

SUBJECT: Delivering tourism objectives via Local Development Plan policies

MEETING: Economy & Development Select Committee

DATE: Thursday 15 October 2015

DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of tourism related planning policies to enable consideration of the extent to which the Local Development Plan (LDP) supports the Council's objectives for growing our tourism economy.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Tourism is vital to Monmouthshire's economy, generating income to support a wide range of businesses that directly or indirectly benefit from visitor spending or that supply or service the county's tourism industry. According to STEAM, tourism generated £175m for Monmouthshire in 2014 with more than 2m visitors. Tourism also provides opportunities for enterprise and employment, and is a significant employer in the county. According to the [Welsh Government Local Authority tourism profile for Monmouthshire](#), tourism employment accounts for approximately 12% of all employment in the county. Tourism revenue per capita is the highest in SE Wales, highlighting that Monmouthshire is more reliant on its visitor economy than any other Local Authority in the region.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 04 June 2015, the Economy and Development Select Committee considered the need to review and update the current [Destination Development Plan](#) to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose and to reflect Council and other stakeholder priorities. Alongside this, the Committee requested an opportunity to review Local Development Plan policies relating to tourism, to consider the extent to which they are delivering or enabling tourism-related development.
- 2.3 The Local Development Plan was adopted in February 2014. This statutory development plan contains a number of policies relevant to tourism. Legislation requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the LDP, unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. Consequently, the effectiveness and appropriateness of the LDP policies is essential in securing the desired tourism outcomes. However, it is worth noting at this point that the LDP does not have to cover all eventualities. Indeed, Welsh Government guidance on producing LDPs requires that LDPs do not duplicate national planning policy. Topics or types of tourism not covered by specific LDP policies can be considered under national planning policy and/or material planning considerations.
- 2.4 This discussion paper is intended to assist an informed discussion on the LDP policies and to identify any areas for further attention. Should it be concluded that the LDP policies are not delivering or enabling the required outcomes, there is a formal process via which the Council can review its LDP, either in whole or as a partial review on a topic basis.
- 2.5 Appendix 1 provides a summary of guidance used elsewhere in Wales and clarifies some of the terminology.

3 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 To aid consideration of this topic, this report is divided into two sections. Firstly, the table below sets out the various types of tourism-related development and shows how they would be considered under the LDP. The table is traffic-light rated to show where policies are supportive (green), supportive only in certain circumstances (amber), or prohibitive/no relevant policy (red). The second section of the report looks at tourism-related planning applications determined since the LDP was adopted. This section utilises details from the LDP Annual Monitoring Report to investigate planning approvals, and a separate analysis of applications refused, to identify any issues arising. The relevant extracts of the AMR are provided at Appendix 1.

Local Development Plan policies

- 3.2 The LDP has 16 defined objectives (page 45 of the LDP), some of which relate directly to tourism development:

3: to support existing rural communities as far as possible by providing development opportunities of an appropriate scale and location in rural areas in order to assist in building sustainable communities and strengthening the rural economy;

5: to improve access to recreation, sport, leisure activities, open space and the countryside to enable healthier lifestyles;

7: to support a thriving, diverse economy, which provides good quality employment opportunities and enables local businesses to grow;

8: to protect, enhance and manage Monmouthshire's natural heritage, including the Wye Valley AONB, the County's other high quality and distinctive landscapes, protected sites, protected species and other biodiversity interests and the ecological connectivity between them, for their own sake and to maximise the benefits for the economy, tourism and social wellbeing.

- 3.3 The LDP contains a number of specific policies relating to tourism development:

- strategic policy S10 (rural enterprise: page 73);
- strategic policy S11 (visitor economy: page 74);
- policy RE6 (provision of recreation, tourism and leisure facilities in the open countryside: page 121);
- policy T1 (touring caravan and tented camping sites: page 122);
- policy T2 (visitor accommodation outside settlements (page 122);
- policy T3 (golf courses: page 124);
- policy LC1 (new built development in the open countryside: page 133);
- site allocation policy SAT1 (tourism sites: page 188).
- In addition, for certain proposals the criteria in H4 (page 94) and/or LC5 (protection and enhancement of landscape character: page 137) apply.

