COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This chapter contains policies on a wide range of community facilities – from basic health and social services, to education, active leisure, arts and culture, and religious needs (categorised as C2, D1 and D2 in the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order 1987, (see Glossary)). The policies provide a framework for promoting and regulating these uses, while taking into account sustainability principles.

The provision of good quality community facilities not only allows for the enjoyment of residents, workers and visitors in the borough, they also help raise the quality of life and promote healthy living. Therefore, the Council, as a local planning authority, will constantly seek to facilitate the supply of appropriate premises across the borough.

The strategic Policy 1.8 for the provision of community facilities is:

To encourage the provision of community facilities to meet the wide-ranging needs of people living, working, studying in and visiting the borough; and to ensure that these facilities are located where they reduce the need to travel and enhance town centres.

The provision of Community Facilities should therefore be seen in its strategic context. The following government policies/guidance have been used for the preparation of this chapter:

- The London Plan: encourages better access and higher quality of community facilities provision, such as arts and culture, healthcare services, educational facilities.
- PPG3: The provision of play area and amenity should be provided within residential development, to ensure a sustainable community.
- PPG6: Town centres are the places at district level to provide for the development of a wide range of mixed use activities, including community facilities. The concentration of activities in local areas helps reduce the need to travel.
- PPG13: With the existing traffic problems faced by Londoners, it is important to reduce further traffic generation, by providing a network of community facilities to serve an identified catchment area, as well as to cater for different user groups.
- PPG17: The promotion of recreational and open space is essential for the development of a sustainable community.

In the local context, Ealing Council has been / will be producing a number of strategies to address local issues and to suggest ways to improve current situations.

Accessibility is an issue that Ealing Council has been strongly promoting. It is particularly important that all the facilities provided within the borough are accessible to all users. SPG 7 Accessible Ealing, one of the series of supplementary planning guidance, seeks to ensure that all sectors in the population are catered for, especially those who have mobility limitation, sight, and hearing impairments.

Ealing Council will work in partnership with both public and private sectors to ensure that high quality community facilities are provided within the borough to serve its residents, workers and visitors. The planning policies set out below have regard to health service priorities. As the local planning authority, the Council will also ensure that the policies in the Plan for the Environment are consistent with corporate policies for education, social care service, sports and leisure, cultural activity and the Council’s overall Community Strategy.
Chapter Eight

**Arts and Culture**

Art and culture are essential parts of any society, allowing expression and participation in new ideas, activities and experiences. The diversity of people and cultures in Ealing means that there is a rich source of artistic and cultural influences, which can positively contribute to the life of the borough.

The Council will promote the borough as a leading West London centre for the arts, heritage and culture, building on the existing facilities, expertise and enthusiasm of local organisations, and consolidating such cultural uses within the Borough's main shopping centres. The Council believes that projects initiated by different ethnic groups, women, young people and older people, are important for creating a sense of belonging to the communities, and promoting greater understanding amongst various communities. The Council is committed to using its public buildings for artistic and cultural uses, and to promote cinema and film as a cultural activity. The Council will further encourage the development of a concert hall/multipurpose arts centre.

The Council also recognises the need for improved public library services, including the broad information and cultural role they fulfil, and is considering the means for improvement. It will examine the use of existing buildings, both to improve the library service and for associated cultural and community purposes. In the plan period the Council will consider providing new or improved premises to Department for Education Standards, and as resources allow, giving priority to the particular need in central Southall.

**Active Leisure**

The borough has a range of private sports facilities, local authority sports halls and swimming pools (including one of only two 50m pools in London at the Gurnell leisure centre) and very many local sports clubs run on a voluntary basis. Active leisure provision is essential to the health and well-being of borough residents of all ages, and has particular value in channelling youthful energies (which might otherwise be diverted into crime and vandalism) into worthwhile activities. Ealing's population is increasing and there is a clear need for additional active leisure provision that is accessible to all. Map Sheet 11 indicates the distribution of built sports facilities and areas with relatively deficient provision. The Council will work with voluntary sector organisations and business to promote the development of additional facilities to meet the identified needs.

