

## **4.1. Introduction**

**4.1.1.** Stroud District Council is committed to help build the economic prosperity of the District, and this is included as a key aim of the 1999/2000 Business Plan. Under this key aim, a number of broad initiatives are indicated that will contribute to its achievement. These initiatives are integral parts of the preparation and implementation of a variety of Council policy documents including the Local Plan and the strategies covering economic development, town centre regeneration, tourism and cultural development. The Council works alongside many partners in striving to achieve this aim including Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, Gloucestershire Regional Development Agency, The Link Group and Stroud College.

**4.1.2.** This chapter deals with the land-use elements of that aim. In particular it deals with employment land issues and the role of tourism. In this Plan the term 'employment land' means land that provides for jobs in the business use, light industrial use, general industrial use and storage/distribution use categories as defined in the Use Classes Order 1987 as B1, B2 and B8 uses respectively. It is these uses that are central to the functioning of the District's economy. However, it is recognised that other activities, for example, retailing, are significant employment generators and this is reflected elsewhere in the Plan.

**4.1.3.** The Council recognises the important role of tourism as a present and future generator of income and employment in the District. Tourism is a valuable economic benefit to the District. The Council has adopted a proactive approach to tourism development in its Tourism Strategy. However, such development needs to be carefully balanced against environmental issues. The Council therefore supports the concept of 'sustainable tourism'; i.e. *'seeking a harmony between the needs of the visitor, the place and the host community'*<sup>7</sup>. Land-use policies relevant to the tourism potential of the District are included in this chapter in recognition of its impact on the local economy.

## **4.2. Objectives**

**4.2.1.** Employment policy in the District is guided by the following objectives derived from the overall aim of 'enabling the economic prosperity of the District':-

1. To maintain and enhance the economic diversity and vitality of the District.
2. To increase rural employment opportunities.

3. To allocate employment land (in accordance with Gloucestershire Structure Plan requirements) for local businesses to expand and new firms to start up.
4. To protect and improve existing key industrial areas.
5. To ensure employment uses have good public accessibility.
6. To minimise any adverse effects of necessary development for employment on the community or environment.
7. To enable the growth of sustainable tourism.

## **4.3. The District's Economy**

**4.3.1.** Stroud District's average unemployment rate of 2.4% is 45% below the national average and 27% below the regional average. As a result, the area does not qualify for assisted area funds from the UK Government or EU.

**4.3.2.** The lack of external funding limits the economic development activities that can be carried out in the District. Therefore it is essential that available resources contribute to widening the economic base, focusing on particular needs and helping to ensure that all sections of the community benefit. The underlying unemployment rate hides particular areas of disadvantage:-

- Some localities within wards have particular indicators of deprivation, notably around Stroud, Dursley and Cam where long term unemployment is between 8% and 12%.
- Average weekly earnings in the District are amongst the lowest in the County.
- Stroud and Dursley have suffered a decline in investment resulting in vacant shops and reduced numbers of people visiting the towns.
- Some rural parts of the District suffer specific problems relating to accessible transport, child care facilities and business services.

**4.3.3.** However, compared to many areas of the UK, Stroud District has a flourishing local economy. In the period 1991-1996 employment grew by 8.1% in the District compared with 4.4% in Gloucestershire and 3.2% in the UK. Its strength remains in the engineering/manufacturing sector, where the high proportion of jobs reflects the historical association with this form of employment within the District.

**4.3.4.** A lower proportion of jobs in the service sector indicates, amongst other factors, the influence of major centres such as Cheltenham, Gloucester and Bristol, have on the District. These centres attract commuting workers from across the District leading to a lessening of the self-containment of the District. Travel to work patterns from the 1991

<sup>7</sup> Source: Maintaining the Balance - Government Task Force Report 1991

Census indicate that only 58% and 51% of trips remained within the Stroud Valleys and the South Vale (based on Dursley and Cam respectively). With the increasing influence of the major centres, relatively little new recent employment provision in the District and losses of small scale businesses, it is reasonable to assume that out-commuting to alternative employment locations outside the District has increased in recent years.

