

10. ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

INTRODUCTION

10.1 The countryside and villages of South Cambridgeshire form an historic landscape which is the setting and stage for our efforts to conserve our natural and man-made heritage and the physical resources of land, air and water which sustain them. It is also the stage for our economic and social development and this Plan has to balance the needs of these, at times conflicting, priorities and activities. The planning system has profound influence in this landscape by controlling the scale and location of new development and through the operation of the laws which have been passed to protect wildlife, trees, buildings and conservation areas.

10.2 South Cambridgeshire is predominantly a rural area where villages still have a high level of individual identity and separation from each other. Within the District the villages vary in character from agricultural hamlets with virtually no facilities such as Childerley (population 50) up to what amount to almost small towns such as Sawston (population over 7,000) with a wide range of facilities and services. Some villages, such as Bartlow, have changed little over the centuries, others such as Wimpole and Bar Hill are relatively recent creations. Equally, the landscape which is their setting varies from upland chalk in the south of the District to the flat fenland of the north, and it is this rich pattern of interchanging character between villages and landscape which makes the District so distinctive.

OBJECTIVES

10.3 The overall environmental aim of the Local Plan is to preserve the biodiversity, historic interest and special character of the landscape and settlements of South Cambridgeshire, and to achieve new development which respects and reinforces local distinctiveness. In doing this a contribution will be made towards the protection of the regional, national and global environment. This overall aim may be met in a number of objectives:

- To maintain and enhance the character and appearance of South Cambridgeshire's countryside and landscape.
- To protect and enhance the biodiversity of the District, particularly to safeguard wildlife by protecting habitats.
- To protect and enhance the built-environment.
- To safeguard and record the archaeological heritage.
- To protect and improve the quality of the land, water and air environments.
- To reduce energy consumption.

GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

10.4 Government guidance to local authorities in recent years has given increasing weight to the protection of the local and global environment and to encourage more sustainable forms of development. The Government is a signatory to the declaration following the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, but environmental agenda, particularly in the fields of archaeology and building conservation began many years before that and are now supported by a well-developed system of laws. The 1990 White Paper, "This Common Inheritance; Britain's Environmental Strategy" emphasises the close relationship between pollution and land use, and defines sustainability as "living on the earth's income rather than eroding its capital". In

1994, the Government published "Sustainable Development; the UK Strategy", which aimed to conserve natural resources, wildlife and landscape, and, in the same year, "Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan" which tries to set a framework for species conservation and habitat protection.

10.5 Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) give more specific advice. PPG12 "Development Plans" emphasises the role that the planning system, and particularly plans like this one, have in ensuring that development and growth are sustainable and that environmental issues and priorities are taken into account.

10.6 There are a number of other PPGs which influence the way local authorities respond to the challenges of planning and environmental conservation:

PPG7: The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development (Revised February 1997, amended March 2001)

PPG9: Nature Conservation (October 1994)

PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment (September 1994)

PPG16: Archaeology and Planning (November 1990)

PPG22: Renewable Energy (February 1993)

PPG23: Planning and Pollution Control (July 1994)

10.7 This Plan is not the only way in which the local authorities and other agencies try to conserve the environment; they may, for example, take on a direct role in funding or managing local nature reserves and they may develop policies and practices which reduce the extent of car use in their organisations. Under the Local Agenda 21 heading local authorities are encouraged to take a broad environmental perspective and to seek greater integration of policies and initiatives, and to some extent this Plan will act as a co-ordination tool.

THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN 1995

10.8 The Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 1995 reflects this growing environmental awareness. Keynote Policy SP1 emphasises that sustainability is all important in the formulation and assessment of development proposals and local plans. It states:

"Active steps will be taken to assess the significance of the principle of sustainable development as the concept and its implications emerge. Those implications will be material considerations in determining planning applications and in the formation of policies and proposals in local plans."

10.9 The Structure Plan firmly states that environmentally sustainable development will be expected to minimise adverse environmental impacts, where they are inescapable, and should include the provision of remedial measures for the enhancement of the environment.

10.10 Chapter 12 of the Structure Plan 1995 - "Rural and Urban Conservation" - recognises that increasing demands have been made on the environment which have had adverse effects including:

- loss of landscape features and wildlife habitats not statutorily protected, such as hedges, ponds and grassland;
- decline in tree cover due to changes in farming practice, tree diseases and the effects of storms and drought;
- the change in agricultural practice which has led to the development of new larger "industrial" farm buildings and larger fields;
- disuse and neglect of traditional buildings;
- construction of new roads, mineral workings, refuse disposal facilities, sewage treatment works and overhead power lines;

- new development for housing, employment, shopping etc.;
- traffic growth.

10.11 The Structure Plan 1995 sets out broad principles to conserve the environment by:

- restricting development to avoid the most environmentally sensitive areas;
- ensuring that new development is in harmony with the environment;
- taking and encouraging measures to protect, manage and enhance the environment.

Landscape Character Areas

POLICY EN1: Relevant parts of the Landscape Character Areas of England are defined on the Proposals Map. In all its planning decisions the District Council will seek to ensure that the local character and distinctiveness of these areas is respected, retained and wherever possible enhanced. While recognising that landscape is a dynamic concept, planning permission will not be granted for development which would have an adverse effect on the character and local distinctiveness of these areas.

10.12 In recent years many features of local character and distinctiveness have been lost as a result of changing practices in land management and development. This has given rise to increasing interest in the idea of seeking to retain remaining elements of local distinctiveness and, wherever possible, to restore them. In 1996 the Countryside Commission and English Nature jointly published a map “The character of England; landscapes, wildlife and natural features”. This publication seeks to provide a consistent national framework for the identification of the unique landscape character areas of England. In 1999 this was taken further locally in ‘Countryside Character Volume 6: East of England’.

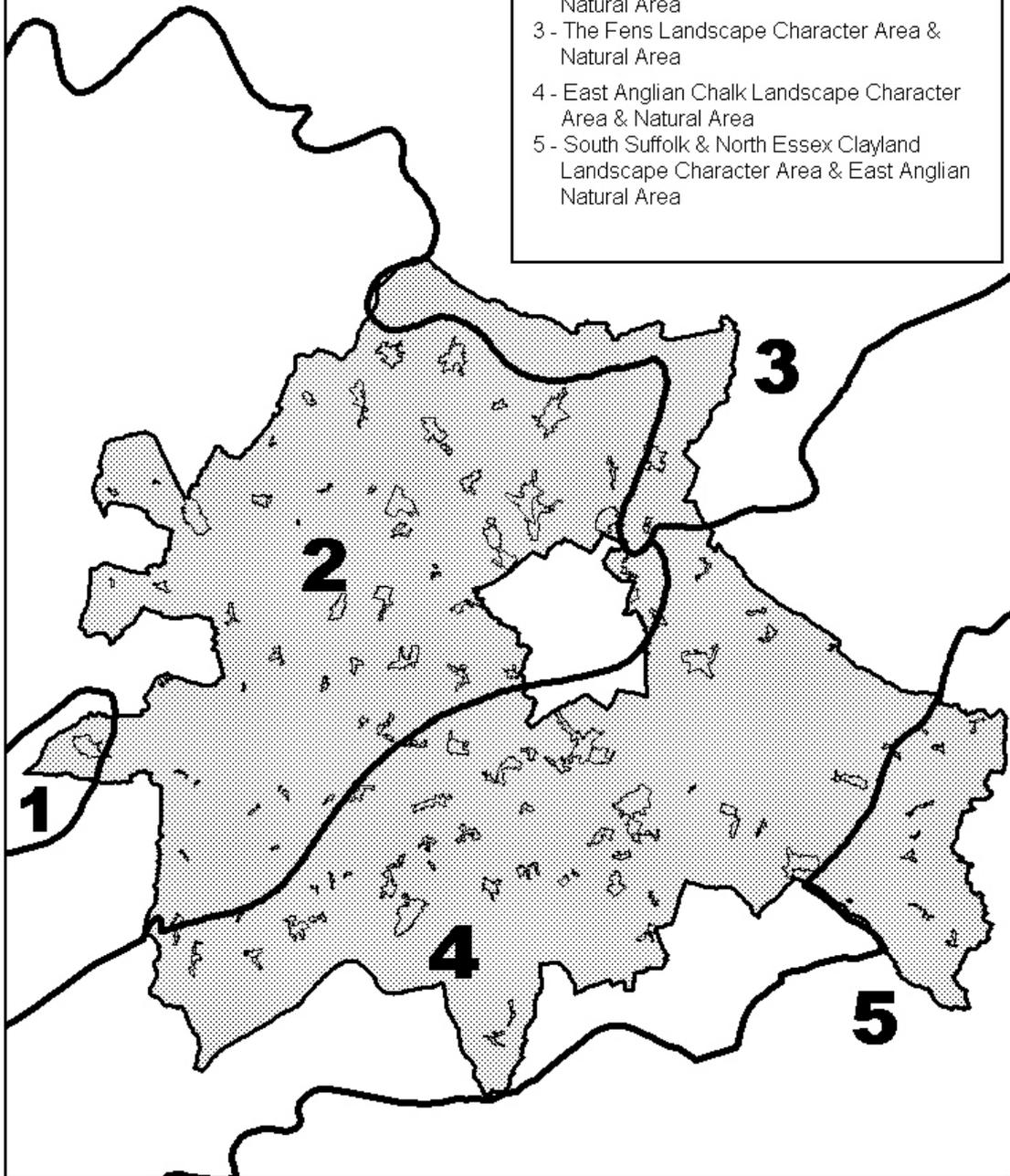
10.13 South Cambridgeshire contains parts of five of these Character Areas (the Fens, the East Anglian Chalk, the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands, and small parts of the Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge and the South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands):

