

STROUD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN: PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS MAY 2005

10. RECREATION AND LEISURE

Proposed Modification M/10/08T: Modify paragraph 10.3.1 to ensure it is consistent with PPG17 and its companion guide.

Central Government Advice

~~10.3.1 Central Government advice concerning provision for sport and recreation is largely contained within PPG17: Sport and Recreation 1991. This provides a national land use planning framework for the development of sport and recreation. It emphasises the need to safeguard and enhance existing recreational opportunities in recognition of their important role in the social well-being of local communities. It states that Local Plans provide the appropriate context in which to assess a community's needs for recreational facilities by identifying deficiencies in the provision of public open space. It further states that Local Plans should include policies which protect existing recreational facilities and encourage a new and wider provision of facilities which are co-ordinated with other land use policies. In the case of new residential developments, both PPG17 and Circular 1/97 suggest that the use of planning obligations may be an appropriate method of securing these facilities. Central Government advice concerning provision for sport and recreation is contained within PPG17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation 2002 and its Companion Guide – Assessing Needs and Opportunities 2003. This provides a national planning framework for the development of open space, sport and recreation. It emphasises the relationship to broader Government objectives such as urban renaissance, rural renewal, social inclusion, community cohesion, health and well-being and sustainability. It recognises both the need to safeguard and enhance existing recreational opportunities. It states that Local Plans provide the appropriate context in which to assess a community's needs for open space, sport and recreational facilities. Paragraph 6 of PPG 17 makes clear that open space standards are best set locally. The Council has adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (November 2000) on Residential Development – Outdoor Play Space Provision. Furthermore the Council is undertaking a review and an audit of~~

existing facilities. Paragraph 20 of PPG 17 sets out general principles for the identification of new areas of open space, sports and recreational facilities. In the case of new residential developments, both PPG17 and Circular 1/97 suggest that the use of planning obligations may be an appropriate method of securing these facilities to meet the need generated by the proposed development.

Proposed Modification M/10/14T: Modify paragraph 10.3.1 to ensure it is consistent the Structure Plan versions (both Adopted and proposed to be modified).

10.3.2. The Adopted Structure Plan: **Second Review** sets the strategic context for planning policies relating to recreation and leisure. It includes a number of policies which aim to encourage the provision of formal and informal recreational facilities and improve public access to both urban and rural recreational resources. Furthermore, the Structure Plan stresses the need to use natural resources for recreation and leisure in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

Proposed Modification M/10/09T: Modify paragraph 10.3.3 to ensure it is consistent with PPG17 and its companion guide.

~~10.3.3. There are no statutory national standards for the provision of open space. PPG17 uses the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) 'Six Acre Standard' as an illustrative guide. This standard recommends a minimum level of outdoor playing space of 2.4 hectares (6 acres) per 1,000 population and this standard has now become widely adopted as a suitable assessment for outdoor play space provision. The standard is composed of formal facilities, both publicly and privately owned, for children's and youth and adult use. Whilst this standard was devised principally for urban areas it has been applied to indicate the general level of recreational provision within the whole of Stroud District. The provision of outdoor play space in accordance with precise national standards may be considered less critical in more rural areas because of the opportunities for access to the countryside for casual play. On the basis of the 'Six~~

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~~Acre Standard' local assessments of provision can be made by the Local Planning Authority and policies can be developed to reflect the level of adequacy of provision of the outdoor recreational facilities.~~ There are no statutory national standards for the provision of open space as such an approach cannot cater for local circumstances. The Council uses the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) 'Six Acre Standard' as being appropriate to this District's demographic profile and the extent of existing built development. Council guidance recommends a minimum level of outdoor playing space of 2.4 hectares (6 acres) per 1,000 population and is composed of formal facilities, both publicly and privately owned, for children's and youth and adult use. On the basis of the 'Six Acre Standard' the Local Planning Authority can make local assessments of provision and policies can be developed to reflect the level of adequacy of provision of the outdoor recreational facilities. The Council is currently undertaking such work and developers are advised to contact the Council for any updates to provision and planning guidance.

Proposed Modification M/10/15/T: Modify paragraph 10.3.4 to update the Plan.

10.3.4. A comprehensive survey of outdoor playing space in Stroud District was conducted in 1999 by the District Council as part of the process of policy preparation for this Local Plan. The full results of this survey have been published separately in a document entitled 'Outdoor Playing Space A Survey of Local Provision and Needs'. The survey revealed a number of deficiencies, in terms of both quantity and quality, with regard to outdoor play space provision in certain areas of Stroud District. The survey will be used, in conjunction with the District Council's ~~recently~~ published Leisure Strategy, as a basis for assessing ~~future~~ outdoor recreational needs within the District.

