

Environment Policies

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*** Further information on deleted policies can be found within the chapter.**

Green Wedges

- 3.4** The fringes of Leicester present particular problems in terms of the use and environmental quality of land adjoining the built-up areas. In recognition of these factors the Structure Plan defines twelve green wedges around Leicester. Two of the green wedges, at Leicester/Scraptoft and at Thurnby/Leicester/Oadby include land within this District; their precise boundaries are defined in this Local Plan. Green wedges are strategic wedges of land extending into Leicester. The purpose of Green Wedges is not to seek to restrict the growth of an urban area but to aim to ensure that, as urban development extends, open land is incorporated within it. The green wedges should remain open and undeveloped to prevent the coalescence of settlements on the fringe of Leicester and to retain links with the countryside. They lie outside the area covered by countryside policies.
- 3.5** The Leicester/Scraptoft green wedge encompasses the paddocks separating Scraptoft and Leicester and Scraptoft golf course. The Thurnby/Leicester/Oadby green wedge is more extensive in area. The outer extent of the wedge south of Thurnby runs south of Bushby Lodge Farm to the edge of Stoughton Airfield. The village of Stoughton lies completely within the wedge. The wedge penetrates into Leicester to encompass Evington Golf Course and the Arboretum.
- 3.6** The green wedges incorporate areas of land of differing agricultural and environmental quality, which may be suitable for different types of land uses. The only types of land use that will normally be considered appropriate for these areas are those where the predominantly open and undeveloped nature of the land is retained. These include agriculture, recreation, forestry, transport routes and mineral uses. It is recognised that built development may be required in connection with some of the above uses. However, only small scale development limited to the operational requirements of the activity will normally be permitted, where such development does not detract from the open and undeveloped character of the green wedge.
- 3.7** **POLICY EV/2** **THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO PROTECT THE OPEN AND UNDEVELOPED CHARACTER OF THE GREEN WEDGES DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAPS AND WILL REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THAT CHARACTER.**

Countryside Priority Area and Management Project

- 3.8** The Leicester Urban Fringe Countryside Management Project (now Stepping Stones) covers land around the City. In this District the parishes of Broughton Astley, Great Glen, Little Stretton, Scraptoft, Stoughton, Thurnby and Wistow are within the Project area. The Project develops the Countryside Priority Area indicated on the Structure Plan Key Diagram. The Project is funded by Local authorities and the Countryside Agency. The Project aims to manage existing countryside resources and to enhance the attractiveness and conservation value of the countryside. Within the Project area the District Council will pay particular regard to the need for comprehensive landscape proposals to form an integral part of development schemes (see **Policy EV/20**).

3.13 It is important that the character of the landscape in this area is maintained and enhanced. Any development which would have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the landscape will be resisted. Intrusive agricultural, recreational, commercial or housing development will not be appropriate in the Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside. Particular attention will be paid to the location and design of agricultural buildings and other acceptable land uses. The general policies relating to development in the countryside will also apply in the Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside. Those policies will provide guidance on the consideration of proposals for developments that are acceptable in principle in the Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside.

3.14 POLICY EV/4 **THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR PROPOSALS THAT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE LANDSCAPE IN THE AREA OF PARTICULARLY ATTRACTIVE COUNTRYSIDE, AS DESIGNATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAPS. WHERE DEVELOPMENTS ARE PERMITTED, CONDITIONS MAY BE ATTACHED TO ENSURE THAT THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE LANDSCAPE IS MAINTAINED.**

3.15 The western part of the District lies outside the strategic Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside but displays its own particular qualities. The landscape is generally flatter with fields bounded by hedgerows and little tree cover. The area drains to the River Swift and to tributaries of the River Soar. Major developments, from motorways to mineral workings and former airfields (Bruntingthorpe and Magna Park) impact on the landscape. Villages tend to be larger than in the east of the District, with red brick buildings predominating. There are pockets of woodland and parkland landscape such as Wistow, Misterton and east of Swinford which are of local importance. The District Council will endeavour to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the landscape in the District through the application of policies for the control of development in the countryside.