- (i) The Fens: starting to the east of Cambridge, and running northwards, this area was originally tidal marsh, which, since Roman times, has been progressively drained to form highly productive farmland on rich black peat-based soils. The resultant low-lying flat and open landscape is punctuated by isolated farmsteads and dissected by a series of man-made drainage channels or dykes with few hedgerows or woods, although some watercourses are marked by lines of Willows.
- (ii) The Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands are formed from a clay plateau in the north-west of the District, broken by shallow river and brook valleys giving rise to a gently undulating landscape. Large open arable fields have been created by modern farming practices with a resultant much-reduced level of hedgerows. There are some woodlands, mainly of oak and ash. Scattered villages with their church towers and spires add interest to this landscape, and these settlements are usually associated with smaller, hedged fields and paddocks on their edges.
- (iii) The East Anglian Chalklands run across the District south of Cambridge from the edge of Royston towards the Newmarket area. This is an area of smooth sloped and rolling chalk hills, broken by the valleys of the Granta and Rhee which converge just south of Grantchester to form the River Cam. Large arable fields are punctuated by small beech copses or hangers on some of the hills.

**Map Illustrating Landscape
Character Areas & Natural Areas**

Key

- 1 - Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge Landscape Character Area & Natural Area
- 2 - Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire Claylands Landscape Character Area & West Anglian Natural Area
- 3 - The Fens Landscape Character Area & Natural Area
- 4 - East Anglian Chalk Landscape Character Area & Natural Area
- 5 - South Suffolk & North Essex Clayland Landscape Character Area & East Anglian Natural Area



- (iv) The South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands, in the extreme south-east of the District, is undulating high land and is some of the highest in the County. Large arable fields form much of the landscape although there is some woodland and hedgerows, whilst earth banks are a distinctive feature along some roadsides.
- (v) Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge: where the area around Gamlingay forms part of a larger landscape area within Bedfordshire which culminates in the Greensand ridge around Sandy. In the Gamlingay area the countryside is gentler but the dry acidic soils still give a different character with woods.

10.14 The 'Landscape Character Areas' approach is concerned to preserve and enhance the local distinctiveness and quality of the whole landscape. It will therefore supersede the former 'Areas of Best Landscape', derived from surveys undertaken in the early 1970s for the first Cambridgeshire Structure Plan. References to such areas remain in the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 1995 and its accompanying key diagram, but this Plan does not identify boundaries for the Areas of Best Landscape because the more holistic landscape character approach is considered more in tune with current approaches to landscape protection. Since the test in policy EN1 applies on a District-wide basis it is no longer necessary or appropriate to distinguish between areas of land within and without the Areas of Best Landscape. The District Council is preparing a district-wide design guide which will be adopted as supplementary planning guidance, and will help ensure that new development respects local distinctiveness.

The River Valleys

POLICY EN2: The District Council will not permit development which has an adverse effect upon the wildlife, landscape and the countryside character of the River Valleys of South Cambridgeshire. Where appropriate the District Council will consider the use of Article 4 Directions to protect this setting.

10.15 The District Council is concerned about the river valley environments within South Cambridgeshire. The most important of these are the River Cam north of Cambridge, the river Rhee to the south and west, the River Great Ouse, the Granta to the south-east and the smaller tributary valley of the Bourn Brook.

10.16 These rivers are important elements within the rural landscape and also form an important part of the setting of many of the villages within South Cambridgeshire. They make attractive water features in the landscape and their associated valleys also add interest with trees and meadows. In addition to having amenity and recreational value the river valleys are also areas of importance as wildlife habitats, often in areas which are intensively farmed. It is therefore essential to maintain the quality of these environments particularly where public footpaths or bridleways follow the river, such as alongside the Cam to the north of Cambridge. The protected areas of river valleys which are the subject of this policy are indicated diagrammatically on the District-Wide Proposals Map.

10.17 Development which could be harmful to riversides includes fencing which is obtrusive because of its inappropriate scale or materials or the construction of outhouses, boathouses, gazebos or sheds which introduce buildings into an open part of the landscape. This may also include the development of mooring or marina facilities (see also the Recreation Chapter). In particularly sensitive areas such as within the Green Belt or within Conservation Areas, the District Council will consider the use of Article 4 Directions of the Town And Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 which remove permitted development rights.

Landscaping and design standards for new development in the countryside

POLICY EN3: In those cases where new development is permitted in the countryside the Council will require that (a) the scale, design and layout of the scheme (b) the materials used within it, and (c) the landscaping works are all appropriate to the particular 'Landscape Character Area', and reinforce local distinctiveness wherever possible.

10.18 In the comparatively few instances where development is permitted on green field sites outside village frameworks, the Council will ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to protect and reinforce local distinctiveness and landscape character. Special attention will be paid to:

- (i) the scale of the development and its siting;
- (ii) the materials to be used which should be traditional to the area;
- (iii) the provision of landscaping schemes which will conserve existing features, enhance the landscape and integrate new development;
- (iv) traffic generation and access requirements;
- (v) avoiding a proliferation of masts through sharing of facilities whenever possible;
- (vi) the need to locate new agricultural buildings close to existing farm building groups, provided the new buildings do not adversely affect the setting of Listed Buildings.

The Council will also seek to ensure that these matters are given close attention in all those cases where proposals have to be notified to the local planning authority, even though planning permission is not required.

Historic Landscapes

POLICY EN4: The District Council will not grant planning permission for development which would adversely affect or lead to the loss of important areas and features of the historic landscape whether or not they are statutorily designated.

10.19 Today's landscape is the product of human activity in the natural landscape over many thousands of years. The legacy of past human activities is visible today in many ways. Areas of this historic landscape include parkland, waterways, trackways, hedges, field patterns, woodlands and wetlands. They may be individual sites or linear features (such as the Wandlebury Hill Fort, Car Dyke, Fleam Dyke and the Roman Road) or cover a much wider area (such as Wimpole Hall Park). In South Cambridgeshire, all such historic features are particularly important because of the intensive nature of farming in the area which reflects the high quality of agricultural land. Historic landscape areas and features add significantly to the quality of South Cambridgeshire's landscape and therefore it is essential that they are retained. PPG 15 brings the concept of the wider historic landscape in to focus as follows:

“In defining planning policies for the countryside authorities should take account of the landscape as a whole rather than concentrate on selected areas. Adequate understanding is an essential preliminary and authorities should assess the wider historic landscape at an early stage. Plans should protect its most important components and encourage development that is consistent with maintaining its overall historic character...”

