

RECREATION & TOURISM

Introduction

- 8.1 Major recreation facilities of a public and private nature have tended to locate in Swadlincote, in order to take advantage of the wide population catchment. The Green Bank Leisure Centre, the Grove Hall and the Town Hall are important foci for a wide range of social and recreational activities. Swadlincote also has a network of parks, playing fields and incidental open spaces within residential areas, along with a major dry ski slope facility. At Fishponds, Midway a scheme has been undertaken to ensure the continuation of fishing and provide opportunities for walking and picnicking.
- 8.2 In the rural areas, most villages have playing fields and other facilities, such as Parish Halls and Meeting Rooms. At Melbourne, there is a locally important Leisure Centre providing a hall, meeting rooms, library and a squash court, whilst at the John Port School, Etwell, a similar range of facilities is available to the public, together with a swimming pool. Other schools in the district also permit the public to use school buildings and playing fields. However, this policy does not operate consistently.
- 8.3 Recreational opportunities of a different kind are found in the Trent Valley, which forms an arc across the district from Catton in the south-west to Shardlow in the north-east. There is angling, boating, sailing, cruising and canoeing on the river, the Trent and Mersey Canal, Foremark and Staunton Harold Reservoirs and on some of the gravel pits of the area. The Trent Valley also forms the setting for a variety of informal recreational pursuits such as picnicking and walking, centred both alongside the waterways and on the surrounding countryside which enjoys an extensive network of local roads and footpaths linking historic centres such as Repton, Melbourne and Shardlow. Important attractions in the Valley include Elvaston Castle, where a Country Park was established in 1970, and Calke Abbey and Park which has been restored by the National Trust and Staunton Harold Reservoir which has a visitor centre.
- 8.4 The Trent & Mersey Canal is a valuable asset for South Derbyshire which is in need of improvement and revitalisation. At the moment, it provides a limited range of opportunities for leisure and recreation which could be extended and improved not only for visitors, but also the local community. The Canal is also important ecologically, historically and architecturally, with listed buildings, areas of landscape value and features of natural history interest along its length. In 1994 the Canal was designated a Conservation Area to protect its architectural and historic character.
- 8.5 British Waterways Board and the District Council have now begun to look jointly at the potential of the Canal from the point of view of conservation of the natural environment and the realisation of development opportunities. When this work has been completed more detailed advice will be published in the form of supplementary planning guidance which will complement the general proposals of the Local Plan.
- 8.6 The recreation potential of the Trent Valley in general has been recognised for a number of years and in 1988, Derbyshire County Council approved the Trent Valley Recreation Plan. Implementation of the Plan's proposals which include picnic sites, leisure drives, footpath and bridleway improvements and major water-based recreation centres has unfortunately been delayed due to the shortage of funding. However, South Derbyshire District Council remains committed to the promotion of recreation in the Trent Valley and will produce more detailed, up to date guidance, as resources permit.
- 8.7 In the Trent Valley, mineral extraction is an important issue. Gravel workings can often be restored to provide water-based recreation facilities which may have the added benefit of creating opportunities for nature conservation. This would be the preferred option for

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workings in the vicinity of Etwall, although at present they are to be returned to agriculture or used for slurry disposal. Restoration of workings and related issues will be considered in the Minerals Local Plan which is to be prepared by Derbyshire County Council.

- 8.8 Throughout the district, there are extensive areas of attractive open countryside, served by a network of public footpaths and bridleways. In "Recreation 2000", the Countryside Commission stressed the need to encourage greater use of, and improvements to, the public rights of way system as a means of extending and improving opportunities for informal recreation in the countryside. More recently, in "Enjoying the Countryside - Policies for People", the Commission restated the need to improve opportunities for the public to enjoy the countryside, whilst emphasising the relationship between countryside conservation and the need to enjoy the countryside in a considerate way.
- 8.9 Disused railway lines and canals can provide a valuable opportunity for the creation of linear routes for walking, cycling and horse riding. The former Melbourne Branch Railway, for example, has been converted into a footpath and cycle route and the potential of the former Mickleover-Etwall railway line is currently being investigated along with other routes in the Trent Valley (including the long distance footpath proposed in the Trent Valley Recreation Plan) and in the urban area of Swadlincote. The Local Plan must ensure that the existing network of footpaths and bridleways is protected and that new development preserves established routes or provides an appropriate alternative.
- 8.10 At present, tourism in South Derbyshire is underdeveloped, although nationally it is now the third largest industry. Government policy is to encourage the growth of tourism in the UK whilst at the same time conserving those qualities of the environment that are a major attraction for tourism. Encouragement is given to promoting tourism as an all-year-round activity and to the promotion of non-traditional, as well as the more popular destinations.
- 8.11 South Derbyshire is ideally placed to take advantage of the expected growth in the domestic market. The area has a number of facilities and attractions that could appeal to visitors as part of a short break holiday in Derbyshire and Staffordshire, or for day visits. Examples include Calke Abbey, Melbourne Hall, Elvaston Castle and Country Park, the Trent Valley along with Staunton Harold and Foremark reservoirs, the historic villages, the attractive countryside, the industrial heritage of the South Derbyshire Coalfield and the Swadlincote Ski Centre. South Derbyshire also has a large number of pubs and restaurants and a growing number of establishments providing overnight accommodation. In appropriate circumstances, moderate sized extensions to existing hotels or public houses can help to ensure the future viability of such businesses. The re-use of redundant agricultural land and buildings for recreation/tourism facilities, such as overnight accommodation, craft units and interpretation centres, will not only enhance the range of facilities available in the district, but will also assist in the diversification of the rural economy and the retention of employment. The National Forest will be a further, major asset which will provide new opportunities for recreation and leisure.
- 8.12 The District Council's Economic Development Strategy recognises the potential of the area for tourism and puts forward proposals to increase public awareness of facilities and attractions and improve co-ordination amongst the various agencies involved locally in tourism promotion. The Council is a member of the East Midlands Tourist Board which has prepared the "South Derbyshire Tourism Strategy 1995-2000". The Strategy provides a framework for the further development of tourism in the area. In the Local Plan, measures will be required to manage and direct opportunities whilst ensuring that the character of the area is protected and the impact on local communities is minimised.

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- 8.13 The District Council is preparing a separate Strategy for recreation. The Strategy will address a wider range of issues than are covered in this Local Plan, although there will be some overlap in terms of identifying current deficiencies and those likely to arise as a result of new development. There is a particular need to ensure that facilities are available to all sections of the community, including the elderly and disabled people.
- 8.14 Nationally, there are no standards of recreational provision. In PPG17 "Sport and Recreation", the Government concludes that it would be unhelpful to prescribe national standards as circumstances differ greatly from area to area. However, the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) standard of 2.4 hectares of outdoor playing space per 1000 population is suggested as the type of standard which might be adopted by local authorities. The 2.4 hectares is broken down into children's use (0.6 - 0.8 hectares) and youth/adult use (1.6 - 1.8 hectares). The latter includes facilities such as pitches, bowling greens, tennis courts etc.
- 8.15 The "Playing Pitch Strategy" recently produced by the Sports Council, the NPFA and the Central Council for Physical Recreation advises a three stage approach to the provision of facilities. Firstly, the adoption of the NPFA minimum standard; secondly, the undertaking of detailed local studies; and finally, the formulation of local standards of provision. When the NPFA standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population is applied to South Derbyshire, there would appear to be a shortage of up to 15 hectares of playing fields in the urban area of Swadlincote along with small deficiencies in the rest of the district. An earlier study (1988) conducted by the Regional Council for Sport and Recreation East Midlands, using the slightly different approach of relating pitches to teams, broadly endorses this view. However, further work will be required in the context of the proposed Recreation Strategy before firm conclusions can be reached.
- 8.16 It is considered that some of the need can be met through the better management of existing facilities (e.g. improved pitch drainage). The dual use of education facilities along with joint provision for sport and leisure activities will also reduce the requirement for new land and make the best use of limited resources. The provision of up to 60 hectares of land for recreation use, including a golf course, following opencast coal extraction in the Cadley Hill Colliery/Nadins area will make a major contribution to resolving deficiencies in the Swadlincote area.
- 8.17 With respect to new housing development, it would be appropriate for the Local Plan to adopt the NPFA standard for outdoor playing space whilst further progress is made in the Recreation Strategy. Supplementary planning guidance will be prepared based upon a local assessment of playing field needs which will provide a basis for the consideration of open play space provision in association with new housing development. The guidance will have regard to the Sports Council's 'A Guide for Planning Obligations for Sport and Recreation - A Guide for Negotiation and Action'. In general, the standard and the future Supplementary Planning Guidance will be interpreted flexibly to allow for the particular needs and circumstances of each new development. Developers may be required to contribute to the cost of providing outdoor playing space and to its subsequent maintenance.
- 8.18 As far as passive recreation/amenity use is concerned, PPG17 advises that this is also a matter for local judgement. Swadlincote has a network of parks and open spaces and all parts of the district are within easy reach of the countryside and the facilities of the Trent Valley. In the circumstances, it is considered that the provision of amenity open space should be a matter for determination in the detailed design of the housing layout rather than through the application of prescribed standards.

