

**MATTER 3: COUNTRYSIDE AND AREAS OF OPEN LAND**

Panel Recommendations	Structure Plan Authorities' Response
<p><b>3.35 That Strategy Policy 6: be redrafted to read as follows:</b></p> <p><b>STRATEGY POLICY 6: GREEN WEDGES</b></p> <p><b>Green Wedges may be designated in local plans in association with planned urban extensions proposed in such plans. The purposes of Green Wedges are:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Protecting structurally important areas of open land which influence the form and direction of urban development;</b></p> <p><b>(b) Ensuring that open land extends outwards between the existing and planned development limits of the urban areas;</b></p> <p><b>(c) Preserving landscape and wildlife links between the Countryside and urban open spaces;</b></p> <p><b>(d) Preventing the coalescence and maintaining the physical identity of settlements adjoining the main urban areas;</b></p> <p><b>(e) Providing appropriate recreational facilities within easy reach of urban residents; and</b></p> <p><b>(f) Promoting the positive management of land to ensure that the Green Wedges remain or are enhanced as attractive contributions to the quality of life of nearby urban residents.</b></p> <p><b>The following land uses will be acceptable in Green Wedges, provided the operational development associated with such uses is compatible with the above objectives:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Agriculture, including allotments and horticulture not accompanied by retail development;</b></p> <p><b>(b) Outdoor recreation;</b></p> <p><b>(c) Forestry;</b></p>	<p>Accept recommendations for the reasons given in the Panel Report (paragraphs 3.6 to 3.7) subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inserting the word 'strategic' in criterion (c) to ensure that links are of a strategic rather than local importance.</li> <li>• the exclusion of (e) and (f) as purposes of the Green Wedges as these are not considered to be purposes of a Green Wedge</li> <li>• including (e) and (f) as a preamble to the second part of the policy</li> <li>• retaining the wording “damage the open and undeveloped character” in the preamble to the second part of the policy as opposed to the wording recommended by the Panel for this part of the policy. The wording suggested by the Panel would weaken an aspect of existing policy that is considered to be clear and unambiguous.</li> </ul>

Decisions and Reasons

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<p>(d) <b>Footpaths, bridleways and cycleways</b>            (e) <b>Burial grounds</b></p> <p>The following development will only be acceptable if appropriate measures are taken to minimise severance and adverse effects on the amenity of the Green Wedge:</p> <p>(f) <b>Mineral extraction;</b>            (g) <b>Road proposals or dedicated public transport routes referred to in the development plan, or where there is no alternative route available outside a Green Wedge;</b>            (h) <b>Park and ride facilities, if no suitable site outside a Green Wedge is available.</b></p> <p>Provision will be made in Green Wedges for the retention or creation of green links between urban open spaces and the Countryside, and for the retention and enhancement of public access facilities, particularly for recreation.</p>	

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<p><b>3.36 That Strategy Policy 7 be amended to read as follows:</b></p> <p><b>STRATEGY POLICY 7: REVIEW OF GREEN WEDGES</b></p> <p><b>The defined boundaries of Green Wedges in the following general locations will be reviewed as part of local plan reviews, and such reviews shall have regard to the sequential approach to new development in Strategy Policy 3A and to the criteria in Strategy Policy 3B:</b></p> <p><b>(a) to (q)</b></p>	<p>Accept recommendations for the reasons given in the Panel Report (paragraphs 3.2 to 3.5) subject to amending the general locations of Green Wedges to correctly reflect settlement names in response to representations to the deposit draft Structure Plan.</p>
<p><b>3.37 That the case for new Green Wedges at Enderby/Braunstone and south of Burbage should be considered in the context of any greenfield urban extensions in these vicinities which may be proposed in local plans, having regard to the criteria in Strategy Policy 6 above.</b></p>	<p>Accept recommendations for the reasons given in the Panel Report (paragraphs 3.9 to 3.19).</p>
<p><b>3.38 That Strategy Policy 8 be amended to read as follows:</b></p> <p><b>Predominantly open land between the defined development boundaries of neighbouring settlements which is not part of a Green Wedge but performs an essential function in keeping the built-up areas of those settlements separate may be defined in local plans as Areas of Separation. Within such areas, development will be permitted only where it would not result in a material reduction in the degree of separation between the neighbouring built-up areas'.</b></p>	<p>Accept recommendations for the reasons given in the Panel Report (paragraphs 3.20 – 3.21).</p>
<p><b>3.39 That Strategy Policy 9 be amended to read as follows:</b></p>	<p>Accept recommendation for the reasons given in the Panel</p>