Development in the Countryside

3.16 Development in the countryside is necessary to sustain a healthy rural economy. This must be balanced with the conflicting pressures to protect the countryside for its own sake and for its agricultural, ecological, landscape and recreational value. In general, the development will be contained within existing settlements, but the following policy provides guidance for those proposals that may require or would benefit from a location in the countryside. Development that is essential for the operational requirements of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, recreation, utilities or tourism; or development that enhances or sustains the rural economy will normally be acceptable. This policy will apply to land outside the limits to development of settlements defined in **Policy HS/8** and to land outside the green wedge areas defined in **Policy EV/2**.

3.17 The siting of any new building in the countryside is particularly important because of the visual impact it can have on the appearance of the countryside. Wherever possible new buildings should be located close to existing buildings or landscape features. Development on a ridgeline or on the skyline should be avoided.

3.18 Certain agricultural operations and buildings, subject to specific conditions, are permitted development under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. New agricultural buildings should preferably be located adjacent to an existing complex of agricultural buildings, or sited in a location which minimises their intrusiveness and prominence in the landscape. Applications for new dwellings in the countryside will be considered under **Policies HS/14 and HS/14**.

3.19 POLICY EV/5

DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WILL BE STRICTLY CONTROLLED. THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE UNLESS:-

- 1. THE DEVELOPMENT IS LIKELY TO SUSTAIN OR IMPROVE THE RURAL ECONOMY AND CANNOT REASONABLY BE PROVIDED WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO AN EXISTING SETTLEMENT;**
- 2. THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE;**
- 3. THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AMENITIES OF RESIDENTS IN THE AREA;**
- 4. ANY NEW BUILDINGS ARE SITED IN A POSITION THAT MINIMISES THEIR IMPACT ON THE LANDSCAPE AND ON IMPORTANT VIEWS INTO AND OUT OF VILLAGES;**
- 5. THE DESIGN, MATERIALS, MASSING AND BULK OF ANY BUILDINGS SHOULD COMBINE TO MINIMISE THE IMPACT ON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE AND SHOULD MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE THE DISTINCTIVE LOCAL CHARACTER OF THE LANDSCAPE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT;**
- 6. THE DEVELOPMENT IS ACCOMPANIED BY A LANDSCAPE SCHEME APPROPRIATE TO ITS SITING AND LOCATION;**
- 7. THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT AREAS OF ECOLOGICAL OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE ;**
- 8. SATISFACTORY ACCESS CAN BE PROVIDED WITHOUT ADVERSELY AFFECTING THE**

CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA;

- 9. THERE IS CAPACITY IN THE LOCAL ROAD NETWORK TO ACCOMMODATE THE TRAFFIC LIKELY TO BE GENERATED BY THE DEVELOPMENT;**
- 10. ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE WITHIN THE SITE FOR PARKING AND SERVICING;**
- 11. THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE COALESCENCE OF TWO CLOSE SETTLEMENTS OR DIMINISH THE OPEN CHARACTER OF THE LAND BETWEEN THEM.**

Intensive Food Production and Ancillary Processing Units

3.20 Recent advances in agricultural techniques and intensive food production have resulted in proposals for non-traditional buildings such as livestock breeding, dairy units and central grain stores which can severely affect the visual and residential amenities of an area. The location of such buildings and structures is determined by the individual nature of each agricultural operation and there may be environmental benefits in siting such developments away from residential areas. However, such development should not compromise the aims of other countryside policies in this Plan which seek to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the countryside.

3.21 *POLICY EV/6 This policy has now been deleted.

Please refer to Local Plan Policy IN/1 regarding Intensive Food Production and Ancillary Processing Units.

Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside

3.22 The conversion of buildings that contribute to the character of the countryside and whose form, bulk and general design are in keeping with the surrounding area will be encouraged. The re-use of such buildings is preferable to their gradual decay and dereliction and may also assist in the diversification of the rural economy. Building conversions for employment generating uses will generally be preferable to residential conversion, subject to the suitability of the building, site and location as they are likely to require less alteration to the fabric of the building and be of more value in terms of promoting a diverse rural economy.