The Council wishes to see its public buildings and open spaces used as appropriate, for arts, culture and active leisure purposes. Such uses will be encouraged throughout the borough, and particularly where they would best serve communities facing deprivation, and where there is good public transport. Special consideration will be given to ways of making sure that new facilities are accessible to all sections of the community in the local area, irrespective of income, and that they cater for the needs of those communities in whose area the public facility is situated.

**Local Principles**

The Council believes everyone has the right to enjoy all the facilities provided, and as locally as possible. In relation to the assessment of community facility applications, this chapter includes a set of local principles to guide all community facility proposals (see Table 8A). The local principles aim to provide general guidance to developers, as well as to ensure that consistency in the provision and delivery of community facility is applied across the borough.
Table 8A
Local Principles for all Community Facility Proposals

All community facility proposals shall have regard to the following:

1. The site can be used satisfactorily for the required community facility and its use is compatible with the character and nature of the neighbouring area. This relates to both residential and employment areas (e.g. traffic generation, noise etc);
2. The site is accessible to the prospective users of the required community facility, by walking, cycling and public transport;
3. The presumption in favour of community facilities is greatest in the borough’s shopping centres, which are some of the most accessible locations in the borough.

There are eight policies for Community Facilities, and these, together with their justifications, are set out on the subsequent pages of this chapter.

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Policies for Community Facilities

**8.1 Existing Community Facilities**

The Council will encourage the improvement of existing community facilities and will resist development proposals that lead to the loss of existing community use of premises unless:

(i) The service provider can demonstrate that there is no longer a need for the facility in that location; or
(ii) Where the need for the facility remains, the developer makes facilities available through refurbishment or redevelopment, and provides interim facilities during development.

This policy aims to improve and enhance the quality of community life in the borough, by providing a wide range of community facilities including informal facilities, for residents, workers, students and visitors and encouraging development of additional facilities in the borough. Community facilities are varied and provided by a range of public, voluntary or private sector organisations to meet the communities needs. These facilities are categorised as follows:

(i) Leisure and culture (including arts and culture and built sports facilities);
(ii) Community offices and meeting places (including places of worship);
(iii) Facilities for children (from nursery provision to youth clubs);
(iv) Education (including adult education);
(v) Social Services;
(vi) Healthcare facilities and veterinary services.
Existing community facilities within the borough are in high demand. The Council therefore encourages the improvement of existing facilities to meet the needs of the community and to avoid any loss of existing facilities. The Council will apply the following criteria for all redevelopment proposals of community facilities.

### Table 8B
Criteria for Redevelopment Proposals of Community Facilities

Redevelopment proposals will be assessed against the following:

1. The design of facilities is environmentally compatible with the immediate surroundings;
2. The premises cater for a wide range of community uses;
3. The premises cater for all sectors in the population, especially those with mobility limitation, sight and hearing impairments;
4. The change of use of the existing facilities will not be allowed unless adequate replacement of the facilities is provided.

The Council will work in partnership with community groups to achieve the best use of existing sites and premises for public and voluntary organisations, by:

(i) Providing information on appropriate premises known to be available, including vacant or under-used community facilities;
(ii) Providing technical advice to voluntary groups on how their particular requirement could be accommodated on any of the sites identified, through joint use or adaptation of existing premises;
(iii) Considering the resource implications for voluntary groups, including direct grant aid where appropriate, and community benefit arising from private development.

Reference should also be made to the Supplementary Guidance on Community Facilities (SPG 19) (refer Policy 8.2).

### 8.2 Major Developments and Community Facilities

For all major residential or business proposals, the Council:

(i) Will require developers to prepare a statement of social impacts to address the increase in demand on community facilities;

(ii) May negotiate with developers to establish a legal agreement to meet the increased demand of community needs.

