

## **Tourism and Related Sports and Recreation**

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### **1. Context**

- 1.1 South East England comprises the largest tourism market in the UK, outside Greater London. This is a result of many factors including:
- The diversity of the region's environment (including attractive countryside, historic towns and coastal resorts).
  - The strength of its economy (as a driver of significant business tourism).
  - Its geographical location (as the gateway to the UK from North West Europe via the Channel Tunnel and the passenger ferry ports).
  - Its proximity to London (the UK's primary international tourist destination and the source of an unrivalled potential domestic visitor market).
- 1.2 Together these and other characteristics combine to make the South East a unique visitor destination with significant untapped potential for further tourism related growth. However, it is essential that any such growth be managed in a sustainable way.
- 1.3 The contribution of tourism to the overall vision for quality of life in the South East can be significantly enhanced by:
- delivering a high quality and rewarding experience for all visitors;
  - providing a greater variety of jobs and opportunities for training over a wide range of skill levels;
  - providing stronger support for urban renaissance and regeneration, especially in the South Coast resorts and the Thames Gateway;
  - helping to diversify and develop further the rural economy;
  - underpinning and promoting environmental quality and local distinctiveness in town and country;
  - generating community benefits to enhance quality of life for all social groups in the region;
  - encouraging travellers passing through the region's international gateways to spend time within the South East.
- 1.4 Delivery of these objectives at the regional level will fall on a wide range of partners at the regional, sub-regional and local levels. At the regional level SEEDA

and Tourism South East will play the leading role, particularly in relation to skills development, marketing, communications and research. The overall framework for the development of the tourism sector in the South East is set out in the Regional Tourism Strategy.

- 1.5 At the local level it is important to establish a comprehensive, long-term vision for the role of tourism and related activities within a locality. The vision needs to be sufficiently explicit and embedded in the community strategy, the local cultural (or tourism) strategy and the Local Development Framework in order to shape investment and decisions. In seeking to implement the vision an integrated approach is needed to ensure that tourism objectives are reflected in local activities such as town centre management and regeneration, open space strategies, heritage enhancement initiatives, countryside management and environmental stewardship.

## 2. Regional Spatial Strategy for Tourism

- 2.1 A Regional Spatial Strategy for Tourism and related Sport and Recreation was adopted as a formal alteration to Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) in November 2004 (as new Chapter 14). The key diagram from the RSS is reproduced in a separate annex for information. It is proposed to roll forward the policies and supporting text contained in RPG9 Chapter 14 into the draft South East Plan, as they are considered relevant and robust for the plan period to 2026, subject to the relatively minor clarifications and adjustments set out below.

## 3. Schedule of Changes to Tourism Policies

- 3.1 In rolling forward the existing spatial strategy for tourism the opportunity has been taken to make some minor changes to the policies and text contained therein, as set out in the schedule below.

Section / Paragraph	Proposed Amendment
14.1 – 14.2	Delete. Superseded by draft South East Plan.
Context	<p>Add to end of paragraph 14.5:</p> <p>Maintaining and enhancing the South East’s attractiveness as a tourism destination will rely upon a planned response to the challenges presented. Opportunities for the tourism sector may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased appeal of the region for visitors as a result of generally warmer summers and milder winters and also in preference to overseas destinations suffering more severe effects of climate change</li> <li>• Increased opportunities for environmental tourism as new habitats are created</li> <li>• Niche opportunities as a result of lifestyle changes in a</li> </ul>

Section / Paragraph	Proposed Amendment
	new climate
Urban Renaissance and Regeneration	Delete paragraph 5.10b and Proposed additional to Policy Q2 – superseded by draft South East Plan.
Tourism Attractions	<p>Delete paragraph 14.32 and replace with:</p> <p>The Gambling Act 2005 proposes the introduction of three new categories of casino: Small, Large and Regional. An Independent Advisory Panel has been appointed to recommend the areas for the new casinos. In reaching their conclusions the Advisory Panel will be required to identify areas which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– are willing to license a new casino</li> <li>– are in need of economic development and regeneration</li> <li>– likely to benefit in regeneration terms from a casino.</li> </ul> <p>In doing so they will be required to take into account regional spatial strategies. The Government will then decide the areas where each of the new casinos may be licensed. Initially, the Bill allows the licensing of only one Regional Casino, to allow the Government to assess the economic and social impacts for a period of three years. Any further increase in the number of Regional Casinos licensed is unlikely before 2011.</p> <p>Government has acknowledged that a Regional Casino would comprise a regionally significant leisure development combining a mix of casino, hotel, restaurants, retail and other leisure uses with the potential to draw visitors and tourists from a wide catchment. Policy TSR4 therefore applies to any proposals for Regional Casinos in the South East. This policy will be subject to review in the light of any increase in the number of Regional Casinos to be licensed.</p>
Countryside and Coastal Management	Delete para 6.9a and Addition to Policy E6. (Superseded by South East Plan).

