

Adopted Local Plan - Tourism

Tourism

Objective: To promote Salisbury District as a tourist destination for all types of visitors, whilst recognising the need to protect the environmental quality of the District and the quality of life for its residents.

Tourist Attractions and Facilities

12.1

Tourism is of considerable importance in the Local Plan area, the most important tourist attractions being the city of Salisbury and Stonehenge, which draw visitors from Britain and overseas. The Local Planning Authority recognises the growing importance of tourism and the contribution it can make to the local economy, although it is conscious of the need to protect the environmental quality of the area. The Principles for Sustainable Tourism put forward by the Tourism and Environment Task Force (set up by the Secretary of State for Employment in August 1990) are fully supported in that they endeavour to emphasise the three-way relationship between the visitor, the place and the host community, and are based on the concept of sustainability and trusteeship - the idea that the needs of today's visitor should not be met at the expense of future generations. The policies in this chapter apply to all the plan area except the New Forest, policies for which are to be found in chapter 8.

Salisbury

12.2

The main attractions in the city are based on its historic heritage, for example, Salisbury Cathedral and Old Sarum. The twice weekly market also acts as an attraction, with resorts such as Bournemouth running special bus tours to Salisbury on market days. In order to remain popular with visitors, Salisbury's attractiveness has to be maintained. The Local Planning Authority is undertaking a programme of environmental enhancement and pedestrianisation schemes which will improve the appearance of the city. New local tourism signing policies of major attractions and car parks, together with the maintenance of the city to the highest level of cleanliness, will also add to the general appeal of Salisbury.

12.3

The tourist industry has undergone a number of major changes in recent years. Although long holidays still account for the majority of spending, there has been a growth in short break holidays and an increasing importance in overseas visitors and business tourism. One of the most significant consequences of these changes has been a marked increase

in the number of visitors now staying in the city outside the high season months of July and August.

12.4

In view of this changing market, it is recognised that opportunities to improve wet weather facilities, and enable the holiday season to be extended, should be considered. The Salisbury Leisure Centre at the Butts, together with the proposed leisure pool, will provide better facilities for the local population as well as act as an additional tourist attraction. Opportunities may also exist to develop new attractions based on the heritage features of the plan area, such as an interpretation centre. However, great care will be needed to ensure that any such proposals do not conflict with policies to conserve the high quality landscape and the historic and architectural heritage of the area.

Policy T1

Amesbury

12.5

Amesbury is extremely well located to benefit from the large number of tourists that visit Stonehenge each year and also those that use the A303 Trunk Road as a route to holiday destinations in the South West. In line with the Local Planning Authority's aim of promoting economic development in the Amesbury area, opportunities may exist in the town to make better use of this potential and develop new tourist facilities. Amesbury already has an established town centre and a number of facilities that can provide for some of the needs of visitors.

Stonehenge

12.6

Stonehenge is a world renowned tourist attraction with around 700,000 visitors a year. The monument is visited either as a specific destination or part of a tour, or as a stopping point on an outward or return holiday journey. Refreshment, interpretative and parking facilities at the site are presently inadequate and policy T3 therefore allows for the construction of an appropriate tourist/visitor development for the Stonehenge World Heritage Site. However, this policy does not imply the automatic acceptability of any particular scheme; the other policies of this plan will need to be taken into account during the consideration of any development proposals.

Policy T3

Remainder of Plan Area

12.7

In order to protect the special qualities of the landscape within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the Landscape Settings of Salisbury and Wilton, the development of new tourist attractions will not normally be permitted. Outside these areas, as with other forms of development, new tourist facilities and attractions in the countryside will be strictly limited and will only be permitted where they are related to the heritage and landscape features of the plan area. They should be small in scale and sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area. Uses which require extensive tracts of land and the construction of many buildings and/or other structures, for example theme parks and holiday villages, are not considered appropriate for this area, whereas limited visitor facilities (such as refreshments, interpretation centres, museums and exhibitions) associated with existing historical, archaeological or landscape attractions may be acceptable.

Policy T2

Tourist Accommodation

12.8

Most of the accommodation in Salisbury is long established and ranges from hotels to guest houses and bed and breakfast establishments. Elsewhere in the Local Plan area, there are a few small hotels in the villages, otherwise accommodation is limited to bed and breakfast facilities in private homes or public houses. Although, over recent years, significant improvements have been made to the existing stock, there is still scope for further improvement. The Local Planning Authority will support proposals to upgrade tourist accommodation provided that any such proposal is not detrimental to the surrounding built environment or the high quality landscape of the area.

