

# Supplementary Planning Guidance

## Horse Keeping



Policy &  
Environment  
Department

February 1998

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## **HORSE KEEPING SPG**

### ***UPDATE TO LOCAL PLAN POLICIES***

***June 2003***

Policies Co 7 and Co 3 have been revised in the Reigate & Banstead Borough Local Plan 1994 Proposed First Alteration 2000. The revised policy Co 7 deals with the issue of scale of development.

In addition, there are new and strengthened policies relating to existing and new Landscape and Nature Conservation designations.

These should all be read in conjunction with this SPG.

**HORSE-KEEPING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**  
**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

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## **HORSE-KEEPING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE** **SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

### **1.0 FOREWORD**

- 1.1 This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is one of a series produced by the Borough Council providing additional guidance on and interpretation of Local Plan Policies for those preparing planning applications. National guidance states that such guidance has to be consistent with the Plan, issued separately, made publicly available, and its status made clear. It may be taken into consideration in the determination of planning applications. The weight afforded to it will increase if it has been prepared in consultation with the public and been the subject of a Council resolution. The SPG should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the strategy, policies and proposals contained within the Borough Local Plan.
- 1.2 Whilst the policies within the Local Plan can only be changed through the statutory process, it is essential that the Plan remains up to date, relevant and capable of addressing the issues affecting the Borough. Since its adoption the policies within the Borough Local Plan have been submitted to scrutiny within and outside the Borough Council, through the determination of applications, appeals and the answering of general enquiries from the public. The conclusion has been that there is a need to give greater detail to the policies and criteria contained in the Local Plan through the production of this SPG. The existing policies are still relevant and should be considered along with the additional guidance provided in this SPG when considering any planning application.

### **2.0 THE AIMS OF THE SPG**

- 2.1 The guidance is designed to inform those intending to apply for planning permission of the criteria against which their proposals will be considered and how those criteria will be interpreted. It is intended that the guidance will aid potential applicants in understanding the way in which planning applications will be considered.
- 2.2 The guidance is supplementary to the existing adopted Borough Local Plan, it does not add new criteria for consideration, but provides further amplification to the development plan.

### **3.0 CONTEXT FOR THE GUIDANCE**

- 3.1 The Local Planning Authority recognises the need for stabling and supports their provision, in appropriate circumstances, to protect horses from the extremes of weather and to provide for treatment by vets. The guidance sets out the Council's requirements in respect of the criteria for consideration of buildings connected with the keeping of horses and other related matters. It is aimed at developments in the countryside, defined in the Borough Local Plan as within the Green Belt and the Countryside Beyond the Green Belt (i.e. the countryside around Horley).

### **3.2 POLICY CONTEXT**

Planning applications for stables and other horse related structures will be considered on the basis of countryside and horse keeping policies contained in the Borough Local Plan, the Surrey Structure Plan and Planning Policy Guidance Notes together with any other relevant policies for particular land designations.

Within the Green Belt there is a presumption against inappropriate development. This presumption, which stems from government guidance in PPG2 : Green Belts which states that essential facilities for outdoor recreation can be appropriate; an example of an appropriate development could be small stables. This guidance defines the term small stables. A similar presumption is being applied within the Countryside Beyond the Green Belt in this SPG.

Policy Co 7 (Horse Keeping) on page 76 of the Local Plan is the principal Local Plan policy. It outlines the criteria against which all relevant applications will be considered. It is criteria based and requires that the impact of a proposal on the agricultural or horticultural use of the land be considered together with its environmental impact and highway implications. Policy Co3 (Redundant Rural Buildings) is also relevant.

Certain parts of the Borough have been identified as being of particular landscape importance and Policy Pc 1 (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and Areas of Great landscape Value (AGLVs)), on page 43 of the Local Plan, outlines that special consideration will be given to ensure that any development permitted does not detract from the character of the surrounding landscape in these areas.

These policies are outlined more fully within the appendices and may be viewed in full within the Borough Local Plan. The guidance below expands on how these policies will be interpreted.

#### 4.0 HOW THE GUIDANCE WILL BE USED

This guidance seeks to take potential applicants through the planning process and outline how an application for a horse related structure would be considered.

