

## **Issue – Tourism**

The Issues and Options document provides the overall definition and background to this particular issue. The identification of this issue as an essential part of the Core Strategy is justified by key evidence set out in the first table below.

### **Desirable outcomes by 2026**

The Community Plan sets out aims of where the District wants to be in 2015:

- Tourism will support the economy across the District, not just in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon.
- The area will fully benefit from the international profile of Shakespeare and the very broad cultural diversity of the district.

The Corporate Strategy aims to increase economic viability in the four main market towns through delivery of the World Class Stratford programme and through action plans to achieve market town area visions. Promoting specific forms of tourism forms an important part of all these projects.

The Corporate Strategy also aims to increase the value of the visitor economy across the whole district, encourage extended visitor stays and capitalise on the opportunity of the 2012 Olympics and Paralympic Games. This will be achieved through agreement and implementation of a delivery plan for a Coventry and South Warwickshire Destination Management Partnership, and through pursuing funding for Better Welcome projects in the market towns. There is also an action to consider whether current local planning policies should take a more positive approach towards hotel development in the District.

## **Policy Context**

### **National**

The Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism (which replaced PPG21 in May 2006) states that development suited to a town centre should be allowed only in town centres. For other development the impacts on the viability and vitality of town centres, and accessibility without a car should be weighed against other factors such as the chance to enhance a site, provide facilities for local residents, and diversify the local economy.

PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas highlights that one important use of the countryside is to provide appropriate leisure opportunities for rural and urban dwellers, but that these needs to be balanced against factors such as sustainable transport.

### **Regional**

The emerging RSS encourages development of tourism and culture as an important contribution to local economy and environmental improvement, subject to the capacity of infrastructure and the environment to accommodate facilities and visitors. Key regional tourism and cultural assets include Stratford-upon-Avon and Shakespeare Country.

Development plans should identify areas where sustainable tourism can be encouraged to the benefit of the local economy and employment without damaging local environment or character. It may be necessary for plans to limit development to particular types or scales of tourism and include proposals to mitigate any problems caused by existing tourism. Plans can also identify the facilities needed to support tourism such as accommodation, improved public transport, and regional footpaths and cycleways.

A settlement hierarchy is at the heart of development policies in the RSS, so major uses which attract large numbers of visitors should be located in Stratford-upon-Avon. Tourism uses can aid farm diversification but should support the main agricultural function.

The West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy (2004) encourages this large diverse region to work together to attract visitors rather than compete against each other's districts. Stratford/Warwick and the Cotswolds are identified as Key Destinations which need continued investment, infrastructure and services, and which should act as Visitor Gateways to the surrounding area. The region should focus on attracting visitors from outside the region, high spending visitors and over-night stays (at the moment nights stayed per trip is lower than average).

### **Local**

The World Class Stratford project is a partnership between Stratford District Council, Warwickshire County Council, The Royal Shakespeare Company and many other key organisations for the town, with Advantage West Midlands support and investment. Its ambition is to create a town that has a world-class quality reputation among residents, businesses and visitors. The Urban Design Framework produced by World Class Stratford sets out detailed objectives for improvement to Stratford to create a centre of excellence for education, culture, leisure, tourism, and an improved public realm and environment. Several major redevelopment projects are identified including the redevelopment of the Bridgeway area to connect the town with the river and provide a major new cultural attraction. The re-landscaping of Bancroft Gardens started Jan 2008.

### **Existing evidence base relating to the issue**

Issue/Challenge	Current State	Trends	Source of Information
Tourism	<p>In 2001 there were 5.5 million visitors to the district spending £238 million. Only 0.9 million visitors stayed overnight, but these visitors spent over half of the total spending. Tourism supports approx 5,702 direct jobs and a further 1,183 jobs from multiplier spending in the district.</p> <p>Tourism supports jobs in 5 key business sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>26% in accommodation</li> <li>17% in retailing</li> <li>34% in catering</li> <li>19% leisure/ attractions/ entertainment</li> <li>4% transport services</li> </ul>		2001 Tourism Economic Impact Assessment for Stratford-on-Avon District (for SDC by Visit Heart of England)
	<p>In 2005, 17.1 million visitors came to Coventry and Warwickshire, of whom the majority were day visitors. They spent approximately £1.4 billion which supported in the region of 34,587 jobs.</p>		Coventry and Warwickshire; The Economic Impact of Tourism (for AWM by Heart of England, 2007 report using 2005 data)
	<p>Strengths for tourism in Stratford-upon-Avon include the Elizabethan heritage and architecture of the centre, the history and setting of the town and the current high number of</p>	<p>Identified economic concerns over the low pay of many jobs in tourism versus the high cost of living, the fact that tourist numbers have been declining recently, and that visitor spend is</p>	<p>World Class Stratford Urban Design Framework (April 06, Urban Practitioners team representing WCC, AdvWM, Stratford Town Trust, RSC, SDC</p>

