

**10. TOURISM AND LEISURE**

PART ONE POLICY

**POLICY TLR1 - PRINCIPLES FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

**PROPOSALS FOR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND VISITOR FACILITIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARDS URBAN AREAS OUTSIDE THE PRIMARILY RESIDENTIAL AREA, AND ESPECIALLY TO:**

- (i) THE EXISTING RESORTS OF NEW BRIGHTON AND WEST KIRBY;**
- (ii) THE CENTRAL AND COMMERCIAL AREAS OF BIRKENHEAD; AND**
- (iii) LAND ALONG THE WIRRAL WATERFRONT AND IN OTHER URBAN COASTAL LOCATIONS.**

**TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND VISITOR FACILITIES OUTSIDE THE URBAN AREAS WILL BE RESTRICTED TO FACILITIES WHICH CAN BE ACCOMMODATED WITHIN AN EXISTING BUILDING AND TO USES OF OPEN LAND WHICH PRESERVE THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT.**

**POLICY TLR1 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 10.1 Tourism is difficult to define. However, in this Section of the UDP it is taken to include proposals which fall outside the normal categories of sport, recreation or retail uses but which are nevertheless intended to cater for a substantial number of visitors from a wider than local catchment area and especially to proposals which are likely to attract visitors from outside the Borough.
- 10.2 The vast majority of visits to attractions in Wirral are for pleasure and are related to visits to friends and family. The predominant form of local tourism is, therefore, the day or half-day trip, for which the local catchment area has been estimated to include over two million people. It is particularly important that the quality of local attractions and their immediate environment is protected and enhanced if Wirral is to continue to attract visitors in significant numbers with the attendant benefits to the local economy.
- 10.3 National planning policy guidance encourages local planning authorities to indicate the broad location of areas where tourist activities are to be encouraged, expanded or restrained. Policy TLR1, therefore, sets out the strategic principles that the Local Planning Authority will use in order to guide future tourist-related investment. It also provides the basis for the more specific policies and proposals contained within Part Two of the UDP. In general terms, new tourist development will be directed towards the existing urban area and will be specifically encouraged in three main urban locations. While visitor facilities will not be excluded altogether from the Borough's more rural areas they are to be strictly controlled.

- 10.4 A concentration on urban tourism is largely dictated by the urban regeneration strategy outlined within the Secretary of State's Strategic Guidance for Merseyside but also arises from the nature and scale of much tourist activity. While the land-use planning problems generated by such uses are not necessarily any different from similar types of commercial-based development seeking to attract and accommodate large numbers of visitors, those involving a high proportion of new buildings are generally more suitable within urban locations. For similar reasons, such uses are also rarely suitable in residential areas and should normally be located with development of the same general nature and which will give rise to similar types of development impact.
- 10.5 Tourism has been identified as one of the fastest areas of travel growth. National planning policy now requires local planning authorities to ensure that major new attractions are located in order to be readily accessible to a full range of means of transport and not just to the private car. Such uses are, in these terms, clearly more suitable to existing urban locations in town centres and other locations already well served by public transport. Policy TLR1, therefore, specifically seeks to encourage and direct new tourist-related development and large scale visitor attractions to urban commercial areas.
- 10.6 Of the three types of area where tourist activity is to be promoted, New Brighton and West Kirby are already established coastal resorts attracting significant numbers of visitors from the Borough and from throughout the wider sub-region. Both are still popular but show signs of decline. This has in the past been more marked within New Brighton, and is directly reflected in the main core of the resort being designated within the area to be regenerated by the Merseyside Development Corporation. Environmental improvements and new development has already taken place but both resorts still require such initiatives to be continued and consolidated throughout the UDP period.
- 10.7 Birkenhead, with its historical associations, still retains an important role as a focus for visitors to the area. The central and commercial areas, outside the Primarily Residential Area, continue to be logical areas for new tourist development. They combine the benefits of a busy, town centre location with its existing attractions and well established provision for car parking and public transport. However, Wirral Waterfront now represents the "shop window" for tourism on Wirral.
- 10.8 Wirral Waterfront provides the entrance to Wirral for many visitors arriving on the Ferries at Woodside or Seacombe and is the area most directly viewed across the River from the Pier Head and from riverside routes in Liverpool. Facilities within this area can complement attractions in Liverpool and maximise the advantages of a well established tourist industry on the opposite bank of the Mersey. It, therefore, represents the area of greatest potential for tourism growth as part of the wider re-development of the area.