The guidance will be used, along with existing development plan policies, to assess all applications for horse related activities so that they are weighed in terms of the relevant designations. The process is laid out below:

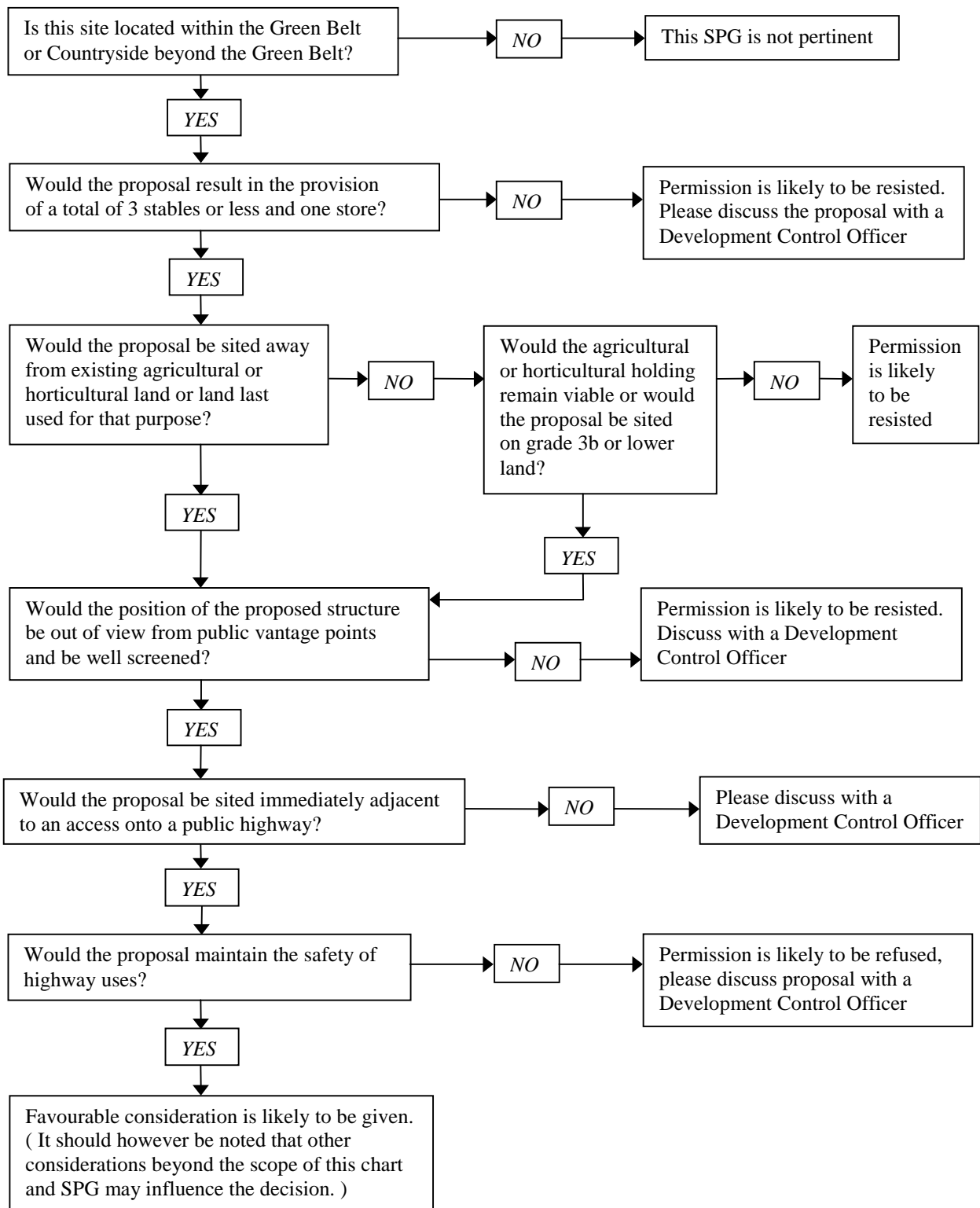
#### 4.1 THE PROCESS OF DETERMINATION

The process of determination of an application is two fold: In the first stage a proposal will be considered as to whether it represents an appropriate form of development in the countryside. This is primarily based upon size. A proposal which is not considered to be an appropriate form of development is likely to be resisted, as inappropriate development is by definition harmful. Very special circumstances, to justify inappropriate development, will not exist unless the harm by reasons of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The second stage may only be reached where the proposal is considered to be an appropriate form of development. Non compliance with any one or more of the criteria in the second stage of determination will normally result in permission being refused.

The flowchart on the next page gives a potential applicant an idea of the key issues surrounding the determination of an application. It enables that person to establish likely problem areas and to determine whether an application is likely to be resisted. It is indicative only, other considerations may result in a different outcome to that indicated by the flowchart. Where the flowchart indicates that permission would be likely to be resisted, it is suggested that any mitigating/special circumstances be discussed with a Development Control Officer.

## KEY ISSUES FOR APPLICANTS GUIDANCE ( indicative only )



## 4.2 STAGE 1: WHAT SIZE STABLES OR FIELD SHELTERS MAY BE APPROPRIATE

*How big a structure might I be able to build?*

Many applications for horse related structures involve sites within the Metropolitan Green Belt. In such locations there is a presumption against permitting new development unless it conforms with the open recreation functions of the Green Belt or is directly related to agricultural or other rural land uses.

Small structures relating to horse-riding can be in keeping with the Green Belt, providing they maintain its openness and are sited and designed so as to maintain its character.

The first criteria against which applications will be considered is whether they are for appropriate forms of development by virtue of their size; i.e. is the application for a small number of stables? Applications for larger numbers of stables and related structures such as barns will normally be considered inappropriate and permission is therefore likely to be resisted.

Reference to small stables within the Green Belt shall be taken as referring to the development of up to and including 3 looseboxes (where a loosebox is normally taken to be a 12' x 12' bay within a stable block) or a similar sized structure on a site, together with no more than one additional loosebox within a stable block or a similar sized structure to provide for the storage of feed, bedding, tack and any security measures. Such a fourth box is likely to be conditioned to restrict its use and an informative attached to any permission advising the applicant that additions to the stables are unlikely to be permitted and any other use of the fourth box is unlikely to be allowed.

NB Where proposals are considered to fall within the term appropriate they must still satisfy further criteria to be acceptable forms of development. Where proposals are considered inappropriate, permission is unlikely to be forthcoming.

### Types of horse related activity and related structures

There are a number of different types of horse related activity:

Private: Where stables are for the sole use of the owner/lessee of the land, where no stables are for use by other persons and the land and horses are not used for commercial activities such as lessons and livery.

Private Shared Facilities: Where the stables are owned by more than one person and horses stabled are used solely by those owners, with no commercial activity on the site such as livery, lessons etc

Commercial: Where lessons are given on a commercial basis to visiting members of the public; where visiting members of the public may ride horses; where horses owned by a third party are stabled and or trained, where stables are rented out on a commercial basis, livery establishments etc. Livery can be further broken down into full livery, part livery and DIY livery.

The following are examples of the types of development which may be sought. The list is not exhaustive and not all are fully catered for by this guidance.



#### Extensions to private stables

Where additions to existing stables are proposed, additions which increase the size beyond that of small stables (three looseboxes with a fourth for bedding, feed and tack storage) will normally be considered inappropriate development for which very special circumstances to warrant the over-riding of Green Belt policies would be required. Where extensions to stables would result in buildings that are no longer small or where extensions to stables that already fall outside this category are sought, these should be directed towards the conversion of existing buildings since the erection of further new buildings is inappropriate.

#### Commercial stables

Where new build commercial establishments of up to three stables are sought, this may be appropriate within the countryside. Beyond this size they will normally be considered inappropriate and be likely to be resisted. It is recognised that commercial activities are unlikely to be viable operations within the confines of this definition of small stables. Where such larger facilities are sought, a more appropriate location could be through the reuse of existing buildings.

#### Extensions to commercial stables

Extensions to commercial stables which result in the provision of more than three stables will normally be considered unacceptable.

#### Indoor riding schools and facilities

Indoor riding schools and facilities require planning permission and will normally be an inappropriate form of development by virtue of their size and scale within the Green Belt and Countryside Beyond The Green Belt. For this reason applications for such developments will normally be resisted.

#### Open sandschools and exercise areas

Open sandschools and exercise areas normally require planning permission. Consideration will be given to whether they are acceptable forms of development, based on their size and the nature of their proposed use. If they are considered appropriate, they must then comply with the requirements of Policy Co 7 (Horsekeeping) of the Borough Local Plan as outlined in stage 2 below.

### 4.4 **STAGE 2: FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPROPRIATE STRUCTURES**

*What else should I consider before making a planning application ?*

If a proposal is considered to represent an appropriate form of development it must then be considered against all the relevant criteria contained in Local Plan policy Co 7. A proposal which fails to meet one or more of these criteria will normally be refused permission. The Local Plan outlines three criteria which will be considered in examining proposals for development associated with horses, these are outlined below with an explanation of how they will be interpreted.

#### 4.4.1 (i) The effect on land or holdings capable of agricultural or horticultural use; *Would the proposal be sited on farm or agricultural land?*

The preamble to policy Co 7 recognises that the viability of agricultural holdings is being undermined and is being exacerbated in the urban fringe particularly by horse owners who are prepared to pay relatively high prices for paddocks, which results in further fragmentation. The policy requires that the impact of a proposal on agricultural or horticultural land and holdings be assessed.

Where the proposal would result in the loss of land with an existing agricultural or horticultural use, the loss of that land will be assessed in terms of the agricultural land classification (produced by MAFF). The loss of land graded 1 to 3a will normally be rigorously assessed. MAFF grade agricultural land according to its productivity, gradient, quality, versatility and flooding potential, and seek to resist the development of the best and most versatile land (graded 1, 2 and 3a).

The viability of holdings will be assessed as to whether the change of use would have an adverse impact on their future use and viability as a land holding. Where agricultural land graded 1 to 3a would be lost by a proposal, consultancy advice will be sought as to the viability of the holding and the impact of the proposal on the future viability of the land or holding.

4.4.2 (ii) The environmental impact of the development;  
*Will my proposal affect the surrounding area?*

a) Size

Proposals which would result in the provision of more than three stables will be considered an inappropriate form of development outside the urban area and will therefore normally be resisted by the Council. In other cases where the size of the stables proposed may be considered an appropriate form of development the proposal will also be carefully considered in terms of the individual application site.

b) Intrusion and Screening

*How visible would the structure be?*

The level of intrusion that would result from a structure is measured against its size, position and the level of existing screening that exists, together with the visual impact the development would have when viewed from public vantage points such as public footpaths, roads and open land to which the public has access, such as commonland.

Proposals should be largely screened from view so as to be hidden from public vantage points, are unobtrusive, and do not detract from the visual openness of the countryside. This may be achieved through the sensitive location of proposals in areas which are naturally screened by land form features or screening such as existing hedges and woodland. Prominent locations such as open fields, the middle of fields and crests of hills should be avoided.

The formation of banks, bunds and other artificial land forms to screen a proposal will not normally be an acceptable method of screening proposals from view since these will in themselves be out of keeping with the existing landscape character of the area and therefore intrusive.

Existing vegetation will be assessed as to its screening potential for proposals. Whilst additional planting may be required, schemes that rely completely on new planting will be unlikely to be acceptable. Any new planting will be expected to be of species native to the area.

Stables, hardstandings, tracks and other structures can have a cumulative impact on the visual setting of the countryside. The Council will assess the combined impact of proposals with other structures in the area (both existing and those for which permission has been given), in order to assess the combined impact these would have on an area.

Structures which are well related to existing building groups are more likely to be acceptable within AONBs and AGLVs than isolated structures, which will need to be very well screened from public view if they are to be considered acceptable.

Since the production of the Borough Local Plan, regulations have been introduced relating to hedgerow protection. Whilst there are no specific policies relating to hedgerows within the Local Plan, they play an important role in forming the character of the countryside. The impact of proposed developments on hedges will therefore be considered in examining applications for horse related activities and structures. Criteria for assessing important hedgerows are outlined within the Department of the Environment leaflet titled "The Hedgerow Regulations-Your Questions Answered". (Copies available from the Borough Council).

The pro-active management of hedges is specifically encouraged to maintain these important landscape features, the loss of which will be resisted. The management of horse related activities should take proper account of this landscape and nature conservation interest.

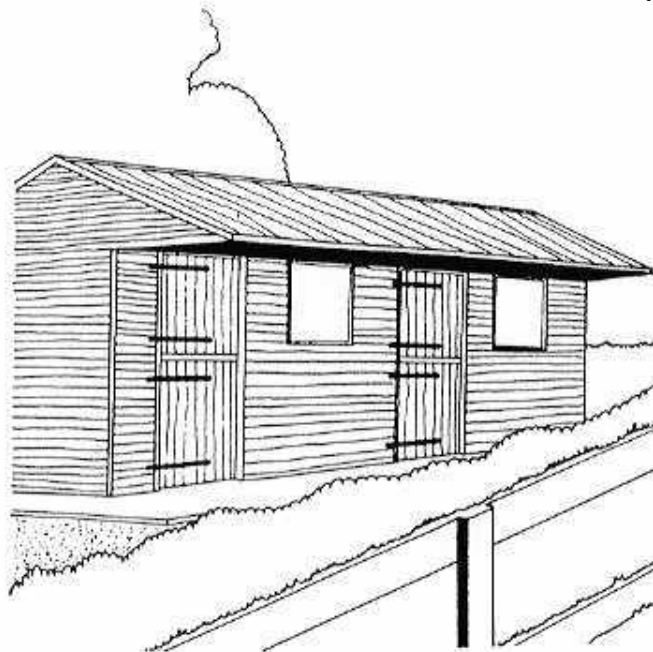
External lighting can make a site very prominent in a rural landscape. Details of any lighting will normally be required by condition.

c) Design & Materials

*What should the building look like?*

Planning permission for stables will only be granted if the buildings are of an attractive design and of appropriate materials. This will almost always mean that a pitched roof is required. A design similar to that shown below with sectional timber bays and an overhanging roof at the front will normally be acceptable.

Buildings should normally be of timber construction with a low pitch roof. Alternatively brick work, block work and render or other traditional materials may be acceptable.



Stables will normally be less obtrusive if the timber is painted or stained a dark colour and if roofing materials are either dark grey or dark green. Bright and garish materials and colours should be avoided.

The provision of a tack room where stabling is considered acceptable will be expected to comply with the above design quality criteria. Whilst it is accepted that high security measures may be required if tack is kept on site, this should be undertaken within stable-type buildings. Steel containers, such as those used for shipping, will not be considered acceptable.

d) Proximity to roads

*How close to a road should I build the structure?*

Tracks serving stables can result in visual scars across the landscape, stables should therefore be located close to access points directly onto the existing road network in order to minimise the amount of track and hard surfacing which is required.

Where tracks or hard surfacing are considered acceptable the choice of materials will be carefully considered. Suitable materials will vary according to the location, nature of the land, soil conditions and any incline across the land, and each case will therefore be considered based on its own circumstances. Materials should blend with the surrounding landscape rather than forming a garish gash across it and should be capable of easy removal. To reduce the impact of a track, a pair of narrow parallel tracks for wheels of vehicles will be preferable to a wider single track.

A balance may need to be found between the position of the stable and the length of any track, in order that the level of intrusion, of either, can be reduced. In cases where stables, tracks or hard surfacing are considered unacceptable by virtue of the level of impact they would have on the surrounding area permission is unlikely to be granted.

e) AONB & AGLV

*What happens if my proposal is in an area of special landscape value or natural beauty*

Within areas designated for their landscape value such as AONB's and AGLV's there are stricter policies relating to the landscape character of those areas. The AONB is of national importance, the AGLV's being of county importance. The prime objective of their designation is the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. The erection of structures on land with these designations can singularly and cumulatively detract from their character and proposals will therefore be more rigorously considered in terms of the level of intrusion the buildings would have on the landscape. Proposals which are more intrusive, or prominently located will be resisted. Where proposals are permitted they will be expected to be well sited, in a position where they cannot be seen from public vantage points, and are not reliant on additional planting or fencing. Regard will also be had to the impact of a proposal should existing screening be lost.

Structures which are well related to existing building groups are more likely to be acceptable within these landscape designation areas than isolated structures, which will need to be very well screened from public view if they are to be considered acceptable.

Particular attention will be paid to the siting, design, materials and screening of proposals within the Surrey Hills AONB, the AGLV and within and adjacent to Conservation Areas.

(f) LAND MANAGEMENT

In the interests of safeguarding animal welfare and environmental quality, it is important to ensure that land used by horses is appropriately managed. Weed control and restraint in the use of fertilisers can help protect wildlife habitats while resting and rotating the pasture will help to maintain the condition and appearance of the site. Appropriate maintenance of boundary features such as fence lines and hedges is essential to ensure the security of livestock and contributes to the appearance of the landscape. A detailed, long-term management plan will be required to show details of the preparation and installation of landscaping features,

fencing and hedging as appropriate and also plans for their continued maintenance and repair. (The Management Plan may also be required to contain details of conditions outlined in paragraph 5.1).

The careful management of land associated with the keeping of horses can lead to a significant reduction in the impact it has on the surrounding area. The Borough Council will expect a land management plan to be supplied with applications for horse related structures. Such a plan should include details of the removal of dangerous weeds, storage of equipment and feed, landscaping hedging and fencing, storage of horse boxes, storage of bedding and manure, removal of jumps and markers, etc. where appropriate. Section 5 below outlines conditions linked to land management which may be imposed.

Further advice on horse pasture management is available from the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (ADAS), the Countryside Commission (particularly their leaflet "Horses in the Countryside") and Reigate and Banstead Borough Council Environmental Services Department (Environmental Policy and Development Control Sections).

4.4.3 (iii) The effect on public highways, the public rights of way network, or open spaces in the area.

*Will my proposal affect road safety or public safety?*

Where permission is sought either for the change of use to a horse related recreational use or for horse related structures, the Borough Council will examine proposals in the light of their proximity to the existing bridleway network. Specific regard will also be had to the impact any proposal would have on public highways and to the future safety of road users.

Horses require frequent inspection and attention, particularly if stabled. Quantities of bedding material, hay and other feed have to be brought to the site and numerous vehicular movements are likely. A good access with visibility in both directions is, therefore, essential and will be critically examined during the course of examining a planning application.

Small stables used for keeping horses in a single ownership will generate less vehicular movements than a commercial stable or livery. The requirements for the access will be dependant on the degree of use and the nature of the road serving the site.

When considering, applications for commercial stables the adequacy of the local road network will be a consideration in terms of its suitability for horse box movements.

4.5 ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS - FIELD SHELTERS

*What if I can't build the stables I originally wanted?*

There will be occasions where applications fail one or more of the above criteria. In such cases other alternatives for the shelter of horses may include the provision of a field shelter or protective hedging. Protective hedging should be made up of species native to the local area. Any alternatives will require consideration against the criteria of the Local Plan together with the guidance provided herein and may not themselves be acceptable.

A field shelter can be less intrusive and has no requirement for a track since it cannot by definition contain secure accommodation for the storage of food or tack and therefore does not require the provision of an access track. This means that the

ability to place it away from an access point onto a highway is greater thus opening up the opportunities to place it in more sheltered and less intrusive locations whilst still providing a degree of shelter for horses.

#### 4.6 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

##### Dwellings

Dwellings associated with the keeping of horses are an inappropriate form of development in the countryside. It is not considered that the security of horses justifies the overriding of Green Belt policies as there are other methods of providing site security. In extreme cases where occasional overnight facilities are needed, for say the care of sick animals, the conversion of existing buildings may be the only option or the conversion of a bay within the existing stable to provide for night watchman type facilities. The provision of a newly built dwelling will not be considered acceptable. Where the future need for accommodation is anticipated, stables should be located close to an existing dwelling.