- 3.4 In terms of policies, the table below focuses on proposals outside of settlement boundaries. Within settlement boundaries, development is generally acceptable in principle subject to normal amenity considerations and policy matters such as flood risk. Outside settlement boundaries, the table highlights two key areas for attention: the need for guidance/clarification regarding how yurts, tepees, manager accommodation and amenity blocks will be considered; and the restrictive nature of tourism policies in relation to agricultural diversification for permanent structures such as wooden huts, lodges, log cabins, pods and static caravans.

Type of tourism development	LDP Policy	Scenario	Comments	Suggested Action
Touring caravans	T1	any	<p>T1(c) requires that the site can be adequately supervised without additional permanent living accommodation for wardens. However, TAN6 could allow for a dwelling on an established site#. This approach avoids permission being given for new dwellings in the countryside to accompany businesses that quickly fail/cease.</p> <p>Policy RE6 allows for small-scale, informal new build tourism facilities such as amenity blocks where the re-use of an existing building is not possible, subject to compliance with LC1 and LC5 (landscape impact).</p>	Supplementary Planning Guidance could be prepared to clarify how amenity blocks will be considered.
Tented camping (touring)	T1	any	As above	As above
Yurts and Tepees	T1	any	<p>As above.</p> <p>The limited degree of permanence of yurts and tepees means they can be considered against Policy T1.</p> <p>Embankments or areas of substantial timber decking to create a level base could require planning permission in their own right.</p>	Supplementary Planning Guidance could be prepared to clarify how yurts and tepees will be considered.
Wooden huts/lodges/log cabins/pods/static caravans	T2	Linked to an established medium/large hotel	<p>TAN6 could allow for a dwelling for a warden/manager on an established site*.</p> <p>Policy RE6 allows for small-scale, informal new build tourism facilities such as amenity blocks where the re-use of an existing building is not possible, subject to compliance with LC1 and LC5 (landscape impact).</p>	Supplementary Planning Guidance could be prepared to clarify how amenity blocks will be considered.

	RE3	Agricultural diversification scheme	Policy RE3(d) only allows agricultural diversification for visitor accommodation where it involves conversion or substantial rebuild within the curtilage of the farm buildings complex. So conversion/substantial rebuild to create a holiday cottage would be acceptable, but siting a pre-fabricated building such as a log cabin or static caravan would not be permitted.	Consideration should be given to whether or not there is a desire and need to amend the policy framework to allow greater farm diversification for tourism purposes.
	T3	Linked to an existing golf course	Policy T3 allows for new buildings if limited in scale and suitably located, so allows for warden/manager accommodation and amenity buildings.	
	SAT1(a)	Within grounds of Hendre Mansion, Monmouth	As above. There is likely to be a suitable outbuilding to convert into an amenity block.	
Holiday cottages (conversion)	T2	Conversion of rural buildings	Subject to Policy H4 (the building must be capable of conversion, not modern or utilitarian construction, good quality design proposed etc.). Policy T2(c) allows the conversion of buildings to visitor accommodation where the building is too small or inappropriately located to provide appropriate standards of space and amenity for permanent residential use.	
Holiday cottages (new build)	T2 & RE3	Substantial rebuild of remains of building	Policies T2(a) and RE3 allow the substantial rebuild of a building within the curtilage of an existing and occupied farm property where it assists agricultural diversification.	
B&Bs, hostels, hotels (conversions)	T2	Conversion of rural buildings	Subject to Policy H4 (the building must be capable of conversion, not modern or utilitarian construction, good quality design proposed etc.).	

B&Bs, hostels, hotels (new build)	T2 & RE3	Substantial rebuild of remains of building	Policies T2(a) and RE3 allow the substantial rebuild of a building within the curtilage of an existing and occupied farm property where it assists agricultural diversification.	
	T2	Linked to an established medium/large hotel	Policy T2 allows the establishment of a B&B or hostel or the extension of a hotel provided it is ancillary to an established medium or large hotel.	
	T3	Linked to an existing golf course		
Visitor accommodation	SAT1	Allocated sites for hotels/visitor accommodation	<p>SAT1(a) identifies Hendre Mansion, Monmouth as being suitable for a new build hotel, conversion to hotel/other serviced accommodation and other new build self-catering accommodation.</p> <p>SAT1(b) identifies Piercefield House, Chepstow as having potential for conversion into a hotel and other serviced accommodation.</p> <p>SAT1(c) identifies Croft-y-Bwla, Monmouth as being suitable for new build hotel accommodation (there is an extant planning permission for this).</p> <p>SAT1(d) identifies Portal Road, Monmouth as suitable for new build hotel accommodation (there is an extant planning permission for this).</p>	
Pub extensions	TAN13			

#TAN6 Rural Enterprise Dwellings allows for a new dwelling on an established rural enterprise (including farms) where there is a functional need for a full time worker and the business case demonstrates that the employment is likely to remain financially sustainable (paragraph 4.4.1). For the purpose of this technical advice note **qualifying rural enterprises comprise** land related businesses including agriculture, forestry and other activities that obtain their primary inputs from the site, such as the processing of agricultural, forestry and mineral products together with land management activities and support services (including agricultural contracting), **tourism and leisure enterprises**.

