2.24 Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy is the principal policy relating to open spaces, sport and recreation.

2.25 There are close links between the proposals for open space, sport and recreation and the policies relating to biodiversity and nature conservation (Core Strategy Policy CS3) healthy communities (Core Strategy Policy CS5) and to the proposals for footpaths and cycleways (as set out in Sections 3, 4 and 5 of this Plan).

2.26 The provision of additional public open space and green infrastructure also has a significant role in mitigating the recreational impacts of new residential development on internationally designated nature conservation sites (in accordance with the Habitats Regulations).

2.26a Some strategic green infrastructure issues cross local authority areas. The Council will work with other local authorities to secure the delivery of appropriate strategic GI projects.

2.27 This Plan recognises the important contribution that the green spaces and features (green infrastructure) makes to the quality of life in the towns and villages, and the impact this can have on health and well-being.

2.28 Policies in this Plan:
- protect existing areas of public and private open space – both informal (amenity) and formal (sports pitches) (See Policy DM7);
- identify and protect important Landscape Features (See Policy DM8); and
- set out the principles of a Green Infrastructure Strategy to be developed for each of the towns and main villages. (See Policy DM9).

2.28 Policies in this Plan:
- protect existing areas of public and private open space – both informal (amenity) and formal (sports pitches) (See Policy DM7); and
- set out the principles of a Green Infrastructure Strategy to be developed for each of the towns and main villages. (See Policy DM9).

Important landscape features are also protected by saved policy DW-E12 (protection of landscape features) from the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration and the Landscape Feature designations of that Plan identified on the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Proposals Maps. There will be an early review of landscape feature designations. This review will consider the protection of landscape features which are important to the setting of a settlement.

2.29 In addition, policies set out in Sections 3, 4 and 5 of this Plan, give detailed proposals for the provision of new public open spaces and green infrastructure. Some are set out as site specific proposals, others are required as part of development proposals made in this Plan.

**Policy DM7: Protection of public open space, private recreation land and school playing fields**

Development will not be permitted on public open spaces, private recreation land/
In the circumstance where the Education Authority has received approval for the disposal of surplus school playing fields from the Secretary of State, in accordance with Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, an exception may be made to this policy where equivalent or greater community benefits are provided.

**Policy DM8: Protection of Landscape features**

Development will not be permitted which would cause loss of, or significant damage to landscape features, including those identified on the Proposals Maps, which make an important contribution to the character and local distinctiveness, or the green infrastructure network, within the locality unless the existing landscape feature is replaced by equivalent or better provision, in terms of quantity and quality, as part of the development proposal.

Policy DM7 and DM8 above relate to specific ‘green features’ which make a significant contribution to the green infrastructure within the towns and villages.

Policy DM7 and DM8 above saved policy DW-E12 from the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration relate to specific ‘green features’ which make a significant contribution to the green infrastructure within the towns and villages.

These designations alone can appear as isolated areas on the Proposals Maps. However they are usually part of a wider network of green areas and open spaces within towns and villages which support leisure and recreation activities, wildlife and biodiversity and add to the wider quality of life of those living in built-up areas. The wider green infrastructure network in each town and village is an important part of the character of an area and its local distinctiveness, and will be identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy which will be prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document to this Plan.

The following features contribute to the local networks of green infrastructure: open spaces (both public and private and including informal and formal spaces and spaces for children and young people); allotments; cemeteries and churchyards; green corridors (including tree-lined streets; verges, watercourses, cycleways, and rights of way); green wedges (woodland and agricultural fields); areas designated for nature conservation; the coast. These different elements of green infrastructure can often have greater value (particular for biodiversity interests) in combination.

Policy DM9 below provides the overall framework for the Green Infrastructure Strategy, identifying the key components which contribute to the local networks of green infrastructure and which will need to be taken into account in development proposals. Specific elements of the green infrastructure network for each town and village are will be identified in the Supplementary Planning Documents. Some of these features will also be identified in the adopted Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Documents.
Detailed information about projects to improve and enhance open space and the green infrastructure network is will be set out in the Open Space Supplementary Planning Document and in the Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document.

<table>
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| Development proposals should maintain, and where possible enhance, the integrity of the network of green infrastructure, including those identified in policies DM7 and DW-E12/DM-8. In particular development proposals should: (i) maintain green buffers between development and major transport routes; (ii) maintain and enhance the character of tree lined streets and streets with spacious verges; (iii) make a feature of watercourses and their banks, and avoid putting the watercourse into a culvert. (iv) enhance ‘green links’ between green spaces within the settlements and between the built up area and the countryside, in particular those that enhance recreational opportunities (for walking/cycling) and those that create wildlife corridors (enhancing biodiversity). Such links should not result in an increase in visitor pressures on internationally protected nature conservation sites. The Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document will give guidance on the location of features where the above requirements will be particularly relevant to the consideration to a development proposal. Any development proposal deemed likely to add to recreational pressures on sensitive European (nature conservation) sites will be required to contribute to the provision of alternative natural green-space.

Green buffers’ for major transport routes are important as they separate roads and railways from surrounding development, providing both a visual screen and distance from potential noise disturbance, and assisting in the filtering of pollutants. They can also provide important links for biodiversity.

Tree-lined streets’ provide green links between habitats within the built up areas, enhancing local biodiversity. They make streets more attractive and enjoyable places for walking and cycling. Intensification of development on some tree-lined streets has resulted in the loss of trees, which has led to some loss of character in those streets. ‘Spacious verges’ provide amenity value and are a valuable part of the character of the area. Some verges are made up of a diverse range of grassland plants and are of high ecological value if managed correctly.

Watercourses provide valuable ecological corridors and amenity value.

‘Landscape setting’ features are significant ‘green lungs’ of green space which extend from the countryside into the towns, or which provide green ‘wedges’ separating settlements.

‘Green links’ within the built up areas and from the built-up areas into the countryside are important for both people and nature. They provide recreational routes to the
countryside which do not rely on the use of vehicles and they provide wildlife corridors, which enhance biodiversity.

2.40a In designing new development, developers should minimise the loss of existing ‘green’ features on a site and maximise the potential to maintain or create wildlife corridors through a site, even where the loss of some trees and hedgerows is unavoidable.