10.20 Parkland, as a historic landscape, is relatively rare in South Cambridgeshire, so that where it does occur it makes a particularly valuable contribution. Those parks which are considered to be of national importance are identified on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Interest. This list is under review but currently includes:

- Bourn Hall
- Childerley Hall
- Croxton Park
- Gamlingay, the former Downing Estate
- Hatley Park
- Longstowe Hall
- Madingley Hall
- Pampisford Hall
- Sawston Hall
- Wilbraham Temple
- Wimpole Hall

There are other man-made landscapes of local value which contribute to the quality of the whole landscape and which, in some cases, form the setting of Listed Buildings. Any development proposals must ensure that there is no adverse impact on either the grounds themselves or the Listed Building whose setting they provide. (Examples include the grounds of Abington Pigotts Hall and Rectory, Babraham Hall, Barrington Hall, Bartlow Park, Conington Hall, Fulbourn Hospital, Fulbourn Manor, Great Abington Park, Girton College, Harston Manor, Hildersham Hall, Horseheath Hall, Histon Manor, Ickleton Caldrees Manor, Kingston Wood Farm, Kneesworth Hall, Little Shelford Manor, Melbourn Bury, Milton Hall, Newton Hall, Papworth Hall, Papworth St Agnes Lattenbury Hill, Quy Hall, Shepreth Tyrells Hall, Shudy Camps Park, Tadlow House and Vicarage, Weston Colville Hall and Westwick Hall).

10.21 Some historic landscape features may be protected by other policies or legislation, for instance because they are Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Ancient Monuments. However, because of the complexity of the historic landscape there are many “undesigned” sites and features which are worthy of retention on account of their contribution to the quality of the landscape and our heritage.

TREES, WOODLANDS AND HEDGEROWS

The Landscaping of New Development

POLICY EN5: The District Council will require trees, hedges and woodland and other natural features to be retained wherever possible in proposals for new development. Landscaping schemes will be required to accompany applications for development where it is appropriate to the character of the development, its landscape setting and the biodiversity of the locality. Conditions will be imposed on planning permissions to ensure the implementation of these schemes.

10.22 Landscaping is a crucial element in the integration of development into the countryside both in terms of working with existing features and providing new trees or hedges to ameliorate the effect of proposals. The District Council will expect all proposals to be accompanied by well-considered schemes of appropriate quality, and will check on site all landscaping required by conditions on planning permission to ensure that new development is assimilated into the landscape. The retention of existing trees, hedges and woodland and the planting of new are particularly important given the openness of the South Cambridgeshire landscape. Landscaping also has a nature conservation dimension which will be taken into account by encouraging the creation of habitats of value.

Tree Preservation Orders and Hedgerow Retention Notices.

POLICY EN6: The District Council will make orders and notices to protect trees and hedges where it considers that they contribute to local amenity or have visual or historical significance.

10.23 The District Council has powers to protect trees and hedges which are a significant part of the landscape or which are of intrinsic value. It will consider grant-aiding surgery work to trees of visual significance, particularly where they are protected by Tree Preservation Orders or prominently situated in Conservation Areas, in order to maintain and enhance their appearance and condition.

10.24 The District Council, in partnership with the County Council, will jointly fund tree and hedge planting. This partnership scheme is managed by the County Council in co-operation with the District Council to avoid duplication of work.

New Tree and Hedge Planting

POLICY EN7: The District Council will encourage the planting and subsequent management of trees and hedges of appropriate native species in partnership with the County Council; the District Council will also encourage planting by other agencies.

10.25 Trees and hedgerows add much to the quality and variety of the landscape. Cambridgeshire is the least wooded county in England, and has suffered considerable loss of trees and hedges through disease and the changes in farming practices. There is a need to maintain a wide range of trees of different ages to ensure that sufficient young trees can replace those which are lost through old age. The District Council will use its powers, through Tree Preservation Orders, to retain existing specimen trees and tree cover where trees are in danger of being lost.

10.26 English Nature has identified a number of Ancient Woodlands in South Cambridgeshire, which are the remnants of the extensive woodlands which covered much of the District until medieval times. These areas of semi-natural vegetation fulfil important functions for both wildlife and the landscape. Some are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, but in other cases the Council will need to consider appropriate controls and initiatives in conjunction with English Nature, in order to ensure continued maintenance and prevent further loss and decline.

10.27 Existing trees and hedges can provide an important element within new development areas by helping to add maturity and to screen its impact on adjoining areas. However, new building close to existing trees can cause damage to roots or change crucial water-table levels.

Housing development will therefore not be permitted in close proximity to trees which are to be retained.

10.28 As part of the Cambridgeshire Rural Strategy, the District Council adopted the "Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines" as Supplementary Planning Guidance in January 1992. This document provides valuable guidance for those who have the greatest influence on the landscape - farmers, developers and engineers, and public bodies, and will be a material consideration when determining planning applications.

NATURAL AREAS

POLICY EN8: The relevant Natural Areas of England are defined on the Proposals Map and Inset Maps. In all its planning decisions which touch on nature conservation and ecology the District Council will seek to ensure that the distinctive habitats, natural features and species characteristic of these Natural Areas are respected, retained and wherever possible enhanced. Whilst recognising that nature conservation is a dynamic concept, planning permission will be not granted for development which would have an adverse effect on the nature conservation and ecology of these areas.

10.29 In 1996, the Government published a map of England entitled 'The Character of England: landscape, wildlife and natural features'. Produced by English Nature and the Countryside Commission, it divides England into unique character areas based upon their landscape, wildlife and other natural features such as geology and soils. English Nature uses these areas as the framework for defining Natural Areas. This approach means that wildlife can be viewed in a more appropriate ecological context rather than within administrative boundaries. The Natural Area approach is to define what wildlife is characteristic of an area, regardless of whether it is common or rare, thus placing great emphasis on local distinctiveness. Its advantage is that it allows the rare and unusual to be conserved alongside the widespread and typical, which gives greater emphasis to the quality of the wildlife resource in the countryside as a whole.

10.30 Boundaries for these Natural Areas are included on the Proposals Map and Inset Maps and form the basis for policy EN8. This is a different approach from the 'Nature Conservation Zones' proposed in policy SP12/5 of the Structure Plan 1995, and is considered to provide a more comprehensive and holistic framework for nature conservation policies and activities.

NATURE CONSERVATION: IDENTIFIED SITES

POLICY EN9: In exercising its planning powers the Council will have regard to the following hierarchy of identified sites:-

- 1. Sites of International Importance**
- 2. Sites of Special Scientific Interest**
- 3. County Wildlife Sites**

Sites of International Importance (or proposed as such):

[There are no such sites or proposed sites in the District at present. If such sites were to be advised, any relevant planning applications would be judged according to the method set out in the blue boxes on pages 17 and 19 of PPG9 Annex C and illustrated in the flow diagram on page 18.]

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and County Wildlife Sites (CWS):

Development proposals within or near to SSSIs will be subjected to special scrutiny and particular account will be taken of any direct or indirect effects on the particular features giving rise to the designation.

In all its planning decisions affecting SSSIs and CWS the Council will safeguard (and wherever possible enhance) the intrinsic features of natural and/or geological interest having particular regard to:-

- the nature and quality of the features on the site, including their rarity value; and**
- the extent of any adverse impacts of proposals on the above features; and**
- the likely effectiveness of any proposed mitigation or compensation measures aimed at enhancing or recreating habitat features on or off the site.**

In negotiating development proposals the Council will, where appropriate, seek to secure the effective management of designated sites through the imposition of conditions or through planning obligations, as appropriate.

Public Access to Wildlife sites

POLICY EN10: The District Council will endeavour to ensure through the control of development and through its own actions that the public has access, including wherever possible, access for people with disabilities, to all sites of importance for wildlife except where such access would be detrimental to the wildlife interests or land-use of a specific area.

Proposals increasing nature conservation importance

POLICY EN11: The District Council will support proposals which would increase the number, size and diversity of sites of nature conservation importance.

