

POLICY RC7

PLANNING PERMISSION FOR NEW GOLF COURSES AND ADDITIONS TO EXISTING COURSES WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL IS NOT SITUATED WITHIN THE SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS AND:

- A THE PROPOSAL IS LOCATED AND DESIGNED TO ENSURE HARMONY AND COMPATIBILITY WITH THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE INCLUDING ANY HISTORIC FEATURES AS MAY EXIST.**
- B THE PROPOSAL TAKES ACCOUNT OF EXISTING WILDLIFE HABITATS AND POSITIVELY CONTRIBUTES TO WILDLIFE CONSERVATION.**
- C THE PROPOSAL MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT THROUGH LANDSCAPING.**
- D THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT INVOLVE ADDITIONAL BUILT FACILITIES NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE GOLF COURSE.**
- E THE LOCAL ROAD NETWORK IS ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE THE PROJECTED TRAFFIC FLOWS WITHOUT RECOURSE TO EXTENSIVE ROADWORKS.**
- F THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT RESULT IN THE IRREVERSIBLE LOSS OF THE BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND**

- 9.23 The District Council are keen to encourage the development of sporting facilities within the District but these must not detract from the amenities of the countryside. Golf courses need not be intrusive in the open countryside provided that they are designed to blend in with the surrounding area and utilise extensive landscaping, they are particularly suitable for "urban fringe" locations on the edges of major towns. They can benefit some wildlife if existing habitats are protected and new ones created but many creatures and plants are bound to be disturbed by the introduction of large numbers of people and the different environment that is created.
- 9.24 The artificial landscape which is the result of mown fairways, planting, elevated tees, greens, bunkers etc which do not relate to existing field patterns, does not complement the natural qualities of the Special Landscape Areas and permission will not normally be granted in these areas.
- 9.25 Where proposals affect the best and most versatile agricultural land the applicant will be required to submit the details of the construction of the course to demonstrate that the loss is not irreversible. Provision should be made for the maintenance or re-routing of any affected rights of way.

- 9.26 The District Council recognises that there is a continued demand for golf courses but notes that the existing and committed provision in the District is way above the Sports Council's and the Royal and Ancient Golf Club's requirements for its own population and is therefore providing facilities for a wide catchment area. The District Council therefore wish to control the development of further courses and extensions to courses to ensure that they are needed and are directed towards resilient locations.
- 9.27 The policies in this Local Plan seek to concentrate built development to the urban areas and to prevent development in the rural areas. In line with the advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note No 17, Sport and Recreation, applications for significant associated developments such as hotels will be judged on their own merits against the relevant policies in this Local Plan. (Policy TM2)
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