This policy addresses the increasing need for additional community facilities and aims to encourage additional facilities to be generated from new development proposals. With more intensive urban development, there is an obligation to provide additional community facilities to meet the requirements of the growing community. The statement of social impacts (see Table 8C for a list of potential social impacts) will be used to assess planning applications, based on the social effect of major residential or business proposals on the surrounding communities. The increased demand for community facilities (such as schools), should be identified based on the needs of the catchment population, and particularly on the need to minimise travel distances and to maximise access opportunities for all, particularly people with disabilities.
Table 8C
Potential Social Impacts Generated from Major Residential and Business Development

1. Potential impacts generally relate to an increase in demand for the following facilities:
   - Leisure and culture (including built sports facilities, arts and culture);
   - Community offices and meeting places (including places of worship);
   - Facilities for children (from nursery provision to youth clubs);
   - Education (including adult education);
   - Social Services;
   - Healthcare facilities and veterinary services.

2. Other potential social impacts include:
   - Noise and traffic generation;
   - Potential land use conflict of the proposed development with surrounding areas.

The Council will use planning powers to ensure that existing community facilities are retained and that additional facilities are secured. This will be assessed on a case by case basis. The assessment may also be based on those criteria established in Policy 8.1 and Table 8A. Also refer to Policy 5.5 in Chapter 5 Housing with regard to the provision of community facilities in residential developments.

When considering Built Sports Facilities, reference should be made to Map Sheet 11. This map shows the location of Built Sports Facilities with community access, and deficiency areas for swimming pools and indoor sports halls (the deficiency areas take into account provision in adjoining boroughs). The deficiency areas have been prepared to assist in planning of additional facilities and to help promote an even distribution of these facilities within the borough.

Supplementary Guidance on Community Facilities has been prepared. This includes advice on how local organisations can be involved in development, which is being considered for planning permission in an area where there is a shortage of community facilities. The guidance will also assist the developer in designing part of the scheme for community use, and in contributing funding to assist the establishment of appropriate facilities.

8.3 Redundant Community Facilities

1. The Council will encourage proposals for the improvement of community facilities by private, public and voluntary organisations. Where a community facility is no longer required in its current use, planning applications for uses other than alternative community facilities will be resisted.

2. However, if the Local Planning Authority is satisfied no appropriate alternative community facility can be identified; affordable housing will be acceptable in principle, on sites in residential areas, and mixed development in shopping centres, ideally with some accommodation for community use.

2004 Plan
See Table 8A and Table 8B
SPG/SPD
SPG 7 Accessible Ealing, SPG 8 Safer Ealing, SPD 2 Community Facilities
The London Plan 2008
3A.18, 3A.19
This policy aims to make use of existing resources within the borough and to meet the increasing demand for the provision of additional community facilities. The Council will encourage refurbishment and alterations to existing compatible community premises to meet increased community needs. Redevelopment proposals will be assessed against the criteria in Table 8B (Policy 8.1). This is also in line with sustainability principles to reuse existing premises.

The Local Planning Authority will consider planning applications to change community facilities to affordable housing in residential areas, or to mixed use developments in shopping centres, after having investigated (within a reasonable period of time), whether other community uses could use the site. A reasonable period of time is considered to be one year, although this may be reduced or increased, having regard to the significance and scale of the building under consideration.

### 8.4 Large Scale Community Facility Development

1. New or expanded indoor leisure, arts and other community facilities that are expected to attract large numbers of people, should be located in established town centres. If a suitable site cannot be found, edge of centre locations may be appropriate. Developments in these locations should be environmentally compatible with adjoining uses, enhance the town centre, improve accessibility by a choice of means of public transport, and may assist urban regeneration.