**POLICY TSR1:  
COASTAL RESORTS**

**Opportunities should be sought to diversify the economic base of the region's coastal resorts, while consolidating and upgrading tourism facilities in ways which promote higher value activity, reduce seasonality and support urban regeneration. To meet these objectives:**

- i) Local strategic partnerships (LSPs) covering coastal resorts are encouraged to establish a vision and strategy for the future of tourism in their area and its contribution to wider regeneration objectives. Where appropriate, this should be undertaken in co-operation with neighbouring LSPs which together form an integrated tourism market.**
- ii) Local Development Frameworks (and/or supplementary planning documents) should address the spatial dimensions of an agreed vision for tourism and identify 'core areas' and associated policies for tourism in coastal resorts to which specific tourism related planning policies apply for the purposes of:**
  - a) controlling inappropriate development**
  - b) co-ordinating management and environmental initiatives**
  - c) setting environmentally sustainable development objectives**
  - d) identifying land for particular types of tourism related development**
  - e) identifying necessary infrastructure investments.**
- iii) SEEDA should work proactively with other members of LSPs covering coastal resorts<sup>1</sup> to facilitate the development and implementation of regeneration strategies**
- iv) Local authorities, in collaboration with the regional tourist board, should act strategically to develop complementary approaches to the marketing and development of the coastal resorts to enhance their overall competitiveness.**

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<sup>1</sup> Spatial designations, including Priority Areas for Regeneration (PAERs), will be subject to review prior to the final submission of the South East Plan to Government in 2006

**POLICY TSR2:  
RURAL TOURISM**

**Opportunities to promote tourism and recreation-based rural diversification should be encouraged where they provide jobs for local residents and are of a scale and type appropriate to their location.**

- i) Local planning authorities in formulating planning policies and taking decisions should:
  - a) Support proposals which seek to develop the tourism opportunities associated with all types of rural development initiatives**
  - b) Protect access to, and support proposals for upgrading, inland waterways and associated facilities for recreational use in accordance with relevant management strategies.****
- ii) In surrounding countryside areas with significant tourism potential, local authorities should identify actions to strengthen linkages between market towns and their hinterlands through the provision of integrated sustainable transport and complementary product development, investment and marketing.**

**POLICY TSR3:  
REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT SPORTS FACILITIES**

**Opportunities should be sought to protect, upgrade and develop new regionally significant sports facilities, particularly in Thames Gateway, Milton Keynes/Aylesbury and Ashford.**

- i) Local Development Frameworks should make adequate provision for new or expanded regionally significant sporting venues to redevelop or expand to meet future demands and requirements of the sport and of the spectator, taking into account sports governing bodies' needs strategies as they become available.**
- ii) Sport England should be proactive in advising the Regional Assembly and local authorities on the need for new or expanded regionally significant sporting venues.**
- iii) Local authorities should be proactive in maximising the benefits to local communities of any major or expanded sporting facilities.**
- iv) Regional partners, including Sport England, SEEDA and the Regional Assembly, should in partnership with the Greater London Authority**

**identify and promote opportunities for new investment in sports facilities in the region which may be needed to underpin a successful bid for a London Olympics in 2012.**

**POLICY TSR4:  
TOURISM ATTRACTIONS**

**Priority should be given to improving the quality of all existing attractions to meet changing consumer demands and high environmental standards in terms of design and access.**

- i) Local authorities and partners should:**
  - a) Encourage the enhancement and upgrade of existing visitor attractions**
  - b) Include policies in development plans for determining applications for all new and changes to existing visitor attractions that are likely to have a significant impact locally. In developing such policies local authorities should incorporate the following criteria:**
    - Do they help reinforce the distinctiveness of a locality?**
    - Are they accessible by public transport?**
    - Do they provide wet weather facilities and help extend the season?**
    - Will they facilitate regeneration?**
    - Are they complementary to existing attractions (or will they displace existing activity)?**
- ii) New, regionally significant tourism attractions should only be developed where they will expand the overall tourism market and can be easily accessed by public transport. A sequential approach to site identification should be adopted for all new regionally significant attractions (those generating more than 250,000 visitors per annum) unless there are overriding requirements related to that site or sectoral reasons linked to cluster development. A suitable location should be sought:**
  - a) First, within one of the Regeneration Priority Areas, Areas of Economic and Social Development or in the Thames Gateway, Milton Keynes or Ashford Growth Areas**

