

Static Caravan and Chalet Development

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND POLICY CONTEXT

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Note is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs), amplifying the development plan policies and other issues in a clear and concise format with the aim of improving the design and quality of new development. The Notes are intended to offer broad guidance which will assist members of the public and officers in discussions prior to the submission of planning applications and assist officers in handling and members in determining planning applications.

2 STATUS AND STAGES IN PREPARATION

- 2.1 The Council's SPG Notes are not part of the adopted plan. However, they have been the subject of both a formal Council resolution and public consultation. The Welsh Assembly Government (The Assembly) has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent Local Planning Authority (LPAs) approval, SPG can be treated as a material planning consideration when LPAs, Planning Inspectors and the Assembly determine planning applications and appeals. This Note was approved by Full Council on 18th March 2003 for use in development control. A statement of the consultation undertaken, the representations received and the Council's response to these representations is available on request.

3 BACKGROUND TO ISSUES

- 3.1 Denbighshire County Council recognise the contribution that static caravans and chalets have upon the County's local economy. The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) aims to provide opportunities for sensitive and unobtrusive development of such sites. The protection of the quality of the environment will be a primary consideration and proposals will be subject to a stringent environmental assessment. The impact of any proposal upon the overall character of a community, both through socio-economic and/or linguistic impact, will also be carefully assessed.
- 3.2 This document is divided into two main sections:
- (1) Outline of the policy and guidance on interpreting the policy and its criteria;
 - (2) Detailed advice on siting, design, layout etc. intended for proposals which, in principle, have satisfied the policy criteria.

4 NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

- 4.1 This SPG supplements policy TSM9 'Static Caravan and Chalet Development' of the adopted Denbighshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP).
- 4.2 National planning guidance relating to static caravan and chalet development is contained in Planning Policy Wales (2002) and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 13: Tourism.

SECTION 2 - INTERPRETATION OF POLICY

5 TOURISM PROPOSALS IN DENBIGHSHIRE

- 5.1 The important contribution that tourism makes to the local economy of Denbighshire is recognised in the UDP. The **UDP Part I** Strategic Policy for tourism is **STRAT 9** which applies a specific spatial strategy to tourism development, as follows:

STRAT 9 Tourism

“Tourism development proposals in the form of:

- (i) tourism projects in the coastal resorts of Rhyl and Prestatyn or as part of Major Mixed Development Areas or allocated sites at Rhuddlan and Corwen;
- (ii) small scale built or natural environment based tourism projects in the countryside and rural settlements;

Will be permitted where they provide appropriate infrastructure, accommodation and attractions and which consolidate and diversify the tourism industry without unacceptably affecting the social, highway, amenity, heritage or environmental interests.”



6 SPATIAL STRATEGY

6.1 Policy STRAT 9 (above), the UDP’s General Development Strategy and the Council’s wider economic/tourism strategy, will form the basis of the **spatial strategy** that the LPA will apply in determining applications for static caravans/chalet development. This **spatial strategy** is set out in paragraph 12.16 of the UDP’s Tourism chapter, and is based upon the **scale of the development**. In determining applications for caravan or chalet development, the County Council will aim to:

- Concentrate **major development proposals** whether new build, redevelopment or conversion, **within main settlements**; and then
- Proportionately **reduce** the size, scale and impact of proposals for **smaller settlements**;
- To ensure that in the **countryside** only **smaller scale proposals** based on capacity considerations are appropriate.



7 UDP POLICY TSM9: STATIC CARAVAN AND CHALET DEVELOPMENT

7.1 In addition to the strategic tourism policy set out in paras. 5-6 above, specific advice on new static caravan and chalet sites is found in policy TSM9, which is set out below.

Static Caravan & Chalet Development

Policy TSM 9

NEW STATIC CARAVAN AND/OR CHALET SITES WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:

- (i) THE SITE HAS GOOD ACCESSIBILITY TO AN ADEQUATE LOCAL HIGHWAY NETWORK AND IS ACCESSIBLE BY A CHOICE OF MEANS OF TRANSPORT;
- (i) THE SITE CAN BE UNOBTRUSIVELY SITED AND FULLY ASSIMILATED INTO THE LANDSCAPE;
- (ii) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT UNACCEPTABLY HARM THE AONB, AOB, HISTORIC LANDSCAPES/GARDENS, CONSERVATION AREAS, UNDEVELOPED COAST, GOOD AGRICULTURAL LAND, AREAS OF LOCAL LANDSCAPE VALUE, SSSI’S OR LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES, INCLUDING THOSE IDENTIFIED AND SHOWN ON PROPOSALS MAPS.

Whilst a popular and thriving form of tourist holiday accommodation, the County is already well served, if not over provided on the coast by such uses, many of which present a conspicuous and unsightly appearance. It is highly unlikely that even in the inland areas a case could be justified for new sites. Large static caravan and chalet parks are difficult to site and extend over large areas often dominating and degrading the landscape.

A ‘Caravan’ is defined by the Caravan Sites Act 1968 as “any structure designed and adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer) and any motor vehicle so designed, but does not include (a) any railway rolling stock which is for the time being on rails forming part of a railway system, or (b) any tent.”

- 7.2 The main considerations of policy TSM9 are transportation; landscape and the environment. Each of these are considered in turn below.

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8 TRANSPORTATION

- 8.1 A new static caravan or chalet site will have an impact upon the local road network. The **UDP's Part I** strategic policy on transport is set out in policy **STRAT I** and applicants should have regard to this:
- “Development should seek to be sustainable, making the best use of resources by being located so as to minimise the need for travel by private car and utilise existing infrastructure, facilities and services.”
- 8.2 More detailed **UDP Part II** transportation policies to which applicants for caravan and chalet developments must have regard include:
- **Policy TRA6** ‘Impact of New Development on Traffic Flows’
 - **Policy TRA8** ‘Transport Requirements in Major Developments’
- 8.3 The bullet points below provide an overview of the transportation considerations which must be considered as part of any application for planning permission:
- New caravan and chalet sites must have a **good transportation infrastructure** and must not affect the safe and free flow of traffic;
 - Sites must ideally have **direct access** to an A or B classified road. This would avoid placing unreasonable pressure on minor country roads;
 - The site must ideally be served by **footpaths** and **cycleways**. Where this is not possible, the Local Planning Authority must be satisfied that pedestrians and cyclists can enter and leave the site **safely**;
 - The site must also be within reasonable walking distance to a **public transport** (i.e. bus or train) service which serves local centres. Where this is not possible, the applicant may wish to explore the option of contributing towards subsidising a public transport service to the site;
 - Where necessary the LPA may require the developer to submit a **Transportation Assessment**.

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9 LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The impact of a caravan or chalet site upon the landscape will be a significant factor to which special attention will be given in the determination of a planning applications. The **UDP's Part I strategic** policy on landscape issues is **STRAT 7 Environment**:
- “The Special Character of Denbighshire, its built heritage, countryside, coastline and environment will be safeguarded by:*
-protecting and enhancing the nature conservation, biodiversity and landscape quality of the County including the aquatic environment both in rural and urban areas;*
-taking account of physical or natural environmental considerations.”*
- 9.2 Static caravan or chalet park development must be **unobtrusive** and **fully assimilated** into the landscape. More detailed guidance relating to **layout and landscaping** is found in Section 3. Developers should have regard to the checklist below, which deals with landscape and environmental considerations:
- The **scale** of a development must respect its surrounding environment;
 - In view of their environmental impact, larger developments will generally only be permitted **within** or **adjacent** to settlements (refer also to ‘Spatial Strategy’ in para. 6);
 - Proposals in more rural locations must be relatively **small scale** and **sensitively** developed;
 - Proposals should be sited in unobtrusive locations, and should **avoid** skylines, prominent hillsides or exposed sites.

- Proposals in Open Countryside locations should normally be set against a **backdrop** of semi-mature / mature trees or within woodland settings. Sites which require extensive screening through new planting will **not** be appropriate.
- Proposals should **respect the topography** of the site and existing site levels should be retained wherever possible.
- All planning applications must be accompanied by a comprehensive **landscape scheme** (refer to Section 3 for further details);
- Close scrutiny should be given to **environmental designations** throughout the County and regard should be given to the following UDP policies where relevant:
 - ENV2 Development Affecting the AONB/AOB;
 - ENV3 Local Landscape Areas;
 - ENV4 International / National Sites of Nature Conservation Value;
 - ENV5 Sites of Local Conservation Importance.
 - ENV11 Safeguarding of High Quality Agricultural Land;
 - CON5 Development Within Conservation Areas;
 - CON6 Development Adjacent to Conservation Areas;

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10 OTHER STRATEGIC POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

10.1 Further important considerations in determining applications for caravan and chalet development will be as follows:

(a) The utilisation of previously developed land and any loss of greenfield land:

- Static caravan and chalet developments often cover a large area of land, encroaching both greenfield land and land of high agricultural or ecological value;
- Previously developed land should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites, particularly those of high agricultural or ecological value;

[Planning Policy Wales (2002), Para 2.7; Denbighshire UDP Strategic Objective - Environment; and STRATI General]

(b) To maintain, protect and enhance as far as possible through land use planning the character of communities

- Static Caravan and Chalet Parks, particularly larger ones, may have an adverse effect upon the character of a local community. The impact upon communities will be assessed in terms of:
 - Welsh language and culture;
 - Socio-economic structure of the area and impact upon local services;

[UDP: Strategic Objective - Social]

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SECTION 3: - DETAILED DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

11 TOPOGRAPHY

- The layout of static caravans and chalets should respect the existing topography of the site. The natural contours of the landscape should be used where possible to reduce the visual impact of a proposal.
- In certain circumstances minor changes in level will be necessary in parts of a proposed site. Where this is the case, the preference will be for cutting into slopes rather than creating platforms for building.

12 DENSITY

- Chalet and Static Caravan development, sited away from existing buildings should be low density, with sufficient separation between units, particularly between chalet units.
- This should be fitting with the rural nature of the surroundings, ensuring the character of the area remains open and rural.
- Low density development will also provide a good standard of amenity and privacy to occupants.

13 LAYOUT OF UNITS

- Suburban type layouts will not be acceptable in Open Countryside locations. Within Open Countryside locations the site layout should be open plan, with no formally defined curtilage for each chalet or static caravan.
- Instead of formal curtilages for each individual unit, a high quality and integrated landscaping scheme for the entire site shall be encouraged.
- As part of the overall landscaping and layout of large sites, the site should be broken up into smaller clusters of no more than 10 units in each cluster.

14 ROADS AND PARKING

- The access road and internal road layout should reflect the character of the area. Formal hard surfacing with raised concrete kerbs can look out of place in a rural setting.
- In many cases, a less formal solution may be more appropriate and will be encouraged by the LPA.
- This may include an internal road utilising gravel / wood chippings and no raised concrete kerbs.
- The overall layout of a site should include informal open areas, which would provide space for informal recreation.
- Car parking should be to the side or the rear of individual units and away from the main elevation.
- Large centralised parking areas should be avoided.

15 ON SITE BUILDINGS

- In open countryside, on site buildings such manager’s accommodation, laundrettes etc should utilise existing buildings;
- Where this is not possible, buildings will only be permitted on the site where they are necessary for the effective operation of the site. Their visual impact should be kept to a minimum through careful siting and design.

16 LANDSCAPING

- The Local Planning Authority will place great emphasis on achieving high quality hard and soft landscaping, which will help to integrate the development into its setting.
- Developers will be expected to submit a scheme of landscaping as part of the application. The landscaping should be submitted as an integrated scheme for the entire site.
- Soft landscaping should focus on native species, and take into account the cover to be provided throughout the seasons, as well as the species and cover adjacent to the site. The use of fast growing conifers will not be acceptable.

- In assessing screening of any proposed sites, it will be necessary to consider whether the operator of the proposed site will have control over the woodland which provides the screening, in order to avoid a situation where a site might later be exposed to view due to felling operations by the adjoining landowner.
- The overall layout of large sites should be broken up into smaller clusters of no more than 10 units in each cluster.
- Hard surfacing should be kept to an absolute minimum and should generally be limited to access roads, footpaths and car parking.
- Lighting should generally be kept to a minimum and where required should be designed so as to minimise light pollution by utilising low level, low intensity illumination.

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17 OCCUPANCY RESTRICTIONS

Conditions will be imposed to restrict occupancy for holiday purposes only. This is primarily to ensure that chalets and static caravans are not used as residential accommodation.



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