3.23 The submission of a structural survey with any planning application for conversion will assist the District Council in determining whether the building is capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding or extensions which would affect its appearance. However, there may be occasions where the removal of a building would be of more benefit to the appearance of the countryside than its retention or re-use. This is likely to be the case where the form, bulk and design of the building are not in keeping with its surroundings.

3.24 POLICY EV/7

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE CONVERSION OF BUILDINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE TO NEW USES, WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:-

- 1. THE BUILDING IS OF PERMANENT AND SUBSTANTIAL CONSTRUCTION AND IS CAPABLE OF CONVERSION WITHOUT MAJOR OR COMPLETE RECONSTRUCTION;**
- 2. ANY SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC FEATURES OF THE BUILDING ARE RETAINED;**
- 3. NO SUBSTANTIAL ADDITIONS OR ALTERATIONS TO THE BUILDING ARE PROPOSED. THE DESIGN, SITING AND MASSING OF ANY SMALL-SCALE EXTENSIONS MUST BE SUBSERVIENT TO THE ORIGINAL BUILDING;**
- 4. A SATISFACTORY ACCESS CAN BE PROVIDED WITHOUT ADVERSELY AFFECTING THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING OR THE AREA;**
- 5. ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE WITHIN THE SITE FOR PARKING AND SERVICING;**
- 6. WHERE APPROPRIATE, ADEQUATE LANDSCAPING WILL BE REQUIRED AROUND THE DEVELOPMENT;**
- 7. THE SCALE AND NATURE OF THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE RURAL AREA.**
- 8. THE FORM, BULK AND GENERAL DESIGN OF THE BUILDING ARE IN KEEPING WITH ITS SURROUNDINGS.**

The Keeping of Horses

- 3.25** Planning permission is not normally required for the grazing of horses or for the keeping and breeding of working horses for use on farms. Permission is, however, required for the erection of stabling or other buildings associated with the keeping of horses. The keeping of horses for recreational purposes on agricultural land may constitute a change in the use of the land and require planning permission. The division of land into pony paddocks for recreational purposes may not require planning permission but it can adversely affect the appearance of the

countryside, particularly through the erection of fencing and buildings of varying design and materials. Planning permission is required for commercial activities including the keeping and breeding of racehorses and for livery stables. The District Council will consider applications for change of use and new buildings in accordance with the following Policy.

3.26 POLICY EV/8

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR STABLING OR OTHER BUILDINGS AND ENCLOSURES ASSOCIATED WITH THE KEEPING OF HORSES, WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:-

1. **THE LOCATION, DESIGN, MASSING AND MATERIALS OF THE BUILDING DO NOT DETRACT FROM THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA;**
2. **THE LOCATION OF THE BUILDING DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AMENITIES OF NEARBY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES;**
3. **A SATISFACTORY ACCESS IS PROVIDED;**
4. **ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE WITHIN THE SITE FOR PARKING AND SERVICING;**
5. **ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE FOR THE STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF WASTE MATERIALS FROM THE SITE.**

Landscape Quality

- 3.27 The landscape quality of the District is derived from the topography and methods of cultivation of the land. Planning permission is not required for all categories of development and considerable permitted development rights pertain to development associated with agriculture. The District Council, therefore, has less control over the siting and design of agricultural buildings than other forms of development. The District Council also has little control over alterations to the landscape such as the enlargement of fields, which can significantly alter the character of an area in a short space of time. It will attempt to achieve the retention of features of interest in the landscape by means of agreement with local farmers and landowners.

Overhead Cables

- 3.28 Overhead power and telephone cables are a visual intrusion in the countryside and should wherever possible be underground or carefully aligned against a back-drop of trees or any other similar landscape feature. However, it is recognised that the undergrounding of high voltage lines can have an adverse impact on areas of ecological and archaeological interest, disturb agricultural operations and be more costly to install and maintain. Where it is proposed to re-route overhead cables, the new route should be less intrusive than the existing route, and all redundant equipment and structures should be removed by the operators.