10.31 PPG9 provides for tiered protection of designated sites of international, national and local importance.

10.32 Sites of International Importance are classified under EC Directives (Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) or listed under conventions (e.g. Ramsar sites). There are no such sites in South Cambridgeshire at present. However, if any such sites are proposed during the period of the Plan any development proposals affecting them will be subject to the most rigorous examination in accordance with the relevant EC Directives and PPG9.

10.33 Sites of National Importance (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) are designated by English Nature under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. In South Cambridgeshire the following sites have been designated and are shown on the Proposals Map and Inset Maps:

- Alder Carr (Hildersham)
- Balsham Wood (Balsham)
- Barrington Pit (Barrington)
- Barrington Chalk Pit
- Buff Wood (Hatley)
- Caldecote Meadows (Caldecote)
- Cam Washes (Waterbeach)
- Carlton Wood (Carlton)
- Dernford Fen (Sawston)
- Elsworth Wood (Elsworth)
- Eversden Wood (Great Eversden)
- Fleam Dyke (Fulbourn, Balsham)
- Wilbraham Fens (Little Wilbraham)
- Whittlesford-Thriplow Hummocky Fields (Whittlesford, Thriplow)
- Thriplow Meadows (Thriplow)
- Stow-cum-Quy Fen (Stow-cum-Quy)
- Sawston Hall Meadows (Sawston)
- Roman Road (Fulbourn, Wilbraham)

- Papworth Wood (Papworth Everard)
- Overhall Grove (Boxworth)
- Over and Lawn Woods (West Wickham)
- Orwell Clunch Pit (Orwell)
- Kingston Wood and Outliers (Kingston)
- Langley Wood (Castle Camps)
- L-Moor (Shepreth)
- Madingley Wood (Madingley)
- Histon Road (Impington)
- Holland Hall Railway Cutting (Melbourn)
- Hildersham Wood (Hildersham)
- Hayley Wood (Little Gransden)
- Hardwick Wood (Hardwick)
- Great Wilbraham Common (Great Wilbraham)
- Gog Magog Golf Course (Great Shelford/Stapleford)
- Gamlingay Wood (Gamlingay)
- Furze Hill (Hildersham)
- Fulbourn Fen (Fulbourn)
- Fowlmere Watercress Beds (Fowlmere)

Policy EN9 will apply equally to any other SSSIs designated during the Plan period.

10.34 Structure Plan 1995 Policy P12/3 states that development will not be permitted within an SSSI, nor will development be permitted if it is likely to affect adversely an SSSI, other than in exceptional cases of an overriding national or international need. English Nature will therefore be consulted on any planning application in or adjacent to an SSSI. For any wetland SSSI, such consultation may extend up to 2km from its boundary because development at some distance could have an adverse effect by a lowering of the water table.

10.35 Regionally Important Geological or Geomorphological sites (or RIGS) are sites that have important geological or geomorphological features but are not of sufficient quality to be designated as Geological SSSIs. There are none in South Cambridgeshire at present. Any that are designated during this Plan period will be protected by Policy EN9.

10.36 In addition to sites which have statutory designation, there are numerous other sites in South Cambridgeshire which have natural history value. These "County Wildlife Sites" have been identified by the Wildlife Trust and will be treated as material to the consideration of development proposals. With the exception of the River Corridors, these are marked on the Proposals Maps. The knowledge of such sites and their condition is always changing and sites may be added and removed from the list. These sites include important roadside verges which support indigenous species of wildlife and which need to be protected from road improvements or new access points for development which could cut across them. Management of such verges is also crucial to maintain the existing wildlife interest, and to encourage further colonisation.

10.37 Most verges are cut regularly, but in these cases the needs of nature conservation must be taken into account when determining when and how often a protected verge is cut. The wildlife interest will also need to be judged against the overriding needs of road safety. The County Wildlife site replaces the Natural History Interest References in the Settlement and Planning Constraints sections of the Village Insets. Reference should be made to South Cambridgeshire District – County Wildlife Sites 1998 for site specific information. Any new County Wildlife Sites designated during the Plan period will be subject to Policy EN9. When the Plan is reviewed they will be included in the Plan and shown on the Proposals Map as appropriate.

NATURE CONSERVATION: UNIDENTIFIED SITES

POLICY EN12: The Council will, wherever possible, seek to retain features and habitat types of nature conservation value where these occur on sites not specifically identified in the plan. Planning permission will only be permitted where the reasons for development clearly outweigh the need to retain the feature or habitat type and in such cases developers will be expected to provide appropriate mitigation measures.

Appropriate management of features and habitat types will be sought by the imposition of conditions, by the use of planning obligations, and by concluding management agreements with landowners and developers.

10.38 Potential development sites throughout the District can contain a wide variety of features and habitat types of nature conservation importance. It is important that every effort is made to retain, and wherever possible enhance, such natural features when development is proposed because small incremental losses can contribute to the slow erosion of the interest of local environments. On the other hand conservation of these sites will help to achieve countywide targets in the Biodiversity Action Plan.

10.39 Examples of the types of features and habitat types that the Council will regard as material considerations, and thus seek to conserve under policy EN12, are set out below. However, this list is not inclusive.

- Ancient woodlands and larger areas of semi-natural woodlands
- Plantations and small woodlands
- Copses, trees (especially veteran trees) and hedgerows
- Pollarded willows
- Semi-natural grasslands
- River corridors
- Marshes and ponds
- Disused gravel, chalk and clunch pits
- Networks or patterns of other locally important habitats

PROTECTED SPECIES

POLICY EN13: The District Council will not grant planning permission for development which could adversely affect, either directly or indirectly, the habitats of animal and plant species which are protected by law unless the need for the development clearly outweighs the importance of conserving that habitat and the advice of English Nature is to the effect that permission may be granted. Where development is permitted which may have an effect on these species, the District Council will impose conditions, where appropriate, and seek to use its powers to enter into planning agreements to:

- (1) facilitate the survival of individual members of the species;**
- (2) reduce disturbance to a minimum; and**
- (3) provide adequate alternative habitats to sustain at least the current levels of population.**

POLICY EN14: The District Council will encourage (and require where planning permission is required) developers to retain, enhance or provide roost sites for bats or barn owls in the conversion of farm buildings or the erection of new farm buildings over 3m high.

10.40 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended 1985) and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 require the District Council to take account of the need to protect certain wildlife species from the adverse impact of development. As well as badgers protected by their 1992 Act, the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act lists protected species in Schedule 1 (Birds), Schedule 5 (Animals) and Schedule 8 (Plants). Protected species are also listed in Annex 1 of the EU Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds and Annexes II and IV of the EU Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna.

10.41 Often these protected species will be found in sites afforded protection by other legislation such as SSSIs and LNRs, but they may also be found elsewhere. Where such species are known or suspected to exist, English Nature and/or the Local Wildlife Trust will be consulted to ensure that the needs of protected species are adequately taken into account in any proposed development. The District Council may therefore require an applicant seeking planning permission to undertake a survey to identify the type, location and extent of any protected species which might be affected by the proposal.

10.42 Certain animal species, particularly bats and barn owls, rely heavily on man-made structures such as farm buildings and barns for their habitats. Modern buildings, the demolition of old farm buildings and the use of toxic wood preservatives have all contributed to the decline of such habitats and their dependent species. Both barn owls and bats are species protected by law and their needs must be taken into account in development proposals, particularly the conversion of existing barns to other uses and in new agricultural buildings. In such cases it is relatively easy for the design to incorporate features which create appropriate habitats. This will be a condition on any development which requires planning permission. Some farm buildings do not require planning permission; in these cases

the District Council will encourage the inclusion of such features during the consultation on such proposals.

