

13. TOURISM TOPIC AREA POLICIES

TM1 GENERAL POLICY FOR TOURISM

Proposals for new tourist accommodation will be expected to be located in, or adjacent to, existing towns and villages. Proposals for tourist development within the countryside that improves or extends the range of tourist facilities, including tourist accommodation will be permitted, provided that:

- i) It would result in the conversion of a suitable rural building; or**
- ii) Forms part of a farm diversification scheme; or**
- iii) Is an extension to existing facilities, of a scale appropriate to its location.**

Proposals for touring sites for caravans and/or tents will only be permitted where there is a proven need for this type of development.

13.1 The tourism industry is important to the economic success of the District, safeguarding existing and generating new jobs and contributing towards a living countryside. The development of tourism must, however, be sensitive to the environment in which it lies and not reduce the attractiveness of the countryside or negatively affect the amenity of local residents.

13.2 The definition of tourism for the purposes of this Plan is that used by the Tourism Society:

"The temporary short term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work and the activities during their stay at these destinations."

Development proposals that do not accord with this definition of tourism will not be regarded as tourism developments.

TM2 WILTS AND BERKS / THAMES AND SEVERN CANALS

Restoration of the Wilts and Berks, including the North Wilts Branch, and Thames and Severn Canals along the routes as defined on the proposals map, will be supported in principle by protecting the alignment by:

- i) Not permitting development likely to destroy the canal alignment or its associated structures;**
- ii) Seeking an alternative alignment where development that cannot be provided elsewhere threatens the canal or its associated structures;**
- iii) Ensuring that where the canal is affected by development, the alignment is protected or an alternative alignment is provided and the canal is restored as part of that development process.**

13.3 Any proposal affecting the original route of either the Wilts and Berks or Thames and Severn canals will need to be given careful consideration to allow for the preservation of the canal as an amenity and recreational feature. The canal network within the District has the potential to achieve greater accessibility to the countryside from the District's residents and visitors. The use of disused towpaths along stretches of disused and restored canal will be encouraged.

TM3 SWINDON AND CRICKLADE RAILWAY LINE

It is proposed to restore, for leisure purposes, the route of the former railway line from Tadpole Lane, Swindon to Cricklade, subject to not causing demonstrable harm to any areas of nature conservation interest along its route.

13.4 The route of the former Swindon and Cricklade railway line from the south of Cricklade extends into Swindon Borough to link with Mouldon Hill Country Park. In the long-term, there is the possibility of considering extending any restored railway line route around the north side of Mouldon Hill, within Swindon Borough, and across the River Ray to Moredon Bridge, within North Wiltshire.

TM4 THE THAMES PATH NATIONAL TRAIL

In connection with the establishment and enhancement of the proposed Thames long distance path, development will not be permitted where proposals are likely to result in a significant adverse effect on the amenities and open landscape along the river and footpath route.

13.5 The Secretary of State for the Environment approved, in September 1989, the proposals of the Countryside Commission for a Thames long distance footpath, submitted under Section 51 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The route mainly follows existing rights of way, but in certain areas, new rights of way will need to be created to complete the route. The riverbanks and adjoining open areas are important in creating a green living corridor of nature conservation and landscape value. Such measures as tree planting and water habitats, involving the creation of bays and backwaters in certain suitable locations to create still water areas for plants and nesting will be encouraged.