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- 8.19 If a satisfactory level of recreation provision is to be achieved, existing facilities must also be retained. Throughout the district, there will be a need to resist redevelopment proposals unless a suitable replacement site is provided or the need for the facility no longer exists.
- 8.20 Horse riding is an activity which is growing in popularity. A proposal is required to control the location of commercial stables and equestrian centres which can be intrusive in the countryside, cause disturbance to local amenity and be a source of danger, unless provision is made for the safe movement of horses and riders.

Derbyshire Structure Plan

- 8.21 The Plan seeks, in an environmentally sensitive way, to meet the anticipated increase in demand for most kinds of leisure activity by promoting a wide range of facilities which are easily accessible to residents and attractive to increasing numbers of visitors. Such promotion would also produce economic and employment benefits.

Objectives of the Local Plan

- 8.22 The objectives of the Local Plan are:-
- (i) To realise the potential of the area for recreation and tourism, insofar as this is compatible with the protection of the environment and the interests of local communities;
 - (ii) To provide recreation and tourist facilities at appropriate locations so as to remedy existing deficiencies and satisfy future needs;
 - (iii) To prevent the loss of existing facilities;
 - (iv) To retain, and if possible expand, the existing network of footpaths and bridleways in the district.

RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY 1 : RECREATION AND TOURIST FACILITIES

- 8.23 PROPOSALS FOR RECREATION AND TOURIST FACILITIES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDING THAT:-
- (i) DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT CAUSE DISTURBANCE TO LOCAL AMENITY BY VIRTUE OF NOISE OR TRAFFIC GENERATION;
 - (ii) ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE FOR PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICULAR ACCESS, PARKING, SERVICING, SCREENING AND LANDSCAPING;
 - (iii) THEY ARE OF APPROPRIATE SCALE AND DESIGN AND ARE WELL INTEGRATED WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS.

Justification

- 8.24 This policy will permit future public and private recreational and tourist related developments, including tourist accommodation, in appropriate locations. Recreation development can have an impact on the amenities of nearby residents by, for example, the traffic and noise which may be generated. Careful consideration needs to be given to the satisfactory location, siting and design of facilities, especially for noise generating sports such as model aircraft, clay pigeon shooting, motorsports etc, to ensure the level of

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disturbance to amenities and the impact on the countryside is minimised. Adequate provision should also be made for access and parking to ensure that the facility can be enjoyed by all sections of the community, including disabled people.