3.29 *POLICY EV/9**This policy has now been deleted.****Please refer to Local Plan Policy IN/1 regarding Overhead Cables.****Telecommunications Equipment**

3.30 The demand for communication masts and towers is increasing and their positioning can have a significant impact on the landscape. Although some development is permitted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, express planning consent is required for the erection of the more obtrusive types of equipment. The District Council will have particular regard to the importance of maintaining the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas and the countryside. It will encourage the sharing of masts or the erection of antennae on existing buildings to reduce the visual impact of the development. Applications for planning permission should be accompanied by an appraisal of the proposal and the site selection process.

3.31 *POLICY EV/10**This policy has now been deleted.****Please refer to PPG8 para.19-31 regarding Telecommunication Equipment.****Conservation Areas**

3.32 The District Council designates Conservation Areas in recognition of their special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. There are currently 61 Conservation Areas within Harborough District. A list of Conservation Areas is given in **Appendix D** together with plans of those conservation areas not already illustrated on the Proposals Map Insets.

3.33 New development, the demolition of buildings and the protection of trees are subject to special control in a Conservation Area. Conservation does not imply blanket preservation of the existing physical fabric of the environment; it encompasses the sympathetic conversion and adaptation of buildings to appropriate uses, in keeping with the character of the area.

3.34 The District Council will only permit development which respects the character of the existing area in scale, grouping and materials and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. New development should make provision for the use of building materials and boundary treatments that are appropriate to the locality. The development of open spaces or vistas that are important to the character of the area will be resisted. The District Council will normally require detailed plans and drawings of proposed new developments, including elevations which show the new development in its setting.

3.35 POLICY EV/11**THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE DESIRABILITY OF PRESERVING OR ENHANCING THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREAS IN THE DISTRICT BY:-**

1. **NOT PERMITTING NEW DEVELOPMENT THAT HAS AN ADVERSE EFFECT UPON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF A CONSERVATION AREA;**
2. **REQUIRING THAT BUILDING MATERIALS, THE DESIGN, SCALE AND DETAILING OF BUILDINGS, SHOP FRONTS, STREET FURNITURE, BOUNDARY TREATMENT AND SURFACE TREATMENT PRESERVE OR ENHANCE THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF THE LOCALITY;**
3. **REFUSING PROPOSALS TO DEVELOP OPEN SPACES OR VISTAS IMPORTANT TO THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF A CONSERVATION AREA;**
4. **SUPPORTING PROPOSALS WHICH ENHANCE A CONSERVATION AREA;**
5. **RESISTING PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD GENERATE A VOLUME OR TYPE OF TRAFFIC HARMFUL TO THE CHARACTER OF A CONSERVATION AREA, AND WHERE APPROPRIATE IMPOSING CONDITIONS OR SEEKING TO ENTER INTO OBLIGATIONS TO CONTROL THE ROUTEING OF CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC.**

3.36 POLICY EV/12

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL EXPECT A DETAILED PLANNING APPLICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN A CONSERVATION AREA. WHERE AN OUTLINE APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED IT MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY SUFFICIENT SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION TO ENABLE AN ADEQUATE ASSESSMENT TO BE MADE OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL ON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA.

3.37 POLICY EV/13

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO PROPOSALS THAT REQUIRE THE DEMOLITION OF ANY BUILDING, STRUCTURE OR WALL THAT MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF A CONSERVATION AREA.

IT WILL NORMALLY GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR PROPOSALS WHERE:-

1. **THE BUILDING OR STRUCTURE IS WHOLLY BEYOND REPAIR OR INCAPABLE OF BENEFICIAL USE;**
2. **ITS REMOVAL OR REPLACEMENT WOULD BENEFIT THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE AREA;**
3. **AN APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OR USE OF THE SAME SITE IS SUBMITTED AND APPROVED AT THE SAME TIME AS THE APPLICATION FOR DEMOLITION.**

3.38 Much of the character and interest of Conservation Areas arises from the variety and juxtaposition of buildings and the spaces created between them. Apart from houses with their associated outbuildings, the Conservation Areas often include buildings originally erected for other purposes, for example agricultural buildings, chapels and schools. Many of these buildings are no longer needed for their original purpose. Where they make a significant contribution to the street scene the District Council will encourage their conversion to appropriate alternative uses, to ensure the retention of the building. The re-use of sound bricks, stone, slates and other locally available building materials will assist in retaining the character of the area.