DEVELOPMENT AFFECTING ANCIENT MONUMENTS OR OTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

10.43 Archaeological remains form a finite and non-renewable heritage which is part of our national identity. They are valued for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and tourism. It is essential that sites of archaeological interest are not needlessly destroyed or damaged. The Government's policy guidance requires a presumption in favour of the retention of important remains in situ. The key requirement is that development should be resisted if it would adversely affect either archaeological deposits, or remains on or under a site or affect its character or setting. In some cases, where the benefits of development clearly outweigh the case for preservation in-situ, it may be acceptable to "preserve by record" by excavating the site and recording the archaeology. It must, however, be remembered that excavation destroys the site and the potential value of future investigation by, as yet, untried but more effective methods.

10.44 Scheduled monuments are identified and designated by central government. Works to such monuments must be authorised by the granting of scheduled monument consent by the Secretary of State. These sites have proven national importance, which is a strong consideration in deciding development proposals which directly or indirectly affect them. Scheduled Ancient Monuments are shown on the proposals maps.

POLICY EN15: The Council will protect, preserve and enhance known and suspected sites and features of archaeological importance, and their settings, by:

- (a) requiring, in all cases involving proposed works at sites of known or potential archaeological interest, that an appropriate level of assessment and/or evaluation is carried out by a suitably qualified person so that the archaeological implications of any proposed development can be established; and**
- (b) refusing planning permission for development which would result in damage to sites and features of national archaeological importance, and their settings, including the Scheduled Ancient Monuments identified on the Proposals Map.**

Where planning permission is granted for development on sites of archaeological interest, in-situ preservation of remains will be preferred. In all cases where this is not merited or is not feasible the Council will require that satisfactory provision is made for a programme of excavation and recording of remains by a suitable person or body prior to the commencement of any approved development.

10.45 The archaeological heritage is, to a considerable extent, a hidden heritage. There are many sites which are potentially of national importance. In addition, sites may be of regional or local importance, and thereby worthy of preservation in-situ or by record. PPG 16

establishes a system of ensuring that remains which are threatened by development are evaluated to inform any decisions and subsequently preserved in-situ or by record.

10.46 The County Council recognises the importance of the archaeological heritage and maintains a County Sites and Monuments Record and holds information on sites of archaeological interest. However, it must be noted that sites of archaeological interests are not shown on the Proposals Maps as identification of sites can never be entirely comprehensive, and will be added to over time, as new information and finds come forward. Developers should approach the Cambridgeshire County Council directly for information on sites to establish the likelihood of archaeological interest and the need for investigation and evaluation at the planning stage of proposals. The District Council supports the County Sites and Monuments Record and archaeological archive storage.

10.47 Where it is considered by the District Council, following consultation with the County Development Control Archaeological Officer, that there may be archaeological potential in a site, the developer will be required to commission an archaeological evaluation to define the character and condition of any archaeological remains. Such an evaluation will include information on the character and depth of the deposits, and the impact of development upon those remains together with any mitigation measures to avoid unnecessary damage to archaeological remains.

10.48 In the following villages, large residential allocations are close to known sites of archaeological interest: Balsham, Bassingbourn, Highfields Caldecote, Caxton, Cottenham, Fowlmere, Gamlingay, Girton, Longstanton, Melbourn, Oakington, Orwell, Over, Sawston, Swavesey and Willingham.

10.49 Where the balance of the value of the site, against the benefits for the development leads to the granting of planning permission, the District Council is required by PPG 16 to seek the preservation by record of important remains which would otherwise be destroyed. This means the undertaking of an archaeological excavation at the expense of the developer. Conditions will be imposed on planning permissions to require developers to commission appropriate excavation and recording work, and to ensure that the visible historic features within, or adjacent to, developments are protected from their development. Where a development would affect sites of particular interest, the District Council will require the developer to enter into a planning obligation to ensure that there is appropriate and satisfactory provision for investigation, excavation, recording and publication of any archaeological remains within the site. Archaeological sites are part of the public heritage and the District Council will encourage, and in appropriate cases require, developers to make arrangements for public access and research.

Public Access to Archaeological Sites and Records.

POLICY EN16: Where planning permission is granted for any development which affects any aspect of the archaeological heritage which is considered to be important in terms of the above policies, the District Council will encourage, and in appropriate cases require by condition or planning obligation, developers to make provision for the deposit of records arising from excavations, for public access and education on site and/or in the form of publications.

BUILDINGS OF ARCHITECTURAL, HISTORIC OR VISUAL INTEREST

General

10.50 South Cambridgeshire possesses a great variety of buildings which are of architectural and historic interest. It is the special and complex combinations of materials and styles with different landscapes which give the District its distinctive character. Unlike areas where there are only a few local materials the character of the District is less uniform and more fragile. The vernacular tradition includes a wide range of timber framed buildings, usually covered in lime plaster, dating from Medieval times to the 19th Century; each period is represented by its own particular building form, style and detailing. The use of brick is also widespread; the earliest and rarest examples dating from the 16th and 17th centuries, but 18th and 19th centuries are the great age of brick, particularly along the Fen Edge, where local gault brick buildings, roofed in natural slate, predominate.

10.51 Other building materials include clunch (a hard form of chalk which is quarried locally), clay lump and clay bat (mud blocks) and flint. In the area around Gamlingay, brown carstone appears in some buildings. The current difficulties in finding materials and craft skills to continue these traditions makes the preservation of the surviving examples extremely important.

10.52 Roofing materials include clay peg tiles and pantiles, typically with a colour mix of pink, red and especially buff. They cannot be satisfactorily replaced with modern cement tiles or uniform coloured clay equivalents, nor can natural slate be successfully replaced with modern asbestos materials. In recent years the production of new peg tiles has recommenced at Burwell, using local Cambridgeshire gault clay. This venture by the Cambridgeshire Tile and Brick Company, a registered charity, has received Council support and is now producing a wide range of local clay products for the use on both old and new buildings. The Council continues to support this project by grant-aiding the use of its hand-made clay peg tiles.

10.53 Thatched roofs in the area are traditionally of longstraw or water reed and the District Council will continue to promote these local materials through its powers to control alteration and its grants scheme. Details are also important and follow local traditions and the District Council will promote the use of local ridge, dormer and other details.

10.54 The Council aims to protect the District's heritage of vernacular buildings and to ensure that alterations and repairs are sympathetic and in keeping, and that wherever practical, traditional materials and techniques are employed.

Building Preservation Notices and Spot-Listing

POLICY EN17: The District Council will continue to research the buildings in its area and, where appropriate, serve building preservation notices under Section 3 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 or seek spot-listing to protect unlisted Buildings which are of architectural or historic interest.

10.55 The finest buildings are Listed Buildings. This means that they are of national importance and have been included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest by central government. The Department of the Environment revised the lists between 1984 and 1986 but not all buildings of listing quality have been identified. There are still discoveries of, for example, important timber frames hidden behind brick facades. Where such unlisted buildings of value are threatened by proposals for alteration or demolition, the District Council can serve a building preservation notice (which imposes

listing temporarily until the Secretary of State can assess it) or seek "spot-listing" by the Department of National Heritage.

The Demolition of Listed Buildings

POLICY EN18: There will be a presumption in favour of the preservation of Listed Buildings. Consent for demolition of Listed Buildings will not be granted other than in exceptional circumstances.

When assessing applications for demolition, the Council will consider:

- 1. The intrinsic interest of the building;**
- 2. The condition of the building;**
- 3. The efforts made to keep the building in use or find a new use, if necessary, by putting the building for sale on the open market.**

10.56 Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: "Planning and the Historic Environment" (PPG15) sets out the criteria which the District Council must apply when there are proposals for the total demolition of a Listed Building. A structural survey will be required in all cases because old buildings generally suffer from some defects, but the effects of these can easily be exaggerated. There is a strong presumption in favour of retaining Listed Buildings so that the demolition of a Listed Building should be the rare exception rather than the rule and only entertained after all options to retain the building have been thoroughly explored. Where demolition is approved as part of a beneficial development scheme, it is important that demolition does not take place in advance of the approval of and execution of that scheme.

Recording and Salvage Where Consent Granted

POLICY EN19: Where the demolition of a Listed Building is approved the District Council will ensure, in all cases, that a record of the building is made and deposited in a public place in accordance with an agreed scheme, and that important features and materials are salvaged and preserved on the site or in another appropriate location.