2. If there are no suitable town centre or edge of centre sites available in the borough, developers should consider the availability of such sites in adjoining boroughs. Out of centre developments are only likely to be acceptable if:
   (i) The activity cannot be accommodated in, or on the edge of, existing centres;
   (ii) The scale, type and location of the development does not undermine the vitality and viability of existing centres;
   (iii) The development is conveniently accessed by public transport, and can be visited easily and safely by pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities from surrounding areas.

The objective of this policy is to identify the best location available for the development of large scale community facilities within the borough. It is part of the effort of enhancing local shopping centres (see Chapter 7 Shopping Centres and Development). The Council expects that the development of any large scale community facilities will cater for all sectors of the population in the borough, allowing them access to major health, education, social and recreational facilities. The Council will also work closely with neighbouring boroughs in the event that the need to locate a site outside Ealing Borough arises.

Any large-scale developments need to have the sequential approach applied to ensure that the location is based on community need, that accessibility is paramount for all sections of the
community, and that there is adequate and convenient public transport provision. The development also needs to be in keeping with the surrounding areas, in both environmental and aesthetic terms. It is particularly important that facilities do not reduce open space values (see Chapter 3, Green Space and Natural Environment). The requirement to demonstrate community need is particularly important for proposals for development in out of centre locations (see Policy 7.2 for details of how the sequential approach is to be applied and the Glossary for definitions of ‘Retail Need’ and the ‘Sequential Approach’).

8.4-J2

8.5 Meeting Places and Places of Worship

The Council will seek to improve the provision of meeting places and places of worship for the different communities across the borough.

This policy aims to improve the network of community centres in the borough. This network includes Council and voluntary sector centres for different areas of the borough and/or sections of the population. As part of the community framework, premises are needed as places for people to meet, socialise and exchange ideas, as well as marking important milestones in their family/community lives.

The Council will apply local principles (see Table 8A) when assessing planning applications, and in particular, consider the proposal’s compatibility to its immediate surroundings. The Council encourages the provision of meeting places serving local neighbourhoods (including tenants halls, school halls and other public, private and voluntary sector facilities). It is important that an even distribution of these facilities is achieved across the borough, and the advantages are that there will be less traffic and noise generated when major religious meetings are held.

The Council also promotes better use of existing facilities, and where appropriate, multiple or shared use of these premises is encouraged to cater for meeting purposes. The occupation of existing facilities for meeting purposes allows premises to be fully utilised, and this promotes sustainable use of the borough’s resources.

The Council will respond sympathetically to proposals for places of worship. The Council will support faith communities in achieving equality of access. Specific guidelines for potential developments will be prepared in consultation with community groups.

8.5-J4

8.6 Facilities for Young Children

The Council will require major development schemes to incorporate a range of facilities for young children and their parents or carers.

This policy aims to promote facilities that cater for the needs of the young population in the borough. Small children, with their particular needs, are often omitted in development plans. The Council recognises the increasing need for adequate facilities for small children, and the demand to improve such provision and opportunities for parents and carers when out, and for play facilities for children throughout the borough. Table 8D provides a summary of a range of young people facilities, as well as relevant health and safety issues.
Chapter 5 Housing addresses the Council's effort to encourage the provision of amenity space for young children. Young children as a social group, also need the infrastructure and opportunities offered to adults for social and leisure activity, as they move from childhood to adulthood. A safe and convenient environment is paramount, particularly providing local facilities to minimise the need to travel. Also refer to Policies 4.3, 9.1 and Supplementary Guidance ‘Accessible Ealing’ and ‘Safer Ealing’ for guidance on accessibility and safety issues.

The Council will negotiate with developers (by means of legal agreement - (see Policies 1.10 and 8.2)) and employers, and in conjunction with community childcare groups, to secure the provision of facilities for children whose parents are in work or education. In particular, the Council will encourage:

(i) Nurseries located at or near the workplace, at training and education establishments, and in residential areas where there is a particular need;
(ii) Play schemes to accommodate children after school and in school holidays, for both nursery age and school age children.

