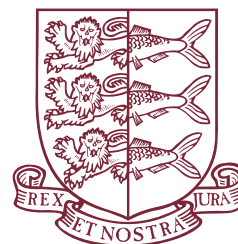


8 The Natural Environment

	<i>title</i>	<i>page</i>
8.1	INTRODUCTION _____	175
8.2	LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION _____	175
8.3	LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT _____	179
8.4	NATURE CONSERVATION _____	179
8.5	THE RURAL ECONOMY _____	182
8.6	HEDGEROWS, TREES AND WOODLANDS _____	185





8 *The Natural Environment*

8.1 INTRODUCTION

- 8.1.1 The Borough Council considers a high quality natural environment to be of paramount importance to the quality of life enjoyed within the Borough. A healthy and well maintained natural environment brings benefits to those living and working within it. For example the Borough's rural and coastal nature provides numerous opportunities for recreational pursuits or passive enjoyment by local residents. It's characteristic landscapes and wildlife habitats are also vital to the economy of the area with many visitors attracted to the Borough by its coastline, countryside and wildlife.
- 8.1.2 The Plan recognises the threat to the area's diverse natural environment from uncoordinated or unsympathetic development. As the intrinsic nature of the area makes it a popular place to live, work and holiday, pressure for development on remaining open areas is growing and, if it is not properly guided, the high quality environment which attracts people to the area will be destroyed. Therefore, it is necessary to identify those areas which should be safeguarded for the future and those which can accommodate change. Within certain areas the natural environment has been destroyed and needs enhancing.
- 8.1.3 The Plan looks to maintain and enhance areas of landscape, nature and amenity importance for both the existing population and future generations. Environmental considerations must be a key part of land use decisions to ensure that development needs are met without compromising our local, national and global environment. Without strict adherence to the approach defined in the policies for the natural and built environment, the qualities that people want in which to live, work, relax and play will be eroded.

8.2 LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION

- 8.2.1 Landscape is an important resource. It contributes to the identity of an area as well as providing opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment. Additionally, landscapes are often important to the settings of settlements and buildings. Within and adjoining the Plan Area there are a variety of landscapes which are considered to be of great value both nationally and locally which the Plan seeks to protect.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 8.2.2 The Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty extends eastwards to include sites north of Winterton and East and West Somerton. Its designation recognises that the natural beauty of the area is of national importance and is worthy of protection. The views of the Norfolk Coast Project will be sought in relation to development proposals which may have an adverse impact on designated areas in the Borough. The Project has had considerable involvement in planning for the AONB, producing various publications including a Visitor Management Strategy for the area.

- 8.2.3 POLICY NNV1** BY GIVING PRIORITY TO LANDSCAPE OVER ALL OTHER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS, THE COUNCIL WILL PROVIDE LONG TERM PROTECTION TO THE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, AND ANY ADJOINING AREA, FROM ALL FORMS OF DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE APPEARANCE OF THE DESIGNATED AREA, PARTICULARLY DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THAT WOULD:
- (a) DESTROY OR DAMAGE FEATURES OF LANDSCAPE IMPORTANCE WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA; AND/OR
- (b) DESTROY OR DAMAGE FEATURES OF LANDSCAPE IMPORTANCE WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

Deleted

(Objective: To safeguard the varied character and features of the landscape within and adjoining the Plan Area.)

Broads Authority Area

- 8.2.4 Adjoining the Plan Area is the Broads Authority's Executive Area. The Norfolk Broads is a series of wetlands of international importance some of which are the best examples of wetland habitat in the world. The area is administered by the Broads Authority which is a Special Statutory Authority, created by the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act (1988), whose duties are similar to those of National Parks. Landscape conservation is a primary function of National Park designation and it is therefore essential that the Plan seeks to maintain and enhance the landscape quality of the neighbouring Broads area.

- 8.2.5 POLICY NNV2** IN AREAS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSAL MAP AS 'LANDSCAPE IMPORTANT TO THE BROADLAND SCENE' THE COUNCIL WILL ONLY PERMIT DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND TRADITIONAL BUILT FORM OF THE AREA, OR DESTROY OR DAMAGE FEATURES OF LANDSCAPE IMPORTANCE WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

(Objective: To safeguard the varied character and features of the landscape within and adjoining the Plan Area.)