	<p>3.8 million visitors a year.</p> <p>Weaknesses include poor rail links and connection between town and station, congested road system, lack of evening economy, and the loss of independent traders.</p>	<p>lowered by the predominance of day over staying visitors.</p> <p>Threats include the limited interests and reasons for visiting the town of visitors, and the quality of the town centre environment.</p> <p>There are opportunities to diversify the attractions offered by the town.</p>	<p>etc).</p>
	<p>The main things that visitors like are the relaxed atmosphere, the river, the parks and gardens, the buildings and architecture, the shopping, the theatre, the history and general prettiness.</p> <p>Cost of parking, value for money of attractions and catering, overcrowding and threat of traffic are rated significantly lower than by visitors to comparable historic towns.</p> <p>The percentage of visitors travelling by regular public transport at 15% is significantly lower than the 28% average for all historic towns. 25% felt threatened by traffic which is 3 times the average.</p> <p>69% of visitors said that nothing had spoilt their enjoyment of their visit.</p>		<p>Stratford on Avon Visitor and Benchmarking study (Heart of England Tourism for SDC and S Renaissance, 2005)</p> <p>Survey undertaken in Stratford June-Sept 05 using questions for 'historic town benchmarking' to allow comparisons to Chichester, Colchester, Oxford etc.</p>

	A town of 23,000 would not normally be able to support 3 international theatres, 70 restaurants, over 200 shops and well maintained parks by the river without tourism.		Stratford-on-Avon Visitor Management Action Programme 1992-1995; final report (Maureen Hicks, project director)
Tourism aspirations of rural market towns	The Vision for Southam has already resulted in projects such as the renovation of the Holy Well and a sculpture walk.	Southam wants to improve level and quality of information for tourists and residents about local attractions. It will support schemes to present and promote local attractions and heritage e.g Blue Lias Rings Walks, Holy Well etc.	Vision for Southam 2020 and Southam Town Plan 2006
		Alcester recognises the value of tourism for the local economy and aims to fully exploit the visitor economy and be a quality destination of choice. This will be achieved by strengthening the Roman heritage, promotion as a stop-over destination for walkers and cyclists and as a festival town, and extending the visitor accommodation offer.	Vision for Alcester in 2020
	Ragley Hall and Coughton Court are high profile attractions which bring visitors to Alcester.	Alcester aims to work with SDC and Better Welcome to make it a more attractive place for tourists and visitors.	Alcester Town Plan 2007
	The Stour Area recognises the value of tourism for the local economy.	The Stour Area want to promote itself as a base from which more visitors will chose to explore the Cotswolds and Shakespeare country. Rather than develop attractions the emphasis of the actions is to improve the already attractive natural environment including AONB and develop first class visitor accommodation.	Vision for Stour in 2020

		Shipston-on-Stour seeks to promote itself as a shopping destination of choice.	
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The evidence base identifies the significant contribution that tourism makes to the economy of the district, and especially to Stratford-upon-Avon, by bringing in money, creating jobs in a variety of sectors, and by supporting a higher level of facilities than would normally be found in a town the size of Stratford. There is concern that visitor numbers are declining due to a variety of factors. The heritage and atmosphere of the town are highly valued by tourists, but infrastructure (traffic, overcrowding, parking, catering) is less satisfactory. Market towns are interested in attracting visitors, but the towns' Visions and Town Plans show differing emphasis on the extent of new facilities desired.

