment should be made into education provision to ensure that there are sufficient places to serve the borough's pupils.

Applicants for residential development proposals will be expected to work in a positive and constructive way with Stockport Council, and other neighbouring local authorities where relevant, to identify the education needs arising from development and to ensure that appropriate provision is made towards new, improved and expanded facilities. Government guidance on the use of planning obligations states that: "Government funding and delivery programmes do not replace the requirement for developer contributions in principle. Plan makers and local authorities for education should therefore agree the most appropriate developer funding mechanisms for education, assessing the extent to which developments should be required to mitigate their direct impacts." To ensure delivery of sufficient school places in Stockport, it is expected that developer contributions for education provision will apply to dwellings that are open market and affordable, of 2-bedrooms or greater, but will not apply to older age restricted accommodation, student housing, care homes or nursing homes.

It is anticipated that a nationally devised 'Pupil Yields Scorecard' will be published by the Department for Education, to help local authorities develop consistent long-term evidence of pupil yield from housing developments, to inform pupil forecasting and justify developer contributions towards education. However, until this is made available, a local approach will be developed where



contributions from development towards educational provision will be calculated taking into account the estimated number of additional children, their education needs and the costs of provision of additional pupil places. The additional number of children per home, or 'yield', will be based on housing developments that have been completed across Stockport over the previous 10-15 years and school census data which correlates to those developments. The pupil yield in Stockport is currently 0.28 children per dwelling for primary schools, 0.20 children per dwelling for secondary schools and 0.0096 for specialist schools. The build costs will be based on Department for Education 'School Places Scorecard', amended to reflect locational and build cost inflation.

Formula for developer contributions for education provision:

Pupil yield per dwelling x cost per pupil place

Applications for Forest School sessions on the wider Council estate are becoming very popular by nurseries and educational establishments. Although they are accepted as providing a unique opportunity for outdoor learning, they can place increased pressure on habitat and wildlife. It is therefore important that opportunities are taken to provide Forest School sessions within the educational establishment themselves.

Where playing fields on educational land intend making facilities available for community use, the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) (2020) recommends that a community use agreement is drawn up. This should set out how it is intended to operate and is to be agreed prior to planning permission being granted, covering such matters as hours of availability, management arrangements and pricing policy. The community use agreement should help secure well-managed and safe community access to sports facilities on educational sites. Proposals for community use of sports facilities will need to ensure that amenity impacts are appropriately considered and addressed.

A supplementary planning document will be prepared to provide additional guidance on when developer contributions and community use agreements will be sought, and the mechanisms for securing these, including through the use of Section 106 agreements.

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## Communities 4: Protection of Open Space and Recreation Facilities

1. Development that would result in the loss of either open space or sport and recreation facilities will only be permitted where:
  - a) it is ancillary to the function of the open space/facility and does not negatively affect the quantity, quality and ongoing use of provision;
  - b) any replacement facility is of at least equal quantity and quality and in the same locality, and where this is proposed on-site, will clearly outweigh the loss; or
  - c) it can be clearly demonstrated that the open space/facility is:
    - i. surplus to requirements in its current use according to an up-to-date needs assessment; and
    - ii. not suitable or viable for any other form of open space provision for which there is an identified demand, and would not create or worsen an existing deficiency.
2. Proposals will be considered favourably that can demonstrate an improvement to existing greenspace in the area in terms of the following:
  - a) visual amenity;
  - b) climate change adaptation benefits;
  - c) recreational benefits; or

- d) accessibility of the open space network.
  - e) ecological improvements
3. The Council will protect existing allotments and support other potential spaces that could be used for commercial food production or for community gardening.
  4. Replacement provision should be provided directly by the developer and made available for use prior to the loss of the existing facility. Exceptionally, there may be circumstances where an off-site contribution towards replacement provision would be appropriate and therefore considered acceptable.
  5. This policy applies to all existing sites and facilities that have a recreation use or value, irrespective of whether they are owned or managed by the public, private or voluntary sectors.

***Explanation:***

Paragraph 98 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) sets out that having access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. It also recognises the role of open space in delivering wider benefits for nature and supporting efforts to address climate change.

Stockport's green, blue and open spaces play an essential role in maintaining and improving quality of life; their contribution to developing locally distinctive and sustainable communities is vital to Stockport's success as being seen as such an attractive place to live. Ensuring a clean, pleasant and well-maintained environment is a top priority of the Council.

Previous public consultation on the Local Plan (2017 Issues paper) highlighted the importance of open spaces to both residents of and visitors to Stockport. The 2017 Open Space Assessment identified that a high proportion of residents regularly visit open spaces in the Borough such as parks more than once a week (52%) which is an indication of their popularity. Some of the open spaces in Stockport, such as Bruntwood Park and Etherow Country Park, are major tourist destinations and attract people from across Greater Manchester and beyond.

