

## TOURISM AND LEISURE

### SWDP 34: Tourist Development



**A. Proposals for the expansion and development of the tourism potential of south Worcestershire (excluding visitor accommodation – see SWDP 35) will be permitted where the following criteria are met:**

- i. The development is compatible with the physical character of the area.**
- ii. The significance of heritage assets and their setting is conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced.**
- iii. The public enjoyment and understanding of the historic and natural environment is promoted.**
- iv. Where schemes are proposed on greenfield land, consideration has been given to the availability of alternative brownfield sites.**

- v. **Appropriate provision is made for access and vehicular parking facilities (including coach parks, where appropriate).**
- vi. **The site is readily and safely accessible by means of transport other than the private car.**

### Reasoned Justification

1. South Worcestershire relies heavily on tourism and leisure and it is an important element within the overall economy of the area. Along with Worcester, the towns and villages - with their rich history and the acknowledged high landscape quality - make south Worcestershire a key destination within the Midlands for short breaks and for overseas visitors.
2. Tourism, both nationally and locally, is an expanding part of the economy. At a national level, tourism expenditure in the UK is estimated to be at £85bn, employing 1.4 million people directly<sup>(77)</sup>. During the past decade, within the county as a whole, tourism generated in the region of £522m through the presence of 11 million visitors per annum<sup>(78)</sup>.
3. For Worcester, the main towns and larger villages, there are important links between economic vitality and support for conservation of the built and natural environment. Tourism provides uses for historic buildings, supports greater diversity within central shopping areas and improves the viability of a range of sporting and cultural events. Within the rural context, the Framework requires local authorities to support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit rural businesses and communities.
4. Visitor attractions can range from site-specific interpretation centres or museums (e.g. Hartlebury Castle) to extensive theme and leisure parks and landscape-scale geoparks (e.g. the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark, with its popular long-distance footpath, the Geopark Way). The policy supports proposals that are compatible with the physical character of the area, reduce the need to travel by private vehicle and look to maximise the reuse of brownfield locations.

77 DCMS (2010) [Winning: A Tourism Strategy for 2012](#)

78 Worcestershire Destination Management Plan 2012 - 2015.