

SWDP 55: Three Counties Showground

(152)

- A. 38.62 ha of land at the Three Counties Showground is safeguarded for agriculture, horticulture, equestrianism and other countryside-related uses. A masterplan for the site will be developed with the landowners. In particular, account will be taken of the location of the showground within the important landscape setting of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.**
- B. The development and redevelopment of facilities and infrastructure directly related to the operation of the Three Counties Showground will be permitted where:**
- i. the use would not be more appropriately located in a town centre (see Policy SWDP 10);**
 - ii. the scale, form, design and location of any buildings and infrastructure will not harm the natural beauty of the landscape; and**
 - iii. proposals can be accommodated using the existing road structure and will include measures to increase access to the site by sustainable forms of transport such as public transport, cycling, walking and links to shuttle bus services.**
- C. Proposals for development beyond the area identified on the Policies Map will be considered in accordance with other policies in the SWDP that seek to control development in the open countryside and respect the sensitive landscape. In general, any additional small-scale development should demonstrate that it cannot be located within the allocated site.**

Reasoned Justification

1. The Three Counties Showground is a large events venue on the outskirts of Malvern, home to the Three Counties Agricultural Society. It hosts exhibitions and leisure events throughout the year, generally related to agriculture, horticulture, equestrianism and other countryside pursuits. The site should be retained to allow for continuation of its role as a rural showground and to enhance its tourism and economic role, whilst allowing careful consideration of development in the context of its important landscape setting within the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (see SWDP 23).
2. The Three Counties Showground is of great economic importance to Malvern Hills District and the wider economy, being a prime tourism venue within Worcestershire. It has

152 There will be no built development in the parts of the site liable to flooding, as defined in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and / or a site specific Flood Risk Assessment.

managed to remain in operation despite other similar county venues declining and the partner authorities wish to support its role. However, this must be balanced by careful consideration of the highly visible and sensitive Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty landscape in which it is situated. Malvern Hills District Council has worked closely with the Three Counties Agricultural Society towards building a masterplan and vision for the site that will allow for its continued success whilst having regard for its impact on the landscape, local residential amenity, infrastructure and services. It is recognised that some of the buildings / structures on the site can be improved, which will be to the benefit of the Agricultural Society and may also lessen the visual impact of the site in its setting at the foot of the Malvern Hills. Opportunities for enhancement of the Green Infrastructure of the site and associated landholding will be important and will be considered in the context of policy SWDP 5.

3. The objectives for any further development on the Three Counties Showground site will, wherever possible, be to rationalise existing and suitable buildings and structures, reduce as far as possible the overall impact of new buildings and structures and seek to consolidate built development within the eastern boundary of the allocated site.