Proposed Modification M/10/16/T: Modify paragraph 10.4.6 as a consequential amendment to the Inspectors recommendation regarding Policy R1.

10.4.6. Land for sporting and recreational use has often been a target for development in the past. Once developed, this land is usually permanently lost as a recreational resource. The Local Plan gives equal consideration to opportunities for participation in sport and play as to other land use activities. It seeks to protect outdoor playing space where its loss will result in an under-provision, and to improve or provide additional facilities where an identified deficiency exists. The loss of existing outdoor playing space and, in particular, any of the identified sites, could result in an under-provision of outdoor playing space or exacerbate an already existing deficiency. PPG17 suggests that when outdoor playing space is no longer required for its original purpose it should, initially, be assessed in terms of its ability to meet the demand for recreational land in the wider community. Policy R1 seeks, through positive safeguarding measures, to ensure that these outdoor playing spaces are not lost through their development. Policy R1 also acknowledges that there may be exceptional circumstances where such protection could be relaxed, provided that certain safeguarding conditions are met. Improvements to existing outdoor play areas may take the form of facilities which enable more intensive usage, such as floodlit all-weather pitches or children's play equipment. In addition, the development of privately owned outdoor playing facilities (which were not, as a matter of practice and policy, available for use by the public) may be permitted provided part of the site is retained as outdoor playing space for use by the public on a permanent basis. ~~The current level of outdoor play space provision within a locality will also be taken into consideration when assessing development proposals against criterion 4 of Policy R1.~~

Proposed Modification M/10/01/P: Modify Policy R1 to reflect recommendation 10.6 of the Inspectors Report

POLICY R1

Development proposals that involve the loss of existing outdoor playing space in public or private ownership, including those sites listed in Appendix 7 as Outdoor Play Space, will only be permitted if:

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1. alternative outdoor playing space of at least the equivalent quantity, quality and accessibility of that lost is provided within the locality; or
2. it can be demonstrated that no shortfall in accessible outdoor playing space exists in the area, or would result from the development; or
3. the loss of part of a site leads to enhanced provision of outdoor playing space on the remainder of the site; or.
4. the loss of part of a site in private ownership, and not currently available for public use, leads to public usage on the remainder of the site.

Proposed Modification M/10/02/T: Modify paragraph 10.4.11 to reflect recommendation 10.9 of the Inspectors Report

~~10.4.11. In addition to open space for formal outdoor play provision, open space for passive recreation and amenity use is considered particularly valuable in providing wider social and environmental benefits to those living, working and playing within urban areas. Open space of this nature does not fall within the NPFA 'Six Acre Standard' categories and no other generally accepted standard has been derived which can be applied. Policy R4 affords protection to amenity space (including 'Pocket Parks') and private undeveloped land with existing or potential recreational value in areas where the provision of more formal recreational facilities is deficient, or where the site contributes to the visual quality or character of the area. In addition to open space for formal play provision, open space for passive recreation and amenity use is considered particularly valuable in providing wider social and environmental benefits to those living, working and playing within urban areas. These areas can also act as havens and habitats for flora and fauna and can thus encourage biodiversity. Open space of this nature does not fall within the NPFA 'Six Acre Standard' categories and no other generally accepted standard has been~~

derived which can be applied. Nevertheless, such space is of great value, and Policy R4 affords protection to amenity space (including 'pocket parks') and private undeveloped land with existing or potential recreational or amenity value unless there are overriding other benefits and the contribution that the site previously made to the amenity, visual quality or character of the area can be maintained.

Proposed Modification M/10/02/P: Modify Policy R4 to reflect recommendation 10.9 of the Inspectors Report

POLICY R4

~~Permission will not be granted for the development of amenity spaces that would:~~

- ~~1. remove opportunities for recreation in areas identified as being deficient in other forms of outdoor recreational provision; or~~
- ~~2. erode the visual quality or character of an area.~~

Permission will not be granted for development on amenity or recreational open spaces unless the benefits of the development outweigh the existing community value and there can be a compensatory open area of similar value provided in the same locality.