10.57 It is important to ensure that where demolition has been authorised, an approved record of the building is made and that important features and materials are salvaged. There is a legal requirement to notify the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of approved demolition and to allow access. That body has limited resources however, and conditions will be imposed to ensure that, if necessary, the developer submits an appropriate record consisting of photographs, drawings and written analysis in accordance with an agreed scheme. Conditions requiring the salvage of materials will also be imposed in appropriate cases.

The Alteration and Extension of Listed Buildings

10.58 Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (PPG15) gives detailed criteria for considering applications. It states that applicants for Listed Building consent must be able to justify the proposals:

"They will need to show why works which would affect the character of a Listed Building are desirable or necessary. They should provide the Local Planning Authority with full information, to enable them to assess the likely impact of their proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the building and on its setting."

Unsympathetic Extensions

POLICY EN20: The District Council will refuse planning permission, where it is required, for extensions to Listed Buildings which:

- (1) are not necessary to ensure the continuing use of the building;**
- (2) would dominate or detract from the Listed Building in scale, form, massing or appearance;**
- (3) would imply the loss of building fabric of architectural or historic interest;**
- (4) would damage archaeological remains of importance; or,**
- (5) would harm the well-being or setting of adjacent Listed Buildings.**

10.59 The repair, renovation and alteration of historic buildings must not destroy the evidence of a building's historical development by unnecessary change or over-restoration. Materials used should match those used elsewhere in the original building.

10.60 Defective members of a timber-framed building which cannot be repaired should always be replaced like for like in new timber of appropriate species, and the render which covers the frame should be replaced with a soft lime-rich mix. Cement render is invariably inappropriate and is likely to result in the deterioration of the frame. On no account should render be removed in order to expose framing which was never intended to be seen. Brick walls should not be rendered or painted. Internal plaster surfaces should be retained as should period features, which may seem to be of a minor nature, but collectively add to the historic interest of a building. An example is the boxing of axial beams which was fashionable in the nineteenth century.

10.61 The cleaning of Listed Buildings requires consent, and PPG 15 advises that sand or shot blasting may damage brickwork and may destroy the texture and appearance of timber frames. Applicants will be required to show that their proposals are necessary and technically sound. Replacement bricks and tiles should be reclaimed or should match the existing in texture quality and colour. Damp proofing and timber treatment may involve the removal of fabric or result in alterations which require listed building consent (see below).

10.62 Historic and decorative features of buildings, both internal and external, should always be retained. Doors and windows are particularly important and replacements, where necessary, should always be in keeping and respect the existing openings. The use of bottle glass, casements with top hung vents, trickle vents, pivot windows and UPVC replacements should be avoided in historic buildings. Old glass should be retained wherever possible.

Preservation by Salvage or Record

POLICY EN21: Where consent is granted for the alteration or extension of a Listed Building and the District Council considers that there is a reasonable case for preserving any fabric or features which will be removed by their salvage, or by the making of a record it will impose appropriate conditions or a planning obligation. In the case of preservation by record a scheme of recording will be required for approval and the record will be required to be placed in a public institution.

10.62 As in the case of demolition, considered above, the District Council considers it essential that proper records are made of historic fabric which will be removed in the execution of approved works and that important features and materials are salvaged. Appropriate conditions will be attached to consents to achieve these ends.

Conditions to Protect the Fabric and Character of Buildings

POLICY EN22: In granting consent to alter a Listed Building, the District Council will impose such conditions in respect of matters of detail, construction methods, the protection of the building and the timing of the works as may be necessary to protect the character of that building, especially insofar as the retention or reinstatement of traditional features or materials are concerned.

Roofs

10.63 It has been noted that the traditional roofs of the District are a crucial element in its distinctive character. It is therefore important that there are clear policies to preserve these materials and details.

POLICY EN23: The District Council will use its planning powers and grant schemes to preserve the character of the roofs of Listed Buildings which are made of traditional materials. In particular it will resist applications for consent which:

- (1) imply the loss of traditional longstraw roofs and their ridge, barge and dormer details,**
- (2) imply the loss of traditional gault clay pegtile and pantile roofs and their ridge, valley, verge and abutment details.**

Repairs and Buildings at Risk

POLICY EN24: The District Council will use its planning powers, grant schemes and advisory role to secure the sound repair of Listed Buildings. It will discourage the use of repair methods which lead to the unnecessary replacement of historic fabric and which use incompatible materials, and in such cases will require that Listed Building consent be obtained. Such applications will be considered in terms of the above policies for Listed Buildings.

POLICY EN25: The District Council will continue with its systematic approach to the problems of buildings in poor condition by keeping its register of buildings at risk up to date and by using that list as a focus for action under sections 47-50 and 54 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 and as a cornerstone of its grant policy.

10.64 Clearly, the survival of our heritage of buildings depends upon the use of safe and sound repair methods and the encouragement of owners to make repairs. In cases where Listed Buildings are being allowed to fall into serious disrepair, the Council is empowered to take action. It should be stressed that these measures are very much a last resort, since it is invariably preferable to reach an agreement to preserve a building or at least temporarily weatherproof it, rather than resort to litigation. However, on occasions the service of repairs notices as a precursor to compulsory purchase proves necessary and the District Council has funds set aside to enable it to do this and to acquire property if necessary. The Historic Buildings at Risk Register will be used to shape the working policies of the Council's Conservation Committee. It will be used to prioritise grant applications and to guide repairs notice action.

10.65 Some other specific issues are dealt with under the heading of Conservation Areas.

The Conversion of Listed Buildings to New Uses

POLICY EN26: In judging applications for planning permission to change the use of listed buildings the Council will consider whether or not:

- (1) the existing use can continue with reasonable utility or life expectancy;**
- (2) all other options for less damaging uses have been explored, including the outcome of any attempts at disposing of the building at a fair market price;**
- (3) the proposed use can take place without the necessity of extensive alterations or extensions which would be harmful to the fabric, character or setting of the building;**
- (4) the proposal would harm the setting and amenity of adjacent buildings.**

POLICY EN27: Applications for planning permission and Listed Building consent for the change of use of Listed Buildings will not be considered separately. In particular applications for planning permission will not be approved unless full details of the effects of the proposals on the fabric and character of the building and its setting are provided. In addition the District Council will have regard to the implications of the proposals in terms of traffic, access, services and the amenity of neighbouring properties.

10.66 Vacant, derelict buildings which are of architectural or historic interest represent a wasted asset. They often constitute eyesores. Positive conservation can revitalise such buildings, providing income for owners and remove unsightly dereliction from the countryside and village scene. The key to this is finding an acceptable alternative use.

10.67 Clearly the best use for a building is that for which it was originally designed and wherever possible, the original use should be encouraged to continue. However, this may not always be practical and in such situations, acceptable alternatives are required. Alternative uses must satisfy normal planning criteria and must not require so much alteration to the building so as to destroy its character and historic importance.

10.68 Redundant churches and chapels need to be carefully treated to ensure the retention of internal and external decorative features. Mill buildings pose particular difficulties where it is important to retain machinery in situ. Conversions of wind and watermills to dwellings can have disastrous results. Very small buildings such as dovecotes, granaries and forges should not be converted to other uses which require significant alterations.

10.69 Farm buildings may provide roosts for bats and owls. Where protected species may be at risk English Nature will be notified and the Local Wildlife Trust will also be consulted to advise on the importance of the wildlife interest, and means to protect the creatures. Bats in particular must not be disturbed. They are protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Timber treatment must not be undertaken using chemicals which are toxic. The Council will also require the provision of suitable nesting boxes or lofts for barn owls as appropriate and may impose conditions to that effect on any planning permission granted for conversion.

10.70 Changing patterns in farming and agricultural subsidies have meant that farmers have looked at alternative sources of income. This has coincided in South Cambridgeshire with an increased demand for residential property and a fashion for homes of character. Inevitably, the first alternative use examined for a vacant farm building is residential and this poses a number of problems, especially when the building forms part of a farm complex and is situated in an isolated position in the open countryside. Aisled, timber frame barns are difficult to light without constructing new openings or peppering the roof with skylights. The alterations required for such conversions would frequently have an unacceptable impact on the barn's appearance. Recreational or commercial uses might be more suitable, particularly where the need to obtain daylight inside the building is less important.