This may also include other urban coastal areas and incorporate smaller scale projects, for example, along the frontage to Seacombe Promenade or at riverside sites in Bromborough and Eastham related to the Country Park and development projects within the Wirral International Business Park.

- 10.9 In contrast to the urban areas, building in the open countryside is to be carefully controlled in accordance with national policies. It is also recognised that the countryside is not an appropriate location for uses which are more suitable within an urban area. Nevertheless, visits to the countryside are significant for local tourism, and countryside recreation in particular is increasing in importance. Tourism can provide for diversification in the rural economy and can be accommodated in so far as the scale, location and impact of such uses can be kept within acceptable limits.
- 10.10 The approach set out within Policy TLR1 is, therefore, to ensure that new uses are appropriate to the rural area in general and to the objectives of Green Belt designation in particular.

#### **Policy TL1 - The Protection of Urban Tourist Resources**

**Proposals which would prejudice the continued attractiveness of the following features for tourists and visitors or which would cause demonstrable harm to the special character of the resources and attractions outlined below will not be permitted:**

- (i) the related dockland and heritage attractions of central Birkenhead such as Hamilton Square Conservation Area, Birkenhead Park Conservation Area, Birkenhead Priory, Shore Road Pumping Station and the Pacific Road Museum;
- (ii) the urban waterfront, Mersey Ferries and riverside walkways giving access to the shore and to views of the Mersey Estuary and the Liverpool skyline;
- (iii) the coastal resorts of New Brighton, West Kirby and Hoylake with coastal views and scenery, and facilities for coastal recreation and watersports; and
- (iv) Port Sunlight Village Conservation Area and the Lady Lever Art Gallery.

#### **POLICY TL1 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 10.11 National planning policy guidance encourages local planning authorities to protect the tourist industry by ensuring that other land-uses are distributed in such a way that respects the qualities that underpin the tourist industry. Policy TL1, therefore, identifies the features and facilities, falling within the urban areas of the Borough, which are most significant in terms of the continued attraction of tourists and other visitors to the area.

10.12 This includes not only the major historical or architectural features which form a prominent part of the fabric of urban tourism in Wirral but also includes the coast and its various associated attractions and facilities. Policy TL1 not only seeks to ensure that the need to retain and enhance these distinctive characteristics is taken into account when considering future development proposals, but also seeks to ensure that their potential for tourism is fully recognised and, wherever possible, retained and maximised.

#### **Policy TL2 - Criteria for Urban Tourism**

**Within the urban area proposals for new tourist attractions, visitor facilities and other related uses will be permitted subject to Policy TL1 and where:**

- (i) the siting, scale and external appearance of any buildings and/ or related structures is appropriate within the surrounding area;**
- (ii) the proposals would not give rise to unacceptable levels of noise or other disturbance, particularly to areas of residential property;**
- (iii) provision for car parking, access and servicing arrangements, including provision for buses and coaches where appropriate, is adequate in terms of the number of visitors expected to be attracted to the development and the availability of public transport facilities within the area; and**
- (iv) the use proposed serves to enhance or complement existing tourist attractions and visitor facilities and is appropriate to the general character of the location.**

**Where necessary, planning permission will be subject to conditions regulating the design and operation of the proposals in order to minimise their impact upon the surrounding area.**

#### **POLICY TL2 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

10.13 Policy TLR1 states that new tourist facilities will normally be directed to existing built-up areas of the Borough. They are not, however, suitable in every location and Policy TL2, therefore, sets out the criteria that the Local Planning Authority will use in order to assess their appropriateness.

