

INTRODUCTION

- 12.1 Tourism makes an important contribution to the local economy and employment. In 1996 there were the equivalent of nearly 3,000 full-time jobs supported by the tourism industry and it is estimated that total spending by visitors staying in the District was £36,800,000. The Council recognises the value of tourism in its Tourism Strategy and seeks to ensure that it continues to make an effective and sustainable contribution to the growth and development of the local economy.
- 12.2 There is a close relationship between tourism and the environment. Tourists come to Hambleton because of its picturesque market towns and villages and its attractive countryside. Tourism, therefore, potentially relates well to the Plan's strategy as it utilises the renewable resources and natural advantages of the District and can be a positive force for the conservation of the District's main environmental assets. However, tourism which is insensitive can damage the environment, dilute local character and distinctiveness and threaten the very qualities that make the area attractive.
- 12.3 In line with Government policy in PPG21 'Tourism', the Council's approach is based on drawing a balance between maximising the economic and employment benefits of tourism and safeguarding the environment and the amenities of residents. In general tourism development is likely to be more acceptable when it is sustainable. That is when it draws on and maintains and enhances the District's landscape, heritage and culture and respects the scale, nature and character of the place in which it is sited.
- 12.4 The growth of tourism is largely influenced by available accommodation and facilities and so the policies focus on these aspects. The Council will concentrate the majority of serviced accommodation in settlements, especially the market towns and larger villages. Whilst favouring tourism development in these areas the Council recognises that it is the countryside where many tourists want to be and where the economic benefits of tourism are needed. However, strong safeguards will be applied in rural locations to ensure that development is acceptable in terms of the effects on the landscape, nature conservation, farmland and rural settlements and communities.
- 12.5 The Government is encouraging farms to develop alternative sources of income. Providing tourist facilities, particularly accommodation, can be an important form of diversification. Proposals will be supported provided they would not conflict with the need to protect the countryside.

OBJECTIVES

12.6 The Tourism Policies of the Plan have the following main objectives:

1. To ensure that tourism continues to make an effective and sustainable contribution to the growth and development of the local economy and local employment.
2. To encourage tourism developments which are based on the intrinsic qualities of the District's landscape, heritage and culture and which aim to safeguard the environment.
3. To ensure that tourism developments are consistent with the environmental objectives of the Plan.
4. To ensure that tourism developments do not unduly disrupt local social and economic activity.
5. To encourage the provision of new accommodation in appropriate locations.

CAMPING, CARAVANNING AND CHALET DEVELOPMENT

POLICY TO1

STATIC CARAVANS, CHALETS AND CABINS

New static caravan, chalet and cabin development for holiday use or the extension of existing sites will not be permitted within AONBs, Special Landscape Areas, Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest or the Green Belt. Elsewhere static caravan, chalet and cabin development will be permitted provided all of the following criteria are met:

1. The site is well screened by landform and/or existing landscaping from roads, elevated viewpoints and other public places and the development will not have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the countryside;
2. The scale of development relates sensitively to its surroundings;
3. The site is of a high standard of layout, design and landscaping and the caravans, chalets and cabins satisfactorily blend into the landscape in terms of their siting, design, colour and materials;
4. The site is located in an area with local opportunities for informal countryside recreation and the development will not itself become detrimental to such attractions;
5. The site will not have an adverse impact on the character or setting of settlements or the amenity of local residents;
6. The traffic generated can be satisfactorily accommodated on the local highway network;
7. The proposal will not have an adverse impact on sites of nature conservation value or archaeological importance, or buildings of architectural or historic interest;
8. The proposal will not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

JUSTIFICATION

12.7 The Structure Plan discourages static caravan sites because they tend to be obtrusive and difficult to successfully assimilate into the landscape throughout the year. Although chalets and cabins are given preference over static caravans because they tend to be more durable, of better design and easier to blend into their surroundings, they can still detract from the scenic quality of the countryside. Static caravans, chalets and cabins will, therefore, not be appropriate in areas of high landscape quality such as AONBs. Static caravans, chalets and cabins are

permanent and urban in nature and are, therefore, also inappropriate within the Green Belt.