The Conversion of Unlisted Traditional Buildings

10.71 The preceding policies express the national and local concern for the fabric and character of Listed Buildings but there is another level of conservation interest which needs to be considered when proposals to convert unlisted buildings are evaluated. The building may be in a Conservation Area in which case its particular character and the effect of proposals on the area must be considered. The building may be of local historical and architectural interest and part of an area of landscape value which, again, give good cause for concern about the appearance of the building and its setting. It is therefore important that the effect of change of

use proposals on, what PPG 15 refers to as “the wider historic landscape”, should be taken into account.

Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building

POLICY EN28: Where it appears that proposals would affect the curtilage or wider setting of a Listed Building, the District Council will require the submission of sufficient illustrative and technical material to allow its impact to be clearly established. The District Council will resist and refuse applications which:

- (1) would dominate the Listed Building or its curtilage buildings in scale, form, massing or appearance;**
- (2) would damage the setting, well-being or attractiveness of a Listed Building;**
- (3) would harm the visual relationship between the building and its formal or natural landscape surroundings;**
- (4) would damage archaeological remains of importance unless some exceptional, overriding need can be demonstrated, in which case conditions may be applied to protect particular features or aspects of the building and its setting.**

10.72 All applications for Listed Building consent or for planning permission within the curtilage or setting of a Listed Building should include details to show the situation as existing and the precise effect on the fabric, character or setting of the Listed Building. Applications which fail to include the necessary information will not be accepted for consideration.

CONSERVATION AREAS

10.73 The District Council has a duty to survey its area from time to time to determine whether it should designate Conservation Areas (areas of special architectural or historic interest). Consideration must also be given from time to time to the formulation and publication of enhancement proposals for designated conservation areas. Once an area is designated, special attention must be paid in all planning decisions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the area’s character or appearance. Some 80 Conservation Areas have now been designated and some have been in existence for nearly 30 years. Central government is now encouraging local authorities to review existing designations to make sure that they are still valid and that they can provide a framework for sound conservation in the future.

Conservation Area Appraisals

POLICY EN29: The District Council will prepare detailed appraisals of its existing Conservation Areas over the period of the Plan and adopt them as formal planning guidance. These appraisals will review the appropriateness of the boundaries of each area, define their special character, decide whether permitted development rights should be curtailed, and evolve guidelines for new development and enhancement schemes.

Development in Conservation Areas

POLICY EN30: The District Council will require that applications for planning permission for development in Conservation Areas or affecting their setting, be accompanied by sufficient details to allow the impact of the proposals to be assessed. This must include drawings or other pictorial material which illustrates the proposed buildings in their context, and in most cases outline applications will not be acceptable. Proposals will be expected to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas especially in terms of their scale, massing, roof materials and wall materials. The District Council will refuse permission for schemes which do not specify traditional local materials and details and which do not fit comfortably into their context.

POLICY EN31: The District Council will expect to agree and approve a high standard of design, planting and materials for the hard and soft landscaping of the open public or private spaces connected with developments in Conservation Areas.

10.74 Within Conservation Areas, the District Council will aim to protect the character of the area by ensuring that new buildings, alterations or other development enhance it. Achievement of this aim depends to a large extent on providing a level of visual interest equivalent to that of existing buildings. Choice of materials and the detailed design of building features such as windows are vital elements in achieving new buildings appropriate to the small-scale context characteristics of South Cambridgeshire Villages. Appropriate boundary details will vary according to the particular character of the Conservation Area; care is required in the designing of both boundaries and accesses through them so as to minimise disruption to the traditional scene. In determining applications, particular attention will be given to ensuring that:

- (a) traditional building lines and enclosure of the street scene are maintained;
- (b) the existing balance of buildings and plot size is maintained;

- (c) natural materials are used which are compatible with the local building traditions (synthetic materials will only be considered favourably if and when they can match the qualities of the original material in colour, finish, detailing and weathering);
- (d) the form, design and detailing of building(s) are well-related to the surroundings;
- (e) that other development, including street furniture, paving, lighting and advertisement displays are in keeping, and that where practicable, electricity, telephone and other cable systems are placed underground or are suitably concealed;
- (f) that existing natural features including trees and hedges are retained, whilst schemes for landscaping and tree and shrub planting will be required;
- (g) that open spaces which contribute to the character of Conservation Areas are protected.

10.75 When considering the impact of proposed development on a Conservation Area, all views of the proposed buildings and not just the public view will be taken into account.

10.76 Applications for development in Conservation Areas will be expected to show precisely how the proposals relate to their context including surrounding buildings. PPG15 states that every new building is designed not as a separate entity, but as part of a larger whole, which has a well-established character of its own. In some cases, sketch details and a schedule of materials accompanying an outline application may be adequate.

Buildings of Merit in Conservation Areas and Controls over Permitted Development and Demolition

POLICY EN32: Consent for demolition of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area will not be granted unless;

- (1) It can be demonstrated that the condition of the building makes it impracticable to repair, renovate or adapt to any reasonable beneficial use for which planning permission would be granted; and**
- (2) There is clear and convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use of the building, or to find a viable and acceptable new use or uses;**

In the case of buildings which make little or no contribution to the character or appearance of their conservation area, demolition will not be permitted unless redevelopment of the site or the creation of an open space would make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area concerned.

Demolition in Conservation Areas

POLICY EN33: Where, in exceptional circumstances, conservation area consent is granted for the demolition of a building, the District Council will, in appropriate cases, impose conditions requiring the salvage of features and materials of interest and the making of a pictorial record to be deposited in a public institution.

10.77 Conservation Area designation extends the Council's powers to the demolition of unlisted buildings. The *Shimizu* judgement in 1997 means that consent is now only required for substantial demolition rather than partial demolition. This throws added emphasis on the need to consider the control of the loss of important details such as chimneys, roof materials and sash windows by suspending permitted development rights.

10.78 Many modest buildings, even if not listed, for example boundary walls, make a significant contribution to the special character of a Conservation Area. Where demolition is unavoidable because the structure is beyond repair the District Council will require to be satisfied beforehand that its replacement is appropriate to the character of the area and that it is recorded in the form of photographs or drawings.

Character, Materials, Features and Building Detail

POLICY EN34: The District Council will seek to retain the character, materials, features and details of unlisted buildings or structures which contribute to the character of a Conservation Area.

Restrictions on Permitted Development

POLICY EN35: Within Conservation Areas, the District Council may, as appropriate, seek to restrict permitted development rights in order to safeguard elements of the character of the area which might otherwise be lost.

10.79 The design, materials and detailing of many unlisted buildings make a vital contribution to the character of Conservation Areas. The character is vulnerable to change through "*permitted development*" alterations, the most widespread of which have been the replacement of windows and doors.

10.80 The sash windows and front doors of Victorian and Edwardian buildings have been particularly affected; unfortunately, most modern replacements have not matched the proportions, detailing or genuine character of the originals. Such changes have been particularly harmful to the unlisted brick houses characteristic of the fen edge villages.

10.81 Other "*permitted development*" works which can have a significant and sometimes adverse effect on the character of a Conservation Area include the erection of walls and fences, and minor extensions to houses and garages.

10.82 In all such works the choices made by an owner will affect the wider Conservation Area context as well as the individual building. An unsympathetic choice can be very damaging; an appropriate solution can usually be found through sensitive design.

10.83 Powers exist under Article 4 of the General Permitted (??) Development Order for the District Council to remove permitted development rights and thus require planning permission for certain minor works as appropriate. The District Council will keep under review its powers to do this where necessary in order to protect Conservation Areas.

External Cladding

POLICY EN36: The District Council will refuse all applications for external cladding which would detract from the character of Conservation Areas.

10.84 Planning permission is now required for external cladding in stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles of any part of a dwelling in a Conservation Area. None of these external claddings is appropriate to the traditional character of houses within South Cambridgeshire's Conservation Areas.

