

14.0 Tourism

Introduction

- 14.1 Tourism plays an important role in Guildford's local economy, with the Borough generating the highest tourism spend out of all the County's districts. This partly reflects the Borough's ability to offer visitors a highly varied and first-class tourism product, encompassing both the tranquillity of the countryside along with the vibrancy of Guildford's Town Centre.
- 14.2 The Town Centre provides the focus for the Borough's entertainment and cultural activities, offering a diverse mix of restaurants, galleries and museums.
- 14.3 Guildford Town Centre has particular appeal to the day and short break markets, with shopping also providing a major impetus for generating such short stay visits. Other attractions in the main urban area include Guildford Cathedral, the castle, the River Wey and Dapdune Wharf Visitors Centre.
- 14.4 The rural parts of the Borough surrounding the Town offer considerable recreational and tourism opportunities. There are a number of attractions including the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens at Wisley and impressive historic properties such as Loseley Park and the National Trust properties of Clandon Park and Hatchlands Park. Additional visits also arise from the pursuit of outdoor sports, notably rambling, horse riding and cycling, for which there is an extensive system of footpaths, bridleways and cycleways.
- 14.5 The main aim of the Plan with regard to tourism is to support the provision of high quality recreational, tourist and community facilities in the Borough.

Objectives

- 14.6 The detailed objectives of the Plan relating to tourism are:
1. To encourage the provision of "accessible" tourist, arts and entertainment facilities in locations which relate well in a social and physical sense, to existing communities;
 2. To resist the loss of existing tourist, arts and entertainment facilities;
 3. To support existing visitor attractions and promote opportunities for new visitor attractions and to seek to avoid the harmful effects of over popularity of some areas;
 4. To increase the range and amount of tourist accommodation in the Borough.
 5. To encourage access to tourist facilities by means other than the private car.

Supporting Measures

- 14.7 A number of measures will be taken which support the policies including the following:
1. The implementation of the Council's Tourism Strategy and Cultural Strategy;
 2. Investigate potential sites for additional hotels;
 3. Pursue opportunities for improved coach parking facilities.

Arts, entertainment and other visitor related development

- 14.8 Guildford Borough has a wide range of arts and entertainment facilities and is pursuing an arts policy that seeks to "extend the range and choice of arts and cultural facilities available in the Borough".
- 14.9 The Borough Council recognises that the tourism industry should be promoted because of the economic benefits it brings.

**Policy T1
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT
IN URBAN AREAS AND
IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS**

Planning permission will be granted for new, replacement and extensions to buildings related to arts and entertainment facilities in the urban area and identified settlements provided:

1. The proposed use would not detract from the character and appearance of the property and surrounding area;
2. The location of the proposed development is accessible to the population being served including by public transport;
3. The development would not have an adverse impact on the amenities of the locality, especially those of neighbouring properties;
4. The parking and access requirements can be satisfactorily accommodated and the amount of traffic generated would not adversely affect highway safety or the residential amenities of the locality.

- 14.10 Visitor related development by its nature is often located in sensitive areas. Landscaping, careful siting of development, the re-use of buildings and attention to detail can help developments to blend in with their surroundings. Any new built development will be expected to complement the natural attractions of the landscape and reflect the character of a particular area.

**Policy T2
SAFEGUARDING ARTS AND
ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES**

Proposals which result in the loss of arts and entertainment facilities will be resisted unless equivalent facilities are first made elsewhere or where it can be demonstrated that:

Continued

1. The retention of a facility has been fully explored without success; or
2. The site is unsuitably located in terms of traffic impact, noise or other adverse effects causing detriment to the amenity of the area or adjoining occupiers.

- 14.11 Opportunities for providing new arts and entertainment facilities are limited and sites are often difficult to find. It is important therefore that existing sites are not lost and when one use ceases, the land or buildings are, wherever possible, retained for another arts or entertainment use.

**Hotels, Guest Houses and Other
Overnight Accommodation**

**Policy T3
NEW HOTELS, GUESTHOUSES
AND OTHER OVERNIGHT
ACCOMMODATION IN URBAN AREAS**

Planning permission will be granted for new hotels, guesthouses and other overnight accommodation and extensions to existing overnight accommodation in the urban areas where it can be demonstrated that:

1. The proposed use would not detract from the character and appearance of the property and surrounding area;
2. The location of the proposed development is accessible to the population being served including by public transport;
3. The development would not have an adverse impact on the amenities of the locality, especially those of neighbouring properties;
4. The parking and access requirements can be satisfactorily accommodated and the amount of traffic generated would not adversely affect highway safety or the residential amenities of the locality.