The Council will itself develop as resources become available, and normally grant planning permission for, the private development of the following facilities for the under fives, particularly in areas of greatest need:

(i) Nursery education at primary school sites;
(ii) Social services day nurseries;
(iii) Community services play centres;
(iv) Community nurseries;
(v) Development of a good distribution of nurseries, pre-school playgroups, childminders, carer and toddler clubs in suitable premises.

Table 8D
Facilities for Young People

1. The range of facilities for young people will depend upon the scale of the development but should include:
   i) Babycare rooms, (available to men and women);
   ii) Indoor and outdoor play areas;
   iii) Pram and buggy parks;
   iv) Creches and nurseries.

2. Health and safety issues need to be considered in line with planning guidelines, such as:
   i) Means of access and enclosure;
   ii) Susceptibility to pollution from motor vehicles exhaust gases and other pollution sources such as excessive noise and mobile phone masts;
   iii) Quality of equipment, surfaces, access etc within the development;
   iv) The ease with which parents and carers can watch over children in their charge.

8.7 Education Facilities

The Council will:

(i) Encourage additional or existing joint use of land or buildings, by other community groups / activities. Such uses shall not compromise the educational interests of the pupils;

(ii) Encourage all school development in the borough to improve external areas within the

2004 Plan
See Policies 1.1, 3.6, 4.3, 9.1, Table 1A, Table 8A and Table 8E
SPG/SPD
SPG 7 Accessible Ealing;
SPD 2 Community Facilities
The London Plan 2008
Policy 3A.24, 3A.25
school grounds and that proposals should be consistent with the requirements of the Department for Education;

(iii) Seek to protect existing school playing fields and that new proposals shall not lead to any net loss of useable areas;

(iv) Work with educational institutions to provide facilities, highlighting good design, functionality, and the aesthetic value of the surrounding environment.

The Council aims to promote the robust use of existing and proposed buildings, with particular regard to accessibility and health and safety issues. This is to allow buildings or land to be used by a wide range of users with various needs. Suitable uses for existing or additional buildings may include:

(i) School premises for adult education and other community facilities;
(ii) Joint use of specialist facilities, e.g. indoor sports halls, art and cultural facilities;
(iii) Educational facilities for people with special needs and disabilities. 8.7-J1

New housing and other development generally increases demand on existing education facilities. The Council will maintain and improve educational provision at its school sites, whilst also requiring developers to contribute to the improvements of existing primary and secondary school provision. These include general improvement of classroom and staff facilities, as well as external areas. Ideally, the facilities would be able to complement the immediate environment. The supply of additional facilities will be based on the demographic needs of the local area. The provision of educational facilities through legal agreement is addressed in Policy 1.1 and Table 1A. 8.7-J2

Apart from school buildings, the Council encourages the retention of school playing fields. They not only present a good opportunity for students to enjoy outdoor sporting activities, these playing fields may also be used by local communities to hold sporting and other social events. 8.7-J3

In order to ensure that all students and local communities can access the borough’s education facilities, the Council urges the design of educational facilities to take into account accessibility and functionality issues, to promote the ease of movement for all. This will not only encourage local pupils and residents with disabilities, it will also help reduce their need and time to travel. For example, these premises shall be easily accessed on foot, by cycling, and public transport. The minimisation of traffic generation may also promote a safer environment for travelling. In addition, better quality design will also enhance the schools and their environment. Also refer to criteria in Table 8A, Chapter 9 Transport for policies on accessibility and safer routes, and Policy 4.3 in Chapter 4 Urban Design. 8.7-J4

Schools proposals which are not required to comply with DFE standards, shall comply with the requirements set out in Table 8E as general guidance. 8.7-J5