##### Renewal or rebuilding

Where the replacement, renewal or rebuilding of an existing structure is sought, this will be considered against the two stages outlined above, but will have regard for the size of the structure being replaced. Where a proposal would result in a larger structure than that which exists at the time of the application and that enlarged structure would be larger than that outlined as small, permission is likely to be resisted. In other cases improvements to the location and impact of proposals will be sought where appropriate.

##### Conversions

Where the conversion of an existing building is sought, the appropriateness of the proposal will be considered in terms of the likely activity that would result. Additional considerations will relate to whether additional structures would be required which may themselves be inappropriate.

#### 5.0 THE USE OF CONDITIONS

##### 5.1 Where private stables are allowed in the countryside a condition will normally be attached restricting the use of the stables to a purely private use:-

The development hereby permitted, together with the land forming the application site, shall be used solely for the private equestrian purposes of the applicant and his/her immediate family.

Reason:

In order to protect the countryside from inappropriate forms of development.

An informative should also be attached advising the applicant that permission for additional structures is unlikely to be forthcoming:-

The applicant be informed that applications to extend the facility hereby permitted beyond that defined by the Local Planning Authority as a small stable are likely to be resisted.

In other circumstances alternative appropriate conditions will be considered, for example where shared private stables are sought.

In exceptional circumstances where commercial stabling is permitted the applicant will be advised, by informative, that extensions to the facilities are unlikely to be permitted:-

The applicant be informed that applications to extend this commercial stabling are likely to be resisted on the basis that they would constitute an inappropriate form of development.

Other conditions may include the following:

1. Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, a land management scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall then be implemented and adhered to, to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority within one week of first occupation of the site and will continue to be maintained thereafter.

For the avoidance of doubt this scheme shall include the following details.

1. All hedging and fencing + proposals for their maintenance.
2. Storage of feed and bedding.
3. Storage of horseboxes and trailers.
4. Installation, removal and storage of jumps/arena matters, etc. when not in regular use.
5. Details for storage and removal of manure.
6. Measures to be taken to control poisons and unsightly plants.

Reason:

As appropriate (depending on location)

2. There shall be no open storage within application sites without the prior approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

As appropriate (depending on location).

3. The land shown as forming the application site, together with any adjoining land within the applicant's control, shall at no time be used for the stabling and/or grazing of more than (No.) horses or ponies without the prior approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

As appropriate (depending on location).

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## **APPENDIX**

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## **Horse Keeping**

*(Structure Plan Context - Policies G5, E1, C4, C12 and C20)*

- 4.9 Horse keeping is an increasing leisure pursuit within the Borough. Consequently, there is a great demand for grazing, stabling and riding facilities often bringing the activity into conflict with agricultural, recreational and landscape interests. In the urban fringe, particularly where the viability of agricultural land is already undermined, horse owners are willing to purchase or rent paddocks at relatively high prices. This results in further fragmentation of agricultural land.
- 4.10 Where there are large concentrations of horses, such as in the north of the Borough at Banstead and Tadworth, there are instances of the accumulation of 'shelters', stables, poorly managed grazing areas and loss of visual quality of the landscape. Existing riding facilities are continually under pressure as the numbers of horses increase. Public rights of way and common land are damaged, with increased danger on access roads to traffic and pedestrians alike. Consequently, the Borough Council will seek to regulate the cumulative effects of horse-related developments in order to minimise the impact on other countryside users, the environment, and on the roads already used for access purposes.

### **Policy Co 7**

**When considering planning applications for development associated with the keeping of horses the Borough Council will take into account the following factors:-**

- (i) the effect on land or holdings capable of agricultural or horticultural use;**
- (ii) the environmental impact of the development;**
- (iii) the effect on public highways, the public right of way network, or open spaces in the area.**

**The Borough Council will seek to mitigate problems arising from horsekeeping activities by imposing appropriate conditions or entering into voluntary agreements.**

### ***Amplification***

- (1) The Borough Council will continue to monitor the situation in the north of the Borough, in particular, and will encourage co-operation from*

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*those involved in equestrian activities in order to protect the environment of the countryside and other users, especially in the urban fringe.*

*(2) In dealing with proposals the Borough Council will have regard to the Code of Practice for owners and riders "Horses in the Countryside" produced by the Countryside Commission.*

*(3) In addition to control over new buildings, the Borough Council has certain powers over the licencing of establishments where horses are for hire, instruction is given, and livery and breeding take place (Riding Establishment Act 1964 and 1970). However, planning permission is not required for the use of land primarily for grazing purposes as opposed to recreational use.*

*(4) The use of redundant rural buildings for stabling, etc. is normally encouraged by Policy Co 3, but the general presumption against building in the countryside applies to the provision of indoor riding facilities (see Policy Re 8).*

