

8 PLANNING BALANCE STATEMENT

Proposed Development:

Shilton Lodges
Land North West of Leicester Road
Earl Shilton, Leicestershire LE9 7TJ

7.1 Introduction:

This Planning Balance Statement considers the proposed development against the objectives of the Development Plan and other material planning considerations. The purpose of the assessment is to determine whether the benefits arising from the proposal outweigh any potential adverse impacts. The proposal has been designed as a small-scale rural tourism development that delivers economic, environmental and social benefits whilst respecting the site's countryside location.

7.2 The Proposal:

Planning permission is sought for:

- Four detached holiday lodges.
- Internal access road.
- Landscaping.
- Ecological enhancement.
- Biodiversity improvements.
- Sustainable drainage.
- Retention of the replacement stable building.
- Associated visitor parking and infrastructure.

The proposal has intentionally been designed as a low-density development.

7.3 Economic Benefits:

The proposal will generate economic benefits through:

Employment opportunities for:

- builders;
- electricians;
- plumbers;
- landscapers;
- local suppliers.

Operational Phase:

Long-term employment associated with:

- lodge management;
- cleaning;
- maintenance;
- gardening;
- servicing.

Visitor Spending:

Guests staying at Shilton Lodges are expected to support:

- cafés;
- restaurants;
- public houses;
- supermarkets;
- local retailers;

- visitor attractions;
- taxi operators;
- petrol stations.

Although modest in scale, these benefits will continue throughout the lifetime of the development.

7.4 Social Benefits:

The proposal provides:

- high-quality visitor accommodation;
- improved recreational opportunities;
- support for local tourism;
- increased visitor choice.

The development contributes positively to the social objectives of sustainable development.

7.5 Environmental Benefits:

The proposal delivers:

- additional tree planting;
- strengthened hedgerows;
- habitat creation;
- biodiversity enhancement;
- sustainable drainage;
- improved landscape management.

The overall environmental quality of the site will improve.

7.6 Landscape:

The proposal has been specifically designed to respond to the landscape.

Key measures include:

- retaining existing mature hedgerows;
- reinforcing boundary planting;
- retaining the open character of the majority of the site;
- locating only four lodges across the site;
- using natural building materials.

The development therefore seeks to integrate with the landscape rather than dominate it.

7.7 Highways:

The proposal provides a purpose-designed access from Leicester Road.

Only four lodges are proposed.

Traffic generation is therefore expected to be relatively low compared with many other forms of development.

Subject to detailed design and the advice of the Highway Authority, the proposal is considered capable of operating safely.

7.8 Ecology:

Ecological enhancements include:

- native woodland planting;
- meadow creation;
- bird boxes;
- bat boxes;
- hedgehog corridors;

- pollinator planting.

The proposal seeks to deliver a measurable ecological improvement.

7.9 Sustainable Drainage:

The development will incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), including permeable paving and surface water management measures, subject to detailed design. An attenuation pond for storm water and sewage treatment plant. See site plan.

The layout also respects the easement associated with the underground 15-inch water main by avoiding built development within the protected corridor.

7.10 Replacement Stable Building:

The site formerly contained a stable building which was destroyed by fire.

The proposal retains provision for a replacement stable building, maintaining the site's established rural character and preserving an existing lawful use of part of the site.

7.11 Planning Balance:

When assessed as a whole, the proposal delivers Economic Benefits:

- ✓ Increased visitor spending.
- ✓ Rural employment.
- ✓ Support for local businesses.
- ✓ Tourism investment.

Environmental Benefits

- ✓ Native planting.
- ✓ Biodiversity enhancement.
- ✓ Landscape improvement.
- ✓ Sustainable drainage.
- ✓ Habitat creation.

Social Benefits:

- ✓ Visitor accommodation.
- ✓ Tourism opportunities.
- ✓ Rural diversification.
- ✓ Improved recreational choice.

7.12 Potential Adverse Effects:

Potential effects have been carefully considered. These include

- development within the countryside;
- visual impact;
- traffic generation;
- construction disturbance.

However, the proposal has been specifically designed to minimise these effects through:

- low-density development;
- careful building positioning;
- extensive landscaping;
- ecological enhancement;
- high-quality design.

Accordingly, any residual impacts are expected to be limited and capable of being mitigated.

7.13 Overall Conclusion:

The proposed development represents a sustainable form of rural tourism. The scheme has evolved from careful site analysis and has been deliberately restricted to four lodges to minimise its impact upon the countryside. The proposal delivers substantial economic, social and environmental benefits while incorporating extensive landscaping, ecological enhancement and biodiversity improvements. It is therefore concluded that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh any limited adverse impacts, and planning permission should be granted.