### Analysis of public consultation on the Issues and Options stage

**Is it appropriate to provide further tourist attractions in Stratford-upon-Avon town? If yes, what types of attractions are suitable?**

Answer to parent question	Comments made on question	Analysis of response
<p><b>Of those who expressed an opinion:</b></p> <p><b>67% said no</b></p> <p><b>33% said yes</b></p>	<p>It is important that the tourism product is adapted to meet changing expectations and competition from other centres. The Council should not be too prescriptive but should support investment and the type of attraction will be determined by the market.</p> <p>Infrastructure of SUA is already strained by number of tourists. Disperse tourism across district.</p> <p>No comment.</p> <p>The Framework should support existing facilities</p> <p>More attractions will overload facilities and we certainly do not want new Casinos or Adult entertainment to cheapen district.</p> <p>Tourist appeal is Shakespeare connections and riverside market town character. New attractions would damage this.</p> <p>Yes but only where compatible with central Shakespeare cultural message. A number of towns have launched book x with great success. It will be difficult to predict international tourist patterns in the light of carbon emissions. European/Chinese tourists likely to want attractions. Need to work on internal UK market</p>	<p>The majority of respondents said that it is not appropriate to provide further attractions in SUA. Reasons included concern that further attractions would damage the river and market town appeal of the town (3 mentions), or result in "down-market" attractions reducing the quality of the town's offer (3 mentions). Also respondents</p>

	<p>see question 36</p> <p>Railway museum, up to date leisure facilities, hands-on museum e.g. waterways or engineering which would interest younger people.</p> <p>Go further than Shakespeare-Greater use of river.</p> <p>Stratford's appeal lies in its Shakespearian connections and small market town character. Number of visitors already stretches infrastructure, and further attractions or infrastructure would damage character and so appeal of the town. Should focus on improving experience and spend per head of current numbers. There are compatible attractions in Warwick and rural areas. SDC should focus on providing quality shopping and restaurants, and street entertainment.</p> <p>Build on heritage of district. Unclear whether the theatre helps the economy versus non cultural visitors. Undesirable to have town-market intrusions. Replacement needed for Lucy's Mill bridge.</p> <p>Shut down tacky museums, replace with local history and craft centres.</p> <p>Toilets, extend park &amp; ride and local parking.</p> <p>Shakespearean actors on the streets.</p> <p>High class attractions to complement existing themes.</p> <p>Expand and improve tourist/leisure facilities.</p> <p>One high quality visitor centre welcome.</p> <p>Distinctive attractions such as the Teddy Bear Museum, other small museums.</p> <p>On a limited basis only. Tourists would like entertainment other than Shakespeare e.g. old style music hall.</p> <p>Emphasise residents not tourists. No need to improve/ change SUA riverside and preserve the Rec. If park&amp;ride developed at Shipston rd/ Severns Meadow intersection should have an electric trolley run along the Tramway to the Butterfly Farm.</p> <p>Subject to identifying need and any conflict with environmental objectives.</p> <p>Opportunity for substantial new cultural attraction on site of leisure centre and other attractions, complementing RSC and Shakespeare offer.</p> <p>Family attractions to complement the heritage attractions and keep families in town longer</p> <p>Five star hotel.</p> <p>Just need to keep Shakespeare, leisure and retail in balance</p> <p>Think there is sufficient?</p> <p>A 16th Century view of English life theme park.</p> <p>Tourism must continue to be a major contributor to the local economy.</p> <p>Haven't we got enough tourists already?</p> <p>State-of-art leisure centre and olympic size swimming pool. New bridge over Avon at Tiddington.</p> <p>Best tourism attraction is the quality of the town and interesting museum, water walks, public gardens. it is the tourist attractions needs to make sure that inappropriate attractions don't come to the town.</p> <p>We should not let tourist buses drive through the town - they give nothing and pollute. Groups should park and walk.</p>	<p>felt that there are sufficient existing attractions, and that infrastructure for tourists is already overloaded.</p> <p>Attractions were suggested by those supporting further attractions, but there were no particular themes. Street entertainment, heritage attractions, infrastructure such as toilets and park and ride, and high quality attractions to support existing, were all mentioned twice. 3 respondents thought that the Core Strategy should support further attractions without being prescriptive to allow the town to adapt to remain competitive.</p>
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**Should we encourage a wider range of tourist attractions in the rural settlements and countryside? If yes, what types of attractions are suitable?**