Development Management decisions

- 3.5 In terms of planning applications approved since the LDP was adopted, the Annual Monitoring Report identifies that ten applications for tourism uses were approved. These comprised:
- ten conversions into holiday accommodation units. These were located throughout the County (Abergavenny, Little Mill, Llandewi Skirrid, Llantilio Crosenny, Monmouth, Skenfrith, Talycoed, Tintern, Wolvesnewton);
 - a campsite (agricultural diversification scheme) comprising of 7 'glamping tents' (yurts) in Llanvetherine.
- 3.6 During the same period, five planning applications were approved that result in the loss of tourist facilities:
- two applications for the change of use from B&B to residential accommodation (Caldicot and Grosmont). However, given that the units were vacant and had previously been in use as dwellings, the reversion to residential use was considered acceptable in principle;
 - one application resulted in the loss of a holiday let to residential accommodation (Devauden), which was considered acceptable in order to meet a specific housing need;
 - one application involved the change of use of a B&B to office accommodation in Chepstow. In this instance the evidence submitted with the application indicated that the B&B had a persistently low occupancy rate and it was determined that the loss of the facility would not adversely impact on tourism;
 - one application related to the demolition of a public house/hotel in Portskewett and its replacement with a workshop/storage facility. This was deemed acceptable as the site is within an allocated employment site for B1, B2 and B8 uses and the proposed employment use is in accordance with the allocation and surrounding industrial uses.
- 3.7 During the same period, two applications relating to tourism sites were refused, however neither was refused on the grounds of tourism policies:
- DC/2014/00004 – Ravensnest Fishery, Tintern: This application was for the proposed extension to and conversion of a redundant pump house to create: owner's on site accommodation, fisherman's overnight accommodation and refreshment/service facilities for fishermen.
It is important to note that the application was refused because the proposed owner's accommodation would result in a new dwelling in the countryside, contrary to national and local planning policy. The overnight accommodation for fishermen and the service facilities were considered to be acceptable, not least because there was an extant consent in place for those elements (DC/2010/01073 approved 02/03/11). In terms of the owner's accommodation, it is worth noting that national planning policy in TAN6 Rural Enterprises would allow such a dwelling, if justified, for an *established* business;
 - DC/2012/00892 – 3 Rose Cottages, Redbrook: This application was for the change of use of an existing general purpose detached two storey outbuilding to a one bedroom

self-contained short term holiday let. It was refused on highway safety grounds. The site is also located within Zone C2 (undefended) floodplain. Therefore, although this application was refused, this decision was not made on tourism policy grounds.

- 3.8 It is worth noting that one further application was refused (DC/2014/01333). This application sought the removal of a planning condition which prevents domestic paraphernalia outside the static caravans at St Pierre. This application is of relevance because it illustrates how static caravans intended for tourism uses can quickly become permanently occupied. The decision on this application was tested at appeal, but the Council's stance was upheld.
- 3.9 Based on planning decisions made since the LDP was adopted, the evidence indicates that the LDP policies are operating effectively and allowing appropriate tourism development to go ahead. Although two applications were refused, in both cases the tourism policies were satisfied and the reasons for refusal related to other matters. The specific circumstances surrounding the decisions to allow the loss of five tourist facilities do not indicate an inherent problem with the LDP policies or their implementation. However, it is acknowledged that the LDP has only been adopted since February 2014 and the Council has just produced its first Annual Monitoring Report. Performance can continue to be scrutinised over the next year or two and any emerging trends can be further considered at that time.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 An assessment of how different types of tourism development would be considered under the LDP has highlighted two areas that Select Committee may wish to debate further:
- a) whether or not there is a need for clarification/guidance on how proposals for yurts, tepees, owner/manager's accommodation and amenity blocks will be assessed. This could be achieved via Supplementary Planning Guidance; and
 - b) whether or not the tourism policies in relation to agricultural diversification for permanent structures such as wooden huts, lodges, log cabins, pods and static caravans are too restrictive and should be reviewed.
- 4.2 An assessment of decisions made since the LDP was adopted does not highlight any problems at this time. It is acknowledged that the LDP was only adopted in February 2014 and it is therefore recommended that this topic be further assessed in October 2016 when the second Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is completed.
- 4.3 Overall, however, it is considered that the LDP tourism policies are fit for purpose and, with the exception of the matters outlined above, fully support and enable the Council's tourism aspirations.