### **Redundant Rural Buildings**

*(Structure Plan Context - Policies G5, E1, C4 and C17A)*

- 4.5 Government advice is that the re-use of redundant rural buildings can contribute to the rural economy by allowing for suitable alternative commercial, residential or recreational uses. Despite agriculture being the predominant land use in the countryside in the Borough, large areas do not form part of a rural economy, including land used for horsekeeping, other quasi-agricultural activities, and land held speculatively by developers or else under-utilised. The Agriculture Census of 1992 lists 115 (74%) of the 155 holdings in the Borough as part time. However, there may be opportunities for the re-use or adaptation of existing redundant buildings for small scale uses in support of agriculture, whether it is full-

time or part-time, provided these can ensure the future management and appearance of land, natural features and buildings contained on the holding. Control of such development is appropriate to ensure that the character of the countryside is protected and the amenity of the locality is not prejudiced.

**Policy Co 3**

**Changes of use of redundant rural buildings will be considered (if the Borough Council is satisfied that a building outside the urban areas is genuinely redundant), but will not normally be permitted unless the use or retention of the building would not detract from the character or appearance of the area and unless the currently adopted standards for parking and/or servicing are complied with.**

**Any conversion works or landscaping should be carried out in a manner appropriate to the character of the building and have no adverse impact on its surroundings. Rebuilding or extensions will not normally be permitted. The benefits to agriculture, the management of the rural environment, and the likely effects on visual and local amenity, traffic generation and access will be taken into account.**

***Amplification***

- (1) *In considering proposals for change of use of buildings in the countryside, the Borough Council would need to be satisfied that they are genuinely redundant and not capable of, or of value for, a continuation of the existing use or last use, e.g. because of their design, condition or location; also that additional buildings will not be required as a result of the proposed development. The Borough Council may seek specialist advice on these matters and on the effect of the development on the continued operation of the remainder of an agricultural holding. Similar considerations will apply if the buildings are divorced physically and/or by ownership from a holding, e.g., are in the curtilage of a residential or other non-agricultural property. PPG7(Revised): The Countryside and Rural Economy (1992) indicates that redundancy would not normally be an issue in the Countryside Beyond the Green Belt.*
- (2) *The Borough Council will need to be satisfied that proposals would not spoil the character of the locality and the building itself, be harmful to the setting of buildings of architectural or historic interest, damage the amenities of neighbouring dwellings, or cause danger or excessive traffic on local roads, or difficulties in the provision of access thereto. Current parking and servicing requirements must be met on-site, and the removal of "eyesores" will be encouraged as part of any proposal.*
- (3) *Uses likely to be appropriate could include the processing of farm produce, craft manufacture, farm shops, "pick-your-own", tourist accommodation, agricultural and service dwellings, livery and horses/ ponies for hire; classrooms, interpretative and exhibition space, storage, changing rooms, toilets and limited refreshment facilities in connection with recreational and educational uses; and stabling.*

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- (4) *Where there are opportunities for re-using or adapting existing rural buildings, commercial or industrial uses are sometimes appropriate. Planning Applications should include details of the numbers of workers and the extent and nature of associated vehicular activity. It may be necessary to control the extent and nature of business activities undertaken within and around the buildings, the extent of the floorspace or site area occupied by any individual firm, and the use of other land and/or buildings excluded from the development.*
- (5) *In the case of proposals involving building works, a structural appraisal may be required. Permission will not normally be granted where the extent of adaptation is tantamount to the erection of a replacement building, e.g. in the case of buildings with low ceilings or of temporary construction, or where the building is unattractive. Residential conversions should not normally involve extensions or peripheral development, or incorporate existing buildings which can be used for garaging or ancillary domestic uses. Permitted development rights will normally be removed by condition, and the extent of any land turned into garden land will be carefully controlled.*
- (6) *In the case of buildings of traditional character and appearance, they must be capable of adaptation without altering their particular character, setting or landscape value and without extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension. Residential conversions are unlikely to be acceptable, particularly if original fabric and features, which the Borough Council considers to be essential, are not being retained. PPG7(Revised): The Countryside and the Rural Economy (1992) explains the National Policy. Supplementary planning guidance has been produced on Appropriate Uses for Historic Barns.*

