

29th April 1998

ABSTRACTS

UK GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Tourism–Towards Sustainability

The following abstracts from the Department of Culture Media and Sport 14th April 1998 Consultation Document provide an overview which brings out the importance of public transport to tourism and, indeed, tourism to public transport and other regional services. The full (11-page) document is available direct from the <www.culture.gov.uk> 'What's New' page or by ringing 0181-569 1918. Comments are required by DCMS to the document by 29th May 1998. These can be submitted by e-mail to enquiries@culture.gov.uk These abstracts should be considered alongside the DETR Integrated Transport Policy Proposals which will result in publication of the White Paper this May.

Why a consultation?

Tourism is one of the key sectors of the economy.

Why tourism?

Tourism is becoming increasingly important.

Many communities are the hosts at tourism destinations.

Tourism indirectly influences a wide range of other industries such as construction, retailing, agriculture and manufacturing. It has a huge impact on the national and local economy, on lifestyle, culture, and on the use of resources.

Tourism is one of the most successful sectors of the UK economy.

The tourism industry has the potential to grow rapidly.

...vast and dynamic industry...

The Rio Earth Summit identified tourism as a key industry with the potential to help the transition to sustainable development by:

- generating funds for marginal local services and crafts;
- stimulating cultural exchange, and
- spearheading landscape and heritage conservation and the like.

Towards sustainable tourism

Tourism covers the activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment.

The World Tourism Organisation describes *sustainable tourism* as 'tourism that meets the need of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future.'

- Environmental protection should constitute an integral part of the tourism development process.
- Travel and tourism should use its capacity to create employment for local people to the fullest extent.
- Tourism development should recognise and support the identity, culture, and interests of local people.

Companies involved in travel and tourism, and individual consumers, are responsible for shaping tourism to meet these principles.

THE KEY ISSUES

Issue 1–The policy framework

Policy makers often deal with specific issues, overlooking the complex relationships between sectors or activities.

The principles of sustainability must be central to tourism policy.

The white paper Building Partnership for Prosperity, published in December, recognised the importance of tourism to regional economies and the key role the sector has to play in the regeneration of the regions.

Further effort is needed to identify ways to integrate national and local actions.

VIEWS ARE WELCOMED ON:

Q2 The most appropriate framework for integrating sustainable tourism into strategies and plans at a local, regional, and national level.

Issue 2–Tourism as an instrument for change

Travel and tourism is a huge industry and – if well managed – it has considerable potential to generate benefits for communities as well as the environment, especially those in marginal economic areas.

There are few communities or environments in the UK which are not affected in some way by tourism.

The potential of the industry to benefit these communities and environments is huge – changing visitor behaviour through carefully targeted marketing messages.

VIEWS ARE WELCOMED ON:

Q4 Ways in which tourism can be managed to ensure that it benefits communities while minimising potential problems.

Q5 Appropriate incentives to encourage the uptake of more sustainable tourism.

Q6 The most effective ways in which the messages of sustainable tourism can be communicated to visitors and residents.

Issue 3–Managing visitor flows

Positive visitor management can offer rewarding experiences to guests and local residents.

Those visitors who consider their experiences to be of poor quality may not return,

Tourism can generate conflict with residents. In contrast, well-managed tourism can:

- underpin economic activity;
- support public sector transport and service infrastructure;
- provide financial support for rural areas;
- support agricultural, manufacturing and service industries;
- underpin conservation of heritage sites and the countryside;
- foster an exchange of cultural experiences;
- improve the viability of central and commercial areas;
- assist the regeneration of degraded or depressed areas, and
- generate pride amongst residents.

Tourist attractions may be subject to intense and sustained visitor numbers. By contrast, other attractions are unable to attract the visitor volumes they desire.

Experience indicates that effective visitor management can increase the number of people that a site can sustain while reducing impact.

Cities such as Cardiff are becoming magnets for tourists.

MANAGING VISITOR FLOWS–SOME EXAMPLES

- interpretive mapping
- themed footpaths and trails
- off-site interpretation facilities

VIEWS ARE WELCOMED ON:

Q7 The specific tools or techniques that should be used to manage visitor flows in the interests of long-term sustainability.

Q8 The techniques that can be implemented locally, regionally, and nationally to ensure that tourism benefits both the visitor and the visited.

Issue 4–Transport realities

Tourism involves travelling to a destination, and transport has a major impact on the global environment.

