

#### **SGbus4: Tourist facilities and accommodation**

**A. We will approve new or improved tourist facilities or accommodation, subject to other policies, if:**

- 1) they are well related to existing settlements and avoid dispersed patterns of development; OR**
- 2) the developer has demonstrated a locational requirement based on the need to be near to the specific tourist attraction being exploited, and that the facility will not damage those interests.**

**In any of these cases, the applicant must also demonstrate that:**

- a) the proposal would respect the character, amenity and scale of the built and natural environment in the surrounding area; AND**
- b) they have taken account of the potential cumulative impact of similar proposals in close proximity.**

**B. We will refuse any proposal to convert existing tourist accommodation to other uses, unless satisfactory evidence is provided showing:**

- 1) that it has been actively marketed for sale as a going concern at a reasonable market price and for a reasonable period with no formal interest having been shown in the property; AND**
- 2) that the current business is no longer viable**

#### **Reasoned Justification**

##### **Part A**

The aim of this policy is to promote tourism in locations where it would not damage one of the main resources on which it is based, i.e. the environment. The policy therefore ensures that development proposals do not have a significant impact upon the nature conservation, landscape character or amenity value of the area.

Tourism is essentially a sustainable industry and is of considerable value to Aberdeenshire, as long as it is not overdeveloped. Tourism is one of the region's largest sectors, and it is an important economic driver. As such, tourism developments should be promoted. Facilities for sport and recreational activities requiring unimpeded access to remote open country will normally be accepted on appropriate sites in the countryside under the rural development policy. However, tourism must not destroy the qualities that bring tourists to the area in the first place. Tourist related development should be carefully located, sited and designed to provide high quality facilities which fit successfully into the environment.

"Tourist attractions" are taken to be specific places or points of visitor interest, including historic sites and monuments (castles, historic houses, concentrations of archaeological sites etc.), and specific natural heritage features (such as waterfalls or viewpoints).

Where retail is proposed alongside or ancillary to tourism developments, it will be determined under the destination retailing policy. Where there is a proposal for retail tourism within a town, the impact on the town centre must be assessed under the policy for town centres and retailing.

## **Part B**

It is important to have a range of tourist accommodation which attracts visitors, and has the potential to prolong tourists' stay in Aberdeenshire.

The loss of hotels to residential accommodation is a particular problem faced by many communities in Aberdeenshire. A reasonable period for marketing is likely to be 12 months. Formal interest can be shown by the engagement of a property or legal professional in a potential sale or transfer.