#### **4.4. Central Government Advice**

**4.4.1.** This is contained in a number of relevant Planning Policy Guidance Notes.

**4.4.2.** PPG4: Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms 1992 encourages Local Plans to assist and stimulate the process of economic growth and regeneration in both urban and rural areas. It advises that Local Plan policies should:-

- provide for choice, flexibility and competition;
- be realistic in their assessment of the needs of industry;
- ensure the availability of sufficient land readily capable of development that is well served by infrastructure; and
- ensure a variety of sites is available to meet differing needs.

**4.4.3.** Locational policy should take account of the opportunities available to:-

- optimise use of existing sites, especially in urban areas;
- reduce the length and number of trips by car;
- place industry and commerce in residential areas without causing unacceptable disturbance;
- encourage new development in locations that can be served by more energy efficient modes of transport;
- discourage development that would unacceptably add to congestion; and
- sustain the rural economy.

**4.4.4.** PPG7: The Countryside, Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development 1997 encourages rural enterprise in a sustainable manner while seeking to safeguard the best features of the countryside. It advocates diversification of the rural economy and acknowledges that a wider range of businesses could be accommodated in the countryside without causing unacceptable harm. The re-use of existing buildings is advocated where the conditions are appropriate.

**4.4.5.** PPG12: Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance 1992 requires Local Authorities

to consider a range of economic considerations in preparing land use policies, such as:-

- urban regeneration and related initiatives;
- the balance between urban and greenfield land;
- Socio-economic factors, (e.g. car ownership, unemployment); and
- the rural economy.

**4.4.6.** PPG21: Tourism 1992 outlines the economic significance of tourism and its impact on land-use planning. Local Plans should:-

- include provision for tourism if appropriate to their area;
- protect the environmental qualities that are important to tourism; and
- utilise tourism as an element of urban regeneration.

#### **4.5. Gloucestershire County Structure Plan**

**4.5.1.** The Structure Plan suggests a distribution of employment land across the County derived from employment land requirements that are based upon theoretical considerations and broad assumptions. As a result, the County has made allocations of land to each District that are indicative only. For Stroud a figure of about 100 hectares of employment land is indicated.

**4.5.2.** The Plan states that priority for employment land provision is within the central Severn Vale. In relation to Stroud District the nearest key strategic employment sites are at Quedgeley (Gloucester City) and Brockworth (Tewkesbury Borough), both areas bordering Stroud District's boundary. No further specific guidance is given for Stroud. However, employment provision should relate well to housing, commercial, leisure and community facilities and where there are opportunities to maximise the use of public transport. That is, it should serve the main urban areas.

**4.5.3.** Most B1 (business development) should be located in the main towns of the District, whilst B8 (storage and distribution) should be located to be readily accessible from primary transport routes and facilities. Scope is given to protect land in employment use where its loss would limit the range and quality of employment sites available.

**4.5.4.** Small scale rural development for employment uses can assist diversification of the rural economy. Subject to its environmental impact, such development may be supported in or adjacent to villages with an adequate range of community facilities and public transport service.

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### 4.6. Local Plan Strategy

**4.6.1.** In addition to the preceding contextual material, other work is of relevance to this chapter. A **review** has been undertaken **of the allocations** contained in the SDLP Deposit Version 1994 **and of the commitments** for employment land. This reveals the extent of employment land available for development at 1 January 1999.

**Table 4.1: Employment Land Supply at 1 January 1999**

	ha.
Structure Plan Requirement	about 100.0
Land developed 1/1/91 - 31/12/98	11.2
Commitments at 1/1/99 (planning consents)	29.0
Shortfall	59.8
Losses to 1/1/99	10.5
Total Shortfall	about 70.3

**4.6.2.** A number of sites considered in this review have been 'available' for a considerable time. In particular about 18 hectares of land at Sharpness has been allocated since the mid 1980's. The lack of any real success in attracting industry to this area brings into question the suitability to the market of this area for employment use. However, the port of Sharpness shows signs of recovery following its privatisation. It is not desirable to undermine the potential of the port's growth by de-allocating sites for employment use at this time, particularly with the increasing focus on alternative modes of transporting freight within the country. Sharpness is especially well located having rail and canal connections linked to the port operation.

**4.6.3.** This points to a need to provide a greater choice of sites to the market if the Stroud economy is to continue to flourish.

**4.6.4.** A **study of business land and premises** in the District published in November 1995 provides important information for the Local Plan Strategy:-

- Allocations of employment land made in the previous Local Plan are unlikely to satisfy future needs of firms expressing a need/desire to expand.
- New land should be allocated to protect and enhance the diversity of the local economy and to retain manufacturing businesses. This land needs to be distributed through the District so

businesses can relocate locally and to meet sustainability objectives.

- Land is required for a range of types of premises.
- Out commuting is a stronger feature of the South Vale part of the District.
- Quality of business land and premises is often more important than location.

**4.6.5.** A **rural employment study** examining the nature and scale of rural employment in the District was undertaken for the Council in September 1997. This highlighted the benefits of rural employment to local areas and the need to ensure a positive commitment to sustainable rural economic development. It suggested some basic decisions were needed to:-

- define clearly the rural area for employment policy purposes and the role of the AONB within this;
- relate rural employment provision to the settlement strategy; and
- make closer links in the range of policies relating to rural diversification.

**4.6.6.** A number of policy initiatives to promote diversification and the strengthening of the rural economy were suggested:-

- relax protection of existing industrial areas in the main built up areas;
- retain small scale employment sites in the rural areas;
- update criteria for re-use of rural buildings to reflect PPG7 guidance;
- incorporate a policy on farm based diversification; and
- consider controlling farm shops where they compete with village shops.

**4.6.7.** Where appropriate, policy stances have been devised drawn from these recommendations and are included in this chapter and other relevant parts of the Plan.

**4.6.8.** A **review of existing employment sites** is being undertaken to assess their continued usefulness in meeting employment land needs in the future. Some sites may have latent development potential either through clearance and subsequent redevelopment for alternative uses or through enhancing the quality of the site through better accessibility and environmental improvement. This may lead to getting better value out of existing sites for employment or other uses. On the other hand, if sites are shown to be unviable they may be lost, thus leading to the need to identify alternative employment land.

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**4.6.9.** Drawing on the above, the Local Plan strategy for supporting and developing the Stroud District economy is:-

- to provide an adequate supply of employment land to meet the needs of the resident workforce;
- to ensure that provision of land for B1 and B2 employment uses is made in locations that will assist in reducing the need to travel between work and home;
- to ensure that B8 employment land is located with good access to main transport corridors and facilities, (particularly rail and canal), thus reducing the impact of HGVs on the environment and communities;
- to protect the existing economic base by ensuring sites occupied by important employment uses are protected from other forms of development;
- to provide a range of sites in size and nature to accommodate a wide diversity of employment uses;
- to maximise the use of existing vacant, derelict or under-used employment land as far as possible or to seek alternative provision for those uses on unviable sites thus allowing the re-development of those sites for appropriate alternative uses;
- to enable the provision of facilities and infrastructure that will assist in the growth of sustainable tourism;
- to enable the extension or intensification of use of premises for growing businesses in the District;
- to control or relocate 'bad neighbour' development to places where its adverse impact on environment and community can be avoided or minimised;
- to allow for the growth of work from home;
- to enable the diversification of the rural economy with appropriate allocations of employment land well related to communities having a good level of services and facilities;
- to allow the re-use of rural buildings for employment in locations well related to communities having a good level of services and facilities; and
- to allow appropriate farm diversification projects.

### 4.7. Employment Land Protection

**4.7.1.** The loss of employment land in the towns and villages of the District is undesirable in so far as it may lead to the loss of employment opportunities. The District is currently a net exporter of labour to other areas. This, in combination with a high level of car ownership, leads to extensive and undesirable car based commuting patterns. In order to assist in reducing commuting levels, it is necessary to retain

a good range of employment opportunities within the District's towns and villages. However, the Council recognises that there may be instances where the removal of employment activities from a site will improve the environment locally, or satisfy other aims of this plan, for example the protection of the AONB landscape.

**4.7.2.** There are a large number of existing employment sites within the District that play an important role in its economy. In addition, a number of new sites that already have planning permission have not yet been developed. These are shown below as employment commitments.