Answer to parent question	Comments made on question	Analysis of response
<p><b>Of those who expressed an opinion:</b></p> <p><b>52% said yes</b></p> <p><b>48% said no</b></p>	<p>Accommodating boats off-line i.e. off the canal itself.            Good family attractions but no large theme parks.            Those linked to/utilising the assets of an attractive rural environment.            Attractions could include water based recreation facilities that would be appropriate in terms of landscape impact.            No comment.            If appropriate - no need to specify type in advance.            Attractions accessible by sustainable transport which would not have a detrimental impact on the strategic road network.            Plenty to do in Warwickshire already. No justification to encourage further traffic movements when country roads are too busy with high accident rate.            SUA should continue to be a focus for further attractions but need to balance environmental and congestion costs against any benefits. Also should spread benefits from tourism more widely across district so encourage attractions outside main settlements.            Ways in which people can learn about the contribution that the rural economy can make.            see question 36            Should focus on local needs not tourists. Tourists are happy to visit the district as it is and can choose to go elsewhere if do not like it.            Cycleways, footpaths, bird watching.            More support for maintaining the canal system for boat users, walkers and cyclists.            Properly promote fetes, folk festivals, concerts, garden walkabouts, heritage ceremonies and other rural activities.            historic attractions, country site, sport, hotels, restaurants and pubs, walks, events, worldwide advertising.            Environmentally friendly attractions such as documented walks and country parks.            Concerts, fetes, folk and other festivals. Promote these rural attractions properly through tourist board.            Support Chedham's Yard!            Family oriented centre i.e. farms and animal sanctuaries            This should be driven by business needs to meet a quantified demand            Many existing historic dwellings should be better linked, a tour? Trains round marked towns of interest.            There are already plenty of attractions in rural areas and transport to small rural villages would not be sustainable.</p>	<p>A key theme was to allow attractions which rely on and contribute to the rural nature of the area (17 mentions).</p> <p>Specific examples are:</p> <p>Walking, cycling or country parks (9 mentions)            Agricultural education and farm visits (5 mentions)            Visiting natural habitats or wildlife reserves (5 mentions)            Promoting rural community events such as fetes, shows, charity events to a wider audience (4 mentions)            Rural crafts (2 mentions)</p> <p>Several respondents perceived rural attractions as an "add-on" for tourists visiting Stratford-upon-Avon and an opportunity to draw tourists away from the town through guided visits,</p>

	<p>Promote country parks and historic buildings.  SUA should continue to be a focus for further attractions but need to balance environmental and congestion costs against any benefits. Also should spread benefits from tourism more widely across district so encourage attractions outside main settlements.  SUA should continue to be a focus for further attractions but need to balance environmental and congestion costs against any benefits. Also should spread benefits from tourism more widely across district so encourage attractions in rural areas, especially improvement and growth of existing venues and large areas of developed land for e.g. conference, exhibition and show events, music and cultural events.  Carefully selected places, Mary Ardens House is a good example.  Attractions which promote the agricultural/ horticultural nature of the district including farm open days and seminars. Similar for village communities.  Any attraction which helps the urbanised Stratfordian to realise that he/she lives in a rural community which harbours natural miracles.  Attractions with a rural basis.  Develop leisure drives, nature trails and conservation areas, these could link together. Add on to mason attraction of Stratford.  Professionally guided tours.  Small artistic units, farm shops, activity based.  Wildlife sanctuaries.  Would spoil the attraction of the countryside.  Large estates could be a base for entertainment, country fayres, water festivals  SUA should remain the hub for visitor economy, but surrounding hinterland should also be part of the visitor experience.  Family friendly  Publicity for local charity events. Hand outs for local servies, walks, folk festivals, fetes, markets, open gardens, concerts etc. to attract visitors away from Stratford.  Countryside prsuits to expand ctachment area  Whatever the owners require.  Summer concert arena at Long Marston, but only after construction of bypass!  family orientated - farms, animal sanctuaries, mills, local interest.  Marina on River Avon.  The countryside and unspoilt villages ARE the attraction.  Using footpaths/ bridleways that are signposted and maintained that have low impact parking. This will take people into rural areas to use the services.  Areas not open with beauty and parking.  Small scale heritage sites and rural crafts and industries. Improved pedestrian and cycling paths, heritage walks, rural travel tours.  Not more 2nd rate B&amp;Bs. Footpath network should be utilised</p>	<p>promoted tours and increased national advertising (7 respondents).</p> <p>Other responses supported larger scale venues such as showgrounds, and allowing rural estates to host events (4 mentions), family orientated attractions (4 mentions), and canal based tourism (3 mentions).</p> <p>Some were concerned to avoid increasing car trips (3 mentions) and to protect the main attraction of unspoilt countryside (3 mentions).</p>
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## Identification and assessment of Options relating to the tourism and culture

## Option 1

Cultural and visitor developments will be supported where they are appropriate to the size, role and character of the settlement. Within the centre of Stratford-upon-Avon, major visitor attractions will be supported and the visitor offer will be extended and improved through the World Class Stratford initiative. Alcester, Shipston and Southam will be supported in their aspirations to improve their visitor offer through initiatives such as the Market Town Initiative and the Better Welcome project. Small-scale tourism-based schemes which help to provide local employment and support for existing rural services will be encouraged across the district.