- b) Second, in areas where it will significantly contribute to the urban renaissance of a coastal resort**
- c) Only where it can be demonstrated that no suitable sites are available in the above areas should other locations be considered.**

**POLICY TSR5:  
TOURIST ACCOMMODATION**

**The diversity of the accommodation sector should be positively reflected in tourism and planning policies.**

- i) In formulating planning policies and making decisions local planning authorities should:**
  - a) Consider the need for hotel developments to be in the proposed location, including links with the particular location, transport interchange or visitor attraction, and seek measures to increase access by sustainable transport modes.**
  - b) Provide specific guidance on the appropriate location for relevant accommodation sub-sectors. This should be informed by their different site requirements and market characteristics and how these relate to local planning objectives.**
  - c) Encourage the extension of hotels where this is required to upgrade the quality of the existing stock to meet changing consumer demands.**
  - d) Include policies to protect the accommodation stock where there is evidence of market demand.**
  - e) Strongly encourage the provision of affordable staff accommodation as part of new and existing accommodation facilities in areas of housing pressure. The criteria for the application of such a requirement should be clearly set out in the development plans.**
  - f) Facilitate the upgrading and enhancement of existing un-serviced accommodation, including extensions where this will not harm landscape quality or identified environmental assets. Particular attention should be paid to identifying suitable sites for the relocation of holiday parks under threat from coastal erosion or flooding.**

- ii) **Tourism South East and local authorities should, working together, undertake active monitoring of the demand for and supply of tourism accommodation on a regional and sub-regional basis.**

**POLICY TSR6:  
VISITOR MANAGEMENT**

- i) **Local Development Frameworks and tourism or cultural strategies should identify areas which would benefit from the development and implementation of visitor management. Where different local authority areas form part of a single tourism destination or market, opportunities should be taken to coordinate or integrate the development and implementation of visitor management plans.**
- ii) **Local Development Frameworks and Local Transport Plans should address the management of tourism-related travel demand in an integrated way as part of a wider visitor management approach to managing tourism pressures and reflecting the priorities in the Regional Transport Strategy. Depending on the nature of the tourism offer, this should include:**
  - a) **Promoting a multi-modal approach to access to attractions and large events. Local authorities should facilitate this by encouraging operators to establish travel plans for attractions and events generating large numbers of trips.**
  - b) **Developing a range of travel planning approaches to specifically address transport impacts associated with urban areas.**
  - c) **Statutory agencies and the regional tourism body should assist local authorities to establish integrated area based Countryside and Coastal Management initiatives focusing on areas with unrealised tourism potential, while ensuring that natural resources and landscapes are conserved and enhanced.**
  - d) **Visitor management plans should be prepared for areas experiencing major pressures in order to safeguard natural assets, particularly in National Parks, AONB and National Nature Reserves. These plans should seek to encourage the tourism potential of these areas to be achieved.**

**POLICY TSR7:  
PRIORITY AREAS FOR TOURISM**

**Within the framework set by the overall vision and objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy for Tourism, Local Development Frameworks, tourism/cultural strategies and transport plans should seek to emphasise and implement the following sub-regional priorities:**

- i) The Coastal Strip and the Isle of Wight – Seeking complementary approaches to the development and management of tourism so as to upgrade facilities, promote diversity, and reduce seasonality and improve access, whilst retaining and enhancing the natural character of the area. This includes making use of the attraction of Canterbury and Brighton to encourage longer stays through linked trips to surrounding areas.**
- ii) Windsor and surrounds – Cross border working to manage the pressures associated with existing high levels of business and leisure tourism activity, through improved visitor management, enhanced public transport access, including coach travel to larger attractions, and strategic planning of visitor accommodation.**
- iii) Oxford – Joint working with neighbouring authorities to encourage longer stays and to provide improved visitor management.**
- iv) River Thames – Joint working to achieve the potential for informal recreation and sporting uses, improved management and access.**
- v) Thames Gateway – Realising the potential for growth in business, sporting, environmental and attraction based tourism as part of the wider regeneration strategy for the Gateway, adding value to the existing tourism market.**
- vi) Milton Keynes/Aylesbury and Ashford – Joint working to make appropriate provision for tourism, sport and recreation within the context of their identification as regional Growth Areas for the delivery of sustainable communities.**

**Local authorities, the Regional Assembly and the regional tourism board should pursue an inter-regional approach to co-ordination and management in the following tourism areas:**

- The Thames Gateway (London and South Essex)**
- Oxford (Cotswolds)**

- **New Forest (Dorset)**
- **Windsor and surrounds (London)**
- **Chilterns AONB (East of England)**
- **Milton Keynes/Aylesbury (South Midlands).**