The Open Space Assessment found deficiencies in different types of open space across the Borough, predominantly allotments and children's play areas. There is significant variation across Stockport, with shortfalls more pronounced in some areas than others. The standards paper that accompanies the study contains an action plan which highlights deficiencies in terms of access to open space across the Borough and can be used as a key tool in assessing development proposals. The Playing Pitch Strategy has identified deficiencies in playing pitches across the borough, in particular for cricket and junior football, which could worsen over the Local plan period.

Areas of open space are increasingly under pressure from development, particularly on the periphery of the urban area. Where an area of open space serves a valuable recreational or amenity function, the expectation will be to protect it from development. Therefore, sites included in the audit as part of evidence from the Open Space Assessment and Playing Pitch Strategy are designated on the policies map. Some sites may not have been assessed as part of the studies as they are below the 0.2 hectare threshold applied or because of changing land uses. Consequently throughout the plan period there will be sites that function as open space but are not formally designated as such. If development comes forward on sites that function as open space but are not designated, the following factors are of importance in determining the value of particular areas of open space and whether they should also be subject to the above policy;

1. the offer of facilities for recreation;
2. visual or amenity value of the land;
3. the contribution made to linked areas of designated open space;

4. informal public access, and
5. the contribution to urban form or general well-being of a community.

Decisions concerning open space, provision or loss of, will take account of the Stockport Green Infrastructure Network and policy aims regarding its connectivity and functionality.

Development on open space may be acceptable where replacement open space is provided. Replacement open space should afford the same or better-quality provision than that which is proposed to be lost and be provided in the local catchment area of the intended use to ensure that it does not create further deficiency in public access to open space.

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## Communities 5: Sporting Facilities

1. **Priorities for protection and enhancement**  
A comprehensive range of indoor and outdoor sports facilities will be protected across the Borough including:
  - a) Grass sports pitches for football, rugby, lacrosse and hockey and cricket;
  - b) Artificial pitches for football, rugby, hockey and lacrosse;
  - c) Tennis courts;
  - d) Bowling greens;
  - e) Athletics facilities;
  - f) Golf courses;
  - g) Sports halls;
  - h) Swimming pools;
  - i) Fitness centres and gyms; and
  - j) Other specialist indoor facilities.
2. The following sites are multi-pitch sites of strategic significance for outdoor sports, and their enhancement will be supported:
  - a) Brabyns Park;
  - b) Bradshaw Hall Playing Fields;
  - c) Davenport Playing Fields;
  - d) Frederick Whittaker Scott Playing Fields;
  - e) Gotherage Lane Playing Fields;
  - f) Lavington Avenue Playing Fields;
  - g) South Reddish Park;
  - h) Torkington Park;
  - i) William Scholes Playing Fields and;
  - j) Woodford Recreation Ground.
3. Development that would result in the loss of an indoor or outdoor sport facility will be required to satisfy the requirements of Communities 4: Protection of Open Space and Recreation Facilities.
4. Where existing outdoor sports pitches are impacted by development there should be no net loss of the quantity or quality of provision, with improvements in provision wherever possible.
5. Proposals to locate an artificial sports surface on an existing playing field will be supported where there is evidence that it meets a strategic need and sporting benefits can be clearly demonstrated.

### **Explanation:**

This policy reflects findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy 2020 (PPS)<sup>6</sup> which assessed sporting need and the supply for outdoor sports facilities. This work identifies potential sites for multi-pitch sites and advises that these sites are prioritised for the improvement of ancillary and changing facilities, particularly those that are currently well used.

Stockport's open spaces and outdoor sports and recreational facilities are an important element of the Borough's character, which help to encourage physical activity and assist in the mental wellbeing of residents. In order to respond to community needs, national policy requires the Council to plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities including open spaces and sports venues, and to ensure they are able to develop and modernise. It will be important that these facilities are fit for purpose and incorporate flexibility to help support the needs of each sport and club in the Borough over the plan period.

Our existing outdoor and built facilities are important assets serving local communities and, in many cases, the whole Borough and adjacent Boroughs. As such, any proposal affecting an indoor or outdoor sports facility must be informed by evidence in the Council's most recently adopted Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Leisure Strategy.

The Council will seek to achieve the overall sporting needs as evidenced in the Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Leisure Investment Strategy and proposals that could result in the loss or adversely affect the quality of such facilities will be assessed against the findings and recommendations set out in the relevant evidence base. Where development is proposed that is likely to have a detrimental impact on the use of a playing field, the Council will engage with Sport England at the earliest opportunity.

The GM Moving strategy 2021 highlights how we can build resilience to Covid-19 and reduce risk of long-term conditions such as cardiovascular disease through preventing inactivity. 'GM Moving is vital to supporting Covid-19 recovery and resilience and better health for all in the longer term'. With a green infrastructure network incorporating public rights of way, parks and gardens together with a comprehensive network of sports and recreational facilities, there is an opportunity to create more active environments. It is therefore ever more important that Stockport's network of recreational facilities are protected and enhanced.