Proposed Modification M/10/03/T: Insert paragraph 10.4.12a to reflect recommendation 10.10 of the Inspectors Report

10.4.12a All new residential developments, including any net increases in dwelling units arising from conversions or redevelopment, will be required to provide an appropriate proportion of the minimum outdoor play space standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population. The only exceptions to this requirement involve:

- replacement dwellings on a one-to-one basis;
- extensions or alterations;

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- housing provided specifically for the elderly such as annexes for dependent relatives, retirement homes, residential homes or nursing care homes;
- mobile homes subject to temporary planning permission;
- affordable housing not available on the open market;
- residential developments where other community benefits have been identified as being of more importance and/or greater priority.

For one-bed dwellings, only the requirement for youth/adult outdoor play space provision will be necessary. Houses in multiple occupation will be treated as a single unit with the equivalent number of bedrooms for youth/adult provision.

Proposed Modification M/10/10/T: Modify paragraph 10.4.18 to ensure it is consistent with PPG17.

~~10.4.18. Golf courses are acknowledged in PPG17 as an acceptable use of the countryside. They~~ can provide leisure facilities for local residents, increase opportunities for public access to the countryside and help stimulate the local economy by generating jobs and encouraging tourism. Local authorities are being encouraged to recognise this and make provision, where appropriate, to accommodate these demands. This view is supported by Sport England (previously known as the English Sports Council) for the South West which recommends the provision of an additional nine hole golf course (preferably on a 'pay-as-you-play' basis) for the Stroud area in its 1993 publication 'Golf - Subject Report'.

Proposed Modification M/10/11/T: Modify paragraph 10.5.03 with factual reference to the CROW Act.

10.5.3. Walking and rambling are popular recreational pursuits within the District and proposals to facilitate these activities will be supported, in co-operation with landowners and other relevant user groups. Initiatives such as access and management agreements which aim to open up, promote and maintain rights of way networks for community use are welcomed and, where possible, will be

supported. Legislation in the Countryside and Rights Of Way (CROW) Act has reinforced this aim by encouraging the "opening up" of some previously inaccessible areas and the modernisation of the rights of way system. In the Cotswolds AONB the demand for recreation and access can be met providing this is consistent with the conservation objectives of the AONB designation.

Proposed Modification M/10/12/T: Modify paragraph 10.5.8 to ensure it is consistent with latest national guidance in PPS7.

10.5.8. Horse riding and related activities are an increasingly popular form of outdoor countryside recreation. Demand for stabling, equestrian centres and other related facilities has also increased, resulting in development pressures in the open countryside and especially those areas close to towns and villages. Whether planning permission for horse related development is required depends primarily on whether the horses are used for agricultural, recreational or commercial purposes. ~~Annex F within PPG7: The Countryside provides guidance on this issue.~~

Proposed Modification M/10/13/T: Modify paragraph 10.5.9 to ensure it is consistent with latest national guidance in PPS7.

~~10.5.9. Advice contained in PPG7 stresses the need for horse related development to incorporate high standards of design, materials and construction of buildings and care of land in order to minimise the impact on the character, diversity and appearance of the countryside. However, in an attempt to control the number of new dwellings constructed in the countryside for equestrian activities, the re-use of existing buildings will be encouraged, where appropriate. In the case of proposals for commercial equestrian development, a location that enables safe and easy access to facilities which are suitable for exercising horses will be required if adequate on-site facilities are not available. Safe and easy access, in this context, could include the use of bridleways, RUPPs, BOATs and some lower classified~~

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highways. In certain circumstances, where equestrian development is acceptable in principle, conditions may be imposed requiring the removal and storage of horse training equipment when not in use to protect the visual amenity of the surrounding area. In addition, watercourses will need to be protected from animal waste and contaminated surface water in accordance with guidance from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) and the Environment Agency. Advice contained in PPS7 recognises that horse riding and other equestrian activities are popular forms of recreation in the countryside that can fit in well with farming activities and help diversify rural economies. Commercial activities such as horse training and breeding can play an important economic role. There is a need for horse related development to incorporate high standards of design, materials and construction of buildings whilst ensuring the care of land in order to minimise the impact on the character, diversity and quality of the countryside. The re-use of existing farm buildings will be encouraged for small-scale horse enterprises (i.e. up to 10 horses) that provide a useful form of farm diversification. In the case of proposals for commercial equestrian development, a location that enables safe and easy access to facilities which are suitable for exercising horses will be required if adequate on-site facilities are not available. Safe and easy access, in this context, could include the use of bridleways, RUPPs, BOATs and some lower classified highways. In certain circumstances, where equestrian development is acceptable in principle, conditions may be imposed requiring the removal and storage of horse training equipment when not in use to protect the visual amenity of the surrounding area. In addition, watercourses will need to be protected from animal waste and contaminated surface water in accordance with guidance from the Environment Agency (EA).

Proposed Modification M/10/04/P: Modify Policy R4 to reflect recommendation 10.14 of the Inspectors Report

POLICY R7

Proposals for horse related development, such as commercial stables, riding schools and arenas, will only be permitted where the development:

1. can provide adequate facilities for the exercising of horses within the curtilage of the property; or
2. has safe and convenient access to facilities suitable for the exercising of horses.

Proposed Modification M/10/05/T: Modify paragraph 10.5.11 to incorporate the recommendation 10.16 of the Inspectors Report with a factual up date on canals restoration matters.

10.5.11. A study carried out by British Waterways in 1996 (Cotswold Canals Corridor Study) identified the valuable social, economic and environmental potential associated with the re-opening of the Stroudwater and the Thames and Severn Canals in Stroud District. The study concluded that, in their current condition, these canals represented a major unrealised asset in the area. The District Council, similarly, has recognised the potential of these waterways and will liaise closely with the Cotswold Canals Trust and British Waterways with the aim of promoting, where appropriate, the use of the canals as resources for recreational and economic activity. Proposals for development along the canal corridors will be assessed against the relevant Local Plan policies. With regard to the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal, it is important to note that this waterway acts as a resource for drinking water, as well as a commercial waterway, and is in close proximity to areas of major conservation interest along the Severn Estuary. British Waterways, in conjunction with the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal User Forum, is in the process of producing the 'Gloucester and Sharpness Canal Corridor Study'. The main objectives of this study are to identify commercial, tourist and recreation development initiatives and to encourage these initiatives in a manner that is consistent with the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, landscape

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~~character and natural resources. The District Council will refer to this document when considering development proposals along the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal corridor.~~ A study carried out by British Waterways in 1996 (Cotswold Canals Corridor Study) identified the valuable social, economic and environmental potential associated with the re-opening of the Stroudwater and the Thames and Severn Canals in Stroud District. The study concluded that, in their current condition, these canals represented a major unrealised asset in the area. The strength of this has been reflected in the Heritage Lottery Fund financial support for canal restoration and South West Regional Development Agency financial support for the economic and regeneration benefits associated with the canals restoration. The District Council has recognised the potential of these waterways and has made a financial commitment to their restoration. The restoration of the Stroudwater and part of the Thames and Severn canals to full navigation through the Stroud area is expected to act as a catalyst to deliver significant social and economic regeneration, including increased visitor spend, tourism, development and construction related employment, neighbourhood regeneration, healthy living, training and skills development and community development. Restoration and regeneration will respect the local biodiversity and landscape value. The first step ("Phase 1") involves the restoration of the canal from The Ocean (near Stonehouse), to Brimscombe Port, upstream of Stroud Town – a distance of 9.5km. The Council will liaise closely with the Cotswold Canals Trust and British Waterways in securing appropriate canal restoration. Proposals for development along the canal corridors will be assessed against the relevant Local Plan policies and the Stroudwater Navigation & Thames and Severn Canal Restoration Position Statement and Developer Checklist (July 2004). With regard to the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal, it is important to note that this waterway acts as a resource for drinking water, as well as a commercial waterway, and is in close proximity to areas of major conservation interest along the Severn Estuary. British Waterways, in

conjunction with the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal User Forum has produced the the 'Gloucester and Sharpness Canal Corridor Study'. The main objectives of this study are to identify commercial, tourist and recreation development initiatives and to encourage these initiatives in a manner that is consistent with the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, landscape character and natural resources. The District Council will refer to this document when considering development proposals along the canal corridor.

Proposed Modification M/10/05/T: Modify paragraph 10.5.12 to incorporate the recommendation 10.16 of the Inspectors Report

10.5.12. The Stroudwater Canal and the Thames and Severn Canal have not operated as commercial waterways for many years and some sections have fallen into disuse or become obstructed by highway development or infilling. In the most serious cases it is not possible to identify, on the ground, the original route of some parts of these canals. However, the identification of **both these original and replacement** 'missing links' is of great importance if the objective of through navigation is to be realised. The District Council will, therefore, liaise with British Waterways, the Cotswolds Canal Trust and relevant landowners with the aim of identifying and protecting these 'missing links'. Nevertheless, there are long stretches of the canal corridors, rather than the canals themselves, which serve recreational purposes such as traffic-free towpath walking and cycling. The long term potential of the canals is recognised by the District Council, not only for their recreational, aesthetic and commercial value but also as a resource of interest to industrial archaeology and nature conservation. The Cotswold Canals Corridor Study has identified a number of priority restoration projects for the canals in Stroud District and, together with the Cotswold Canals Trust and British Waterways, the District Council will support these restoration objectives with the aim of re-opening the canals in their entirety. Development proposals that hinder the realisation of these objectives and prevent the canals from reaching their full potential will, therefore, be resisted. At the

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same time, development proposals which assist the restoration of the canals will be encouraged, providing other relevant Local Plan policies are complied with. These will include having regard to the role canals can play in maintaining the supply of water resources. Any development adjacent to a canal should also respect its setting. Development proposals will be required to incorporate a high standard of design and, in many cases, this will include appropriate canal-frontage design.

Proposed Modification M/10/17/T: Modify paragraph 10.5.13 to incorporate a factual up date on canals restoration matters and take account of the national review on planning obligations.

10.5.13. ~~In the 1990s,~~ The District Council continues to offer practical assistance and financial support in the restoration of the Cotswold canals corridors by working in partnership with key bodies such as the Cotswold Canals Trust, British Waterways, the Company of the Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation and the Stroud Valleys Project. The intention behind Policy R8 is to adopt a more positive and pro-active approach to the restoration of the Cotswold canal corridors by seeking planning obligations from developers in accordance with Circular 1/97 or its successor.

Proposed Modification M/10/18/T: Modify paragraph 10.5.14 to take account of the national review on planning obligations.

Proposed Modification M/10/06/T: Modify paragraph 10.5.14 to incorporate the recommendation 10.16 of the Inspectors Report

10.5.14. In appropriate circumstances, development proposals abutting the actual canal channels will be required, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or its successor, to contribute to the improvement or restoration of the related area of canal and towpath. The District Council believes that certain forms of development (eg. residential and leisure) will utilise, and benefit from the close proximity of, the canal corridors. The nature and scale of the contributions

sought by the District Council will be related to the individual circumstances of each development proposal. The scale of individual contributions will be a matter of negotiation between the developer and the District Council based on the residual value of the development. The relative distribution of developer contributions between canal/towpath improvements and other required community benefits will also be subject to negotiation.

Proposed Modification M/10/07/T Modify paragraph 10.6.1 to incorporate the recommendation 10.19 of the Inspectors Report

~~10.6.1. Arts, cultural and entertainment facilities can provide an important source of leisure for the local community and can be widely defined to include a number of diverse activities. The District Council recognises the important contribution these facilities make to the social and economic welfare of the community. The encouragement of creative cultural activities, through the provision of appropriate infrastructure, can help town centre regeneration objectives by promoting community involvement, vitality, distinctiveness and local identity. In an attempt to address this issue the District Council has formulated its own Cultural Development Strategy to direct resources to particular gaps in provision. Despite a high level of interest in various forms of leisure activities, the actual level of infrastructure within the District is low. For example, the District has no purpose built theatre, no concert hall and no art gallery. Although the town of Wotton-under-Edge has a 179 seat cinema to serve the South Vale area, the District's main town of Stroud lacks such a facility. However, there are some other notable entertainment facilities in Stroud such as the Subscription Rooms which hosts concerts, exhibitions and events. Similarly, the Prema Arts Centre in Uley has a national reputation for both its exhibition and performing arts programme.~~ Arts, cultural and entertainment facilities can provide an important source of leisure for the local community and can be widely defined to include a number of diverse activities. The

District Council recognises the important contribution these facilities make to the social and economic welfare of the community. This is particularly the case in smaller communities with town and village halls. The encouragement of creative cultural activities, through the provision of appropriate infrastructure, can help town centre regeneration objectives by promoting community involvement, vitality, distinctiveness and local identity. In an attempt to address this issue the District Council has formulated its own Cultural Development Strategy to direct resources to particular gaps in provision. Despite a high level of interest in various forms of leisure activities, the actual level of infrastructure within the District is low, especially in rural areas. For example, the District has no purpose built theatre, no concert hall and no art gallery. Although the town of Wotton-under-Edge has a 179 seat cinema to serve the South Vale area, the District's main town of Stroud lacks such a facility. However, there are some other notable entertainment facilities in Stroud such as the Subscription Rooms which hosts concerts, exhibitions and events. Similarly, the Prema Arts Centre in Uley has a national reputation for both its exhibition and performing arts programme.