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Appendix 1

Visitor Economy

Monitoring Aim/Outcome: Encourage high quality sustainable tourism

Strategic Policy: S11 Visitor Economy

LDP Objectives Supported: 1, 3, 5 & 7

Other LDP Policies Supported: T1-T3, RE6, SAT1

Contextual Changes

There have been no significant contextual changes relating to this policy area during the monitoring period.

Indicator	Target	Trigger for Further Investigation	Performance 27 February 2014 – 31 March 2015
1. Number of tourism schemes approved (includes extensions /conversions and new build)	No target	None	17 tourist accommodation units gained*
2. Number of tourism facilities lost through development, change of use or demolition	Minimise the loss of tourism facilities	Loss of any 1 tourism facility in any 1 year	5 tourism facilities lost
Analysis			
<p>1. 10 applications were approved for tourism uses during the monitoring period, all of which were for tourist accommodation facilities. These included a total of 10 holiday accommodation units (all conversions) in various settlements** and a campsite (agricultural diversification scheme) comprising of 7 ‘glamping tents’ (yurts) in Llanvetherine. The number of tourist accommodation facilities approved suggests that the relevant Plan policies are operating effectively allowing such developments to take place. However, given that this is the first monitoring period the conclusions drawn are very preliminary and the Council will continue to monitor this issue closely in future AMRs to determine the effectiveness of the policy framework relating to the provision of tourist facilities.</p>			
<p>2. 5 applications relating to the loss of tourism facilities were approved during the monitoring period, all of which involved the loss of tourist accommodation. Two of these involved the change of use from B&B to residential accommodation (Caldicot and Grosmont). However, given that the units were vacant and had previously been in use as dwellings the reversion to residential use was considered acceptable in principle. Another application resulted in the loss of a holiday let to residential accommodation (Devauden) which was considered acceptable in order to meet a specific housing need. One application involved the change of use of a B&B to office accommodation in Chepstow. In this instance the evidence submitted with the application</p>			

indicated that the B&B had a persistently low occupancy rate and it was determined that the loss of the facility would not adversely impact on tourism. A further application related to the demolition of a public house/hotel in Portskewett and its replacement with a workshop/storage facility. This was deemed acceptable as the site is within an allocated employment site for B1, B2 and B8 uses and the proposed employment use is in accordance with the allocation and surrounding industrial uses.

While the data collected indicates that a number of tourist accommodation facilities have been lost to alternative uses over the monitoring period and subsequently the trigger for this indicator has been met, their loss is justified within the context and requirements of the LDP policy framework. The Council will continue to monitor such proposals in future AMRs to determine the effectiveness of the policy framework relating to this issue.

Recommendation

1. No action is required at present. Continue to monitor.

2. No action is required at present. Continue to monitor.

*All visitor accommodation: 10 self-catering holiday cottages/apartments; 7 yurts

**Abergavenny, Little Mill, Llandewi Skirrid, Llantilio Crosenny, Monmouth, Skenfrith, Talycoed, Tintern, Wolvesnewton

Rural Enterprise

Monitoring Aim/Outcome: Encourage diversification of the rural economy

Strategic Policy: S10 Rural Enterprise

LDP Objectives Supported: 1, 3, 5, 7 & 14

Other LDP Policies Supported: RE1-RE6

Contextual Changes

There have been no significant contextual changes relating to this policy area during the monitoring period.