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## **Communities 6: Health Care Facilities**

1. Proposals for major development that create a potential increase in demand for primary health care provision will be required to make appropriate provision for new facilities either on-site, or by making a suitable contribution towards the improvement or expansion of nearby facilities. This policy will be applied to residential development of all types, including but not limited to:
  - a) residential dwellings;
  - b) student accommodation; and
  - c) age-exclusive accommodation.
2. Development proposals for health care facilities will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal:
  - a) is in an accessible location, served by a choice of sustainable travel options, in line with transport policies; and
  - b) is designed in such a way that provides flexibility for future expansion;

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<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/evidence-planning-policy/open-space-sport-and-recreation>

3. Proposals that would result in the net loss of health care facilities will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that local health care needs can still be met.

**Explanation:**

Paragraph 96 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) refers to the requirement on local planning authorities to ensure faster delivery of public service infrastructure by working proactively and positively with promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to plan for required facilities and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

Stockport's population is projected to significantly grow in the 65+ age-range over the next 20 years by the Office for National Statistics. With an ageing population, it is vital that local healthcare facilities are easy to get to and easy to get seen by a health care practitioner, to ensure individuals maintain a healthy older age. Similarly, it is also important that areas of open space, public realm, cultural and recreational facilities are easy to get to and use, to ensure that individuals maintain an active older age.

The health and care system is delivered by clinical commissioning groups (CCG), local authorities and NHS providers. Primary care is based on a GP-led model. GPs are central to the coordination and delivery of patient care and aspects of health improvement, it is important to use other providers in care provision to increase GP capacity for more complex work, improve continuity of care across providers and ensure limited funds are used to best effect. The quality of the remaining primary care estate varies from purpose built, modern premises to the ground floor of a semi-detached or terraced houses. However, genuine equality of access for those with disabilities still remains poor in some practices. Stockport council will work with the CCG and health care providers to ensure the capacity of health facilities in Stockport increases in line with the changing needs of our communities. Maximising the accessibility of facilities for residents is important, so district and local centres will normally be the most suitable locations for them.

Where proposals for major development may result in a shortfall in primary healthcare provision, this will trigger a review of nearby practice premises with a capacity assessment. A deficiency in healthcare provision will be demonstrated by, but not limited to, factors such as:

- The levels of utilisation of the premises.
- The clinical / non-clinical split of the accommodation.
- The extent to which changes in patient needs are likely to result in additional workload for the practices.

Where relevant this will be done on a case by case basis to minimise adverse localised impacts of new housing on primary care services.

Formula for developer contributions for health care provision:

Number of persons x capital cost per person

Stepping Hill Hospital is located just off the A6, between Great Moor Local Centre and Hazel Grove District Centre, and is operated by Stockport NHS Foundation Trust. The Trust is an integrated provider of acute hospital and community services to the people of Stockport, as well serving the populations of East Cheshire and the High Peak in North Derbyshire. It has recently been awarded funding for a £30.6m Emergency Care and Pathology Campus development. This will provide a purpose built facility, which will also include an urgent care treatment centre and provision of Same Day Emergency Care services for patients.

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## Communities 7: Cemeteries and Crematoria

1. Development proposals for cemeteries and crematoria will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal:
  - a) will have no adverse impact on surface or groundwater;
  - b) will have no adverse impact on the ecological value of the area;
  - c) will not give rise to unacceptable adverse impacts on neighbouring and nearby uses; and
  - d) will respect the visual appearance and character of the area.

### ***Explanation:***

Paragraph 8b) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) establishes an objective to deliver sustainable communities "...with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being". Specific references to cemeteries or burial space within National Planning Policy Framework can be found in paragraphs 149 and 150, which relate to development and material changes of use of land within the Green Belt. The provision of burial space is considered to be a form of social infrastructure, and cemeteries are considered to be a form of Open Space, which helps to support well-being.

Stockport Council provides cemetery facilities to people of all faiths and beliefs, with five cemetery sites located across the borough, and a crematorium located at Stockport Borough Cemetery on Buxton Road in Heaviley. Historically, burial was the preferred post-death option but more recently the trend has been moving away from burial to cremation, with the vast majority of people in Stockport (90%) opting for cremation within Stockport, which is around 2,500 people per year.

The active cemetery that currently provides new burial space is located at Mill Lane Cemetery in Cheadle. It is anticipated that land that is currently suitable for new burial space within Mill Lane Cemetery will be taken up by approximately 2030, based on the current uptake rate of 150 burial spaces per year. Not all land is suitable for burials due to the environmental criteria for burial grounds, regarding the height of the water table and geology. The burial of human and animal remains must be managed in a way that limits groundwater pollution, and environmental guidance is provided by the government on this matter. Work is currently being undertaken to investigate options for expanding existing sites and to make better use of remaining land to provide a longer term supply of burial plots.

The Local Plan will facilitate the provision of an adequate supply of suitable land in appropriate locations for cemetery development and ancillary facilities; this will be through efficient use of land that is already identified as a cemetery, or the expansion of existing cemeteries. Expansion of existing cemeteries will be the preferred approach before alternative sites are considered for new cemetery development, this approach aims to ensure the best use of existing resources.