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<p><b>STRATEGY POLICY 9: DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE</b></p> <p><b>Land beyond the existing and planned limits to the built-up areas of settlements which is not land comprising a Green Wedge will be designated as Countryside.</b></p> <p><b>All development proposals in the Countryside will be considered against landscape character assessments featured in local plans and providing a context for Countryside Design Summaries and Village Design Statements. Existing local countryside designations will be reviewed in the light of such assessments.</b></p> <p><b>The Countryside will be protected for its own sake. Development in the Countryside will only be acceptable if the general appearance and character of the landscape and the countryside is safeguarded or enhanced. Built development should be well integrated in relation to existing development and designed sympathetically to fit into the local surroundings. Existing buildings should be re-used where appropriate. Development will be limited to the following purposes:</b></p> <p><b>(a) small scale development for employment or leisure;</b>  <b>(b) dwellings essential for agricultural or forestry needs;</b>  <b>(c) affordable housing for local needs in accordance with Housing Policy 4 and rural exceptions policies in local plans;</b>  <b>(d) land-extensive outdoor recreation uses that do not include</b></p>	<p>report (paragraphs 3.22 to 3.27) subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ deleting the words in the second paragraph “and providing a context for Countryside Design Summaries and Village Design Statements. Existing local countryside designations will be reviewed in the light of such assessments”. The wording provides explanation and interpretation of the Policy and would more appropriately be included in the Explanatory Memorandum.</li> <li>▪ amending of criterion c) to read “affordable housing for local needs adjoining villages and other small settlements in accordance with rural exceptions policies in local plans”. To make clear that affordable housing in the countryside would only be acceptable under rural exceptions policies in local plans, rather than general policies on affordable housing and that such development should be located adjoining villages and other small settlements, in accordance with advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 3 Housing, Annex B. Reference to Housing Policy 4 should be made in the Explanatory Memorandum.</li> <li>▪ amending of numbering of criteria d)–g) to f)–i). To correct an apparent error.</li> <li>▪ inserting the words “to be located” in the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, the sentence to read “...it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding need for the development to be</li> </ul>

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<p><b>(e) substantial built development; and agriculture or forestry buildings.</b></p> <p><b>In addition, the following uses may be accommodated if: they cannot be satisfactorily located within the existing and planned limits to the built up areas of settlements; it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding need for the development in the Countryside; and appropriate works of mitigation are to be undertaken:</b></p> <p><b>(d) telecommunications installations;</b>  <b>(e) renewable energy installations;</b>  <b>(f) minerals extraction and waste management development; and</b>  <b>(g) transport infrastructure.</b></p>	<p>located in the Countryside...". To clarify the wording recommended by the Panel and to accord with the reasoning in paragraph 3.27 of their report that the demonstration of an overriding need for development in principle goes beyond government policy and that demonstration that a countryside location is necessary is sufficient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ changing the reference to "renewable energy installations" to "energy installations" to be consistent with modifications to Resource Management Policy 3.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.40 That Strategy Policy 14, clause (b) be amended to read 'providing for appropriate and non-intrusive sporting activities within a wooded setting....', and that the explanatory memorandum be amended to refer to the general inappropriateness of noisy sports within the National Forest area.</b></p>	<p>Do not accept recommendation. It is not the view of the Three Councils that noisy sports are an inappropriate activity in the National Forest and the National Forest Strategy advocates that noisy sports are an appropriate activity. The Panel has misunderstood the request made at the EIP for the inclusion of reference to noisy sports.</p>

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<p><b>3.41 That Strategy Policy 15 be amended to read as follows:</b></p> <p><b>STRATEGY POLICY 15: CHARNWOOD FOREST</b>  <b>In areas designated as Countryside within the boundaries of the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Area, special attention will be given to the need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and character of the landscape.</b></p> <p><b>Within areas so designated, only development which is small in scale and essential for the economic or social wellbeing of Charnwood Forest will be permitted.</b></p>	<p>Do not accept recommendation because the policy suggested by the Panel only deals with the Countryside. It is considered that the wording proposed provides a better policy framework, recognising the special qualities of the whole of the Charnwood Forest area, including its countryside and settlements, whilst taking into account the Panel report recommendation.</p>
<p><b>3.42 That Resource Management Policy 5 be amended to read as follows:</b></p> <p><b>RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY 5: AGRICULTURAL LAND</b></p> <p><b>Development affecting agricultural land which is irreversible will only be acceptable where it would not result in the loss of the best and most versatile land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a), except where there is an overriding need for the development and where greater weight should be given to sustainability considerations in respect of alternative sites on poorer quality land.</b></p>	<p>Accept recommendations for the reasons given in the Panel Report (paragraphs 3.34).</p>