Meter Boxes

POLICY EN37: The District Council will expect the co-operation of statutory undertakers in ensuring that meter boxes and other like installations are designed and sited so as to cause minimum damage to the character of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. Consent will be refused if proposals are incompatible with the character or setting of a Listed Building.

10.85 External gas and electricity meter boxes do not have to be prominently visible provided that their position is known to the reader. Their design is not well suited to the character of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas; consent is required for such boxes if they are attached to a Listed Building.

Shopfronts and Signs

POLICY EN38: The District Council will resist proposals which imply the loss of traditional shopfronts and their details.

10.86 A number of larger village Conservation Areas have traditional shopfronts with moulded and decorative details which add much to their surroundings. These must be considered to be under threat as the demand for large pane windows increases. Standard

designs for shopfronts and advertisements often involve large areas of glass and bland fascias which are unsuited to the small-scale character of Conservation Areas. In all cases, an individual design should be worked out to suit the specific site; existing buildings sometimes offer opportunities for imaginative signs. The council may be able to offer grant aid in certain cases to improve the appearance of shop fronts.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements in Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings

POLICY EN39: The Council will apply exacting standards of control over the display of advertisements in Conservation Areas or on Listed Buildings. Particular care will be exercised over applications for the following categories of advertisement which will often be inappropriate:

- (1) internally illuminated or other projecting fascia signs,**
- (2) externally illuminated signs where the means of illumination would be obtrusive;**
- (3) the application of lettering, lighting, symbols, materials and colour schemes which would harm the character and appearance of a conservation area including fascia displays, window stickers and pavement signs and signs advertising particular products;**
- (4) blinds or window/door canopies bearing lettering or symbols or which would in any other way harm the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.**

In the case of Listed Buildings, special care will need to be taken to ensure that proposals do not detract from the integrity of the building's design, its historical character or its structure, and do not harm or compromise its setting.

10.87 Advertisements can greatly influence the appearance of an area. Extensive or inappropriate signs can ruin the appearance of a building and its surroundings. A balance has to be made between the commercial needs of businesses and the protection of the environment. The most stringent controls will be appropriate to maintain the character of Conservation Areas, and often these cover original village centres where most commercial activity is located. The District Council will also be concerned about the impact of inappropriate advertisements on Listed Buildings.

Advertisements outside Conservation Areas

POLICY EN40: Outside Conservation Areas, advertisements will be restricted to the number, size, format, materials and design appropriate to the building to which they will be attached and the locality in which they will be displayed in order that they should not detract from the character and appearance of their surroundings. Advertisements alongside roads will not be permitted where they would prejudice the safety of road users.

10.88 Further restrictions on the classes, dimensions and location of advertisements also apply in the Area of Special Control of Advertisements which have been adopted by this Council. This Area covers most of the District and is defined in Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 as being areas which appear to the Secretary of State to require special protection on the grounds of amenity. In South Cambridgeshire the Area of Special Control relates to the whole District as a rural area, excluding parts (usually the commercial centre) of Cottenham, Fulbourn, Gamlingay, Great Shelford, Histon and Impington, Linton, Milton, Sawston, Swavesey, Whittlesford Bridge and Willingham. Further information, relating to the boundaries and nature of restrictions, can be sought by contacting the appropriate Planning Officer at the District Council.

Co-ordination of Consents with Commencement

POLICY EN41: Where redevelopment in a Conservation Area involves the demolition of existing buildings, or the removal of protected trees or hedges, the District Council will not grant consent for demolition or felling without the previous or simultaneous grant of planning permission for the proposals. Consent will be subject to conditions to ensure that demolition or felling do not take place in advance of the signing of a building contract for the redevelopment.

10.89 The character of a Conservation Area can be spoiled for a long period where the removal of buildings or trees takes place too far in advance of approved development.

ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES

POLICY EN42: The District Council will promote the enhancement of Conservation Areas by co-ordinating and giving advice to the public and by encouraging grant schemes in conjunction with other public and private bodies.

10.90 General improvements can enhance the quality of Conservation Areas and, by making the area more pleasing, also attract further investment by encouraging building owners to improve and maintain their properties. There is also scope for remedying past unsympathetic alterations and reinstating appropriate details. Schemes may come forward

from town or village amenity societies, Parish Councils and other groups. The District Council will offer advice and encouragement on such schemes.

10.91 The Council will also make provision for grant schemes to encourage the enhancement of its Conservation Areas.

STREET FURNITURE, NEW EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

POLICY EN43: The District Council will expect the statutory undertakers and utilities to consult when working in Conservation Areas and to exercise their permitted development rights only after taking expert advice on the impact of their proposals. In all cases the District Council will seek to agree works which are of appropriate visual quality and which preserve existing features of importance such as boundary walls, trees, hedges, paving and street furniture.

10.92 New equipment and the bland forms and surfaces of new materials and design inevitably contrast with the weathered texture of the Conservation Area scene. Their disruptive impact can be reduced by design and siting to suit the setting. Equipment which does not have to be conspicuous should be concealed wherever possible.

10.93 The District Council will seek to retain existing street furniture and paving materials where these contribute to the character of Conservation Areas or the setting of Listed Buildings. The design and siting of new street furniture or materials in such locations should respect the character of their setting. The provision of traffic calming measures in Conservation Areas will also be required to respect the special qualities of the environment.

TELEPHONE KIOSKS

10.94 The new generation of telephone kiosks is not well suited in appearance to locations in Conservation Areas or adjoining Listed Buildings. The District Council will seek retention by agreement of red K6 kiosks additional to those included in the Statutory List; in the event of damage to such kiosks, it will seek their replacement with others of the same design. Where kiosks of new design are installed, the co-operation of British Telecom will be sought in finding the least visually damaging locations.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CONSERVATION OF ENERGY

10.95 In addition to ensuring the efficient use and conservation of energy resources, the District Council wishes to encourage the use of energy from renewable sources of energy. Renewable energy sources from sun, wind, water or burning waste products offer the opportunity of increasing the diversity of energy supplies and reducing harmful emissions to the environment from burning of fossil fuels. Indeed, the government target is to produce 10% of electricity generating capacity nationally from renewable energy by 2010. The Eastern Region Renewable Energy Study indicates that wind speeds in South Cambridgeshire are not sufficient for large scale wind farms, although individual turbines for private use may be viable. However, it also indicates that East Anglia may be an appropriate location for bio-mass (straw burning), solar power and photo-voltaics. The impact of these need to be considered against the other policies in the Local Plan including Green Belt and Landscape Character Area policies.

10.96 Structure Plan Policy SP9/3 draws attention to the contribution which the design, siting and orientation of buildings can make to energy conservation. The District Council will therefore encourage applicants to take account of these factors when drawing up detailed schemes for development. Attention is also drawn to Policy HG22 which emphasises the importance of these factors in housing developments. The District Council will require a statement from the applicant on energy conservation and the use of renewable energy resources when considering major applications for development.

POLICY EN44: The District Council will support and encourage proposals for the use of renewable energy resources, water efficiency and for developments using energy efficient and energy conservation technologies subject to other policies in the Plan.

THE WATER ENVIRONMENT

POLICY EN45: There is a general presumption against development which will have an adverse environmental impact on the water environment, nature conservation, fisheries and water-related recreation.

10.97 The interests of the landscape and wildlife are dependent upon both the quality and quantity of water in the environment. The water environment is therefore important and should be protected from pollution and unacceptable levels of abstraction.

10.98 The nature, scale, location and timing of development will make demands on the water environment. The protection of water resources from the potentially harmful effects of development is an important part of ensuring a sustainable environment. Policies CS2 and CS3 of the Community Services and Infrastructure Chapter are important policies to secure this objective.

AIR QUALITY

10.99 Recently there has been increasing concern about air quality. The Government is also committed to reducing air-borne pollution and emissions as part of its international obligations reflecting the concerns about global warming as well as more localised pollution. The Environmental Standards Chapter sets out these issues in paragraphs 11.15 - 11.17 and Policy ES4.