Cotswold Water Park

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Cotswold District Council - November 1999
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Introduction

The Cotswold Water Park was established in 1967. Some 80% (8600 hectares - approximately 33 square miles) of the Water Park falls within Cotswold district and the remaining 20% within Wiltshire. In 1999 the boundary was extended to include the Wiltshire parish of Cricklade, although this addition is not shown on the attached plans.

This guidance applies only to that part of the Water Park which falls within the Cotswold District.

The idea behind the zoning of particular types of uses within the Water Park was first introduced by the Upper Thames Plan, which identified activity-based uses for some of the lakes.

The zones aim to provide a flexible framework to assist with the control of development, allowing freedom for enterprise and initiative, while protecting the quality of the area.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with policies contained in the Cotswold District Local Plan and the Upper Thames Plan (reviewed 1993). It will be a material consideration when assessing development proposals within the identified parts of the Water Park. Development of land within the Water Park which does not fall within any specific zone, is subject either to Cotswold District Local Plan Policy 2, which deals with development in rural areas, Policy 1 if the land is within a settlement.

The Zones

The zones are divided into four types, zones A, B, C, & D. Each zone identifies areas suitable for particular types of recreational development and intensity of use. Together, the zones cover a significant part, but not all, of the Water Park area within Costwold District.

The Water Park and zones are shown on the attached plans. Plan 1 identifies the area covered by the Cotswold Water Park (including that within Wiltshire), and plans 2, 3 and 4 provide insets showing the boundaries of the zones.
Zone A - Quiet Zones

Zone A areas are those which:-
• are closest to existing settlements;
• have poor access; and
• have a remote and tranquil quality
  which is essential to their character.

These zones may already contain non-conforming,
but established, uses. These will be allowed to
continue. However, any intensification, extension
or replacement uses on these sites will be
considered against the criteria for Zone A.

Development in Zone A

*Development in Zone A will be for low intensity
uses which protect the residential amenities of
settlements and enhance the quiet enjoyment of the countryside.
Uses which create noise will not be acceptable in Zone A.
Appropriate uses within Zone A will include nature reserves,
walking and riding. Fishing on some lakes may be acceptable,
but may involve seasonal limitations or restrictions on the land
from which fishing can take place. New buildings will not
normally be acceptable, with the exception of structures such
as birdwatching hides.*
Zone B - Low Intensity Recreation Zones

Zone B identifies areas where the recreational use of land and/or water is acceptable in principle. However, the proximity of existing settlements requires that control be exercised over the type of use in order to protect nearby residents. Similarly, the character of the landscape within a zone may need to be safeguarded from more intensive development.

Areas covered by Zone B do not always have direct access to the main road network, but are sufficiently accessible to cope with a relatively low level of traffic movements.

The expansion or intensification of existing uses may be restricted where they do not comply with the criteria for the zone.

Development in Zone B

A variety of recreational uses will be permitted in Zone B, provided that there is no significant creation of noise or traffic nuisance. Appropriate uses will normally include sailing, fishing, windsurfing, rowing, canoeing and, in some cases, water skiing. Small private clubs for water-based activities will normally be acceptable, provided that they are well designed and that their activities, including the use of motorised craft, are not noisy. Low density and small-scale caravan or camping sites will also be appropriate.
Zone C - Sport, Recreation and Tourism

Areas within Zone C normally have direct access to the western spine road or are readily accessible without encouraging traffic to pass through the settlements in the area. They are sufficiently well removed to ensure that there is no likelihood of significant adverse effects from noise or other disturbance.

Development in Zone C

Medium to high intensity uses will normally be allowed in Zone C, provided that there is adequate access to the development site. Zone C will be suitable for uses that generate larger volumes of traffic and visitors, and which involves noisier activities. Tourist attractions will be acceptable, but only if they have an affinity with the purpose, character and natural history of the Water Park. New holiday accommodation will be limited to holiday use only by condition and/or legal agreement.
Zone D - Agriculture and Forestry

Within Zone D, future gravel extraction will provide an opportunity to establish a new form of landscape. This will be compatible with the quiet rural character of the area, recognising its high agricultural value and realising its potential as a newly-created wildlife habitat. At the outset, the opportunity should be taken to create a landscape based on agriculture, forestry and habitat creation in order to complement the water-based activity in the rest of the Water Park.

Development in Zone D

The development of land in Zone D will include the restoration of land to agriculture and forestry, the creation of woodland, lakes, marsh and other dry or wetland habitats for nature conservation management. Within plantations, recreational and sporting uses compatible with forestry will be acceptable in principle. Provision should also be made for additional public access, such as picnic sites, car parking areas, footpaths, cycleways, bridleways, and could include provision for activities such as orienteering. The creation of wetland areas will not be acceptable within the vicinity of RAF Fairford because of the problems associated with bird-strike.
Notes for Guidance

Intensity: Reference is made in the policy to levels of intensity of use. This is a relative matter that will vary widely over times of the year for particular uses. The level of intensity of a proposed use or development will be based on the maximum anticipated use of a site at peak times. For most of the time the actual intensity of use will be much less. The example of Keynes Country Park on a sunny Sunday in August, compared with the average weekday use in March, is an obvious example. The number of cars or people estimated must reflect peak time use. Factors determining intensity of use will include the numbers and spread of people likely to be using the site, the vehicle generation, noise emissions and other pollutants of air, land or water. Applicants must supply a justified estimate of anticipated numbers of people and vehicles likely to use each facility at peak times, and annual throughput. Conditions may be imposed to limit the number of parked cars, coaches or other vehicles. Site areas to be used in measuring the intensity of use will include all land and water.

Quiet Zones: Uses should not attract large numbers of visitors or vehicles. As a guide only, sites in a quiet zone should not attract more than 5 cars or 15 people per hectare at peak use. Existing examples of such uses include the nature reserves at Cokes Pit, the Freeth Mere area, Whelford Pools and the fishing use at Rainbow Lake.

Low Intensity Recreation Zones: Uses should not cause excessive noise levels, attract large numbers of people, or generate high traffic volumes. Sites in low intensity recreation zones may attract between 5 and 10 cars or 15 and 30 people per hectare at peak use. The use of water areas could be subject to restrictions affecting the location and timing of activities in order to protect nature conservation interests. Existing examples of such uses would include the sailing club lake at Cerney Wick.
Sport, Recreation and Tourism Zones: Such uses should also comply with relevant policies contained in the District-wide volume of the Local Plan. Sport, recreation and tourism zones may have more than 10 cars or 30 people per hectare at peak use. Existing examples of such uses would include Cotswold Hoburne and the hydroplane racing lake at Fairford.

Agriculture and Forestry Zones: Although the primary use of these areas may be for agriculture and forestry, there is also a need for lakes and wetlands to be created, not only for nature conservation purposes, but also for hydrological reasons. These areas could be landscaped and managed for nature conservation purposes, including the creation of new habitats.

Landscaping: The amount of land which should be kept free from development and landscaped as part of the works in low intensity recreation zones and in sport, recreation and tourism zones, is identified in Local Plan Policy 8.1, Water Park Principles.

Key Policies from the Cotswold District Local Plan

Policy 8.1 - Water Park Principles
Policy 8.3 - Settlement Protection Boundaries
Policy 2 - Development in Rural Areas
Policy 36 - Hotels and Serviced Accommodation
Policy 37 - Self-Catering Accommodation
Policy 38 - Touring Caravans and Camping Sites
Policy 39 - Visitors Attractions