

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Caravans, Chalets & Camping



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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 SPGs are not part of the adopted development plan. The Welsh Government has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent Local Planning Authority (LPA) approval, SPG can be treated as a material planning consideration when LPAs, Planning Inspectors and the Welsh Government determine planning applications and appeals. This SPG document was formally adopted by Denbighshire County Council's Planning Committee on 18th July 2018.
- 2.2 These notes have been prepared in accordance with guidance contained in Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9); Local Development Plans Wales (December 2005); and Welsh Government Technical Advice Notes.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Denbighshire Economic & Community Ambition Strategy (2013-2023) recognises the contribution tourism makes to the local economy and aims to increase the value derived from the offer in the county. As part of this, the Strategy identifies a need to improve both the quality and quantity of visitor accommodation throughout the county. The

Strategy also highlights the need to promote sustainable rural economies, whilst balancing development with protection of the natural environment.

3.2 The Denbighshire Local Development Plan (LDP) aims to provide opportunities for sensitive and unobtrusive development of caravan, chalet and camping sites. There can be a greater demand for such development in areas of higher scenic value and the coast. Protection of the quality and value of these areas, along with nature conservation and the historic environment will be a primary consideration when assessing proposals, as also potential impacts on highways and the local community.

3.3 The Council recognises the increase in the types of holiday accommodation available in recent years, particularly involving new forms of static holiday accommodation and 'glamping' (i.e. glamorous camping), and the possibility for further new types of accommodation in the future. Given the lack of standard definition for these types of accommodation, the Council will use the existing definitions within the Caravans and Development Control Act 1960 in determining the policy approach to be applied:

"... any structure designed or 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 or adapted 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."

This definition has been modified by Section 13 (1) of the Caravan Sites Act 1968 ("The 1968 Act"), which deals with twin-unit caravans:

“A structure designed or adapted for human habitation which:

- a) Is composed of not more than two sections separately constructed and designed to be assembled on a site by means of bolts, clamps or other devices; and*
- b) Is, when assembled, physically capable of being moved by road from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer), shall not be treated as not being (or not having been) a caravan within the meaning of Part 1 of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 by reason only that it cannot lawfully be moved on a highway when assembled.”*

Lodges, chalets, pods and other similar structures which fall within this definition will therefore be treated as static caravans. Yurts, tepees and other similar ‘luxury tent’ structures will normally be dealt with as camping sites under LDP policy PSE 12 ‘Chalet, static and touring caravan and camping sites’.

- 3.4 The purpose of this SPG is to provide guidance on proposals for caravan, chalet and camping sites as holiday accommodation. For clarification, a ‘holiday’ is defined as a period of recreation away from your main residence when no work is done. Certain ‘permitted development rights’ exist in relation to the stationing of caravans on land (e.g. keeping a caravan within the curtilage of a dwelling), which would not require planning permission. If you wish to station and holiday in a caravan (or any other type of structure including sheds and summerhouses) on land which has a non-residential use – e.g. agricultural, equestrian or forestry use – this would usually constitute a change of use in the land that requires planning permission, unless the caravan/structure is removed within 28 days of its stationing. Further advice should be sought from the Council’s Development Management Team on instances where this may be applicable.

4. PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the Welsh Government's aim for *'tourism to grow in a sustainable way and to make an increasing contribution to the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales'*. PPW also recognises that much of the existing provision of tourist accommodation is located in urban locations and there may be a need, in some areas, to limit new development due to environmental or amenity impacts. In rural areas, it recognises that tourism-related development can be an essential element for a sustainable local economy but should be sympathetic in nature and scale to the local environment.
- 4.2 Welsh Government's Technical Advice Note (TAN) 13 'Tourism' acknowledges the importance of caravan and chalet accommodation for the self-catering holiday sector and their contribution to the local economy but states that they can be intrusive in the landscape and special consideration needs to be given to proposals for new and extended sites.
- 4.3 This draft SPG supplements LDP policy PSE 12 'Chalet, static and touring caravan and camping sites' but also makes reference to policies PSE 5 'Rural Economy', PSE 11 'Major New Tourism Developments' and PSE 14 'Outdoor Activity Tourism' where relevant.

5. IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING SITES

- 5.1 Policy PSE 12 supports the environmental improvement of existing static caravan and chalet sites provided the character and appearance of the area is maintained, and any proposed increase in numbers would preserve or enhance the landscape setting of the site. If an increase in numbers is proposed, the applicant will be required to

demonstrate how this benefits the site, that it is a genuine proposal to reduce environmental impacts and is not an attempt to simply create additional space for development within the site.

- 5.2 Proposals for improvements to existing touring caravan and camping sites will be supported where the requirements of policy PSE 5 are met.

6. NEW SITES

- 6.1 In line with policy PSE 12, proposals for new static caravan sites will not be permitted.
- 6.2 Policy PSE 12 supports proposals for new touring caravan and camping sites, subject to detailed criteria relating to visual/landscape and environmental impacts, and overconcentration of similar developments.
- 6.3 Proposals for new sites involving other types of tourist accommodation, both through conversion and new build, which sustain the rural economy will be supported subject to the criteria in policy PSE 5 being met. Where new chalet development is proposed as part of an outdoor activity tourism proposal (policy PSE 14), this will be permitted where it can be demonstrated there is a lack of tourist accommodation to support the development, and there are no opportunities to use or convert existing buildings in the first instance.

7. DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1 Proposals for any new or extended caravan, chalet and camping sites must address the following requirements:

7.2 Highways

New and extended sites will have an impact upon the local road network and the following considerations will apply:

- Sites must have 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, to avoid placing unreasonable pressure on minor country roads;
- Sites must ideally be served by footpaths and cycleways – where this is not possible the Council must be satisfied that pedestrians and cyclists can enter and leave the site safely;
- Sites must be within reasonable walking distance to a public transport 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 applicant may be required to submit a Transport Assessment.

7.3 Landscape & Environment

The impact of sites upon the landscape will be a significant factor to which particular consideration will be given in the determination of planning applications, alongside issues of visual amenity and natural and built heritage. This is particularly relevant for proposals within the nationally protected landscape of the AONB or its setting. Proposals should be informed by the use of Landscape & Visual Impact Appraisal or Assessment, and the need for planning applications to be supported by such should be discussed at the pre-application stage. Proposals should have regard to the following:

- The scale of a development must respect its surrounding environment;
- Larger development will generally only be permitted within or adjacent to settlements;
- Proposals in rural locations must be sensitively developed;

- Proposals should be sited so as to avoid skylines, prominent hillsides or exposed sites.
- Proposals in open countryside 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. Where minor changes in level are necessary in parts of a proposed site, the preference will be for cutting into slopes rather than creating platforms for building;
- All planning applications must be accompanied by a comprehensive landscaping scheme;
- Close scrutiny should be given to environmental designations throughout the county. In line with national guidance, proposals within areas of flood risk will not be permitted;
- For development within the AONB or its setting, developers should have regard to the AONB Management Plan and the need to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the protected landscape. Similar considerations apply to the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal World Heritage Site and its buffer zone.

7.4 In accordance with policy PSE 12, development proposals must not result in an over-concentration of sites any one locality to the detriment of the landscape or residential amenity. Applications may be required to be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or Appraisal.

7.5 Within the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), environmentally sensitive colours, of which there is a palette available, should be used for new and replacement caravans.

7.6 Welsh language

In accordance with policy RD 5 'The Welsh Language & the Social and Cultural Fabric of Communities', any development causing significant harm to the character and language balance of a community could be refused. Applicants will normally be expected to submit a Community Linguistic Statement for tourism proposals (which includes those types of holiday accommodation covered by this SPG) in villages, hamlets or open countryside that have a floor area of 1000m² or greater. Tourism proposals of 3000m² or greater must be accompanied by a more detailed Community & Linguistic Impact Assessment. Further guidance is provided in the Council's adopted SPG 'Planning & the Welsh Language' (2014).

8. DESIGN GUIDANCE

8.1 Density

Proposals sited away from existing buildings should be low density, with sufficient separation between units. In rural locations this should be fitting with the nature of the surroundings and ensure the character remains open and rural. Low density development will also provide a good standard of amenity and privacy to occupants. Site density and separation distances between caravans will be specified through site licence conditions and will be consistent with the Model Standards (1983 and 1989) for caravan sites, safety standards and health and amenity requirements. Minimum separation distances will normally be 5-6 metres, depending upon the material of the caravan, with a minimum of 3 metres separation between awnings. A 3 metre wide area should be kept clear within the inside of all boundaries.

8.2 Layout

Suburban type layouts will not be acceptable in rural locations. Within rural locations the site layout should be open plan, with no formally

defined curtilage between units. Instead of formal curtilages, a high quality and integrated landscaping scheme for the entire site shall be encouraged. Informal open areas for informal recreation should be included as part of the site layout. As part of the overall landscaping and layout of large sites, the site should be broken up into smaller clusters.

8.3 Roads & Parking

Access roads and the internal road layout should reflect the character of the area, particularly in rural settings where formal hard surfacing with raised concrete kerbs can look out of place. In many cases, less formal solutions (e.g. gravel/wood chippings, no raised kerbs) may be more appropriate and this will be encouraged by the Council. Car parking should be to the side or rear of individual units and away from the main elevation. Large centralised parking areas should be avoided.

8.4 On Site Buildings

In open countryside, on site buildings (manager's accommodation, laundrettes etc.) should utilise existing buildings. Where this is not possible, new 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.

8.5 Landscape Proposals

Landscape proposals will be required to demonstrate how the development would be integrated within its setting, and conserves and enhances existing landscape features. They should be developed in response to the landscape and visual analysis of the site and in conjunction with planning and design of the development as part of an integrated proposal. All planning applications must be accompanied by a comprehensive landscaping scheme, including proposals for

management and aftercare of the site. Proposals should have regard to the following:

- Set out any changes to landform, the use of retaining structures and how these will be naturalised – generally only very minor reshaping of hillside sites should be considered due to the difficulties in naturalising bare ground, steep slopes and thin soils;
- The use of native indigenous plant species are required to maintain rural character and support biodiversity. Scots pine, Corsican pine, Yew and Holly, may be appropriate for adding some evergreen cover into the planting mix. Fast growing conifers will not be acceptable;
- Planting, protection, establishment and maintenance specification for new planting will be required;
- New boundaries should have regard to the local vernacular traditions e.g. hedgerows, dry stone walls etc;
- Finishes to hard landscape components will be specified including roads, paths and retaining structures;
- The use of natural materials and colour hues can help integrate buildings within rural settings;
- A management plan for existing hedgerows, trees and woodland within the ownership of the applicant would be required where these are important to the character and integration of the development (normally 25 years or for the lifetime of the development);
- 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 which incorporates baffles and/or are directed to avoid the upwards spillage of light. Illumination levels should be the minimum necessary to meet the needs of the location. Planning applications should be accompanied by a lighting scheme that demonstrates sensitivity to the location and provides details of measures to minimise

light pollution, including the colour temperature of proposed lighting units.

9. HOLIDAY USE

- 9.1 Extending the tourist season beyond the traditional holiday times of the year has advantages to the local economy and can help to reduce the impacts of seasonal employment. In order to ensure that tourism accommodation is used for its intended purpose, and does not become part of the local housing stock through unauthorised permanent residential occupation, the Council will impose holiday occupancy conditions when planning permission is granted. For static caravan and chalet sites, site owners/operators will be required to maintain an up-to-date register of the names and home addresses of all owners/occupiers of individual units on the site, which must be made available to the Council. The following condition is currently being applied to such permissions:

'The caravan site license holder or his/her nominated person(s) shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names(s) and principal address(es) of the owner(s) and the principal occupier(s) of each holiday unit on the site. The register shall also contain copies of up-to-date council tax demands pertaining to each principal address given. The register shall be made available for inspection by Officers of the Local Planning Authority at all reasonable times.'

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to effectively monitor the use of the holiday units to ensure that no unauthorised permanent residential occupation of the units takes place on site.'

- 9.2 The Council has implemented a corporate strategy to address the issue of unauthorised residential occupation of holiday caravan sites. An

ongoing audit of sites identifies where this is occurring and enforcement action will be taken.

- 9.3 The change of use of static caravans and chalets from tourist use to residential use will not be permitted. The conversion of touring caravan sites to static caravan sites will also not be permitted.

10. CARAVAN STORAGE

- 10.1 Sites specifically for the storage of touring caravans can have a negative impact on the landscape, particularly if the proposed site is inadequately screened. Such proposals will be considered against the relevant LDP policies, including RD 1 'Sustainable Development and Good Standard Design' and PSE 5 'Rural Economy'. The Council will support storage within existing buildings (where suitable) to minimise the impact on the landscape, or where the site is well screened from public views and the scale and nature of the proposal is appropriate for the location. In line with national policy, any proposals that are considered to be detrimental to the quality of the AONB and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site will be refused.

11. CONTACTS

Strategic Planning & Housing	Development Management
Planning and Public Protection	Planning and Public Protection
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APPENDIX 1

Denbighshire Local Development Plan Policies

Policy PSE 12 - Chalet, static and touring caravan and camping sites

Proposals for new static caravan sites will not be permitted. However the environmental improvement of existing static holiday caravan or chalet sites by remodelling, provision of new facilities and by landscaping will be supported provided the development is acceptable in terms of other Local Development Plan policies and meets the following criteria:

- i) the proposed development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area; and
- ii) it can be demonstrated that any proposed increase in the number of static caravan/chalet units would preserve or enhance the landscape Setting of the overall site.

The change of use of a static caravan or chalet from tourist use to residential Use and the conversion of touring caravan sites to statics will not be permitted.

New touring caravan and camping sites will be encouraged where all the following criteria are met:

- i) the site is small in scale and proportionate to its location, particularly within and adjoining the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Area of Outstanding Beauty, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site (including the buffer zone) or other regionally important landscape areas; and
- ii) the development would not result in an over concentration of sites in any one locality to the detriment of the landscape or residential amenity; and
- iii) the development makes a positive contribution to the local

- biodiversity, and natural and built environment; and
- iv) the development would not appear obtrusive in the landscape and is high quality in terms of layout, design and landscaping in line with the development principles, and it has no adverse highway or community impacts;

The grant of planning permission may, where appropriate, be subject to the imposition of a seasonal occupancy condition.

Policy PSE 11 – Major new tourism developments

Proposals for sustainable forms of tourism development, of regional or national significance, which meet the needs of residents and visitors will be supported subject to meeting all the following criteria:

- i) it is appropriate to its setting and within the capacity of the local environment, particularly within or affecting the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Area of Outstanding Beauty, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site (including the buffer zone) or other regionally important landscape areas. In line with national policy any proposals that are considered to be detrimental to the quality of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and World Heritage Site will be refused; and
- ii) it is within the capacity of the local infrastructure, or it can be demonstrated that the development can fully address any infrastructure deficiencies identified, and;
- iii) it is accessible to all potential users, offering large scale and appropriate public transport and where possible access by walking and cycling, and;
- iv) it will support and extend the range of facilities on offer within the County, and;
- v) it will assist in the regeneration and biodiversity objectives of

- Denbighshire, and;
- vi) it will utilise available local labour where possible.

Policy PSE 14 – Outdoor activity tourism

Development proposals that expand or reinforce the tourism offer of the County in the outdoor activity sector will be supported provided the following criteria are met:

- i) the development is appropriate to its setting and within the capacity of the local environment and infrastructure, particularly within and adjoining the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Area of Outstanding Beauty, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site (including the buffer zone) or other regionally important landscape areas. In line with national policy any proposals that are considered to be detrimental to the quality of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and World Heritage will be refused; and
- ii) that any suitable existing buildings are converted or re-used in preference to new build; and
- iii) necessary mitigation measures are included and the proposals would not have an unacceptable impact on the local community; and
- iv) chalet development in association with outdoor activity tourism will only be permitted if a significant need is demonstrated and there are no opportunities to use or convert existing buildings for tourist accommodation.

Policy PSE 5 - Rural Economy

In order to help to sustain the rural economy, tourism and commercial development, including agricultural diversification, will be supported throughout the County subject to detailed criteria, which include making a

significant contribution to sustainable development and recognising the special status of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty/Area of Outstanding Beauty.

Appropriate employment proposals for both conversions and new build outside of development boundaries will be supported provided the following criteria are met:

- i) the proposal is appropriate in scale and nature to its location; and
- ii) any suitable existing buildings are converted or re-used in preference to new build; and
- iii) proposals for new buildings are supported by an appropriate business case which demonstrates that it will support the local economy to help sustain local rural communities; and
- iv) within the AONB/AOB, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site (including the buffer zone) or other regionally important landscape areas, take full account of and seek to enhance the nature and distinctive qualities of the local landscape. In line with national policy any proposals that are considered to be detrimental to the quality of the AONB and World Heritage Site will be refused.