

Section 3 Planning Objectives

Primary Objectives for the World Heritage Site

- 3.1 The two primary aims for the Stonehenge Master Plan in respect of the World Heritage Site are defined below, together with the specific objectives which each entails:

WORLD HERITAGE SITE OBJECTIVE ONE:
To create a setting and environment for Stonehenge appropriate to its status as a World Heritage Site, with the minimum disturbance to the surrounding downland landscape, to the archaeology it contains and the lives of the people who live in the area.
Specific Objectives
■ To improve the quality of the immediate setting of Stonehenge by the removal of the existing visitor facilities and car park.
■ To seek the minimisation of road and traffic impacts in the vicinity of Stonehenge. In this respect, there is a commitment to the closure of the A344 together with improvements to the A303 (T).
■ To restore the natural landscape of the World Heritage Site, as far as is practicable, by the removal of inappropriate features and a programme of environmental enhancement.

WORLD HERITAGE SITE OBJECTIVE TWO

To develop a new Visitor Centre and ancillary catering and retail facilities at Countess Road East, outside the World Heritage Site which will provide for the enhanced understanding and enjoyment of Stonehenge and the wider World Heritage Site by the hundreds of thousands of people who visit Stonehenge each year.

Specific Objectives

- To maximise public access, enjoyment and understanding of Stonehenge and the surrounding historic landscape while minimising the impact of tourism on the environment of the World Heritage Site and, in particular, the immediate setting of the Stonehenge monument.
- The provision of a new, high quality Visitor Centre on the Countess Road East site providing state-of-the-art interpretative facilities for the whole World Heritage Site and beyond. It will include a full range of high quality visitor facilities, parking and appropriate ancillary catering and retail uses.
- The provision of a free, environmentally sensitive and sustainable transport link in accordance with an agreed Green Travel Plan to take visitors between the Visitor Centre and a specific viewing point within easy walking distance of the Stonehenge monument.
- To provide access for disabled, elderly, young visitors or those who find walking difficult.

Local Area Objectives

3.2 The Stonehenge Master Plan and the new Visitor Centre in particular, raise a number of opportunities and issues for the local area in terms of amenity, the economy and the environment. Therefore, any development proposal should also be set in the context of the following local area objectives:

LOCAL AREA OBJECTIVES
■ To protect the amenity of local communities, in particular the Countess Road residential area and the surrounding settlements of Shrewton, Durrington, Amesbury and Winterbourne Stoke.
■ To improve the highway network, local accessibility journey times and highway safety, in accordance with sustainable objectives.
■ To secure appropriate environmental improvements both within and outside the World Heritage Site, thus minimising the adverse impact of tourism on the local environment.
■ To safeguard the countryside from inappropriate development.
■ To protect local ecology.
■ To enhance the environment of the Avon River Corridor in the vicinity of the Countess Road East site and improve public access to the riverbank, where appropriate.

- To ensure a co-ordinated approach with other heritage and tourism based projects in the locality and wider region, in order to strengthen the area's overall attraction as a visitor destination.
- To seek to maximise the local economic benefits of the project in the generation of expenditure to support existing local services such as hotels, guest houses, shops and restaurants.
- To create sustainable built development, transport links and employment
- To provide a tourist information centre for the attractions of Wiltshire and the South-West.