- 14.12 The provision of adequate visitor overnight accommodation is important to both businesses and tourism.
- 14.13 Relatively high occupancy rates in Guildford Borough indicate a continuing demand for hotel accommodation despite recent extensions to existing hotels. The Council therefore considers it is important to increase the stock of hotel accommodation in the interests of the local economy.
- 14.14 As much of the Borough lies in the Green Belt, scope for additional hotel provision is mainly limited to sites in the urban areas. Modest extensions to existing premises in the countryside may be acceptable where development complies with relevant countryside policies.

**Policy T4
SAFEGUARDING HOTELS,
GUESTHOUSES AND OTHER
OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION**

The Council will resist the loss of hotels, guesthouses and other overnight accommodation unless equivalent facilities are first made elsewhere or where it can be demonstrated that:

1. The retention of a facility has been fully explored without success; or
2. The site is unsuitably located in terms of traffic impact, noise or other adverse effects causing detriment to the amenity of the area or adjoining occupiers.

- 14.15 In view of the continuing demand for hotel accommodation and the importance of tourism to the economy of the Borough, the Borough Council considers it is important to retain the existing stock of hotel and other visitor overnight accommodation.

**Policy T5
CHANGE OF USE TO
GUESTHOUSES AND OTHER
OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION**

Proposals for the change of use of dwellings to guesthouses or bed and breakfast accommodation will be permitted provided that:

1. The development would not materially harm the amenities of the surrounding area;
2. The residential element of the property is not substantially reduced; and,
3. Car parking is limited to that required for the reasonable operation of the proposed use.

- 14.16 The Council wishes to be satisfied that the level of activity generated by these uses can be accommodated satisfactorily without an unacceptable loss of residential use and is compatible with the surrounding properties and the wider area.

- 14.17 In some cases even though a property may be suitable for conversion to a guesthouse for example, the increased activity may not be compatible with the character of the area.

- 14.18 In rural areas proposals for overnight accommodation will be considered as part of farm diversification schemes under Policy RE8 or in the context of the re-use or rural buildings under Policy RE9 and Policy RE10. Other proposals will be considered in the light of the objectives of the Green Belt or Countryside beyond the Green Belt designations and the general policies of the Plan.

**Policy T6
STATIC RECREATIONAL
CARAVANS AND CHALETS IN THE
COUNTRYSIDE**

Planning permission will not be granted for new or extensions to existing static recreational caravan or chalet sites in the countryside.

- 14.19 Static holiday caravans and chalets are considered inappropriate in the Borough's countryside because of the adverse environmental effects they have on the countryside. Also they do not provide the type of accommodation sought by the majority of visitors to the Borough who come to the Borough for the day, for business or short stays.

**Policy T7
LOSS OF RECREATIONAL CARAVAN
AND CAMPING SITES**

Development resulting in the loss of existing recreational caravan and camping sites will not be permitted unless cessation of use would significantly enhance the landscape or countryside character.

- 14.20 The majority of visitors to the Borough are business visitors and short stay/day tourists therefore the demand for recreational camping and caravan sites is limited. It is however considered desirable to resist the loss of existing sites for the demand that exists, particularly as the opportunities for finding suitable new sites are restricted, unless cessation of use would significantly enhance the landscape or countryside character.

**Policy T8
NEW SITES FOR TOURING
CARAVANS AND TENTS**

The provision of new sites for touring caravans and tents, or the extension of existing sites will only be permitted where:

1. They are well related to the major road network; and,
2. There is no adverse impact on the landscape character, nature conservation interest, water environments, historic landscapes, archaeological interest, conservation areas or buildings of historic or architectural interest.

- 14.21 Camping sites can be intrusive in the countryside and it is important that they are well located, designed and managed. The provision of new sites should take account of the location of existing sites and should be reasonably accessible to the Borough's major roads.

- 14.22 The provision of small-scale sites on farms is likely to be an acceptable form of diversification especially where the reuse of existing buildings for ancillary facilities is involved. Such sites should be accessible on foot from the long distance footpaths and recreational cycle paths in the Borough (see also Policy RE8).

- 14.23 There may also be opportunities for the re-use of existing farm buildings for the provision of basic overnight accommodation for walkers and cyclists. Access to new sites will not be permitted from the M25 Motorway or A3 Trunk Road.