



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 14 th November 2017	<u>Item</u> 6
--	-----------------------------

DRAFT SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager
e-mail: phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254741

Summary

This paper seeks comments from Partnership members on the draft new Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Shropshire Hills for 2017-22.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the draft Strategy.

Background

The AONB Partnership has been closely involved with the Shropshire Hills & Ludlow Destination Partnership since 2011, and commissioned the production of a Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the area, funded by Advantage West Midlands. Based on this, we also hold the Europarc Federation's 'Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas', as one of only seven AONBs of the 38 in England and Wales.

Five years on, we continue to run the Destination Partnership for the Shropshire Hills, now in conjunction with Shropshire Hills Tourism, which is recognised by Visit Britain as a Destination Management Organisation (DMO). This recognition from the tourism industry side is very valuable. The recent rounds of EU funding via Defra in the RDPE Growth Programme referred to the Destination Partnerships' strategies as the key guiding documents. Funding was sought for renewal of the Strategy, but since this was not successful, the Strategy is being renewed through 'in-house' partner capacity of the Destination Partnership, in which we are taking a lead.

While the principle of sustainable tourism has wide support in the area, since both visitors and local people appreciate the 'unspoilt' nature of the area, there are also pressures, including:

- Visitor numbers are increasing and localised impacts of certain activities e.g. mountain biking and large events, require more input to manage effectively
- Political pressure for less constraints on development through the planning system
- Reduced public sector resources into infrastructure important to visitors, including Visitor Information Centres, public toilets, footpaths and countryside sites
- Reduced sector support for tourism from Shropshire Council

- Changing public perceptions of sustainability, and a need to re-energise these initiatives.

An on-line survey of businesses has been carried out, and a valuable consultation event was held with stakeholders on 31st October. The Strategy will be refined taking into account the comments and input received, and approved by the Destination Partnership in December, before the Charter renewal submission is made by the end of the year.

List of Background Papers

Information on the Destination Partnership is at <http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/aonb-partnership/area-initiatives/shropshire-hills-and-ludlow-destination-development-partnership/>.

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal

The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.

Risk Management Appraisal

Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Draft Shropshire Hills Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2017-22