- 8.25 Within the National Forest, the provision of forest related recreation and leisure facilities with appropriate planting will be promoted and encouraged. Similar encouragement will be given to the provision of water-based and informal recreation facilities in the Trent Valley. More detailed planning guidance will be prepared for the Trent Valley in general and the Trent and Mersey Canal in particular. Gravel workings in the Trent Valley provide opportunities for additional water skiing, jetskiing, sailing and sail boarding, all of which have grown in popularity in recent years. However, these sites are not readily available for motor sport as it is currently common practice to flood former workings due to the shortage of suitable back-filling materials. These are matters for the Derbyshire County Council Minerals Plan in the first instance. Proposals for power boating, water skiing and jetskiing will require to be assessed in the same way as other noise generating activities. Golfing is also increasing in popularity. There are two golf courses in South Derbyshire: at Bretby and Pastures Hospital and permission exists for courses at the Nadins open cast site and at Weston-on-Trent. The National Forest may provide further opportunities. Care is required to site facilities so as to avoid undue impact on the character of the countryside.

Implementation

- 8.26 By the use of development control powers and supplementary planning guidance.

RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY 2 : NEW RECREATION PROVISION, SWADLINCOTE

- 8.27 A COMMUNITY RECREATION AREA INCLUDING PLAYING FIELDS, NATURE TRAILS AND GOLF COURSE IS PROPOSED ON LAND BETWEEN MEADOW VIEW ROAD, NEWHALL AND THE FORMER CADLEY HILL RAILWAY, AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.

Justification

- 8.28 The area is the subject of a permission for opencast coal mining as a precursor of which the developer has agreed a package of measures as part of a Section 106 agreement for the restoration and after use of the land. The existing deficiency in paragraph 8.15 above in outdoor pitches in the Swadlincote urban area will largely be met by the provision above. In addition the better management of existing facilities, for example by improving the drainage of pitches together with the encouragement of dual use will also assist in rectifying the current deficiency. The location is well related to the urban area.

Implementation

- 8.29 Through the use of development control powers and by the District Council negotiating planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY 3 : NEW PLAYING FIELD PROVISION

- 8.30 NEW PLAYING FIELDS WILL BE PROVIDED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP:-

REAR OF ELMSDALE ROAD, 1.2 HA. (3.0 ACRES)
GOSELEY ESTATE, HARTSHORNE

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FINDERN

2.2 HA. (5.4 ACRES)

Justification

- 8.31 There are local deficiencies in playing field provision in the Plan Area either where facilities are lacking or where they are inappropriately located. The above proposal for extension and relocation of existing playing fields should solve these local deficiencies.

Implementation

- 8.32 Through the District Council's Capital Programme.

RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY 4 : PROVISION OF OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE IN NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- 8.33 PROPOSALS FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S CURRENT STANDARDS, FOR OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE DEVELOPMENT. THE COUNCIL WILL NEGOTIATE PLANNING OBLIGATIONS UNDER SECTION 106 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 TO SECURE SUCH PROVISION.

Justification

- 8.34 It is the Council's intention to produce supplementary planning guidance based upon a local assessment of playing field needs which will provide the basis for the consideration of open play space provision in association with new housing development and which will be subject to public consultation. However, pending preparation of this guidance, the Council will use the National Playing Fields Association Standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population which comprises:

- (i) Outdoor playing space for children's use (0.2 - 0.3 hectares) and casual or informal play space within housing areas (0.4 - 0.5 hectares);
- (ii) Youth and adult outdoor playing space including facilities such as pitches, bowling greens, tennis courts and athletics tracks (1.6 - 1.8 hectares)."

- 8.35 In considering development proposals the National Playing Fields Association Standard and the future Supplementary Planning Guidance will be applied flexibly.

- 8.36 In the National Forest, where open space requirements can be met by planted areas, such provision will normally be in lieu of the open space required by this policy. However, children's play space has special requirements which are unlikely to be met in a woodland setting and specific provision should be made.

Implementation

- 8.37 Through the use of development control powers and supplementary planning guidance and by the District Council negotiating planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY 5 : LOSS OF RECREATION FACILITIES

- 8.38 A. PROPOSALS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS EITHER:
- (i) A SUITABLE REPLACEMENT SITE IS PROVIDED, OR
 - (ii) ALTERNATIVE PROVISION OF EQUIVALENT COMMUNITY BENEFIT IS MADE, OR
 - (iii) SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES CAN BEST BE RETAINED AND ENHANCED THROUGH THE REDEVELOPMENT OF A SMALL PART OF THE SITE, OR
 - (iv) THE EXISTING FACILITY IS NO LONGER REQUIRED.
- B. THE COUNCIL WILL NEGOTIATE PLANNING OBLIGATIONS UNDER SECTION 106 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 TO SECURE THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES TO REPLACE THOSE LOST AND TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PERMITTED.

Justification

- 8.39 Existing recreation land needs to be retained to maintain an adequate level of provision in the Plan area. At the same time, it is important to retain such areas as valuable amenity open space within the urban environment. The need for retention will be determined in the light of the requirements of the wider community and the conservation, wildlife, historical or amenity value of the site.

Implementation

- 8.40 Through the use of development control powers and by the District Council negotiating planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

~~RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY 6 : GREEN BANK LEISURE CENTRE~~

- 8.41 ~~LAND ADJOINING THE GREEN BANK LEISURE CENTRE, SWADLINCOTE DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP WILL BE SAFEGUARDED FOR RECREATIONAL AND ASSOCIATED USES.~~

~~Justification~~

- 8.42 ~~The intention of this proposal is to safeguard sufficient land for recreational and Leisure Centre uses, so as not to prejudice the prospect of further development. The majority of the land is already in the District Council's ownership. The effect of this proposal is to provide a statement of intent that within the defined area, the Local Planning Authority would not wish to see any long term uses other than for leisure centre/recreational purposes.~~

~~Implementation~~

- 8.43 ~~By the use of development control powers.~~

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RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY 7 : DISUSED TRANSPORT ROUTES

- 8.44 A. DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS LIKELY TO IMPAIR THE CONTINUITY OF OR RESTORATION OF DISUSED RAILWAY LINES OR CANALS OR PREJUDICE THEIR FUTURE USE FOR RECREATION PURPOSES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.
- B. PROPOSALS WHICH LEAD TO THE USE OF DISUSED RAILWAY LINES AND CANALS FOR FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAY AND CYCLE ROUTES (AS APPROPRIATE) WILL BE PERMITTED.

Justification

- 8.45 Disused railway lines and canals can provide a valuable opportunity for the creation of linear routes for walking, cycling and horse riding. Granting planning permission for development along these routes could prejudice their recreational development.
- 8.46 The District Council will promote the reclamation of suitable disused railway lines and canals for walking, cycling and horse riding, especially in the Trent Valley, around Swadlincote and at Etwall, where the former Mickleover-Etwall railway line has potential for the creation of such a facility which is currently being investigated. The Derby and Sandiacre Canal Company propose to re-open the canal northwards from Swarkestone and restore it on its original route. Where recreational routes are created they should respect landscape features and features of nature conservation interest.

Implementation

- 8.47 By development control powers.

RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY 8 : PUBLIC FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS

- 8.48 THE EXISTING NETWORK OF FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS WILL BE PROTECTED. NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS ESTABLISHED ROUTES ARE SAFEGUARDED OR SUITABLE ALTERNATIVES ARE PROVIDED.