Coastal Landscapes

- 8.2.6 The coastal landscapes of the Plan Area are a particularly precious natural resource not only for recreation, relaxation and leisure pursuits but also as a stimulus for economic activity. If uncontrolled, development within the remaining unspoilt coastal areas can prejudice the physical separation between settlements and erode the intrinsic beauty of the coast.

- 8.2.7 POLICY NNV3** IN THE AREAS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AS 'LANDSCAPE IMPORTANT TO THE COASTAL SCENE' THE COUNCIL WILL ONLY PERMIT DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DETRACT FROM THE ESSENTIAL OPEN CHARACTER OF THE AREAS.

(Objective: To protect the remaining open coast.)

Historic Parks and Gardens

- 8.2.8 Historic parks and gardens are an important part of the Borough's heritage and environment. Apart from historic interest, parks and gardens are also important in terms of their contribution to the landscape, architectural and archaeological features, wildlife habitats, plant variety and educational value.

- 8.2.9 The County Council has undertaken a study of Historic Parklands (Sept 1988) which defines existing parklands of over 25 hectares at Browston Hall, Ormesby Hall and Rollesby Hall. The Borough Council considers these parks and gardens, along with the Town's Victorian and "Seaside" parks and gardens to be a positive asset to the Plan Area's landscape by contributing diversity and interest in rural areas and the built environment. The Plan therefore seeks to protect these sites and their settings from unsympathetic new development and to encourage their proper management wherever possible. It is also important that other small parks and gardens within rural and urban settings which are of historic interest are identified. The Council will continue to identify further parklands and gardens of antiquarian interest and encourage their continuing sympathetic management.

-
- 8.2.10 POLICY NNV4 IN THE PARKLANDS AND GARDENS OF ANTIQUARIAN INTEREST SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, THE COUNCIL WILL ONLY PERMIT PROPOSALS INCLUDING THOSE FOR INCREASED USE AND ACCESSIBILITY, WHICH WOULD ENHANCE THEIR FORM, CHARACTER LAYOUT OR SETTING, OR HISTORIC AND VISUAL INTEREST.**

(Objective: To protect historic parks and gardens.)

Landscapes Important to the Setting of Settlements

- 8.2.11 The scattered nature of settlements is one of the characteristic features of the local landscape. Areas of open landscape surrounding the main urban area and other settlements provide a physical separation between those settlements and in some instances form landscape extensions into the built up area. It is important to safeguard those areas, such as between Great Yarmouth and Caister and between Gorleston and Hopton which prevent urban sprawl and the coalescence of settlements. The green wedges not only provide a welcome break between settlements but also provide the most readily accessible countryside to residents for recreational and leisure pursuits. It is the Council's intention to secure visual improvements to the green wedges between settlements. (I.e. beyond the development limits set by the Proposals Maps) In the countryside, housing development will not be permitted unless: (i) it is shown to be needed in connection with agriculture, forestry, organised recreation or tourist facilities or the expansion of existing institutions; (ii) it could not reasonably be provided within a settlement; and (iii) there are no significant environmental or access concerns.

-
- 8.2.12 POLICY NNV5 IN THE AREAS AROUND SETTLEMENTS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AS 'LANDSCAPE IMPORTANT TO THE SETTING OF SETTLEMENTS' THE COUNCIL WILL PERMIT DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED A DEVELOPER CAN DEMONSTRATE ESSENTIAL NEED OR THAT THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT IMPINGE ON THE PHYSICAL SEPARATION BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS PARTICULARLY BETWEEN GREAT YARMOUTH AND CAISTER AND GORLESTON AND HOPTON WHICH ARE MAJOR GATEWAYS TO THE TOWN, OR GIVE RISE TO ANY OTHER SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACT.**

(Objectives: To protect the setting of settlements and prevent urban sprawl.)

Areas of Important Landscape Character

- 8.2.13 Some areas contain a variety of features which combine to form varied and stimulating local landscapes. Such features include the river valleys and their settings (for example the Waveney Valley) and the woodland and waterscape areas around the Lound Reservoirs.

- 8.2.14 **POLICY NNV6** THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL ONLY PERMIT DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECT ON AREAS OF IMPORTANT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, AND THE APPLICANT CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT:-
- (a) THE INTRODUCTION OF BUILDINGS/STRUCTURES ETC. INTO THE LANDSCAPE WOULD BE IN KEEPING WITH THE INTRINSIC LANDSCAPE QUALITIES AND TRADITIONAL BUILT FORM OF THE AREA.
 - (b) FEATURES OF LANDSCAPE IMPORTANCE WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA WOULD NOT BE DAMAGED, DESTROYED OR PERMANENTLY ALTERED IN ANY WAY.