Currently, there are a number of local educational institutions within the borough. The Council will work with them closely to ensure that those educational facilities most needed locally are provided. For example, Thames Valley University, the borough’s only University, presents an opportunity to set an example for other educational institutions to incorporate good design into developing facilities. The University is a major Higher Education institution, with one of its main campuses in Ealing, and occupies a number of buildings in or near the town centre. It has about 18,100 students in Ealing, employs around 1,150 staff (2002/3 figures), and plays an active role in the Ealing Centre Partnership. 8.7-J6
Proposals to locate or expand schools and colleges which are not required to comply with DFE site and space standards, will only be permitted if the Council is satisfied that the site and buildings have the capacity to accommodate the number of pupils, staff and students proposed, taking the following criteria into consideration:

1. Good, safe pedestrian access (on foot and by bicycle) to and from and within the site;
2. Accessibility of public transport;
3. Availability of safe setting down or picking up points for coaches or private cars, where the education establishment is likely to have a wide catchment area;
4. Provision of secure cycle parking and locker facilities;
5. Implementation of a school travel plan;
6. Adequate on-site provision of playground facilities related to DFE standards and some landscaped sitting out space for students;
7. Proposals do not reduce the amenity of adjoining residential properties or conflict with Conservation Areas or Listed Building, Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land policies, or tree preservation orders;
8. Provision of playing fields and adequate classroom and other floor space related to DFE standards.

### Table 8E
Criteria for Education Facilities

(To be read in conjunction with DFE requirements.)

Proposals to locate or expand schools and colleges which are not required to comply with DFE site and space standards, will only be permitted if the Council is satisfied that the site and buildings have the capacity to accommodate the number of pupils, staff and students proposed, taking the following criteria into consideration:

1. Good, safe pedestrian access (on foot and by bicycle) to and from and within the site;
2. Accessibility of public transport;
3. Availability of safe setting down or picking up points for coaches or private cars, where the education establishment is likely to have a wide catchment area;
4. Provision of secure cycle parking and locker facilities;
5. Implementation of a school travel plan;
6. Adequate on-site provision of playground facilities related to DFE standards and some landscaped sitting out space for students;
7. Proposals do not reduce the amenity of adjoining residential properties or conflict with Conservation Areas or Listed Building, Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land policies, or tree preservation orders;
8. Provision of playing fields and adequate classroom and other floor space related to DFE standards.

#### 8.8 Health Care Facilities

The Council will:

(i) **Assist primary and strategic health authorities to ensure that health care facilities are provided to meet the needs of the community;**

(ii) **Consider proposals for doctors' and dentists' surgeries, clinics and other health provision, in the light of assessment of the need for such facilities in the area, including observations by the Ealing Primary Care Trust and other appropriate agencies;**

(iii) **Encourage the provision of health care facilities, within mixed developments, suitably designed, and compatible with adjacent uses.**

The policy aims to provide a range of health care facilities for the community, by working closely with primary and strategic health authorities. These facilities are designed based on sustainable development principles for land use, for example, these provisions can be implemented in mixed use development.

Incorporating community facilities such as health and social care facilities in mixed use developments is a positive step towards sustainable development. This will help ensure the community has access to essential services such as hospitals, clinics, dentists’ and doctor’s surgeries, related services and veterinary services. The Council recognises the need for close liaison with health authorities for a consistent approach, particularly in view of the resource constraints facing the National Health Service (NHS). It will ensure that local needs are clearly stated for the benefit of the community. Council recognises the underlying trend in community
care; which increases the need for a more accessible, flexible and supportive community/
health/social environment.

The Council will undertake development for the care of vulnerable people and will also
encourage development by other agencies consistent with social services and health need in
the borough; that is, residential, day care and medical facilities. The advice of the appropriate
regulatory or advisory agencies will be sought before taking planning decisions on this type of
development. It is particularly important these sites are well served by public transport.

| Table 8F  |
| Good Practice: Liaison with Health Authorities |

The Council will help the health authorities to identify and safeguard suitable sites:

1. To provide sufficient local facilities for primary and community care, giving a wide range
   of residential, day care and support services;

2. To improve facilities for elderly people in the borough, including the development of
   geriatric hospital care and community nursing premises.