12.8 Elsewhere, proposals for static caravan, chalet and cabin development will have to meet strict criteria. It is particularly important that where landscaping is to provide essential screening that this is already established and effective. Any additional planting should be necessary only to reinforce existing landscaping and not to compensate for the lack of it.

- 12.9 The replacement of static caravan sites with chalets or cabins can be a way of securing environmental improvement through improved design, layout, landscaping and densities. The Structure Plan encourages such changes.
- 12.10 Seasonal or holiday occupancy conditions will normally be imposed on static caravan, chalet and cabin development to ensure that they are not used for permanent residential use.

POLICY TO2

CAMPING AND TOURING CARAVAN SITES

Subject to Policy TO3, proposals for the establishment or extension of camping and touring caravan sites will be permitted where all of the following criteria are met:

1. The site is well screened by landform and/or existing landscaping from roads, elevated viewpoints and other public places and the development will not have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the countryside;
2. The scale of development relates sensitively to its surroundings;
3. The site is located in an area with local opportunities for informal countryside recreation and the development will not itself become detrimental to such attractions;
4. The site has good access to the road network and will not cause significant traffic congestion or safety problems;
5. The proposal will not have an adverse impact on sites of nature conservation value or archaeological importance, or buildings of architectural or historic interest;
6. The site will not have an adverse impact on the character or setting of settlements or the amenity of local residents.

JUSTIFICATION

- 12.11 PPG21 notes that touring caravanning will remain an important part of the self catering holiday market and can contribute much to the local economy including playing a useful role in farm diversification. Touring caravan sites tend to be less intrusive in the landscape than static sites, generally being smaller, with the caravans removed during the winter. However, caravan development, unless carefully controlled, can have an adverse effect on the scenic quality of the countryside, nature conservation and local communities.
- 12.12 All proposals for caravan and camping sites will, therefore, have to meet strict criteria. It is particularly important that where landscaping is to provide essential screening that this is already established and effective. Any additional planting should be necessary only to reinforce existing landscaping and not to compensate for the lack of it.
- 12.13 The number of pitches proposed will be a key consideration in assessing the impact and whether a proposal is acceptable. Small sites are likely to be viewed more favourably than large sites.

POLICY TO3**CAMPING AND TOURING CARAVAN SITES IN SENSITIVE AREAS**

In the AONBs, Special Landscape Areas, Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest and the Green Belt proposals for the establishment or extension of camping and touring caravan sites will be permitted where the criteria in Policy TO2 are met and where:

1. The proposal does not conflict with the priority accorded to landscape conservation or maintaining their open character; and
2. The proposal is small scale; and
3. The proposal is of a particularly high standard of design, layout and landscaping.

For such proposals a detailed application will be required with detailed plans showing the design of the site, its layout and landscaping.

JUSTIFICATION

- 12.14 Caravan and camping development can have an adverse impact on the appearance of the countryside and so deserves special consideration in areas of high landscape quality. This is recognised in PPG21.
- 12.15 The AONBs, Special Landscape Areas and Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest owe their attractiveness to the exceptional quality of their landscapes. These areas are amongst the District's key environmental and tourism assets and so the environmental impacts on these areas require special consideration.
- 12.16 The importance attached to conserving the landscape in these areas is such that few sites are likely to be suitable. It is particularly unlikely that large sites will be considered suitable.
- 12.17 Outline applications may not provide sufficient detail to allow the full impact of a proposal to be assessed. Applications in sensitive areas should contain details of the design, layout and landscaping of the site and show how the proposal relates to its surroundings.