Satellite Dishes and Antennae

3.39 The installation of a satellite dish or antenna on a prominent elevation of a building can have an adverse visual impact on the locality. This is particularly true in a Conservation Area where such apparatus can have an adverse effect on the character of the area. On buildings within Conservation Areas the District Council will encourage the sensitive location of satellite dishes and antennae on the least prominent elevation of buildings so as to minimise their visual impact on the Conservation Area street scene.

3.40 *POLICY EV/14 **This policy has now been deleted.**

Please refer to PPG15 para.2.12 regarding Satellite Dishes and Antennae.

Listed Buildings

3.41 Many of the most important buildings in the District are included on the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, issued by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Stricter controls apply to listed buildings to ensure that their character is preserved. Listed Building Consent is required for demolition or other works which materially alter the character or appearance of the building. This can include a change in materials. Alterations which involve the introduction of UPVC plastic or similar synthetic materials, bare metal finishes or unpainted tropical hardwood will not normally be permitted. The District Council will normally resist proposals for the demolition of a Listed Building. If a building worthy of protection, but not yet listed, is under threat of demolition or major

CONSERVATION AREA, WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:-

- 1. THE CHANGE OF USE IS ESSENTIAL TO THE RETENTION AND PRESERVATION OF THE BUILDING;**
- 2. THE NEW USE CAN BE ACCOMMODATED IN THE BUILDING WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT ALTERATIONS THAT WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE BUILDING.**

Historic Parks and Gardens

3.46 Historic Parks and Gardens are an important part of the heritage and landscape of the District. Their importance is increasingly being recognised. A Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest has been compiled by English Heritage. Five parks and gardens in the District are included, at Baggrave Hall and Quenby Hall (Hungarton), Lowesby Hall, Stanford Hall (Westrill and Starmore) and West Langton Hall. The Register is not exhaustive and other parks and gardens may be added to it as knowledge and research increases. The District Council will encourage the sympathetic management and protection of such sites and their settings from new development which would destroy or harm their historic interest.

3.47 POLICY EV/18 THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL NORMALLY REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS UNLESS:-

- 1. THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE PARK OR GARDEN;**
- 2. IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE PROPER MAINTENANCE OR RESTORATION OF THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE PARK OR GARDEN;**
- 3. IT IS RELATED TO THE RETENTION OF A BUILDING THAT IS IN KEEPING WITH THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE PARK OR GARDEN.**

Protection of Trees

3.48 Woodland and hedgerow trees make a significant contribution to the character of the countryside and provide shelter and food for wildlife (see also **Policies RM/9 – RM/11**). Trees are also important components of the village and town environments. Trees in Conservation Areas are afforded some protection by virtue of the Conservation Area legislation. Many trees of particular amenity value across the District are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders. The

District Council has the power to serve Tree Preservation Orders on trees that are threatened and will exercise its powers where appropriate. Applicants seeking planning permission to develop sites that contain trees of significant amenity value will be expected to submit a detailed assessment of the trees, to support any proposal that would result in the felling of the trees.

