

**RESPONSE TO CHAPTERS WITHIN THE LOCAL PLAN DIRECTION OF TRAVEL
CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – 18 JANUARY 2021
Uckfield Town Council**

CHAPTER 9 – TOURISM

Are there any issues or challenges we have missed?

Although links with nature are mentioned, much more could be made of tourist opportunities that are **specifically linked with nature e.g. conservation-type holidays; opportunities to learn traditional Sussex crafts and skills** (unless these were included within the experiential tourism bracket) and opportunities to explore different natural sites.

By building on or adjacent to AONBs or SSSIs, Wealden are in **danger of concreting over the very countryside that provides the tourism** that it needs to create job opportunities. An example is the large 5 bedroom development being built in Mayfield.

There are also opportunities for numerous walking holidays with the Cuckoo Trail, Weald Way, Vanguard Way and Ashdown Forest nearby. More should be done to promote Ashdown Forest by using local people to act as tour guides - for example having tour buses from Uckfield and Crowborough with dedicated tour guides and walking groups. It would cut down on CO2 emissions and traffic congestion and limit the wide distribution of tourists as people could be guided around the Forest in groups, giving areas 'rest time' to recover the impact of human contact.

There is no policy or reference to **supporting the Ashdown forest** within this document.

Do you agree with the proposed policy options?

We would disagree with the implied suggestion that self-catering and camping type holidays are over-represented in Wealden. The **type of camping offered by sites such as WoWo in Sheffield Park are hugely popular** and further sites such as this should be encouraged. This is not to say that other forms of holiday accommodation should not be promoted. Wealden is a beautiful area and tourism could be a real economic powerhouse for us if sufficiently promoted and managed sustainably.

Do you disagree with any of the options?

No response.

Are there any other policy options we should be considering?

As with other areas of the consultation, there needs to be **clear links with sustainable transport options**.

Camping needs to be increased. The only facility we have in Uckfield to support this form of industry is the Caravan club on London Road.

Do you have any other comments in relation to how we can plan for tourism and culture within the district?

Wealden DC need to include more within this document and do more to support tourism.

It would be interesting to find out how well used the existing hotels are in Wealden District. We have very limited facilities in the Uckfield area at an affordable price, which is why we were surprised the Smokehouse was not retained as hotel accommodation. The document

refers to the type of accommodation in the district (high class hotels etc). **Reference should be made to the new Premier Inn coming in at Ashdown Business Park** and how you would support more affordable accommodation of this nature.

At the moment locals are asked to stay away from Ashdown forest and utilise the SANGS yet everyone else can visit.

Whilst suspending council tax is again applaudable, it is short sighted in the long term when the council is unable to afford to **support leisure facilities**. These decisions then impact on town and parish councils to pick up the shortfall when funds are not there to sustain the amenities that they are providing.

The report clearly defines that Wealden tourism is based around Ashdown Forest and the countryside but very little mention within the report of Ashdown Forest. Do Wealden DC financially contribute? To maintain tourism it is essential that **Wealden supports it with resources (funds and people)** in order to offer a high quality tourism experience and to protect the very environment that provides this.

You can get blue badge guides but never heard of any in Wealden district. **Themed holidays** in the document mainly refer to viticulture. Lots of themed holidays that could be promoted nationally and internationally. Such as walking holidays - Cuckoo trail, Weald Way, Vanguard Way and Ashdown forest, and the previously mentioned conservation or links to eco holidays.

There appears to be no co-ordination between the Tourism/Economy department and the Planning department when applications which are leisure/tourism based are submitted. There is no wider consideration of the positive impacts for the local economy.