(Objective: To retain the character of local landscapes.)

The Remainder of the Countryside

- 8.2.15 Outside areas defined on the proposals map as being of landscape interest, there is a continuing need to protect the countryside as a natural and non renewable resource. Protection of the countryside of lesser importance provides the contrast to areas of greater interest and may increase its appreciation.

- 8.2.16 **POLICY NNV7** THE COUNCIL WILL PROTECT THE REMAINDER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE OUTSIDE THE AREAS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSAL MAP AS BEING OF LANDSCAPE INTEREST BY PERMITTING ONLY THOSE PROPOSALS THAT ARE IN KEEPING WITH THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

(Objective: Protection of the countryside for its own sake.)

Open Space in Settlements

- 8.2.17 Open spaces within built areas are a valuable and non-renewable resource. Parks, playing fields, school fields, informal open space, private open space, allotments and cemeteries can provide opportunities for recreation, relaxation and also form wildlife refuges in the urban environment. Open space within the Plan Area's built environment is already deficient. The Borough Council has adopted the National Playing Fields Association's "6 Acre Standard". A study of open space in the Borough in 1991 indicated that, for example, Great Yarmouth and Gorleston, Caister and Bradwell fell short of this standard by 24%, 72% and 27% respectively.
- 8.2.18 The Borough Council has adopted policies for the provision of open space in connection with new development in order that this shortfall should not be exacerbated by an increasing population. However development pressures in recent years have placed existing open space at a premium and the Council therefore considers that open space of amenity and recreational value within built up areas should be safeguarded against future development.

- 8.2.19 **POLICY NNV8** DEVELOPMENT WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IN AREAS OF OPEN LAND WITH RECREATIONAL OR OTHER AMENITY VALUE WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO EXISTING DEVELOPED AREAS THAT ACCORDS WITH THE POLICY OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN AND COMMUNITY

Deleted

(Objective: To retain sites of recreation and amenity value which contribute to the character of developed areas.)

8.3 LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT

Unightly and Derelict Land

- 8.3.1 Derelict or degraded land can contaminate the natural environment and prejudice wildlife habitats. This is recognised in the Borough Council's approved Land Reclamation Strategy. Where such sites are identified, the Borough Council will endeavour to obtain Land Reclamation Grants to restore the land to its natural state.

Landscape Enhancement Areas

- 8.3.2 The Plan identifies areas within which landscape enhancement is sought in order to achieve improvements to the natural environment including the creation of wildlife habitats. The areas identified concentrate on principle links, gateways and landmarks which attract most attention from both residents and tourists. Such areas include the principle transport routes serving the urban areas of Great Yarmouth and Gorleston and attractions such as the Town Wall, Gt. Yarmouth and Gorleston seafront and quays and the remainder of the coastline. The Plan also identifies vacant land and problem areas within the built environment and urban fringes.

-
- 8.3.3 **POLICY NNV9 WITHIN IDENTIFIED LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT AREAS THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL PROMOTE, SEEK AND SECURE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LANDSCAPE THROUGH RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES INCLUDING THE CREATION OF WILDLIFE HABITATS.**

(Objective: To secure improvements to the amenity and natural environment.)

Enhancement Through New Development

- 8.3.4 Proposals for development frequently present opportunities for landscape enhancement, through for example restoration or creation of features such as ponds and copses. Such schemes not only improve the variety of landscapes but can also increase wildlife habitats and greatly enhance the amenity of new development. In addition to general landscape requirements of tree and shrub planting developers will be expected to realise the full potential of landscape features on development sites.

-
- 8.3.5 **POLICY NNV10 IN CONNECTION WITH NEW DEVELOPMENT THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL, WHERE APPROPRIATE, EXPECT THE RETENTION, RESTORATION AND CREATION OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND WILDLIFE HABITATS.**

(Objective: To enhance the variety and quality of landscapes.)

- 8.3.6 **POLICY NNV11 WHERE PERMISSION IS REQUIRED FOR DEMOLITION AND THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE INTENTION TO REDEVELOP THE SITE, THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL EXPECT THE SITE TO BE LANDSCAPED IN KEEPING WITH THE APPEARANCE OF THE LOCALITY.**

(Objective: To achieve visual improvements.)