## Option 2

In accordance with the majority response to the Issues and Options consultation, further large-scale visitor attractions will not be supported within the district, even within the centre of Stratford-upon-Avon. Small-scale tourism-based schemes will be acceptable where they promote and enhance the rural or agricultural nature of their setting.

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Option 1 Provision to match settlement hierarchy</b>	<b>Option 2 Small scale rural attractions only</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Consistency with national policy</b>	+	-	National policy recognises the benefits of tourism and considers town centres to be an appropriate place for new tourism development.
<b>Consistency with regional policy</b>	+	-	Stratford-upon-Avon and Shakespeare Country is identified as a key regional tourism asset which should be developed. A settlement hierarchy is at the heart of development policies in the RSS.
<b>Consistency with Community Plan and Corporate Strategy</b>	+	-	Option 2 would be contrary to local objectives to provide a world class offer in Stratford-upon-Avon, and medium-scale attractions in the larger rural centres.
<b>Consistency with response to Issues &amp; Options</b>	-	+	The majority of respondents did not wish to see further large scale attractions in Stratford-upon-Avon.

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Option 1 Provision to match settlement hierarchy</b>	<b>Option 2 Small scale rural attractions only</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>consultation document</b>			
<b>Participation – provide scope to contribute to decision-making</b>	+	+	Both of these options could provide scope for decision making. The Market Town initiative is led by local communities.
<b>Crime – reduce crime/anti-social behaviour and fear of crime</b>	/	/	
<b>Education – provide facilities for all stages of life</b>	+	0	Tourist attractions may offer educational opportunities provided they are well connected to local communities.
<b>Health – provide facilities and promote healthy lifestyles</b>	/	/	
<b>Poverty – tackle disadvantage</b>	/	/	
<b>Access – improve services and opportunities</b>	+	0	Attracting new visitors to main rural centres could help support and so maintain local everyday services.
<b>Culture &amp; recreation – increase participation</b>	++	+	Visitor attractions should provide new opportunities to engage in culture and recreation.

Factors	Option 1 Provision to match settlement hierarchy	Option 2 Small scale rural attractions only	Commentary
<b>Housing – provide good quality and affordable homes</b>	/	/	
<b>Population – balance needs of residents and visitors</b>	-	0	There is concern that Stratford-upon-Avon cannot take increased visitor numbers without exacerbating congestion in the town centre and changing the character of the town. The World Class Stratford programme should be able to resolve this as it contains actions to deal with these issues while still encouraging longer visitor stays and a broader range of attractions.
<b>Historic and cultural heritage – preserve and manage assets</b>	++	+	Tourism developments should provide an opportunity to make the most of local heritage, provided that is in keeping with and makes the most of local features. Policies need to make sure that development is designed to enhance and complement heritage rather than detracting from it.
<b>Landscape and townscape – maintain character and appearance</b>	++	+	Tourism can provide an incentive and funding to support improvements to the landscape and townscape, especially as this is a key attraction for tourists to this district. Policies need to make sure that development is designed to enhance and complement landscape and townscape rather than detracting from it.
<b>Environmental assets – preserve natural and built features</b>	+	+	Tourism can provide an incentive and funding to maintain environmental assets, as this is a key attraction for tourists to this district. Policies need to make sure that development is designed to enhance and complement environmental assets rather than detracting from it.
<b>Biodiversity – protect and enhance species and habitats</b>	/	/	
<b>Land use – optimise use of brownfield land</b>	0	0	Neither of these options provides specific encouragement to re-use large brownfield sites in the countryside for tourism uses. These would need to be looked at on a case by case basis.

Factors	Option 1 Provision to match settlement hierarchy	Option 2 Small scale rural attractions only	Commentary
<b>Urban development – achieve high quality environments</b>	+	0	Option 1 may provide scope to achieve high quality urban environments provided that policies ensure development is of a high quality and appropriate to its location.
<b>Stewardship – encourage local responsibility</b>	+	+	Market Town Visions and Parish Plans developed by the local communities often promote local attractions and visitor improvements which relate to the special character and features of the area.
<b>Pollution - minimise air, water and soil pollution</b>	/	/	
<b>Climate change – minimise District's contribution</b>	/	/	
<b>Flood risk – avoid increasing risk</b>	/	/	
<b>Energy – increase efficiency and use of renewable sources</b>	/	/	Policies elsewhere in the local plan should ensure new development is energy efficient and benefit from renewable energy.
<b>Conservation – reduce consumption of natural resources</b>	/	/	