10.14 The Policy TL2 criteria are based upon whether the site would be suitable to accommodate the nature and scale of the use proposed in terms of both its operational requirements and its impact upon the surrounding area. In particular, they provide for the protection of residential amenity and allow the Local Planning Authority to control aspects of the operation of the site in order to achieve this objective.

10.15 In dealing with proposals for new tourist-related facilities and attractions under Policy TL2, special regard will be given to the capacity of local infrastructure to cope with the number of visitors expected, especially at peak periods when

local highway and parking problems will be at their maximum. The Local Planning Authority will, in all cases, need to be satisfied that visitor numbers and related traffic can be accommodated without harm to the character of the surrounding area.

### **Proposal TL3 - Land for Tourism Development at Wirral Waterfront**

The following sites within the Wirral Waterfront redevelopment area are considered suitable locations for tourism projects as part of primarily mixed-use/ commercial development proposals, subject to Policy TL2 and Policy CO1 controlling development within the Coastal Zone:

1. Land at Twelve Quays, Wallasey (Proposal EM3/1) and the associated dockland areas adjacent, subject to Policy CO3
2. Land at Monks Ferry, Tranmere, subject to Policy CH1
3. Land at the former Cammell Lairds shipyard, Tranmere (Proposal EM1), subject to Policy CO3

Proposals located in these areas should, wherever possible, be designed and located in order to be well-integrated within The Birkenhead Dockland Heritage Trail.

### **PROPOSAL TL3 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 10.16 Wirral Waterfront is the riverside area between the Seacombe Ferry terminal and Monks Ferry in Tranmere, as delineated by Birkenhead Road, Tower Road, Canning Street, the Woodside Gyratory and Church Street in Birkenhead, but is also taken to include attractions in associated areas nearby, such as Hamilton Square Conservation Area. While predominantly allocated for employment uses, this zone has been identified within the Council's approved Tourist Development Strategy, since 1987, as an area where increased tourism should be promoted.
- 10.17 A number of schemes, such as at the Woodside and Seacombe Ferry Terminals including Woodside Visitor Centre and Seacombe Submarine, Shore Road Pumping Station, Birkenhead Priory, Egerton Lifting Bridge, HMS Onyx and Plymouth and the riverside walkways associated with new development at Scott's Field, Seacombe, Woodside Business Park and Monks Ferry/ Priory Wharf have already been implemented. Others such as the Pacific Road Museum and Heritage Tramway, Birkenhead Town Hall, and further work at Woodside Ferry are still being developed.
- 10.18 A number of other major redevelopment opportunities still exist within the Wirral Waterfront area. These now also incorporate the site of the former Cammell Lairds shipbuilding yard at Tranmere. Proposal TL3, therefore, recognises the importance that tourism projects may have in securing the wider regeneration of this area and provides for these further opportunities to expand tourist facilities within the area to be fully exploited.

- 10.19 However, while providing a necessary and complementary function, tourist projects should not be allowed to prejudice uses which are more clearly related to the primary allocation of these sites for employment use. Proposal TL3 does not allocate these sites exclusively for tourism. It only allows tourist related activities to be incorporated as part of mixed-use schemes for wider industrial, business and commercial purposes.
- 10.20 Existing tourist facilities within the Wirral Waterfront are linked by way of a dockland and heritage theme and are marketed as a series of attractions through the Birkenhead Dockland and Heritage Trail. It is important that the dockland heritage theme is retained and enhanced and that new projects are well integrated within the Trail in order to maximise the wider attractiveness of the area. Policy TL3, therefore, provides for new proposals, wherever possible, to be located and designed in order to maximise the cumulative benefits that arise from a series of linked attractions.

