

Consultation comments on policy E11 – visitor related development within the countryside

- Support - 8
- Neither support of object - 5
- Object - 1

The changes to the supporting text and the Local Plan policies have not only been informed by the responses to the Regulation 18 consultation but they have also taken on board any additional feedback that has come out of discussions/meetings with statutory consultees and members in order to improve the clarity and understanding of the contents of the Local Plan.

Comments which neither support or object to policy E11 – visitor related development within the countryside		
Respondent number	Comment	Officer comment
BHLF-KSAR-N8TZ-5	Paragraph 10.166 mentions that visitor accommodation and associated leisure activities may form part of farm diversification plans. “Horse riding” should also be added into the final sentence as through equestrian tourism, visitors also bring their equines to stay on holiday at farm accommodation to enjoy riding in the area or along length of the South Downs Way, for example.	Agreed and this would reflect wording suggested by the SDNPA in relation to long distance active and sustainable travel routes. An addition is proposed to text. Recommended Response: Amend 10.166 as follows – ‘..long-distance walking, equestrian and cycling paths...’
BHLF-KSAR-N8Z7-8 South Downs National Park Authority	There are strong synergies with purpose 2 of National Parks (i.e., promoting opportunities to understand and enjoy the National Park), and the need to promote and develop sustainable tourism and the local economy. The South Downs Local Plan identifies Winchester City as a key gateway to the South Downs National Park (SDNP), and we acknowledge the potential for Bishop’s Waltham, New Alresford and Wickham to increase the role of tourism and visitor-related development within the setting of the SDNP. As such, we would welcome	It is proposed that additions be made to the text to make greater reference to the SDNP. Recommended Response: Addition to text as follows – 10.165 The SDNP plays an important and unique role within the district. The SDNP is located in the south-eastern part of the district and extends up to the boundaries of the City of Winchester, Bishops Waltham and New Alresford and comprises approximately 40% of the land

	<p>measures to ensure that tourism benefits the City, Market Towns and the SDNP providing that any tourism-related development is sensitively designed when in the setting of the SDNP.</p> <p>Recommend that reference is made to the South Downs Sustainable Tourism Strategy.</p> <p>Policy E11 should include a reference and/or criteria regarding the need for good physical and functional connections with other tourist destinations and active travel networks both within and outside of the SDNP.</p> <p>Also, their points under (6) of sustainable travel and non-motorised travel routes. Selected quote below:</p> <p><i>Overall, the SDNPA would encourage the creation of new – along with the safeguarding, enhancement and connection of existing - bus, cycling, equestrian and pedestrian routes into the SDNP.</i></p>	<p>area of the district as a whole. Although the SDNP area is not part of the Winchester Local Plan area, the importance of the SDNP is recognised and this is particularly so in relation to the visitor economy. The SDNPA similarly recognises the potential of the towns listed above to act as gateways into the National Park. The Winchester Local Plan encourages visitor-related development in and around these towns where it is in accordance with the plan and this policy in particular - subject to compliance with the local plan as a whole - and has in mind the potential to enhance links into the National Park from these areas.</p> <p>Amend Policy E11 criteria iii) [moved to criteria 2] as follows - long distance sustainable and active travel routes</p>
<p>BHLF- KSAR- N86T-1 Hampshire County Council (Transport)</p>	<p>P321 – Policy E11 – Visitor-related development within the countryside</p> <p>The County Council would welcome reference to mitigation in the form of innovative rural transport proposals such as demand responsive transit/taxis, community car clubs, localised bike and e-bike hire rental schemes.</p>	<p>This list is too detailed for the local plan policy and transport issues are largely covered by the transport policies of the plan (T1-T4).</p> <p>Such matters will come under the travel plans referred to in Policy E11, which requires mitigation of impacts. However, it is considered that the policy could also encourage the use of positive transport solutions as part of the consideration of proposals.</p> <p>Recommended Response: Amend Policy E11 Add new paragraph after paragraph 5 -</p> <p>Any benefits of proposals in terms of enhancing sustainable and/or active travel opportunities in the area, or improvements to the local environment and</p>