3.49 POLICY EV/19

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENTS THAT WOULD RESULT IN THE DESTRUCTION OF TREES SUBJECT TO A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER, OR TREES OR WOODLANDS OF SIGNIFICANT AMENITY VALUE UNLESS:-

1. **IN THE CASE OF TREES SUBJECT TO A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER IT CAN BE SHOWN TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL THROUGH A DETAILED ASSESSMENT THAT THERE IS JUSTIFICATION FOR FELLING A TREE(S);**
2. **THE PERMISSION IS CONDITIONAL ON THE REPLACEMENT OF A TREE(S) OF THE APPROPRIATE SIZE AND SPECIES WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT.**

Landscaping

- 3.50** The appearance and treatment of the spaces between and around buildings will often be of comparable importance to the design of buildings and should likewise be the subject of consideration, attention and expert advice. The aim should be for any development to be of benefit in environmental and landscape terms. Detailed planning applications for new development should be accompanied by a landscape scheme where appropriate. In addition, where a proposed development is likely to have a considerable impact on its surroundings, a landscape appraisal or definition of landscape design principles should be carried out as part of the design process and should be submitted at the time of the outline application.
- 3.51** The retention of established mature trees, shrubs and hedgerows in new development schemes provides context and continuity for the new buildings. The treatment of ground surfaces, walls and other built landscape features also helps to create a sense of identity in a new development. The loss of these features will be resisted in new development schemes. Proposals for the maintenance of existing features should also be addressed (see also **Policies RM/9 and RM/10**).
- 3.52** When new development works are being undertaken it is important to protect existing trees on the site from damage and to avoid soil compaction around the roots. Trees can easily be damaged by drainage works affecting the root system and changes in soil level, which may not become fully apparent for several years. When new trees are planted, care should be taken in the selection of the tree with regard to its mature height and spread and proximity to surrounding buildings.

3.53 POLICY EV/20

DETAILED PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY A LANDSCAPE SCHEME WHERE APPROPRIATE, RELATED TO THE SCALE, NATURE AND LOCATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT. THE SCHEME SHOULD INCLUDE PROPOSALS FOR:-

- 1. THE RETENTION OF EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES WHERE THIS IS DESIRABLE AND PRACTICABLE, SUBJECT TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL;**
- 2. NEW PLANTING AND SURFACE TREATMENT;**
- 3. THE PROTECTION OF THOSE LANDSCAPE FEATURES WHICH ARE TO BE RETAINED WITHIN AND ADJOINING THE SITE DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PERIOD;**
- 4. MAINTENANCE OF THE EXISTING AND PROPOSED LANDSCAPE FEATURES.**

THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE A LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL AND THE DEFINITION OF LANDSCAPE PRINCIPLES AS PART OF AN OUTLINE APPLICATION WHERE THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, BY ITS SCALE OR NATURE, WOULD HAVE A CONSIDERABLE IMPACT ON ITS SURROUNDINGS.

WHERE NECESSARY, CONDITIONS WILL BE ATTACHED TO PLANNING PERMISSIONS TO ENSURE THAT DETAILED LANDSCAPE SCHEMES, INCLUDING ALL PLANTING DETAILS AND THE MEANS OF PROTECTION OF EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PERIOD, ARE SUBMITTED AND APPROVED PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT.

Access to the Countryside

- 3.54** As well as providing an amenity for residents in the District the public rights of way network is appreciated by people from further afield. The responsibility for signposting rights of way from public roads lies with the Highway Authority. The waymarking of public rights of way on private land is being promoted and is one area where better direction signs may help to prevent unnecessary damage to crops and hedges through needless trespass.

- 3.55** **The District Council will promote and encourage greater access to the countryside.**

3.56 The District Council has given approval in principle to the creation of a circular recreational route around the District. Although it is intended to base this predominantly on the routes of disused railway lines, alternative paths will need to be developed in some places where, for example, access to parts of the route is not available. It will be developed initially as a footpath route, but provision for cyclists and horse-riders will be incorporated where appropriate. The creation of the circular route is a long term proposal and plans have yet to be prepared. It is intended to achieve the route by negotiation of access rights rather than acquisition of the land concerned (see also **Policy RM/16**).

3.57 **The District Council will promote the development of a circular recreational route around the District.**

Environmental Art

3.58 The District Council will encourage the incorporation of art as an integral part of the design process for new development or refurbishment schemes. If more attention is given to art within new development it can enhance the environment, create a sense of identity for a development and encourage the use of work by local artists and crafts people.