**Table 4.2: Sites with Planning Permission for Employment Use at 1 January 1999**

SITE	USE	HA
Stroudwater Business Park	B1, B2	2.5
Lucas EU1, Stroudwater Business Park	B1	1.4
Land at Oldends Lane	B1	0.8
Bilton Cargo Depot, Haresfield	B8	4.8
Merrett's Mill, Minchinhampton	B1	0.4
Parlour Farm, Bisley	B1	0.2
Netherhills Depot, Frampton on Severn	B8	2.4
RDS, Cirencester Road, Minchinhampton	B1	0.7
Old Airfield, Moreton Valence	B8	3.5
Adj MOD, Aston Down	B1	3.0
Springmill Industrial Estate, Nailsworth	B1	0.5
Draycott Business Park, Cam	B1	0.4
South of Draycott Business Park, Cam	B1	1.6
Adj SNFA Bearings, Charfield (Kingswood)	B1	0.8
Adj Bonds Mill, Stonehouse	B1	6.0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29.0</b>

**4.7.3.** A number of the existing and committed sites are regarded as key employment locations. The majority of these sites are located within or adjacent to the settlement boundaries. These have particular significance in relation to the sustainability agenda being well located in relation to the main labour market and thus able to provide good opportunities for a short journey to work. They provide a key resource for local employment and their protection helps to reduce the need to seek new greenfield opportunities for employment uses.

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### POLICY E1

The key employment land identified on the Proposals Map and listed below will be retained as areas where employment needs take precedence and where redevelopment for alternative uses or changes of use will not be permitted.

SITE	PARISH	SITE NAME
EK1	Chalford	Chalford Industrial Estate
EK2	Eastington	Meadow Mill Industrial Estate
EK3	Stonehouse	Stroudwater/Oldends Lane Industrial area
EK4	Stonehouse	Bonds Mill Industrial Estate, Bristol Road
EK5	Stonehouse	Upper Mills Industrial Estate, Bristol Road
EK6	Stonehouse	Ryeford Industrial Area
EK7	Cainscross	Dudbridge Industrial Area
EK8	Rodborough	Daniels Industrial Estate, Bath Road
EK9	Rodborough	Bath Road Industrial Estate
EK10	Stroud	Fromeside Industrial Estate, Dr Newton's Way
EK11	Stroud	Salmon Springs Industrial Estate, Painswick Road
EK12	Stroud	Stafford Mills Industrial Estate, London Road
EK13	Thrupp	Griffin Mills Industrial Estate, London Road
EK14	Thrupp	Phoenix Industrial Estate, London Road
EK15	Thrupp	Hope Mills Industrial Estate, London Road
EK16	Thrupp	Brimcombe Port Industrial Area, London Road
EK17	Woodchester	South Woodchester Industrial Area, Bath Road
EK18	Woodchester	Frogmarsh Mill Industrial Estate, Bath Road
EK19	Nailsworth	Inchbrook Industrial Estate, Bath Road
EK20	Nailsworth	Nailsworth Mill Industrial Estate, Avening Road
EK21	Nailsworth	Spring Mill Industrial Estate, Avening Road
EK22	Frampton on Severn	Frampton Industrial Estate, Bridge Road
EK23	Cam	Draycott/Middle Mill Industrial Area, High Street
EK24	Cam	Cam Mills, Everlands
EK25	Dursley	Lister Petter/Long Street Industrial Area
EK26	Dursley	Mawdsley's, Uley Road
EK27	Wotton-under-Edge	Tabernacle Road
EK28	Wotton-under-Edge	Renishaw, Old Town
EK29	Wotton-under-Edge	Berkshire Gravure, Brookside
EK30	Kingswood	Abbey Mill Industrial Estate, Charfield Road
EK31	Kingswood	Renishaw, New Mills
EK32	Hinton	Sharpness Docks
EK33	Berkeley	Rigestate, Station Road

4.7.4. There may be circumstances where the loss of employment land is acceptable, for example, in terms of the removal of disturbance through noise

or dust or removal of activities damaging to a site of nature conservation value. Such proposals will be assessed against Policy E2. In allowing loss of employment land there will be a negative effect on the provision of work for the community that will require addressing. The Council will be looking to achieve the replacement of any lost job opportunities in order to retain a reasonable balance between population and employment. Where possible the proposal leading to lost employment opportunities should address this and come forward with proposals that compensate the loss.