#### **Proposal TL4 - Land for Tourism Development at New Brighton**

The following sites within New Brighton are considered suitable for mixed-use, tourism-related developments, subject to Policy TL2 and Policy CO1 controlling development within the Coastal Zone:

1. **Site of the former open air swimming pool and the Marine Lake, Marine Promenade**
2. **Fort Perch Rock and Rock Lighthouse, subject to Policy CH1**
3. **Land and buildings to the south of Marine Promenade**

#### **PROPOSAL TL4 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 10.21 A number of strategies have been prepared in the past for the restoration of New Brighton as a major day-trip destination within Merseyside. The core of the resort now falls within the area of the Merseyside Development Corporation and is the subject of a revised New Brighton Area Strategy for the renewal of the area. As a result of this latest initiative a comprehensive programme of environmental improvements and redevelopment has been undertaken within the main retail and commercial area and along the coastal strip.
- 10.22 Further improvements are planned but it is widely recognised that major tourist development still needs to be attracted if the future of the resort is to be secured. Policy TL4, therefore, formally allocates those sites already identified within the New Brighton Area Strategy as sites providing major opportunities for new tourist-related development or as part of proposals for mixed-use development schemes.
- 10.23 Allocations include the site of the former open air swimming pool, which would be suitable for a major recreational and entertainment complex; the

historic fort at Perch Rock, which will be primarily subject to listed building controls set out within Policy CH1; and the redevelopment of the land and buildings fronting the promenade. These allocations reflect the wider objective of focusing tourist projects to the waterfront area north of Virginia Road and away from the main residential and retail areas beyond.

#### **Policy TL5 - The Control of Tourism in West Kirby**

**Proposals for new tourist attractions and related facilities will be limited to the commercial and retail core of West Kirby, shown on the Proposals Map as subject to Policy SH1 and Policy SH6, and to the urban coastal frontage between Dee Lane and Sandy Lane, West Kirby, subject to Policy TL2.**

#### **POLICY TL5 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 10.24 West Kirby with its beaches, sand dunes, marine lake, sailing club, retail area and public facilities within the West Kirby Concourse is an established location for a day or half-day trip to the coast by car, bus or rail. It is identified within Policy TLR1 as an area where tourism development will be encouraged. However, not all areas of the resort are suitable for accommodating tourist activities.
- 10.25 Policy TL5, therefore, aims to only direct new proposals to those areas which have traditionally been recognised as forming part of the resort itself as opposed to the Primarily Residential Area around which it has become established. This, therefore, includes the primarily retail area identified on the Proposals Map under Policy SH1, the Primarily Commercial Area identified under Policy SH6 and the main seafront area overlooking the Marine Lake between Dee Lane and Sandy Lane. Development outside these areas will continue to be regulated in accordance with Policy HS15.

#### **Policy TL6 - The Control of Tourism in Port Sunlight**

**Proposals for new tourist-related development and associated visitor facilities will be primarily regulated in accordance with controls set out within Conservation Area Policy CH9, subject to Policy TL2.**

#### **POLICY TL6 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 10.26 Port Sunlight is a Conservation Area of outstanding historic and architectural interest and represents an innovative, planned industrial village built during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by William Lever in order to accommodate workers at his nearby soap and chemical works. Together with its formal layout and "garden" setting, the village is a tourist attraction in its own right.

- 10.27 Wirral Borough Council, in partnership with UML Ltd, has recently discussed a proposal to develop a new interpretative and educational centre for visitors to the village in order to replace and enhance the facilities offered by the existing Heritage Centre. While negotiations have not yet been brought to a conclusion, the prospect of providing such a facility remains a possibility.
- 10.28 The Local Planning Authority also considers that other proposals for developing tourist-related facilities may also reasonably be expected to come forward during the UDP period. Policy TL6 therefore states, for the purpose of clarity, that when considering any new development for tourist activities within Port Sunlight the Local Planning Authority will continue to give priority to the principles set out within Conservation Area Policy CH9.