POLICY TO4**PERMANENT BUILDINGS ON CAMPING, CARAVANNING AND CHALET DEVELOPMENTS**

Proposals for permanent buildings, including clubhouses and dining or leisure facilities, provided in association with camping, caravanning or chalet development will be permitted when all of the following criteria are met:

1. They are necessary for the operation of the site, with the size and nature of the buildings relating to the needs of site residents;
2. They do not have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the countryside or sites of nature conservation value;
3. They are of a high standard of design and satisfactorily blend into the landscape in terms of their siting, design and materials;
4. They are compatible with the landscape and Green Belt policies.

The use of such facilities by the general public will not be permitted.

JUSTIFICATION

12.18 Facilities for eating, drinking and leisure may be permitted for the use of residents in association with tourism development.

12.19 However, if such facilities were open to the general public, much greater levels of use

may result with more traffic and parking, detracting from the character and appearance of the area. The proper place for such facilities for the general public is within settlements.

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

POLICY TO5

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

New tourist attractions or the improvement or upgrading of existing tourist attractions will be permitted provided that proposals meet all of the following criteria:

1. They are appropriate to the District’s heritage and culture and where located outside Development Limits, to the character and function of the countryside;
2. They respect the scale and level of activity in the locality;
3. They will not adversely affect the character or appearance of the countryside;
4. They will not result in a detrimental impact on road safety and the free flow of traffic on the adjacent highway network;
5. They will not have an adverse impact on the character or setting of settlements or the amenity of existing residents;
6. They will not have an adverse impact on sites of nature conservation value or archaeological importance, or buildings of architectural or historic interest;
7. Any new buildings are of a high standard of design and satisfactorily blend into their surroundings in terms of their design, siting and materials;
8. They are compatible with the landscape and Green Belt policies.

JUSTIFICATION

12.20 If the District is to make the most of its tourist potential it cannot rely solely on existing attractions. New tourist attractions will, therefore, be encouraged where appropriate.

for the future because generally they tend to be sympathetic and can be accommodated without undesirable impact.

12.21 Existing tourist attractions in the District are generally small scale and related to its countryside, heritage and culture. These include country houses, museums, working farms and mills, craft industries and collections of livestock. The Council considers that this should be the pattern

12.22 Proposals which have to be located in the countryside should not have an adverse effect on the landscape or nature conservation. Wherever possible, the re-use of existing rural buildings will be preferred to the construction of new buildings.

POLICY TO6**LARGE SCALE TOURIST ATTRACTIONS**

Large scale tourist attractions such as theme parks and residential holiday centres will not be permitted. Exceptionally, where there are significant proven benefits to the local economy and employment which other policies of the Plan would be unlikely to achieve, proposals will be permitted provided that all of the following criteria are met:

1. They are not within the AONBs, Special Landscape Areas and Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest or the Green Belt;
2. They will not adversely affect the character or appearance of the countryside;
3. They will not result in a detrimental impact on road safety and the free flow of traffic on the highway network or require improvements which could detrimentally affect the character of rural roads in the area generally;
4. They will not have an adverse impact on the character or setting of settlements or the amenity of existing residents;
5. They will not have an adverse impact on sites of nature conservation value or archaeological importance, or buildings of architectural or historic interest;
6. Any new buildings are of a good standard of design and are sympathetic to the landscape in terms of their design, siting and materials;
7. They do not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

In all cases a full environmental assessment of the proposal will be required.

JUSTIFICATION

12.23 Tourism development in Hambleton should be based upon a well balanced, sympathetic development of the area's present assets, rather than the introduction of major new activities unrelated to the inherent qualities of the area.

12.24 In PPG21 the Government gives emphasis to the economic benefits of large scale

tourist developments and advises that these should be taken into account provided that suitable sites can be found. However, it is unlikely that such development could be accommodated in the countryside of the District without causing serious amenity problems.