The tourism industry can play a role on the world stage in taking strides to reduce emissions of those gases implicated in climate change by selecting appropriate transport technologies and enabling consumers to make environmentally responsible transport choices.

Traffic congestion impacts negatively on the visitor experience.

Unless solutions to these transport realities can effectively be implemented, it is unlikely that significant strides can be made towards sustainable tourism in the next decade.

Two key issues to be addressed:

- The predicted growth in visitor volume will place additional strains on the infrastructure of many destinations, perhaps making car-borne tourism (to destinations perceived to be congested) considerably less attractive, thus potentially denying them opportunities for economic development;
- A better, more integrated transport system – such a system should be accessible to all, through its quality and cost – should encourage tourists and residents to use it;

The Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions plans to publish a White Paper on integrated transport policy later this year.

TRANSPORT REALITIES–SOME EXAMPLES

Appeal to visitors is inextricably linked to:

- **ease of access;**
- extent of pedestrian areas;
- quality of streets;
- local air quality, and
- security and cleanliness.

Improving public transport and providing facilities for walking and cycling has a key role here.

The Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions plans to publish a White Paper on integrated transport policy .

The *Moorsbus* project in the North York Moors National Park is a part of a network of public transport services in and around the National Park designed to enable people to visit the area without a car or to use 'Park and Ride' facilities to move around the Park.

(The Snowdon Sherpa service in the Snowdonia National Park is another good example.)

VIEWS ARE WELCOMED ON:

Q9 The specific ways in which visitors can be encouraged to use more environmentally-friendly transport options:

- a) to reach their destinations, and
- b) to travel around once they are here.

Issue 5–Planning imperatives

Decisions made now about the design and development of new tourism facilities and infrastructure will play a key role in dictating the volume and value of tourism to the UK economy and society.

Sustainable tourism should:

- **be accessible, particularly to public transport;**
- be based wherever possible on existing well-located infrastructure, and
- use existing redundant buildings wherever possible.

New development needs to be well-located in respect of public transport.

Best use needs to be made of existing infrastructure and **tourism may often be developed alongside other activities, such as farming and forestry.**

Steps should be made towards sustainable tourism by:

- **encouraging investment in public transport infrastructure** and finding ways to help local economies benefit from tourism;
- **looking at ways of addressing problems of capacity at railway stations where these may be limiting the beneficial effects of tourism;**
- **publicising good practice in the design and operation of tourism facilities,** and
- ensuring that the effect of tourism upon an area is to strengthen its innate qualities and distinctiveness.

VIEWS ARE WELCOMED ON:

Q10 **How new tourism developments can be encouraged to locate in sites accessible by public transport.**

Issue 6–Sustainable tourism for all

Opportunities for relaxation, leisure and recreation (of which tourism is a key part) are fundamental components of a healthy society.

Two key considerations:

- accessibility to travel for people with particular needs.
- **There have been isolated experiments in promoting tourism for the less well off in society based on affordable transport and accommodation.**

VIEWS ARE WELCOMED ON:

Q12 As accessibility to tourism is expanded to all sectors of society, what measures can be taken to ensure that sustainable development considerations are taken into account.

Issue 7–Public and private sector partnership

The private sector has a great capability to bring sustainable tourism into being because it may have the resources, management tools and **communication channels with visitors with which to influence behaviour**.

The private sector has been very responsive in tackling many of the impacts of its own activities, especially in cost saving areas. Less action has been introduced on the issues of transport management and community involvement.

There are currently more than 200,000 establishments within the UK comprising what is loosely known as the 'tourism industry'.

Progress towards sustainable tourism will depend on the development of methods to work with the tourism industry to communicate environmental issues to consumers to bring about a change in visitor behaviour.

VIEWS ARE WELCOMED ON:

Q14 The most effective mechanism to take into account the views and interests of the tourism industry, consumers, local communities, and others.

Q16 Education and training schemes to increase awareness and action by:
a) people employed in the sector.
b) consumers.

We are particularly interested in suggestions for practical actions which will help promote sustainable tourism.

We would welcome ideas for action that can be taken by public tourism bodies, local authorities, business, or individual tourists.

Steven Hodson
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The closing date for receipt of comments is 29th May 1998.

Comments can be submitted by e-mail to <enquiries@culture.gov.uk>

Copies of the full (11-page) consultation paper can be obtained from the <www.culture.gov.uk> 'What's New' page or by telephone on 0181–569 1918.