### **Policy TL7 - Criteria for Hotels and Guest Houses**

**Subject to Policy TL2, hotels and guest houses providing overnight accommodation, without facilities for non-residents, will be permitted within the Primarily Residential Area.**

**Proposals providing overnight accommodation incorporating conference, restaurant, night club and other related sports or leisure facilities available to the visiting public, will only be considered suitable within urban commercial locations.**

### **POLICY TL7 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 10.29 Policy TLR1 provides the general background for the location of all new tourist facilities throughout Wirral. The provision of suitable visitor accommodation is an essential aspect in the promotion of longer stay tourism and new bedroom accommodation should, wherever possible, be directly co-ordinated with the wider promotion of tourism. Policy TLR1 will, therefore, also be held to apply to new proposals to provide for overnight accommodation for visitors to the Borough.
- 10.30 Policy TL7 provides more specific criteria related to the differing scale and nature of provision for use by overnight visitors. Guest houses typically provide a room for short stay accommodation only and hotels generally provide a room together with some additional facilities for staying guests. Subject to the normal safeguards set out within Policy TL2 or Policy TL10, as appropriate, such uses can normally be acceptable within a residential setting.
- 10.31 However, this is not the case with proposals which, while still providing an element of overnight accommodation, also provide additional facilities for use by the visiting public. The scale and nature of such facilities in terms of the number and turnover of visitors and levels of activity and noise generated at otherwise unsociable hours means that such uses are normally unsuitable



within residential locations. Policy TL7, therefore, restricts such uses to urban commercial locations.

### **Proposal TL8 - Land at the Former Derby Pool, New Brighton**

Land adjacent to the site of the former Derby Pool, Harrison Drive, is considered suitable for the development of an hotel or restaurant, subject to all the following requirements being met:

- (i) buildings should be located towards the western part of the site, should be no more than two storeys in height and be designed so as to reduce the visual impact of the development, especially when viewed from Kings Parade and Bayswater Road;
- (ii) public access to Leasowe embankment and North Wirral Coastal Park must be retained;
- (iii) the grassed picnic area to the west of the site must be retained open for use by the general public for open air recreation.

### **PROPOSAL TL8 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

10.32 The site of the car park adjacent to the former Derby Pool has been identified as suitable for an hotel or restaurant for a number of years and could also provide additional facilities for visitors to the North Wirral Coastal Park adjacent. As the site is close to the crest of a hill, particular attention needs to be given to the visual impact of any development proposed and this is specifically provided for within Proposal TL8. Proposal TL8 also seeks to preserve the benefits to the local community of access to the coast and to the recreational facilities of the Coastal Park.

10.33 Development at this site should respect the need to protect nature conservation interests on adjacent land subject to Policy NC3 and Policy NC5 which can be found in Section 13 of the UDP.

### **Policy TL9 - The Protection of Rural Tourist Attractions and Resources**

The following features form part of the Borough's special attractiveness for tourism, based upon the quiet enjoyment of the Wirral coast, landscape and open countryside. Proposals which would prejudice the continued attractiveness of these features for tourists and visitors or which would cause demonstrable harm to the special character of the resources and attractions outlined below will not be permitted:

- (i) historic, rural villages including Barnston, Brimstage, Frankby, Landican, Raby, Storeton, Thurstaston and Thornton Hough;
- (ii) Areas of Special Landscape Value;
- (iii) areas of undeveloped coastline and coastal habitat with coastal

walks, views and scenery in north and west Wirral; and

- (iv) the network of rural rights of way linking rural villages and attractions such as country parks and areas of importance for landscape and nature conservation.

#### **POLICY TL9 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

10.34 National planning policy guidance encourages local planning authorities to protect the tourist industry by ensuring that other land uses are distributed in such a way that respects the qualities that underpin the tourist industry. Policy TL9, therefore, identifies characteristic features within the Borough's rural areas, which are most significant in terms of the continued attraction of tourists and other visitors to the area.

10.35 These include quiet rural villages, areas of special landscape quality and unspoilt coastline, as well as the network of footpaths, country parks and areas of interest for nature conservation. Policy TL9 seeks to ensure that the need to retain and enhance these distinctive characteristics is fully taken into account when considering new development within rural areas of the Borough and that new proposals are designed, located and managed in order to protect their potential for tourism.