Indicator	Target	Trigger for Further Investigation	Performance 27 February 2014 – 31 March 2015
1. Number of rural diversification and rural enterprise schemes approved*	No target	None	7
Analysis			
<p>1. 7 applications relating to rural diversification/enterprise were approved during the monitoring period. 5 of the applications were allowed as rural enterprise schemes. Of these, 3 related to conversion of existing agricultural buildings to provide business uses where the former use of the building had become redundant. An additional scheme related to the change of use of redundant public toilets in Tintern to a podiatrist business, providing the opportunity to improve the appearance of a redundant building in a Conservation Area/Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The final rural enterprise scheme related to new build development in order to support and expand an existing rural business. The remaining two applications related to agricultural diversification, one of which was approved for a 'glamping' tourism scheme, whilst the other was approved to provide a cattery. Both schemes will supplement and diversify the respective farm businesses.</p> <p>The amount of rural diversification and rural enterprise schemes approved over the monitoring period suggests that Strategic Policy S10 and supporting development management policies are operating effectively. The Council will continue to monitor this indicator in future AMRs to determine the effectiveness of this policy framework in relation to the diversification of the rural economy.</p>			
Recommendation			
1. No action is required at present. Continue to monitor.			

*Rural Enterprise Schemes as listed here do not constitute those that require special justification as defined by TAN6

Appendix 2

Tourist Accommodation Policy Guidance in other Local Planning Authorities

Gwynedd – Holiday Accommodation SPG 2011

- **Glamping** – usually semi-permanent structures and examples include:
 - Yurts (wooden frame structures with wood burner)
 - Tepees (can be equipped with beds, open fires)
 - Wooden tents (can be placed on land without need for foundations and are not connected to services)
- **Status in planning law / UDP:**

In dealing with applications for non-traditional forms of caravanning and camping accommodation the LPA will adopt the following sequential approach:

 - Does the tent structure fall with the statutory definition of a caravan or is it a tent?
 - Is the caravan or tent a ‘touring unit’?
 - The degree of permanency of the unit on the site i.e. will it be removed off site when it isn’t occupied as holiday accommodation?
- **Yurts and Tepees**
 - Not considered to fall within the statutory definition of a caravan and can be described as ‘luxury tents’. Provide a list of matters to consider in relation to a proposal to locate such units on existing pitches on tenting campsites e.g. whether the proposal would lead to changes in the operational arrangements of the site beyond that already granted (e.g. operating beyond the permitted touring holiday season); whether the proposal involved provision of more permanent type structures with associated facilities e.g. wooden decking; whether units would be removed?
 - One of main policy considerations is the **degree of permanency** of the structure and whether it can be removed when not in use.
- **Wooden tents or similar structures**
 - If capable of being delivered to a site complete and no operations required then they conform to the statutory definition of a caravan. However, given their degree of permanency on the site such structures cannot be categorised as touring units and will therefore be considered as **static caravans**.
 - Such proposals will be considered against the requirements of policies D16 (i.e. provision of new static holiday caravan and holiday chalet sites where such proposals will be refused as already well provided in the county) and D17 (i.e. upgrading of existing static holiday caravan and holiday chalet site where criteria base approach is adopted).

Snowdonia National Park – Visitor Accommodation SPG 2012

- Notes that new forms of static accommodation have emerged in recent years e.g. pods, yurts, tepees (‘glamping’)
- Due to their recent development they are not covered by the Caravans and Development Control Act 1960 – therefore no standard definition within planning. SNPA have used existing definitions in the Act to define the various types of accommodation.
- **Pods:**
 - Constructed of timber, have floor and roof, can have beds and oil heaters.
 - Usually constructed off site and transported on to a site as a completed unit – therefore fall under the latter part of the static caravan definition (transported on back of a motor vehicle / trailer). Unlikely to be moved off site when not in use.

- Treated in planning policy terms the same as **static caravans**.
- **Yurts and Tepees:**
 - Yurts - Large like tent structures with wooden frames and solid front doors, often have beds and wood burners. Considered more like semi-permanent structures – take time to erect and much larger than traditional tents.
 - Tepees – Conical shaped structures with wooden poles, often have beds and wood burners. Again the structures are more permanent than more traditional canvas tents.
 - Such structures are not considered to be static caravans or tents as they are more permanent than traditional tents. They are typically large and complex to erect and likely to remain on the site throughout the holiday season. Therefore likely to have greater impact on surrounding landscape than traditional tents.
 - Considered more like touring caravans and will be considered against the **touring and camping sites** policy.
 - If propose decking / other associated works with yurts and tepees then due to their degree of permanency SNPA will consider any application for yurts and tepees under the policy for chalets and **static caravans**.

Conwy – Tourist Development SPG 2015

- Note that the term ‘camping’ encompasses touring caravans, tents and yurts – schemes for timber pods or alternative small structures will be assessed on their own merits in line with the criteria set out in Policy TOU/4 Chalet, Caravan and Camping Sites.