HOTELS, GUEST HOUSES AND OTHER PERMANENT VISITOR ACCOMMODATION

POLICY TO7

VISITOR ACCOMMODATION WITHIN DEVELOPMENT LIMITS

Within Development Limits new hotels, guest houses and other serviced and self-catering visitor accommodation, the extension and upgrading of existing visitor accommodation or the change of use of suitable buildings to provide visitor accommodation will be permitted provided that all of the following criteria are met:

1. It is compatible with its surroundings in terms of siting, scale, design, materials and landscaping;
2. It will not have a detrimental effect on the amenities of people living nearby;
3. It will not adversely affect buildings or areas of historic or architectural interest;
4. It will not result in a detrimental impact on road safety and the free flow of traffic on the highway network;
5. It can provide sufficient vehicle parking within the curtilage of the property in an acceptable manner;
6. It will not result in an unacceptable loss of residential accommodation in Town Centre Commercial Areas.

JUSTIFICATION

12.25 The provision of new serviced accommodation and the improvement of existing serviced accommodation is seen as important by tourist authorities because, of all types of accommodation, this provides the greatest employment and economic benefits.

the majority of new tourist accommodation and related facilities to 'touring bases' and defines Thirsk as a 'touring base'. The Council considers that all market towns and to a lesser extent larger villages are able to perform this function.

12.26 New visitor accommodation should be concentrated in the market towns and larger villages because they have the services and facilities to meet tourists' needs and they are best able to absorb development. The Structure Plan directs

12.27 In residential areas small hotels or guest houses may be acceptable. However, sometimes they can cause problems for neighbouring residential properties, including disturbance through increased activity, increased on-street car parking and proliferation of signs.

POLICY TO8**VISITOR ACCOMMODATION OUTSIDE DEVELOPMENT LIMITS**

Outside Development Limits the provision of permanent serviced and self-catering visitor accommodation will be permitted where it involves:

1. The moderate expansion of an existing hotel, guest house, public house, farmhouse accommodation or similar establishments; or
2. The provision of ancillary accommodation within existing public houses, restaurants, farmhouses or similar establishments; or
3. The change of use of suitable residential properties; or
4. The conversion of buildings of architectural or historic interest, subject to Policy HH17; or
5. The conversion of suitable rural buildings, subject to Policy H27.

Proposals should meet all of the following criteria:

- i. Be of a scale compatible with their surroundings and appropriate to the existing level of activity in an area;
- ii. Not adversely affect the character or appearance or nature conservation value of the countryside and conform with the environmental policies of the Plan;
- iii. Not result in a detrimental impact on road safety and the free flow of traffic on the adjacent highway network;
- iv. Provide sufficient off-street vehicle parking;
- v. Not have an adverse effect on the amenity of existing residents;
- vi. In the case of extensions, be of a high standard of design and not adversely affect the character of the building.

JUSTIFICATION

12.28 The provision of new serviced accommodation and the improvement of existing serviced accommodation is seen as important by tourist authorities because this type of accommodation provides the greatest employment and economic benefits. This Policy is intended to assist the provision of serviced tourist accommodation in rural areas.

12.29 Visitors are increasingly demanding higher standards of accommodation and proposals to upgrade and extend existing establishments will be supported in principle.

12.30 Policy H27 sets out the requirements for the conversion of rural buildings to residential use. Proposals to convert rural buildings into holiday accommodation will also be considered under the same Policy. To find suitable uses for some kinds of historic building can be a problem and conversion into tourist accommodation is to be welcomed provided it is sensitively handled and does not materially alter the character or features of the building. In addition there are many old redundant or semi-obsolete buildings such as mills, warehouses and railway stations that can lend themselves well to adaptation and modernisation as hotels and motels.

12.31 Where holiday accommodation is permitted in converted buildings in locations where permanent dwellings would be contrary to the provisions of the Plan, holiday occupancy conditions will normally be attached. Also, where more

units are permitted or a lesser standard of amenity, access, parking and private amenity space accepted than would be the case for permanent residential use, a holiday occupancy condition will be also imposed.