#### **Policy TL10 - Criteria for Tourism Development in the Green Belt**

**Proposals for tourist attractions and visitor facilities within the Green Belt will be permitted, subject to Policy TL9, and where:**

- (i) the nature and scale of the proposals are appropriate to the setting and character of the surrounding area;
- (ii) the visual impact of the proposals, including the impact of related outdoor uses and facilities, is acceptable within the local landscape;
- (iii) adequate provision has been made for highway access and on-site car parking and servicing requirements;
- (iv) the likely number of visitors and the level of traffic likely to be generated along rural roads can be accommodated without major alteration to local infrastructure; and
- (v) the proposals would not cause unacceptable disturbance to neighbouring property and land-uses, including wildlife;
- (vi) the proposals would be accommodated within an existing building or would otherwise preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

Where necessary, planning permission will be subject to conditions regulating the scale and location of the proposals, the provision of landscaping, traffic and visitor management measures and hours of operation.

## POLICY TL10 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 10.36 Policy TLR1 provides for new tourist facilities and attractions located outside the urban area to be restricted to uses which are appropriate to a rural area and which are directly related to an existing countryside feature or attraction. Policy TL10, therefore, sets out the more detailed development control criteria that will be used to regulate proposals for such uses within the Green Belt.
- 10.37 The objective of Policy TL10 is to ensure that proposals, otherwise appropriate under national Green Belt controls, are designed, located and operated in order to preserve the predominantly rural character of Wirral's Green Belt. The criteria contained within Policy TL10 are, therefore, primarily related to regulating the scale and impact of proposals upon the surrounding area.
- 10.38 A major concern in regard to new proposals for tourist facilities and attractions is the ability of the local area, including local infrastructure, to absorb increased visitor numbers particularly at peak periods. This may, in some cases, also include the capacity of the local highway network leading to the site. In accordance with Policy TL9, proposals which would involve major alteration to the character of Wirral's rural areas should normally be avoided and these requirements are, therefore, re-iterated within Policy TL10.

## Policy TL11 - Development at Countryside Recreation Sites

**The re-use of existing buildings and the construction of small scale visitor facilities for countryside recreation will be permitted within the following areas, shown on the Proposals Map, subject to: the need to preserve the openness of the Green Belt; protect and enhance natural beauty, landscape character and features of importance for nature conservation; and the need to prevent over-intensive use and disturbance to neighbouring land-uses:**

1. **Arrowe Park**
2. **Royden Park**
3. **North Wirral Coastal Park**
4. **Eastham Country Park**
5. **Wirral Country Park and The Wirral Way**

## POLICY TL11 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 10.39 The sites listed under Policy TL11 are identified within the Wirral Countryside Recreation Strategy, which was prepared by the Council's Leisure Services and Tourism Department and approved in 1990. They are already established locations for countryside recreation and cater for an increasing number of visitors and range of pursuits. All require visitor facilities to be expanded, upgraded or enhanced and are also the subject of detailed management plans prepared and implemented by the Leisure Services and Tourism Department. None is considered suitable for major tourist development.

- 10.40 Some areas, such as Eastham Country Park and the facilities within Wirral Country Park at Thurstaston, are already close to their capacity in terms of their ability to cater for increased levels of use. New attractions likely to lead to a further increase in the number of visitors should, therefore, be restricted in these locations. Others, however, such as at Arrowe Park, Royden Park and at the North Wirral Coastal Park, retain scope for an expansion of activity. Consistent with the Wirral Countryside Recreation Strategy, new facilities at these locations may be able to redirect visitor pressure away from areas where visitor pressure is beginning to cause problems as well as broaden and enhance local recreational opportunities.
- 10.41 Policy TL11 is intended to ensure that an incremental improvement to visitor facilities is continued throughout the UDP period, but without harming the special features and distinctive characteristics of each site. New development is, therefore, primarily restricted to the re-use of existing buildings and, where necessary, to the provision of other small scale facilities. It also includes criteria to ensure that new development is sensitively located, not only in terms of protecting the intrinsic value of the Parks themselves but also in terms of the impact on adjacent land and property.