8.4 NATURE CONSERVATION

- 8.4.1 The aim of nature conservation should be to ensure that our heritage of wild flora and fauna remains as large and diverse as possible. Many valuable habitats are threatened by development pressures, modern farming practises and changing land management. In order to maintain the diversity of wildlife, remaining sites of nature conservation interest will be safeguarded.

Protection of Statutorily Designated Sites

- 8.4.2 The local, national and international importance of various sites of nature conservation value may be recognised by statutory designations - Special Protection Areas (SPA); Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); National Nature Reserves (NNR); Marine Nature Reserves (MNR) and Ramsar sites as set out in PPG9 - Nature Conservation. Sites may also be designated as Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and managed under agreement for nature conservation and educational purposes by local authorities.
- 8.4.3 The Conservation (Nature Habitats etc) Regulations 1994, which give effect to the EC Birds Directive and Habitat Directive, have significant implications for the control of developments affecting SPAs, SACs, potential SPAs, candidate SACs and RAMSAR sites which are as follows:
- When considering proposals likely to have a significant effect on a SPA which are not directly associated with the site or its management, the Borough Council, in consultation with English Nature, must assess the implications for the SPA bearing in mind the SPA's conservation objectives;
 - if the assessment shows that the development would not adversely affect the SPA's integrity, (and subject to other planning considerations) permission may be granted;
 - if the assessment concludes that the development would adversely affect the SPA's integrity, permission may only be granted if there are no alternative solutions and the proposal must be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest; and,
 - these reasons may be social or economic except where the SPA hosts a "priority natural habitat" or "priority species". In these cases, the overriding reasons must relate to human health, public safety, beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment or other reasons agreed by the European Commission.
 - Permitted developments which are granted by the General Development Order and are likely to have a significant effect on the SPA and are directly associated with the site or its management, must not be begun until the Borough Council has given written notice of its approval. If, after consultation with English Nature, the Borough Council considers that the development would adversely affect the SPA's integrity a full planning application will be required which will follow the above-mentioned procedures. Alternatively, the developer may appeal to the Secretary of State against the authority's refusal to give approval.

8.4.4 POLICY NNV12 THE COUNCIL WILL PROTECT A DESIGNATED OR PROPOSED SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST, A NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE OR A MARINE NATURE RESERVE EITHER IN OR ADJOINING THE PLAN AREA FROM DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD DESTROY OR SIGNIFICANTLY ADVERSELY AFFECT THE DESIGNATED AREA. THE COUNCIL WILL NOT PERMIT DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER LAND CHANGES WHICH WILL DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY DESTROY OR ADVERSELY AFFECT, A DESIGNATED OR PROPOSED SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST, A NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE OR A MARINE NATURE RESERVE EITHER IN OR ADJOINING THE PLAN AREA WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM'S INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CONVENTION WITH RESPECT OF BOTH PROPOSED AND DESIGNATED RAMSAR SITES, SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS AND SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION, AS SET OUT IN PPG9. TO REFLECT THE UK GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO COMPLY WITH INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS EMBODIED IN THE CONSERVATION (NATURAL HABITATS & C) REGULATIONS 1994.

(Objective: To safeguard important wildlife habitats.)

Protection of Non-Statutory Sites

- 8.4.5 Following a county-wide survey by the Norfolk Naturalists Trust some areas have been identified as County Wildlife Sites, formally known as 'C' sites. These are the best semi-natural habitats, other than SSSIs, in the County. Additionally some sites such as ponds, woodlands, common land, hedges and roadside verges may have no designation but may provide valuable local habitats for wildlife. Where development is permitted, the retention of wildlife habitats will be expected through the applicant entering into legally binding planning obligations under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Borough Council will promote and support the designation of local nature reserves within the plan area. The Borough Council will encourage the County Council and statutory agencies to have regard to the potential nature conservation value of highway verges, future developments and new highway schemes.

- 8.4.6 **POLICY NNV13 EXCEPT WHERE AN APPLICANT IS ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE BENEFITS OF A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD EXCEED THE DECREASE IN THE NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE OF THE SITE, AND THAT ANY SUCH DECREASE IS MINIMAL AND FULLY COMPENSATED FOR BY HABITAT CREATION OR LOCAL ENHANCEMENT ELSEWHERE WITHIN THE SITE OR THE LOCAL AREA, THE COUNCIL WILL SAFEGUARD A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE OR A SITE OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION AGAINST DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING CHANGES OF USE, THAT WOULD DESTROY OR SIGNIFICANTLY ADVERSELY AFFECT IT.**

(Objective: To safeguard areas of important wildlife habitats.)

Note: A full description of these sites to which policies NNV12 and NNV13 apply can be obtained from the Borough Planning and Development Department.

Management of Sites of Nature and Landscape Interest

- 8.4.7 Whilst protecting environmentally sensitive sites from development is a key component of nature and landscape conservation, it is not enough in isolation to maintain our heritage of wildlife and landscape features. Management is also essential. Therefore, the Plan seeks to encourage the management of sites of nature conservation and landscape value through the designation of Local Nature Reserves or by the use of management agreements with the County Council given the opportunity to consider every case on its merits.
- 8.4.8 Landowners and farmers will be encouraged to retain and manage valuable habitats and landscape features for their nature conservation, aesthetic, recreational, landscape or economic importance. Where appropriate the Borough Council will consider negotiating management agreements to ensure the proper and sustained management of sites and wildlife corridors.
- 8.4.9 There are an increasing number of schemes operated by government and other agencies which promote land management practices which are consistent with policies for the protection of the countryside. An example is the Environmentally Sensitive Area (E.S.A.) which has been designated in the Broads (part lies within the Plan Area) by the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food.

- 8.4.10 **POLICY NNV14 THE BOROUGH COUNCIL, IN CONJUNCTION WITH NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL, WILL SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WHICH BRINGS BENEFIT TO THE COUNTRYSIDE WHICH BENEFIT**

Deleted

(Objective: To encourage land management practices beneficial to landscape and nature interests.)

Access and Interpretation

- 8.4.11 Sites which are of nature and landscape interest bring benefits in terms of increased recreational and educational opportunities. Some areas within the Borough have become so popular, particularly for leisure and recreational pursuits, that they are being degraded by over-use. There is a need to relieve pressure on these areas by spreading facilities and enhancing the environment. In other areas sites may be inaccessible to the general public either by virtue of their location or ownership. The Borough Council recognises the community and educational benefits associated with access to such sites but is also mindful of the damage which can occur to sensitive sites through uncontrolled access or inappropriate signage.
- 8.4.12 The Borough Council, will seek access agreements under the appropriate legislation to enable the public including the disabled to have limited access to sites wherever practicable noted for their nature conservation and landscape importance except where such access would be significantly detrimental to the wildlife interest or land use of the area. The Borough Council will support proposals for interpretation of features where the character of the area would not be significantly adversely affected and the information is for educational purposes.
- 8.4.13 Within the main population centres, there is a need for accessibility to sites of nature interest. Countryside and coastal sites may be too remote for those residents who do not have a car. The Plan therefore seeks to establish a series of accessible nature areas throughout the built environment in order that residents may enjoy the Borough's wildlife without the need to travel more than a kilometre from their homes.

-
- 8.4.14 POLICY NNV15 THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO ESTABLISH A SERIES OF ACCESSIBLE NATURE AREAS THROUGH THE CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR HABITAT CREATION SCHEMES THROUGHOUT THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT. IT WILL ALSO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT LOCAL INITIATIVES TO CREATE WILDLIFE HABITATS (ON SITES SUCH AS SCHOOL GROUNDS, COMMUNITY CENTRES, VILLAGE HALLS AND CHURCH GROUNDS) THROUGHOUT THE PLAN AREA.**

(Objective: To enhance the enjoyment and educational benefits of nature conservation sites.)

8.5 THE RURAL ECONOMY

Protection of Good Quality Agricultural land

- 8.5.1 National Guidance indicates that the best and most versatile agricultural land is an important national resource and should be protected from development. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food classifies land according to its quality. Within the Plan Area there are significant areas of Grade 1, 2 and 3a land which are the highest classes of agricultural land.

-
- 8.5.2 POLICY NNV16 PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAND REGARDED AS THE BEST AND MOST VERSATILE LAND, I.E. LAND CLASSIFIED AS GRADE 1, 2 OR 3A BY THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THERE IS NO OTHER SUITABLE SITE FOR THE PURPOSE AND, THAT, IN SO FAR AS IS POSSIBLE LAND OF THE LOWEST CLASSIFICATION HAS BEEN USED.**

(Objective: To safeguard the most versatile agricultural land which is a long term national resource.)

Diversification

- 8.5.3 Changes in National and European agricultural policy are having an important impact on farming activities. A reduced emphasis on quantities of food production, together with improved farming techniques means that it is no longer necessary to retain as much land for food production as before. Many farmers are looking at alternative means to supplement farm incomes.
- 8.5.4 In order that rural communities thrive and survive change, it is important that diversification of the rural economy is sustained. Examples of diversification include: conversion of farm buildings for workshops and tourist accommodation, forestry, recreation (golf courses, horse-riding), informal leisure pursuits and specialised farm produce shops. Such developments can be of benefit to local residents and tourists alike by providing jobs and opportunities for recreation. They can also irreversibly damage the natural environment by destroying wildlife habitats and landscape character or creating traffic problems. The Plan's aim is to encourage long term, sustainable diversification of the rural economy. Where development proposals involve structural change, conditions may be applied to ensure the visual improvement of the building.

-
- 8.5.5 **POLICY NNV17 DEVELOPMENT TO SECURE FARM DIVERSIFICATION SCHEMES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE:**
- (a) **THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT BE SIGNIFICANTLY VISUALLY INTRUSIVE IN THE LANDSCAPE;**
 - (b) **THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACT ON LOCAL AMENITY;**
 - (c) **THE PROPOSAL INVOLVES THE APPROPRIATE RE-USE OF FARM BUILDINGS AND/OR LAND;**
 - (d) **THE LOCAL ROAD NETWORK CAN ACCOMMODATE THE TRAFFIC WHICH WOULD BE GENERATED BY THE DEVELOPMENT;**
 - (e) **THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACT ON NATURE CONSERVATION OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERESTS.**

(Objective: To encourage sustainable diversification of the rural economy.)

New Agricultural and Forestry Buildings

- 8.5.6 Agricultural and forestry buildings can form prominent features in the countryside. If they are not suitably designed and sited they can adversely affect valued landscapes and habitats. The open character of the countryside means that new buildings can have a strong visual impact. The Town and Country General Development Order provides opportunity for local authorities to control the siting and external appearance of agricultural and forestry buildings which do not require specific planning consent. The Plan aims to limit the impact such buildings can have on the natural environment. New agricultural dwellings will need to comply with Policies HOU10 and HOU11.

-
- 8.5.7 **POLICY NNV18 IN DETERMINING DETAILS OF AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY BUILDINGS, DUE CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE SCALE AND SITING OF THE PROPOSAL IN RELATION TO ITS IMPACT ON THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF DESIGN, MATERIALS AND DETAILING TO LOCAL TRADITION.**

(Objective: To safeguard the character and visual quality of the countryside.)

Development Involving Horses

8.5.8 As a result of diversification and the increasing amount of recreational time available, the keeping and riding of horses for leisure or on a commercial basis is becoming increasingly popular. Within the Plan Area increasing amounts of land are being put over to such uses. Beneficially these activities can improve employment and economic prospects. They can also have a detrimental affect by introducing unsympathetic and low quality shelters and paddock arrangements into traditionally open landscapes. Horse grazing can also adversely affect sites of nature conservation importance. The Plan therefore seeks to limit the impact these developments can have on the environment. In considering new proposals for equestrian facilities the likely impact of equestrian activities on the surrounding area, especially conservation sites, will be assessed and where possible any adverse impact will be ameliorated through conditions or section 106 agreements.

8.5.9 POLICY NNV19 EQUESTRIAN CENTRES/RIDING SCHOOLS/TREKKING CENTRES ETC. WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE:-

- (a) **THE SCALE OF THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACT ON LOCAL AMENITY;**
 - (b) **ANY NEW BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES WOULD NOT FORM SIGNIFICANT INTRUSIVE FEATURES IN THE LANDSCAPE AND ARE IN KEEPING WITH THE TRADITIONAL BUILT CHARACTER OF THE AREA;**
 - (c) **THE CENTRE IS ACCESSIBLE AND SUITABLE MEANS OF ACCESS AND PARKING CAN BE ARRANGED.**
 - (d) **THE PROPOSAL IS NOT UNNEIGHBOURLY.**
-

8.5.10 The introduction of brick-built shelters into the open countryside can have an urbanising effect on the rural environment. The use of timber for individual horse shelters will therefore be preferred. The Borough Council will however wish to maintain control over the appearance of these structures which are liable to deteriorate at a faster rate than brick. Where appropriate the Borough Council will place a limit on the duration of a planning permission. The removal of unauthorised shelters will be sought to retain control over the amenity of the plan area.

8.5.11 POLICY NNV20 FIELD SHELTERS FOR HORSES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE:

- (a) **THEY ARE SITED UNOBTRUSIVELY AND ARE OF APPROPRIATE SCALE, HAVING REGARD TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA AND THE LOCATION OF ANY NEARBY BUILDINGS; AND**
- (b) **THE DESIGN, AND MATERIALS USED FOR EXTERNAL FINISHES ARE IN KEEPING WITH THE LOCAL TRADITION.**

(Objective: To safeguard the natural environment from unsympathetic development.)

Common Land

8.5.12 The Plan Area has numerous commons (defined on the Proposals Map) which have traditionally been used for agricultural or recreational purposes. Common land today, whilst retaining commoners rights, can provide important green spaces and havens for wildlife within built-up areas. In the countryside commons add an historic interest to the landscape. The Plan seeks to safeguard these areas from inappropriate development and retain them for future public use. The Borough Council will also resist proposals for deregistration of common land.

- 8.5.13 POLICY NNV21 THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL NOT PERMIT DEVELOPMENT ON REGISTERED COMMON LAND UNLESS IT IS CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTES TO, THE USE OF THE LAND AS A COMMON. MEASURES TO MAXIMISE THE BENEFITS OF COMMONS CONSISTENT WITH THE RETENTION OF THEIR CHARACTER WILL BE ENCOURAGED.**

(Objective: To safeguard the varied character and features of the natural environment.)

8.6 HEDGEROWS, TREES AND WOODLANDS

- 8.6.1 Trees and hedgerows make a significant and positive contribution to the appearance of the landscape and can be an important habitat for wildlife. They help to break up extensive tracts of land into a more human scale, thus creating greater visual interest. They also provide valuable screening for new development enabling better integration with an existing landscape. This is particularly important in the rather open and undulating landscape characteristic of the Plan Area.
- 8.6.2 Over the years there has been a decline in the number of trees and hedgerows throughout the County, including the Plan Area, which has contributed to a gradual change in the landscape towards greater uniformity. This decline can be attributed to a number of factors including changes in farming practices, disease, particularly Dutch Elm disease, the “Great Gale” of October 1987, drought and the lack of management to ensure replacement of mature trees and survival of existing trees.

Protecting Trees and Hedgerows

- 8.6.3 The Borough Council currently has around 180 Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) protecting trees which are important amenity features and which are under threat and it is the Council’s intention, provided resources are available, to regularly review these existing TPOs. The Council also places emphasis on good management and enhancement. However, where a clear threat to trees of special interest or amenity value exists, the Council will continue to use TPOs to ensure their protection.
- 8.6.4 Trees in Conservation Areas are protected and permission is required to fell or carry out work on trees in these designated areas.
- 8.6.5 The Hedgerow Regulations came into force on 1 June 1997 and provide positive provisions for the protection of hedgerows that fall within the scope of the Regulations. The overall aim is to secure the retention of important countryside hedgerows, by controlling their removal through a system of notification.

- 8.6.6 POLICY NNV22 WHERE A CLEAR THREAT EXISTS, INCLUDING A THREAT FROM DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS OR POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS, TO FELL OR DAMAGE TREES WHICH MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE LANDSCAPE OR CHARACTER OF A SETTLEMENT OR IN INDIVIDUAL TREES, SMALL GROUPS OF TREES OR CLUSTERS OF TREES, THE COUNCIL WILL PROTECT THE TREES BY MAKING TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS. IN THE EVENT OF AN IMMEDIATE THREAT TO TREES CONSIDERED TO BE WORTHY OF PRESERVATION OR OF AMENITY VALUE THE COUNCIL WILL SERVE ‘PROVISIONAL’ (EMERGENCY) TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS.**

- 8.6.7 POLICY NNV23 THE COUNCIL WILL GRANT CONSENT FOR THE CUTTING DOWN, REMOVAL OR FELLING OF TREES WHICH ARE PROTECTED BY A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER OR WHICH ARE IN A CONSERVATION AREA ONLY IF THE VOLUME OF NEW TREES TO BE PLANTED IS AT LEAST EQUAL TO THE VOLUME OF TREES TO BE REMOVED.**