### POLICY E2

Development leading to the loss of employment land not protected under Policy E1 will only be permitted where:

1. there are demonstrable environmental and/or conservation benefits that outweigh the loss of jobs; or
2. the loss of employment land can be compensated for satisfactorily by the provision of alternative new land; or
3. the loss of employment land through site rationalisation leads to investment in other parts of the site resulting in increased employment generation potential.

## 4.8. Employment Land Allocation

4.8.1. New sites are allocated for employment use to meet anticipated needs up to 2011. These are in addition to those already committed through planning permissions. Some allocations are carried forward from the Local Plan, Deposit Version 1994. They are well related to either existing centres of population, existing industrial sites or new housing allocations. The sites at Sharpness continue to provide stability and potential for growth of the port. The allocations, in combination with existing sites and commitments, provide a wide range of opportunities in both scale and nature.

4.8.2. This provides adequate choice for employers, enables improvements to the quality of provision and hence supports the growth of the Stroud economy. The sites proposed will accommodate the envisaged growth of indigenous businesses and new firms wishing to start up or establish operations in the District. Land will also be available through the release of existing sites, as firms grow and move within the District, to enable new businesses to start up.

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### PROPOSAL E3

The following sites are allocated for employment use. On those sites where obligations are indicated, a Section 106 Legal Agreement will be sought to secure them.

SITE	PARISH	DESCRIPTION	USE	HA
EA1	Cam	<b>East of Draycott Mills Industrial Estate, Cam*</b> <u>Obligations</u> Contributions to off-site highway works including public transport, pedestrian and cycle links to Cam and Dursley Rail Station and to Cam and Dursley centres.	B1, B2	11.6
EA2	Eastington	<b>Meadow Mill, Eastington*</b>	B1, B2	2.2
MU1	Hardwicke	<b>Hunt's Grove, Colethrop Farm*</b> <u>Obligations</u> These will be sought in conjunction with the provision of residential development as listed under Proposal H1.	B1	5.2
EA3	Hinton	<b>Rear of Dock Road, Sharpness Dock*</b> <u>Obligations</u> Contributions to off-site highway works.	B1, B2, B8	6.8
EA4	Hinton	<b>Land east of dock, Sharpness Dock*</b> <u>Obligations</u> Contributions to off-site highway works.	B1, B2, B8	3.2
EA5	Hinton	<b>Adj tidal basin, Sharpness Dock*</b> <u>Obligations</u> Contributions to off-site highway works.	B1, B2, B8	4.0
EA6	Hinton	<b>Bridge Road, Sharpness Dock*</b> <u>Obligations</u> Contributions to off-site highway works	B1, B2, B8	3.4
EA7	Kingswood	<b>Charfield Road, Kingswood*</b>	B1	0.3
EA8	Kingswood	<b>Renishaws, Wotton-under-Edge*</b> <u>Obligations</u> Contributions to off-site highway works including public transport, pedestrian and cycle links to nearby settlements and urban areas. Provision of public playing fields.	B1, B2	13.0

EA9	Stonehouse	<b>North of Stroudwater Industrial Estate</b> <u>Obligations</u> Contributions to off-site highway works including public transport, pedestrian and cycle links to Stonehouse and Stroud. Protection of woodland and amenity areas.	B1, B2	15.7
EA10	Stonehouse	<b>Stroudwater Business Park, Phase 1</b>	B1, B2	4.0
EA11	Stonehouse	<b>Land adj ABB/Kent, Oldends Lane</b>	B1, B2	1.4
EA12	Thrupp	<b>Adj Ham Mills, Thrupp*</b>	B1	0.6
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>71.4</b>

\* These sites may have archaeological significance and may require an archaeological evaluation at least before planning applications are determined. Prospective developers are advised to contact the County Archaeologist at an early stage in the formulation of their proposals.