**Proposal TL12 - North Wirral Coastal Park Visitor Centre**

**Land and buildings at Leasowe Lighthouse are allocated for the development of a visitor centre for North Wirral Coastal Park.**

**POLICY TL12 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 10.42 The Leasowe Lighthouse and Leasowe Common area is one of the busiest areas of the North Wirral Coastal Park. It has been identified within the Wirral Countryside Recreation Strategy as an area where the provision of additional visitor facilities and information should be targeted.
- 10.43 Leasowe Lighthouse is a major landmark within the Coastal Park and since refurbishment in 1987, has become a popular attraction for visitors to the north Wirral coast. It is now, therefore, proposed to incorporate a visitor centre as part of a further phase of refurbishment, allied to new outbuildings required to provide a Rangers office, toilet, kitchen and small classroom/lecture area. The project is within the Council's approved capital programme and is, therefore, provided for within Proposal TL12.

**Proposal TL13 - Camp Site Amenity Block, Royden Park**

**Land at Royden Park, Frankby is allocated for the development of amenity and washroom facilities for visitors to the new camping area set aside within the Park.**

#### PROPOSAL TL13 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 10.44 In 1988, a new camping field was established at Royden Park to relieve pressure on the camping facilities at Thurstaston Country Park. This new provision, specifically intended for use by organised groups and parties, has proved extremely popular. However, on-site facilities are of a poor standard for this level of demand and campers currently have to cross a road to use the public toilets also used by other visitors to the Park. A need to provide toilets and showers for use by campers alone, with further provision for disabled campers, has therefore been recognised.
- 10.45 The project is within the Council's approved capital programme and is, therefore, provided for within Proposal TL13.

#### Policy TL14 - Protecting and Extending Public Rights of Way

**The Local Planning Authority will have special regard to protecting the character of rural rights of way and will seek to enhance and extend the network of public rights of way where new routes are required in order to;**

- (i) redirect visitor pressure away from sensitive areas for agriculture or nature conservation;**
- (ii) retain or improve access to features of importance such as historic settlements, countryside recreation facilities or scenic viewpoints; or**
- (iii) provide missing links in the existing network of public rights of way.**

**New routes, to be made available in the first instance on a permissive or informal basis, may be sought by means of legal agreement or ,where appropriate, as a condition of planning consent.**

#### POLICY TL14 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 10.46 The network of public rights of way, especially within the Borough's rural areas, is a popular and valuable asset for tourism and countryside recreation. It is the subject of a separate Rights of Way Strategy for Wirral prepared by the Council's Leisure Services and Tourism Department. The Strategy sets out a series of targets for the management and maintenance of rights of way throughout the Borough and forms the basis for an Action Plan setting out priorities for the development of rights of way in Wirral. The role of the UDP, however, is more limited.
- 10.47 The definition, closure and diversion of statutory rights of way are primarily subject to statutory procedures falling outside the Town and Country Planning Acts. Nevertheless, the planning system can still play a role in regulating the

impact of new development upon existing rights of way and, where appropriate, can promote the establishment of new routes. Policy TL14, therefore, sets out the approach that the Local Planning Authority will adopt when considering development likely to affect an existing right of way and when considering the need for new routes to be established.

- 10.48 Policy TL14 does not require rights of way with statutory status to be imposed upon applicants. It only allows for permissive routes to be negotiated. However, whether such routes are to be the subject of planning condition or voluntary agreement will depend upon the circumstances in which they are required. For example, new routes provided in order to satisfy Policy AG1, which can be found in Section 12 of the UDP, or Policy NC3, which can be found in Section 13, will normally be required by means of condition or legal agreement, whereas routes provided in order to promote the wider enjoyment of the countryside will normally be subject to voluntary negotiation in accordance with the objectives of the Rights of Way Strategy for Wirral.
- 10.49 The need for a new route will also largely depend upon the location and scale of the proposal involved. Extensive open land-uses, such as golf courses or other uses which would otherwise introduce a significant barrier to public movement throughout the countryside, will normally always be required to make adequate alternative provision for public rights of way.