- (a) THE PROPER PRUNING OF THE TREE FOR GOOD ARBORICULTURAL REASONS; OR,
 - (b) REMOVAL OF THE TREE SO THAT THE SURVIVAL OR GROWTH PROSPECTS OF OTHER PROTECTED TREES ARE ENHANCED.
- IN CONNECTION WITH PROPOSALS FOR THE REMOVAL OF TREES, THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE THE APPLICANT TO SUBMIT DETAILED LANDSCAPING PROPOSALS IN AN AGREED POSITION WITH TREES OF APPROPRIATE SPECIES AND SIZE.

Deleted

(Objective: To safeguard existing treescape features of particular interest and amenity value.)

- 8.6.8 POLICY NNV24 THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL USE THE PROVISIONS OF THE HEDGEROW REGULATIONS (1997) TO ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF, AND ENCOURAGE THE RETENTION, AND PROPER MANAGEMENT OF EXISTING HEDGEROWS AND THE PLANTING OF NEW HEDGEROWS WHERE APPROPRIATE WITHIN THE WIDER LANDSCAPE OF THE DISTRICT AND COUNTRYSIDE AREA.**

Deleted

(Objectives: To safeguard and improve existing hedgerows and encourage the creation of new hedgerows.)

Landscaping of New Development

- 8.6.9 It is the Borough Council’s policy to encourage tree planting throughout the District to make up for past losses and to soften the impact of new development in built-up areas and on the edges of settlements. Applicants seeking planning permission for new development will be expected to submit detailed planting and landscaping schemes which should include the retention of existing treescape features taking account of proposed ground levels and root and crown spread. Existing planting should be strengthened by new planting, where appropriate. Grants are made available for amenity tree planting schemes by the Countryside Commission and the County Council. General advice on tree planting is available from the Borough Council’s Recreation and Amenities Officer.
- 8.6.10 Built development, as outlined in Policy NNV25, should incorporate landscape management proposals. Where existing trees are to be retained as part of a development scheme, site layouts must make adequate provision for root and crown spread. A detailed tree survey should be submitted with the application indicating tree locations, species and crown spread and an indication of how they are to be protected during the works. Where necessary, the Borough Council will request details of proposed ground levels to assess the impact of the development on root structures. In connection with new residential development proposals which are less than estate scale the Council will, where appropriate, expect the applicant to meet the requirements.

- 8.6.10 POLICY NNV25 IN CONNECTION WITH PROPOSALS FOR BUILT DEVELOPMENT AFFECTING SITES OR LANDHOLDINGS IN EXCESS OF 0.5HA, INCLUDING PROPOSALS FOR RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND TOURIST ACCOMMODATION, THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE THE APPLICANT TO SUBMIT DETAILED LANDSCAPING PROPOSALS BASED ON A DETAILED TREE SURVEY WITH THE PROPOSALS INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:**

Deleted

- (A) DETAILS OF PROPOSALS FOR THE PROTECTION OF EXISTING TREES AND HEDGEROWS SUPPLEMENTED WITH PLANTING OF COMPATIBLE NATIVE SPECIES TO ENHANCE AND STRENGTHEN EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES; AND
- (B) DETAILS OF HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING INDICATING MATERIALS AND SPECIES.

Deleted

Forestry and Woodlands

- 8.6.11 The scattered woodlands and copses throughout the Plan Area provide features of interest in the open landscape. They are also sites of wildlife interest and areas which provide opportunity for recreation.
- 8.6.12 Wherever possible the Borough Council will encourage owners of existing or planned woodlands to enter into proper management agreements to ensure that existing and proposed woodlands can continue to benefit the natural environment. The "Woodland Grant Scheme" which is administered by the Forestry Authority is the Government's main support for the creation and maintenance of Woodlands.

8.6.13 **POLICY NNV26 THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE THE RETENTION, ENHANCEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF WOODLANDS BY ENCOURAGING OWNERS TO ENTER INTO PROPER MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS TO ENSURE THAT EXISTING AND PROPOSED WOODLANDS CAN CONTINUE TO BENEFIT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.**
(Objective: To encourage proper woodland management).

Deleted