Justification

- 8.49 Public footpaths and bridleways provide a safe means of movement for people away from vehicular traffic and are in many instances of environmental benefit. In the rural areas their value is well recognised and they can be of considerable recreational importance. Swadlincote is well provided with footpaths, many being long established routes between housing areas and former colliery sites. They remain well used and provide a means of integrating new development.
- 8.50 The continuity of the overall network of routes is important and it is vital that individual sections are not lost to development or become unsuitable for use. The District Council will promote and encourage the continued use of public footpaths and bridleways. The Council also recognises the need to expand the public rights of way network particularly in the Trent Valley and in the National Forest where the need to develop new long distance trails and routes for short circular walks has been identified. Opportunities will be sought in association with other agencies to extend the network through a variety of methods including the redevelopment of disused railways and canals where former routes are protected under Recreation and Tourism Policy 7 in order that they might be used as footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes.

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- 8.51 The District Council has a Highways Agency Agreement with the County Council and is responsible for keeping approximately 470 miles of public footpaths and bridleways free from obstruction for enjoyment by the public. A Minor Maintenance Agreement scheme between the District and Parish Councils enables Parish Councils to undertake minor repairs to the footpath network and claim the costs incurred at the end of each financial year.

Implementation

- 8.52 By the use of development control powers and by County Council, District Council or Parish Council actions.

RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY 9 : COMMERCIAL STABLES AND EQUESTRIAN CENTRES

- 8.53 THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL RIDING STABLES, LIVERY STABLES AND EQUESTRIAN CENTRES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDING:-

- (i) WHERE POSSIBLE, THEY ARE WELL RELATED TO EXISTING SETTLEMENT PATTERNS;
- (ii) THE DEVELOPMENT IS SITED IN PROXIMITY TO EXISTING BUILDINGS;
- (iii) DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT CAUSE DISTURBANCE TO LOCAL AMENITY BY VIRTUE OF NOISE, SMELL OR TRAFFIC GENERATION;
- (iv) PROVISION CAN BE MADE FOR THE SAFE MOVEMENT OF HORSES AND RIDERS.

Justification

- 8.54 The keeping and riding of horses is recognised as a rural pursuit and thus a use appropriate to a rural area. Taking into account the need to protect the amenities and undeveloped character of the open countryside, it is considered that the most appropriate locations for such uses are the rural fringes of towns and villages.

- 8.55 Development related to equestrian activities such as stables and tack rooms, indoor schools etc, should be carried out in a way that minimises the effect on the appearance of the countryside and does not cause disturbance to local amenity. The location of these establishments also needs to take into consideration the safe movement of riders and horses in combination with other users of the highway.

Implementation

- 8.56 By the use of development control powers.

RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY 10 : TOURING CARAVAN AND CAMP SITES

- 8.57 PROPOSALS FOR TOURING CARAVAN AND CAMP SITES WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:

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- (i) THE SITING OF THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT RESULT IN AN UNDULY PROMINENT INTRUSION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE OR DAMAGE THE CHARACTER OF AREAS OF LOCAL LANDSCAPE VALUE;
- (ii) DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT CAUSE DISTURBANCE TO LOCAL AMENITY BY VIRTUE OF NOISE OR TRAFFIC GENERATION;
- (iii) ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE FOR PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICULAR ACCESS, PARKING, SERVICING, SCREENING AND LANDSCAPING; AND,
- (iv) THE DEVELOPMENT IS OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE AND DESIGN AND IS WELL INTEGRATED WITH ITS SURROUNDINGS.

Justification

- 8.58 South Derbyshire contains camping and caravan sites at Elvaston and Shardlow which together provide approximately 160 pitches. On a national scale, caravans account for 40% of all self catering accommodation. Government guidance in PPG21 indicates that planning authorities should seek to reconcile the need to make provision for caravan and camping facilities with the protection and preservation of those environments which attract holidaymakers in the first place.
- 8.59 Good screening incorporating native tree and shrub species will be necessary to prevent developments appearing prominent in the landscape. The provision of substantial landscaping will be particularly important in the National Forest.

Implementation

- 8.60 By the use of development control powers.