### 4.9. Extension and Expansion of Existing Employment Uses

**4.9.1.** Investment by businesses within established industrial sites is supported in principle. However, in the case of industrial uses within non-industrial areas it may be appropriate to restrict further growth or consolidation of the use in order to prevent degradation of the surrounding environment. For example, employment proposals that give rise to unacceptable loss of amenity to adjacent or nearby residential properties or have an unacceptable impact on other sensitive land uses will not be allowed. Such instances are covered by the General Policies of the Plan (G1 to G5).

**4.9.2.** Some of the District's employment sites are located in the open countryside some distance from the nearest town or village. At first sight, the growth of such an employment use may appear undesirable in terms of the potential impact on the countryside and the potential to attract car based commuters to the site. However, balanced against this there will be occasions where expansion is desirable to improve local employment opportunities. Particularly where out-commuting is a feature of an area it may be desirable to increase the work prospects for the local community.

**4.9.3.** Whilst it is recognised that the planning system cannot force people to live and work in close proximity, it can provide the opportunity to do so. In

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making judgements on expansion proposals for this type of site, the Council will take into account the potential for improvements to the accessibility of such workplaces, particularly in respect of alternative modes of transport to the car. The strengths of these arguments will be closely examined when making decisions on whether growth is acceptable.

### POLICY E4

The extension or expansion of existing businesses including the erection of new buildings will be permitted provided all of the following criteria are met:

1. the development would not appear as an intrusion into open countryside;
2. the site is capable of satisfactorily accommodating the proposed development in terms of layout, access, parking, landscaping or any other requirement of the development; and
3. the site is, or will be made easily accessible by a range of transport modes other than the car from the anticipated employee catchment area.

### 4.10. Rural Employment Provision

**4.10.1.** The Council wishes to encourage the establishment of new businesses within the District that meet the needs of the community without unacceptable detrimental impacts on the community or environment. In particular, in the District's larger and medium sized rural settlements, there are insufficient local employment opportunities available in relation to the number of people in the workforce. This leads to commuting and contributes to an unsustainable form of development. The Council would like to see an increase in the number of local employment opportunities in these settlements through the provision of small scale industrial sites.

**4.10.2.** Allocations for new employment are set out in Proposal E3, most of which relate to the District's more urban areas. However, there may be proposals in relation to other settlements that seek to establish businesses on land that is not identified for employment use in this plan. In these circumstances proposals will be judged against Policies E5 or E6. The former establishes criteria designed to ensure that new employment development is suitably located at main settlements and medium sized rural settlements, it is accessible and will not have adverse impacts on either the environment or the community, and the latter sets out strict criteria for the expansion of existing employment uses in the open countryside.

### POLICY E5

Development proposals for new employment use within or adjacent to the settlement boundaries of:

Berkeley	Bussage
Chalford	Eastcombe
Eastington	France Lynch
Frampton on Severn	Kingswood
Kings Stanley	Manor Village
Minchinhampton	
Leonard Stanley	Painswick
Nailsworth	Upton St Leonards
Whitminster	
Woodchester	
Wotton-under-Edge	

will be permitted provided:

1. they are appropriate in scale to the settlement;
2. for proposals adjacent to settlements, there is no suitable alternative site available within the settlement or within nearby key employment sites identified on the Proposals Map; and
3. they are in locations less than 800 metres from public transport facilities and can be safely accessed.

### POLICY E6

Development proposals for new employment use in the open countryside will not be permitted. Extensions to existing premises in the open countryside will only be permitted if the following criteria are met:

1. the scale of the resulting development is appropriate to the locality;
2. there are not suitable alternative buildings or sites within or adjacent to settlements in the area;
3. the development would improve local employment opportunities; and
4. there is no adverse impact on the landscape.

### 4.11. Homeworking

**4.11.1.** New businesses are often first formed in the home. The Council supports this enterprise in principle but is mindful of the harm that may be caused to surrounding residents or the local environment if the use outgrows the domestic environment. Provided the employment use

remains ancillary to the domestic use of the property, then planning permission is not usually required.