		biodiversity will be taken into account as part of considerations of proposals.
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Comments that object to policy E11 – visitor related development within the countryside		
Respondent number	Comment	Officer comment
ANON-KSAR-NKZK-F	Paragraph 10.166 mentions that visitor accommodation and associated leisure activities may form part of farm diversification plans. “Horse riding” should also be added into the final sentence as through equestrian tourism, visitors also bring their equines to stay on holiday at farm accommodation to enjoy riding in the area or along length of the South Downs Way, for example.	Duplicate of comment BHLF-KSAR-N8TZ-5. Considered above. Recommended Response: No change (covered above)

Comments that did not answer whether they support, object or neither support or object to policy E11 – visitor related development in the countryside		
Respondent number	Comment	Officer comment
BHLF-KSAR-N8RU-X	Tourism is vital: Covid demonstrated how countryside is linked to people’s physical and mental health and, overall, tourism’s benefits for the District and localised economies are huge. Large scale events in the countryside can be problematic: at odds with local communities, disturbing wildlife and encouraging significant growth in car and coach traffic but these impacts could to a considerable extent be much better controlled by the Authorities. The historic and natural heritage assets are magnets for visitors in both Winchester Town and the market towns and villages and	Comments noted. The points are generally covered in the supporting text to E11. Other policies of the plan in Natural Environment section include leisure and recreation facilities in the countryside. Recommended Response: No change

	surrounding countryside. Without tourism, the hospitality and leisure sectors and a wide range of retailers from 'everyday' to specialist 'destination' shops, will continue to struggle and, in the medium to longer term, their decline or loss also diminishes community cohesion.	
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	Recommendations	Officer response
Comments from SA	NONE	
Comments from HRA	NOT AS YET	

Amendments to policy E11

Amendments to supporting text

All supporting text updated, final version below.

VISITOR-RELATED DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE COUNTRYSIDE

10.174 The visitor economy is an important part of the rural economy of the Winchester district and this is expected to grow.

10.175 Opportunities exist to make use of the natural assets and beauty of the area and take advantage of links to South Downs National Park and the wider south-east area, the coast, and relative accessibility to London and regional airports. Visitors are attracted by the natural beauty of the area, its rivers and countryside, the historic attractions of Winchester City and traditional character of the market towns and attractive smaller rural settlements. There are unique activities which attract visitors such as vineyards, recreational fishing areas and opportunities for recreation on local rivers such as the Itchen and Hamble. Also of note are a number of large country hotels that attract visitors and business/conference uses.

10.176 The SDNP plays an important and unique role within the district. The SDNP is located in the south-eastern part of the district and extends up to the boundaries of the City of Winchester, Bishops Waltham and New Alresford and comprises approximately 40% of the land area of the district as a whole. Although the SDNP area is not part of the Winchester Local Plan area, the importance of the SDNP is recognised and this is particularly so in relation to the visitor economy. The SDNPA similarly recognises the potential of the towns listed above to act as gateways into the National Park. The Winchester Local Plan

encourages visitor-related development in and around these towns where it is in accordance with the plan and will take into consideration the potential to enhance links into the National Park from these areas.

10.177 Visitor-related activities can make a valuable contribution to the sustainability and viability of rural settlements from the smaller rural villages to the larger market towns. The visitor economy supports local food and drink business in the rural area, such as rural pubs and restaurants, attractions associated with local farms, such as around farm shops. Such businesses can enhance the local economy, supporting the local supply chain and providing local employment. The visitor economy can also assist in supporting the viability of sustainable travel options in these areas through their increased custom.

10.178 There are opportunities for event venues in association with existing buildings, attractions or in an attractive location. Visitor development may enable the restoration or enhancement of historic buildings and other heritage assets. Visitor accommodation and associated leisure activities may form part of farm diversification plans. New opportunities may arise in relation to eco-tourism proposals that benefit the environment. There are also opportunities for development in association with long-distance walking cycling and equestrian routes into the SDNP and beyond.