12.9

Hotels Hotels make a particular contribution to the tourist industry in the city and form an important element in the stock of tourist accommodation. At present there are no 4 or 5 star hotels in Salisbury, although the city does have a number of hotels which are awarded highly commended, with 4 crowns certified by the English Tourist Board.

12.10

A recent survey commissioned by Salisbury District Council from the Southern Tourist Board highlighted the fact that single business travellers to Salisbury made up a large proportion of mid-week and out-of-season visitor nights. The business and conference tourist market is growing and the Council recognises the need for hotels to cater for these demands,

with the provision of conference facilities and associated services such as adequate parking.

12.11

It is recognised that there is a need to provide a new large, high grade hotel in the city, to serve the group travel trade market and business conference market. However, due to the nature of the historic and built environment in the city centre, few acceptable schemes may come forward. There is also a lack of suitable sites in close proximity to the city centre, and around the periphery of the city there are significant landscape constraints.

Proposals for new hotels within settlements, including Salisbury, will normally be permitted, although they will be assessed in terms of their impact on the built and natural environment and the vitality and viability of the settlement.

12.12

Where sites for new hotels are proposed on the edge of settlements, the Local Planning Authority will require supporting information from applicants demonstrating that all potential sites in the adjacent centres have been thoroughly investigated and why they are inappropriate for the development proposed.

12.13

Where complementary uses, such as restaurants and pubs, are included in schemes on the edge of settlements, and are larger than the demand which would be generated by the hotel use, their impact on the adjacent settlement will be assessed.

Policy T4

12.14

In order to protect the high quality landscape of the plan area, proposals for new build hotels will not be permitted in the countryside. However, the conversion of large country houses to hotel use can, if approached in a sympathetic way, provide an attractive form of tourist accommodation. It is important that any new development which is required in connection with the conversion to hotel use does not detract from the character, appearance or quality of the building and its surroundings.

Policy T5

12.15

Conversion of Existing Dwellings to Tourist Accommodation The conversion of dwellings to guest house or bed and breakfast use is

generally considered acceptable. This is, however, dependent upon car parking provision being available and there being no undue disturbance to surrounding neighbours. The nature of the plan area is such that the potential for developing self-catering accommodation is limited. However, opportunities may exist, on a small scale, to develop some self-catering accommodation through the conversion of, for example, farm buildings (provided that the proposals are in accordance with policies C22 and C23) which could supplement farm incomes, or outbuildings attached to public houses. It may be necessary to control such developments by legal agreements to ensure that holiday use does not turn into full residential use, which could conflict with other policies in this plan.

Policy T6

12.16

It is not considered that there is any scope within the plan area for the large scale "Center Parcs" style holiday village. Large scale development of static holiday caravans and other holiday accommodation, such as chalets and cottages, will be resisted throughout the plan area due to its highly sensitive character in landscape terms. Small scale development would, however, offer the opportunity to extend the range of holiday accommodation available and should be located within or adjacent to settlements which offer a range of facilities to the tourists.

Policy T7

12.17

Camping and Caravan Sites Sites for touring caravans and campers can have a detrimental impact on the landscape, and as such, need to be carefully controlled, particularly within the AONB. Elsewhere in the District, the landscape of the Local Plan area is sensitive and it is therefore important that touring caravan and camping sites do not detract from this high quality environment. Small sites for five units or less which are certified by the Camping and Caravanning Club or the Caravan Club do not require planning permission. There are no permanent sites for caravans and campers within or on the edge of Salisbury and it is acknowledged that there is a need for such a facility near the city. Facilities for Caravanning and Camping will be improved in the city with the expansion of Hudson's Field. The Local Planning Authority acknowledges the contribution which the site at Alderbury provides in enhancing tourist accommodation in the Salisbury area.

Policy T8

12.18

Elsewhere, any new campsites will be expected to be located in or adjacent to settlements, for example Amesbury, Downton, Mere or Wilton or main holiday routes (A338, A303, A360 and A36), and will need to be well screened from vantage points, highways and residential development as well as satisfying the other general criteria for development in policy G2.

Policy T9