## **LANDSCAPE AND NATURE CONSERVATION**

### **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLVs)**

*(Structure Plan Context - Policies G12, E1, E2, C12, C13 and C14)*

- 3.1 The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) comprises landscape of national importance which follows the full length of the North Downs Escarpment within this Borough, from Pebble Coombe Hill in the west to Alderstead Heath in the east. The main purpose of designation, by the Countryside Commission, is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and the traditional landscapes of the area. This includes protecting flora, fauna, geological as well as landscape features.
- 3.2 Complementing the AONB are landscape areas of county significance with sufficient visual quality to merit special protection. The County Council is responsible for the designation of Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLVs) and reviewed the boundaries in 1983 to include additional tracts of countryside, including areas within this Borough. The major areas designated as AGLVs include land on the dip slope of the North Downs at Walton and Banstead Heaths, Kingswood, Chipstead Valley, Banstead Wood, and Hooley. Additionally, the Reigate Heath area forms part of an AGLV.
- 3.3 Recreational demands arising from proximity to London and the completion of the M23/M25 network bring greater pressure to bear on these areas. In addition, they are vulnerable to the changing economic situation in agriculture. The large number of voluntary bodies and land owners active in these areas together with a wide range of recreational pursuits gives rise to conflicting interests and organisational problems in meeting the objectives of designation. The Borough Council will therefore seek, through discussion and voluntary agreements with interested parties, to ensure that pressures for change are managed and co-ordinated in the interests of conservation of the landscape.

#### **Policy Pc 1**

**The Borough Council will protect the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Areas of Great Landscape Value, as shown on the Proposals Map, from inappropriate development, and will promote measures for the conservation and enhancement of the landscape. Major proposals for development within these areas would normally be inconsistent with the aims of**



designation. To aid proper consideration they must be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal of their environmental impact.

When considering applications for development in these areas the Borough Council will apply the following criteria:-

- (i) there will be a general presumption against any development other than to meet the essential requirements of agriculture, forestry or informal recreation, and development provided for in Policies Co 6, Ho 24 and Ho 26. Mineral working and waste disposal may be acceptable where no suitable alternative sites are available outside the designated areas and where the need for development outweighs environmental and other relevant considerations;
- (ii) special care will be afforded to the siting, scale, impact and design of any development which may be permitted to ensure that it is in keeping with the surrounding landscape. In particular:-
  - (a) the design, materials, siting and screening of new farm buildings should be compatible with the landscape; and
  - (b) where proposals are made by statutory undertakers, the Borough Council will ensure that the interests of visual amenity are a key consideration in siting and design.

Within these areas, the Borough Council will promote conservation and enhancement by:-

- (i) encouraging the management of open spaces and public rights of way for nature conservation and informal recreational use to ensure that visitors are accommodated without detriment to the environment;
- (ii) ensuring that where intrusive development or uses are to the detriment of amenity, action will be taken to improve the environment and extinguish such uses, where practicable;
- (iii) the grant aiding of tree planting and conservation schemes taking into account nature conservation;
- (iv) the promotion of joint action with private interests, including the management of land by agreement to take account of landscape, conservation and other objectives.

Particular regard will be paid to the provisions of this policy in the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in recognition of its national importance.

***Amplification***

- (1) *The winning of minerals will normally only be permitted where there is an overriding economic necessity. If permitted special landscaping measures will be required to ensure the protection of the landscape and agreements and conditions will be imposed to require full restoration .*
- (2) *Informal recreation will be encouraged where no damage would result to the landscape. The Borough Council will endeavour to secure improved public access*

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*to recreational areas (see Policy Re 8). Formal recreation and associated facilities are normally inappropriate to the aim of protecting natural beauty.*

- (3) Where "permitted development" is considered to threaten the quality of the landscape or nature conservation interest, the Borough Council will consider the use of Article 4 Directions in order to bring such development under planning control.*
- (4) Without careful control, advertisements can severely detract from areas of otherwise good landscape. Those parts of the Borough subject to Green Belt Policy in 1972 were designated an area of special control of advertisements, and this places additional restrictions on the types of advertisement that may be displayed without consent. A review is now necessary but the statutory procedures and requirements for consultation need to be carried out separately from the procedures leading to the adoption of this Plan.*
- (5) Much of the North Downs escarpment is owned by the National Trust, while the Borough Council also owns a substantial tract around Reigate Hill. The National Trust and the Borough Council, together with the County Council who are responsible for managing the North Downs Way, co-operate in managing the land in this area, which is subject to increasing visitor pressure (see Policy Pc 5). There is also a need to promote environmental improvements to reduce noise intrusion from the M25, particularly given the proposals to widen the motorway.*
- (6) Specific conservation works and recreation projects, where consistent with the conservation of natural beauty, may be subject to grant aid. Grant aid may also be available for tree planting schemes (see section on Woodlands and Trees). Such schemes should not encroach on existing viewpoints or vistas, but should enhance them or help to create new ones.*
- (7) In AONBs, some permitted development rights are reduced and others withdrawn entirely, so that some types of normally minor development remain subject to scrutiny by the planning system. AGLVs however, have no direct statutory implications for the planning process in terms of any limitations of permitted development rights, but serve to highlight particularly important features of the countryside that should be taken into account in planning decisions.*

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Published by:

**Policy & Community Initiatives Group**

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council

Town Hall

Castlefield Road

Reigate

Surrey

RH2 0SH

Tel: 01737 276000

[www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk](http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk)