

8. Recycling and Pollution

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Recycling

8.1 The Government has set a target of 25% of household waste being recycled by the end of the decade. Significant changes in collection and sorting have taken place and are continually being developed for the future. 8.9% was recycled in the year ending March 1997 which had increased from 4.0% for the year ending March 1996 by the introduction of the Blue Box doorstep scheme and by the recycling of white household goods.

8.2 In accordance with the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the Council prepared its draft Recycling Plan. The basis of the plan was to introduce a kerbside collection which has now been in operation since July 1997. The Council is currently reassessing its Recycling Plan with a view to increasing recycling opportunities.

POLICY RP1

AS RESOURCES PERMIT, THE COUNCIL WILL EXTEND THE NETWORK OF COLLECTION SITES FOR GLASS, METAL, PLASTICS, PAPER AND CLOTHING. POTENTIAL SITES WILL BE ASSESSED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

- (i) **POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON NEARBY HOUSES FROM NOISE, TRAFFIC, LITTER ACCUMULATION, PROMINENCE AND APPEARANCE; AND**
- (ii) **CONVENIENCE FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY; AND**
- (iii) **ROAD SAFETY AND HIGHWAY POLICIES.**

POLICY RP2

THE COUNCIL WILL ALLOCATE PART OF THE LANGSTON ROAD DEPOT (IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP) AS A MATERIAL SORTING FACILITY FOR RECYCLING DRY HOUSEHOLD WASTE.

8.3 If this facility is ultimately used conditions must be imposed on hours of operation, types of material which can be handled (i.e. only solid and non-toxic substances; putrescible waste is not acceptable) and vehicle movement in and out of the depot.

8.4 Composting of household garden waste contributes towards the Government's 25% recycling target. The Council's view is that such a facility should be run by a private contractor. It will therefore not take an active lead in identifying suitable sites.

Location and operation will need to satisfy the Environment Agency who may wish to control the quality of runoff. It is likely that conditions would be imposed limiting the range of materials which could be processed.

Pollution

8.5 Pollution can occur when a substance capable of causing harm to any living organisms is released into water, land or the air. PPG23 - "Planning and Pollution Control" indicates that "harm" should include offence to senses (eg excessive and unpleasant smells but not the visual effect of unsightly development) and damage to property as well as the more obvious health issues.

8.6 Due to recent legislation (notably the Water Act 1989, the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990, the Planning and Compensation Act 1991, the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Environment Act 1995), the dividing line between planning powers and pollution control is not always clear. It is therefore of considerable importance that close consultation and good working procedures are developed between the Council and the relevant pollution authorities (see paras. 3.21 and 8.11).

8.7 PPG12 outlines the relationship of pollution to the land use planning system:

"Development Plans... may... include policies designed to control pollution and to limit and reduce nuisances such as noise, smells and dirt. Policies should also reflect... land drainage issues... and the need to protect water quality. Particular attention should be paid to the protection of groundwater resources which are susceptible to a wide range of threats arising from land-use policies."

8.8 There is a direct relationship with the concept of sustainable development because impacts on the environment which may be irreversible or very difficult to undo may result in lost resources for future generations. PPG12 also states that "Development Plans should take account of the location of hazardous installations and the need for sites for new hazardous development."

8.9 The Government White Paper "This Common Inheritance" highlights the close relationship between pollution and land use. It states that:-

"The systems to control pollution are intended to ensure that:

- a) development will be located, and associated processes controlled, to minimise adverse effects on the environment; and

- b) after any development or use of land has ceased, that land, and any water resources, should be left in such a condition as to be capable of productive use."

8.10 The current Structure Plan broadly incorporates these concerns in its policies for control of development in the built environment, for mineral working and waste disposal.

8.11 Existing District Council policies also cover these issues, with a particular concentration on noise. Revisions are required however because:

- a) they are insufficiently detailed;
- b) the Environment Agency came into being in April 1996 as an amalgamation of the National Rivers Authority, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution, Waste Regulation Units of County Councils and the London Waste Regulation Authority. The Agency's main function is to integrate environmental protection of air, land and water. It will produce Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs) based on river catchment areas to deal with these issues. The District Council will be consulted during the production and monitoring of the LEAPs. This will ensure that policies in the Local Plan deal effectively with the links between pollution and land use.

(1) Groundwater and Surface Water Protection

8.12 The groundwater resources of the Thames Region are an essential source for public supply, industry and agriculture. They also sustain the base flows of many of the area's rivers. As the cleaning up of contaminated groundwater is difficult and expensive it is preferable to prevent or reduce the risk of contamination, rather than deal with its consequences. In determining planning applications the Council will have regard to the sensitive zones (defined by the Environment Agency) around public water supply boreholes where the risk of pollution to water sources is greatest.

8.13 Deterioration in water quality will affect the supply for domestic, industrial, agricultural and recreational uses and is likely also to have an impact on nature conservation and general amenity. The Council is therefore keen to restrict or prevent development which threatens surface water quality and will try to encourage initiatives aimed at improving that quality.

POLICY RP3

THE COUNCIL, AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY, AND, AS APPROPRIATE, BRITISH WATERWAYS AND THAMES WATER, WILL REFUSE PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENTS OR ACTIVITIES WHICH PRESENT AN UNDUE RISK TO THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF:

- i). **GROUNDWATER; OR**
- ii). **WATER IN RIVERS, CANALS, LAKES, PONDS OR OTHER WATER COURSES.**

8.14 This policy will apply to waste disposal, the treatment of contaminated land, industrial development and other proposals which may involve major changes in land use. It is also important to note, however, that relatively minor issues such as inappropriate storage of chemicals or incorrect disposal of effluent can lead to the contamination of groundwater.

8.15 Account will be taken of the nature of the surface and waste water discharges from proposed developments. An assessment also needs to be made of other waste which is likely to be generated by development and of any arrangements for its storage, treatment and disposal. Site investigations must be undertaken on contaminated sites and methods for dealing with any contamination must then be agreed with the Council, who will in turn seek the advice of the main pollution authorities.

(2) Contaminated Land

8.16 Contaminated land is not widespread in the District. Nevertheless, sites such as the former Royal Ordnance Factory at Waltham Abbey are heavily contaminated with a mixture of chemicals, explosives and other materials. In the interests of health and public safety it is essential that any proposals for development or reuse should recognise the problem of contamination and ensure that it is addressed by the appropriate authorities. These sites often provide at least local interest for nature conservation as the ground conditions can support unusual mixtures of plants and other organisms.

POLICY RP4

THE COUNCIL WILL NOT GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OR REUSE OF LAND WHICH IT CONSIDERS LIKELY TO BE CONTAMINATED UNLESS:

- i). **PRIOR TESTS ARE CARRIED OUT TO ESTABLISH THE EXISTENCE, TYPE AND DEGREE OF CONTAMINATION;**
- ii). **AND IF CONTAMINATION IS FOUND, APPROPRIATE METHODS OF**

TREATMENT AND MONITORING ARE AGREED WITH THE COUNCIL, POLLUTION AUTHORITIES AND WATER COMPANIES; AND

iii). THE AGREED METHODS OF TREATMENT INCLUDE MEASURES TO PROTECT OR RECREATE HABITATS OF NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST.

8.17 Policies GB20 and HC16 deal with known contaminated sites (i.e. Royal Ordnance and Royal Gunpowder Factories at Waltham Abbey).

8.18 The District Council will consult Essex County Council, the waste disposal authority, regarding development proposals on, or within 250 metres of, land which has been used for the disposal of waste within the last 30 years. This is to address the potential problems of landfill gas (methane), including its lateral migration.

(3) Noise and other forms of nuisance

8.19 PPG23 "Planning and Noise" introduced the concept of 'noise exposure categories' for assessing proposals for noise sensitive developments (eg housing, hospitals, schools) which may be affected adversely by existing noise sources.

8.20 Noise, smell, dust, vibration and light from other forms of development can be a source of nuisance and should not adversely affect the amenity of housing areas. Additionally, new noise sensitive proposals should not be sited in areas where the external environment is already poor because of other forms of pollution.

POLICY RP5

THE COUNCIL WILL NOT GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR:

- i). DEVELOPMENT CLOSE TO EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS, HOSPITALS AND SCHOOLS WHERE THE NEW DEVELOPMENT COULD CAUSE EXCESSIVE NOISE, VIBRATION, OR AIR, GROUND OR LIGHT POLLUTION; OR**
- ii). SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT SUCH AS HOUSING, HOSPITALS OR SCHOOLS WHICH COULD BE SUBJECT TO EITHER EXCESSIVE NOISE FROM ADJOINING LAND USES OR TRAFFIC, OR OTHER FORMS OF NUISANCE;**

EXCEPT WHERE IT IS POSSIBLE TO

MITIGATE THE ADVERSE EFFECTS BY THE IMPOSITION OF APPROPRIATE CONDITIONS.

8.21 Consultations with the Council's Environmental Services and other pollution authorities will be carried out in determining any planning application. Consideration will be given to the possibility of granting planning permission subject to conditions covering such issues as:

- (i)** traffic movements during and after construction;
- (ii)** daily cleaning of access highways and other techniques to minimise dust emissions during construction;
- (iii)** days and hours of operation or use of the completed development; and
- (iv)** noise and vibration from plant and machinery.

PPG23 will be used in establishing noise limits for particular types of development.

(4) Hazardous substances and installations

8.22 The Council is required to consult the Health and Safety Executive on applications near hazardous installations. The Executive's role is to advise on the nature and severity of the risks so that these can be given due weight.

8.23 Controls under other legislation have recently been introduced so that 'hazardous substances consent' is now required for the storage (above specified quantities) or other presence of hazardous substances.

POLICY RP6

THE COUNCIL WILL NOT GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE STORAGE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES OR FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF HAZARDOUS INSTALLATIONS UNLESS IT IS SATISFIED THAT THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT CREATE NEW, OR ADD TO EXISTING, ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH OR SAFETY HAZARDS.

8.24 Any permissions will include detailed conditions intended to minimise dangers.

(5) Litter

8.25 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 gives local authorities a statutory duty to keep land and highways clear of litter. A start has been made with the 'partnership approach' between Parish and Town

Councils, residents and Council Members in promoting a cleaner District.

8.26 Policy RST8 shows the Council's intention to ensure that play areas are kept 'dog free' by the use of protective fencing. The Council will review the success of this and consider extending it to other sites including town greens and open spaces in residential areas. Bye-laws will also be used where appropriate.

Environmental Implications

8.27 The policies in this chapter will have a marked bearing upon the extent to which the following aims (see pages 24 and 25) are achieved:-

(xxxv) To promote the efficient use of natural resources.

(xxxvi) To minimise all forms of pollution, where possible.

(xxxviii) To enable the continued implementation of the Council's Environmental Charter.

(xxxix) To enable the implementation of the Council's Recycling Plan.

8.28 The environmental implications of the policies in this chapter are set out in Appendix 2. Their greatest effect will be on the recycling of natural resources through providing a site for recycling offensive waste material, and the prevention of pollution by hazardous substances and of water. However, they are also expected to have an impact upon both the quality of the urban and rural environments through minimising nuisance.