10.179 Larger-scale developments such as hotels should be situated within settlements and other policies of the plan cover these – particularly E3 (Town Centres Strategy and Hierarchy) and E7 (Town Centres).

10.180 This policy considers development outside of settlements, where development is strictly limited. Accordingly, it is necessary for proposals to outline the benefits to the local economy as part of the justification for their proposals, including when proposing additional development in relation to existing accommodation or facilities. In order to minimise impacts on the rural environment, proposals should make use of existing buildings in the first instance and will be expected to provide justification when this is not the case.

10.181 As well as considering the impacts of proposals, the council will take into account any benefits that the proposal may provide such as in relation to improvements to biodiversity, such as habitat creation, restoration of historic buildings and features or enhancements to active travel routes in the area. Applicants should therefore set out any such benefits as part of their proposals.

10.182 A variety of accommodation is necessary to provide for the varied needs of visitors, ranging from hotels, to bed and breakfast and self-catering accommodation to camping and camping and caravanning sites. Larger scale hotels are directed to towns and village centres to support the range of activities there and where they are more accessible by a variety of means of transport and sites are more likely to be available to accommodate their larger footprint.

10.183 There is a need for a range of smaller scale accommodation to support the rural visitor economy. For some of these forms of development, their situation in isolated locations, or away from built areas is part of their appeal. However, these may have the potential for disproportionate impacts on the local environment so will need to be carefully controlled. The situation in relation to existing settlements, local attractions and long-distance routes will be taken into consideration when considering the appropriateness of the location in relation to the creation of rural hubs and support for 20 minute neighbourhoods. The accessibility of the site by existing active travel and sustainable travel means will also be considered as contributing to carbon reduction.

10.184 Important factors will be the amount and scale of development in terms of its visual impact. Even camp sites may have ancillary facilities such as amenity blocks, site shops or cafés which will also have an impact, both visually and in terms of potential pollution issues from light, sound, and traffic generation.

10.185 The location of the site in terms of accessibility and traffic generation will be very important. Limits may need to be imposed on the amount of development permitted as a result – to mitigate negative environmental impacts and minimise traffic issues. Long-term management plans may be sought to ensure that the proposals support the characteristics of the rural environment.

Policy E11 Visitor-Related Development within the Countryside

Visitor related development, including accommodation and improvements and associated development to existing visitor attractions and accommodation in the countryside will be supported where the proposals are in accordance with the development plan, promote the rural economy and contribute positively towards the ongoing protection and enhancement of the countryside.

Proposals will be expected to make use of existing buildings in the first instance. Proposals which involve new buildings should provide justification as to why it is not feasible to use existing buildings.

Proposals will be expected to provide evidence to support new development in terms of the benefits to the local economy and demonstrate how the proposal will minimise impacts on the local environment, by its location, scale and detailed design.

Traffic assessments of proposals will be necessary and travel plans will be required to show how impacts can be mitigated.

Where proposals are being proposed as part of ensuring the viability of existing commercial development within the countryside (such as pubs or food and drink facilities) this should be made clear in the application.

Any benefits of proposals in terms of enhancing sustainable and/or active travel opportunities in the area, or improvements to the local environment and biodiversity will be taken into account as part of considerations of proposals.

In assessing proposals for overnight accommodation within the countryside, account will also be taken of the following factors:

- i. Potential to use existing buildings.
- ii. Location in relation to existing settlements, local attractions, other visitor and tourist uses and long distance sustainable and active travel routes.
- iii. Accessibility by active travel and sustainable transport.
- iv. Scale of development in relation to the character of the area and the characteristics of the site, and
- v. The suitability of local infrastructure and access arrangements.

Visitor accommodation that is of a large scale in terms of its physical size or the amount of traffic it generates will not be appropriate within the countryside. Hotels should be located within settlements. Residential or commercial uses, proposed in association with tourism, recreational and leisure developments in the countryside, but not directly essential to their operation, will not be permitted.