Factors	Option 1 Provision to match settlement hierarchy	Option 2 Small scale rural attractions only	Commentary
<b>Standards – improve design and construction of buildings</b>	/	/	
<b>Planning – promote sustainable locations and effective use of infrastructure</b>	+	+	Neither of these options supports large new developments in un-sustainable locations. Option 1 would allow larger developments to take place in settlements with existing infrastructure. Option 2 would result in small-scale development which is appropriate to its location.
<b>Transport – encourage modal shift from use of private car</b>	+	0	Option 1 may encourage visitors to use the public transport which is available to access attractions and accommodation in the larger settlements, and allow combined-purpose trips. This will need to be supported by good public transport in and between Stratford and the main rural centres and good information and promotion of public transport to visitors.
<b>Waste – reduce consumption and increase re-use and recycling</b>	/	/	
<b>Local sourcing – encourage local supply of goods and materials</b>	/	/	
<b>Growth – achieve sustainable economic growth</b>	++	+	Tourism creates significant income and jobs in the district and indirectly supports many more. These benefits need to be maintained and spread across the district. The World Class Stratford Urban Design Framework seeks to address the fact that visitor numbers have been declining.

Factors	Option 1 Provision to match settlement hierarchy	Option 2 Small scale rural attractions only	Commentary
<b>Employment – provide opportunities suited to workforce</b>	0	0	Increased tourism will provide more job opportunities but they are often low-skilled, low-paid or seasonal and therefore not particularly suited to the residents of the district.
<b>Investment – assist prosperity</b>	++	+	Tourism creates significant income and jobs in the district and indirectly supports many more. Option 1 would support the World Class Stratford, Market Town and Better Welcome initiatives which seek to use tourism to attract investment to settlements.
<b>Skills – engage in learning and skills development</b>	/	/	
<b>Innovation – encourage culture of enterprise</b>	+	0	Option 1 will allow greater flexibility for innovation in providing new tourist-based enterprises.
<b>Technology – promote new technologies</b>	/	/	
<b>Responsibility – involve local organisations and agencies</b>	0	0	Both these options should allow opportunities for locally organised schemes.
<b>Tourism – enhance visitor experience</b>	++	+	Option 1 gives most scope to improve the visitor experience across the whole district, provided that developments are sensitive to the character of the area and that schemes such as World Class Stratford and Market Town initiative steer the resulting investment to enhance the visitor experience and infrastructure.

## **Preferred Option**

Option 1 performs best in the Sustainability Appraisal against most sustainability criteria. The option follows national and regional policy, and ties in well with local policy and initiatives. The Appraisal highlights the valuable contributions that tourism development can make towards sustainability objectives in terms of economic growth, supporting local services and providing investment to maintain local heritage, landscape and public realm to a high standards. However these sustainability objectives will only be achieved if the development that takes places is sensitive to the character of the area and seeks to make the most of the existing valued features of the district without losing the heritage, traditional architecture and rural character that attracts visitors to the district in the first place. Several criteria highlights that proactive community planning is required that provides improved tourism infrastructure and public realm, which can be achieved through initiatives such as World Class Stratford, Market Towns visions, Better Welcome and Parish Plans. The 67% of respondents to a question in the Issues and Options consultation did not wish to see further large scale attractions in Stratford-upon-Avon which is contrary to this option.

A majority of respondents to the Issues & Options consultation did not support further tourist developments in Stratford-upon-Avon. There is concern that Stratford-upon-Avon cannot take increased visitor numbers without exacerbating congestion in the town centre and changing the character of the town. However these issues can be addressed by ensuring that development is appropriate and sensitive to the character of the area, and that the infrastructure for tourists is improved, for example through World Class Stratford projects.

The approach also needs to be supported by good walking, cycling and public transport facilities within and between Stratford-upon-Avon and the main rural centres.

## **Rejected Option**

Option 2 is incompatible with regional and national policy which emphasises the strong benefits of tourism to the region and the need to continue improving the offer for visitors. It would also be incompatible the World Class Stratford initiative which looks to provide a broader range of visitor facilities in Stratford-Upon-Avon including a new high quality hotel and new cultural attraction. Only allowing very small scale developments may also cause problems for medium scale proposals coming forward through the Market Town Visions. Restraining the aspirations for Stratford and the Market towns to provide more for visitors would reduce the potential benefits for a range of sustainability objectives as described for Option 1 above.