**4.11.2.** Working from home has become an easier option for many professions with the growth of new technology, particularly the growth of information technology. This trend is likely to continue over the Plan period and is welcomed as perhaps one of the most sustainable forms of employment. The District is already highly attractive to home workers, particularly in the arts and crafts sectors. Home based businesses, where they do not adversely affect other residents or the environment, play a positive role in expanding the local economy in a cost and energy efficient way.

**4.11.3.** Unacceptable aspects of such businesses may occur where the business generates visitors, traffic, noise or fumes beyond that normal at a single residence without the ancillary use. In general B1 (light industrial) uses are most acceptable. B2 or B8 (general industrial and storage/distribution) uses will be considered on their merits but are likely to be unacceptable due to their impact on the environment or community. Where planning permission is required, the proposal will be assessed against Policy G1.

## **4.12. Tourism**

**4.12.1.** Tourism covers a wide range of activities and types of development. As part of the local economy it has significant employment and income generation benefits for the District. The Council wishes to see the local tourist industry flourish in response to market demand. At the same time it wishes to protect the special environmental qualities that attract visitors in the first place. Therefore, a balance needs to be struck that enables the development of tourist facilities whilst not unacceptably harming environmental and community interests.

**4.12.2.** The Council will encourage development of activities and facilities that improve Stroud District as a tourist destination and that help to achieve the aims of protecting and enhancing the environment within the central concept of sustainable development. The District has a wealth of natural and man-made features which form the basis for development of its tourist industry. The Cotswold Hills contrast with the Severn Vale to provide a unique blend of dramatic landscape, unspoilt countryside, public access to commons and an industrial heritage typified by the canals and the former woollen mills. Existing attractions complement this in the form of The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust at Slimbridge, Berkeley Castle, Prinknash Abbey and Painswick's Rococo Garden.

The Council is supportive of tourist developments that help to develop a network of industrial heritage attractions based on the land adjoining the canals and re-using historic buildings. These can provide suitable sites for water based activities and activities related to the heritage of the canals and its associated historic industries.

**4.12.4.** In considering proposals across the District, preference will be given to those that provide new facilities housing activities that emphasise the special qualities of the Stroud District, such as the physical, natural or historic heritage of the area.

### **POLICY E7**

**Proposals for visitor attractions will be permitted provided that all the following criteria are met:-**

- 1. the proposal relates to the physical, natural or historic heritage of the area;**
- 2. the proposal does not have an unacceptable impact on the landscape, particularly in the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and**
- 3. any proposal likely to generate large numbers of visitors is readily accessible to means of transport other than the private car.**

**4.12.5.** Accommodation for tourists to the District exists in a wide range of hotels, bed and breakfast and self-catering accommodation. The Council is supportive of these establishments and will normally look favourably on extensions to them provided that they are compatible with their surroundings.

**4.12.6.** Where new hotels are proposed, these should be located within the District's settlements as far as possible. A location on the edge of a settlement will only be considered if no suitable site exists within the centre of the settlement, or any adjacent centres.

### **POLICY E8**

**New hotels will be permitted within or on the edge of settlements subject to there being no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of adjacent centres.**

**Where sites on the edge of settlements are proposed, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that all sites in the adjacent centre(s) have been investigated.**

**4.12.7.** A need has been identified for the provision of new small scale camping/caravan sites in the District. It is envisaged that these would accommodate between 10-20 pitches on a site.

They would provide a longer-stay base for visitors to the attractions of the Severn Vale and the Cotswolds and support the 'in transit' needs of holidaymakers heading to the South West. The Council is happy for this demand to be met provided that the local environment and community are protected from any adverse effects in providing a new site. Proposed sites must also be easily accessible from the primary road network and preferably avoid the need to enter into or pass through existing settlements.

**POLICY E9**

**Proposals for small scale sites for static holiday caravans, permanent holiday accommodation, and for touring caravans and tents, will be permitted within or adjacent to settlements or adjacent to main holiday routes, provided that all the following criteria are met:-**

- 1. the proposal does not have an unacceptable impact on the landscape, particularly in the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;**
- 2. sites are well screened from vantage points, highways and residential development; and landscaping is provided amongst plots within the site and around the site boundaries.**