3.59 **The District Council will encourage the provision of environmental art within new developments.**

Environmental Enhancement

3.60 Within Conservation Areas the District Council has a statutory obligation to prepare enhancement schemes. In recent years the District Council has also prepared and implemented enhancement schemes within and outside Conservation Areas, in line with its objective of preserving and enhancing the heritage of the District. The schemes have consisted of improving the appearance of village centres by repaving, landscaping, providing street furniture or removing unsightly overhead cables. Subject to the availability of resources, the District Council will allocate money to implement enhancement schemes and encourage other agencies, Leicestershire County Council and Town or Parish Councils to do the same.

3.61 **The District Council will support the preparation and implementation of environmental enhancement schemes within the District.**

Control of Advertisements

3.62 With the exception of the built-up areas of Broughton Astley, Fleckney, Kibworth, Lutterworth and Market Harborough, the District is an Area of Special Advertisement Control, designated under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations 1992. Within the Area of Special Advertisement Control there are stricter limits on the display of advertisements in order to protect the visual amenity of the area.

Advertisements on Land Adjacent to the Public Highway

3.63 Along some of the roads in the District there has been an increase in the erection of free-standing advertisement signs on land adjacent to the highway. The proliferation of such signs is detrimental to the character and appearance of the countryside and can be distracting to drivers. In exceptional circumstances advance directional signs may be justified if a business is located off the classified road network in a remote location, where lack of signing may result in difficulties for customers gaining access to the site. To avoid a proliferation of advance signs, businesses in the same general location will be encouraged to combine their essential advertising needs. Care should be taken to ensure that signs are designed and sited to harmonise with their setting.

3.64 POLICY EV/21 **THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL NORMALLY REFUSE CONSENT FOR THE ERECTION OF FREE-STANDING ADVERTISEMENT SIGNS AND HOARDINGS ON LAND ADJACENT TO A PUBLIC HIGHWAY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.**

EXCEPTIONALLY, CONSENT MAY BE GRANTED FOR ADVANCE DIRECTION SIGNS RELATING TO A BUSINESS THAT IS LOCATED ON A SITE WITHOUT A FRONTAGE TO A CLASSIFIED ROAD.

Light Pollution

3.65 There is increasing concern at the level of light pollution emanating from outdoor light sources. Much external light is associated with roads and is not subject to planning control. Where floodlighting can be controlled, the District Council will assess lighting schemes to ensure that excessive glare and light spillage are kept to a minimum. By developing appropriate lighting schemes, light pollution can be substantially reduced without detriment to the lighting task. Well-designed lighting schemes that focus lighting where it is required can also help to reduce energy costs.

3.66 POLICY EV/22 **WHERE EXTERNAL LIGHTING IS REQUIRED FOR A DEVELOPMENT, PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE TO MINIMISE LIGHT POLLUTION BY:-**

- 1. KEEPING THE AMOUNT, INTENSITY AND DURATION OF OPERATION OF THE LIGHTING TO A MINIMUM;**
- 2. DESIGNING THE LIGHTING SCHEME TO MINIMISE GLARE AND SPILLAGE.**

Control of Pollution and Nuisance

3.67 The District Council will seek to ensure that new development does not have an adverse effect on its surroundings in terms of pollution, nuisances (e.g. noise, smells and dirt) or unacceptable levels of traffic. Where appropriate, the Council will consider imposing conditions on planning permissions to safeguard the environment and the amenity of nearby uses.

3.68 **POLICY EV/23**

WHERE APPROPRIATE THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL IMPOSE CONDITIONS ON PLANNING PERMISSIONS TO ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE CHARACTER OF ITS SURROUNDINGS, OR HARM THE AMENITIES OF NEARBY USES, THROUGH NOISE, SMELL, DUST, DIRT, GRIT, AIR OR SOIL POLLUTION, OR AN UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF TRAFFIC. IF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL IS NOT SATISFIED THAT THESE ADVERSE EFFECTS WOULD BE OVERCOME BY THE IMPOSITION OF CONDITIONS, PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED.