

*Good Practice Guide on Planning  
for Tourism*

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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### Purpose of this Guide

- 1.1 Tourism, in all its forms, is of crucial importance to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the whole country. The planning system has a vital role to play in terms of facilitating the development and improvement of tourism in appropriate locations. This document is designed to:
- ensure that planners understand the importance of tourism and take this fully into account when preparing development plans and taking planning decisions;
  - ensure that those involved in the tourism industry understand the principles of national planning policy as they apply to tourism and how these can be applied when preparing individual planning applications;
  - ensure that planners and the tourism industry work together effectively to facilitate, promote and deliver new tourism developments in a sustainable way.

This document should be read in the context of national planning policies (see Annex D).

### Status of this Guide

- 1.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires regional planning bodies to have regard to “national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State” (section 5(3)(a)) when preparing regional spatial strategies. A similar provision exists for local authorities when preparing local development documents (section 19(2)(a)). Regional and local planning authorities in England should therefore have regard to the guidance in this document when preparing development plans. The guidance may also be material to individual planning decisions. The Government has announced that it will cancel Planning Policy Guidance note 21 (PPG 21) on Tourism (published in November 1992) with effect from 1 September 2006.
- 1.3 The use of examples in this guide taken from any development plan prior to its adoption is without prejudice to the Secretary of State’s rights of objection or direction in respect of plan policies, or to call in plans for his own determination. The use of any example, whether from an adopted plan or otherwise, is also without prejudice to any decision the Secretary of State may wish to take in respect of any planning application coming before him as a consequence of a policy included in an example in this guide.

## Definition of Tourism

- 1.4 Tourism is defined by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) as comprising the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes. The WTO further explains that “Tourism” refers to all activities of visitors including both “tourists (overnight visitors)” and “same-day visitors”. This definition has been adopted by the UK Government and the WTO definition of tourism is therefore used for the purposes of this guide.
  
- 1.5 At the same time, this guide recognises that tourism is extremely diverse. This definition can include travel and visits for business, professional and domestic purposes as well as for holidays and recreation. But those distinctions are not always clear cut; sometimes more than one purpose is involved. For example, business conferences and sales events, music festivals, professional and academic meetings, all of which can attract both national and international audiences, often combine an element of tourism with their more specific purposes. Such events are an important and expanding aspect of the tourist industry. Tourism includes not only the annual family holiday but also a wide range of shorter visits, weekend breaks and day trips. It is essential that planners recognise this diversity when preparing development plans and in taking planning decisions.

# CHAPTER 2

## The Importance of Tourism

### The Value of Tourism to the National and Regional Economy

- 2.1 Tourism is of crucial importance to this country. It generates significant revenues, provides millions of jobs, supports communities and helps maintain and improve important national assets.
- 2.2 Tourism is a vital component in the make-up of the national economy:
- It contributes £74 billion to GDP<sup>1</sup>. This revenue accounts for 6.4% of the UK's total GDP<sup>2</sup> and 3.4% of Gross Value Added (GVA)<sup>3</sup>.
  - It is the UK's third largest foreign exchange earner after oil and vehicles – tourism accounts for over 4% of total exports<sup>4</sup>.
  - It contributes an estimated £11.8 billion to the national exchequer in terms of the tax paid by tourists on goods and services<sup>5</sup>. This equates to 70% of central Government expenditure on education<sup>6</sup> and 44% of the defence budget<sup>7</sup>.
  - Every 1% increase in tourism revenue generates £118m in revenue for Government. Achieving central Government's target to increase the value of tourism to £100bn by 2010 will increase Government revenue from tourists to almost £16bn per annum.
  - For every £1 the country invests in tourism, it gains £5 through taxation for reinvestment<sup>8</sup>.

1 Office for National Statistics Travel Trends 2003

2 ONS UK Economic Accounts Quarter 4 2004

3 Department for Culture Media and Sport 2005

4 ONS UK Economic Accounts Quarter 4 2004

5 BTA study *The Taxation of Overseas Visitors to Britain* 2001

6 ONS Government expenditure on education, 1991/92 to 2001/02: Annual Abstract of Statistics

7 ONS UK Defence expenditure, 1998/99 to 2003/04: Annual Abstract of Statistics

8 BTA study *The Taxation of Overseas Visitors to Britain* 2001

### 2.3 In terms of employment:

- The industry employs 2.2 million people – 7.7% of the UK workforce<sup>9</sup>.
- Almost 80% of tourism jobs are located outside London and most tourism employment is located in 150,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)<sup>10</sup>.
- Labour Force Survey figures show that not only is the tourism industry the sixth biggest employer in the UK, it is one of the largest employers in English regions such as the South West and North East where employment opportunities are most needed.
- Tourism generates a high percentage of new jobs – in 2003 tourism was responsible for 20% of new jobs in East Midlands, 16% in Yorkshire and Humberside, 12% in the North West and 9% in the South East.
- Tourism is the largest employer of people under the New Deal employment initiative and provides a valuable stepping stone for young people with little or no work experience or qualifications. Since 2000/1 tourism employment among 25-34 year olds has grown by over 6% compared to a fall in this age group's employment generally over the same period.
- ONS Labour Force Survey data shows that the growth in the number of employees who are classified "DDA disabled and work limiting disabled" and "work limiting disabled only" has been higher in tourism than any other industry. Growth in disabled employees in tourism since 2000/1 has been nearly three times that of those in manufacturing.

## The Local Value of Tourism

### 2.4 Tourism can bring many broader benefits that will contribute to the economic and social well being of local communities as well as to individuals. It can:

- be the focus of regeneration of urban and rural areas, as has been demonstrated by its success in Birmingham and in many seaside resorts;
- provide a catalyst for growth in an area, raising its profile and stabilising out-migration;
- provide opportunities for retraining for the resident workforce and help to diversify over-specialised economies; and
- help maintain and expand underused sports and recreation facilities in urban areas; and

<sup>9</sup> ONS Labour Force Survey 2004

<sup>10</sup> VisitBritain – Employment Generated by Tourism in Britain 2003



2.5 The revenue generated by tourism can help to:

- support and enhance local services and facilities such as shops and pubs, particularly in rural areas;
- secure the retention or upgrading of public services such as public transport, health centres and libraries;
- support a broader and more vibrant and active community by attracting arts, sports or cultural events;
- aid diversification within the rural economy; and
- underpin the quality of the local environment and facilitate further enjoyment of it by residents and visitors.

These benefits can be particularly valuable in rural areas as they may provide amenities that people would otherwise not have access to.

2.6 Tourism depends heavily on the natural and built environment and can also be the key to maintaining and enhancing the environment:

- The economic benefits of tourism in particular can help to sustain and improve both the natural and built physical environment.
- Derelict land and buildings may be brought back into use and the countryside can be better maintained.
- Visitors to historic buildings, archaeology and landscapes can provide income or voluntary effort which help maintain and conserve such assets.
- In rural areas the health of the environment and of the community depends on the viability of the local economy. So areas which attract visitors for their scenic beauty and which enjoy income from tourism will be better able to afford to sustain the local environment.
- Proposals involving high quality design improve the visual and environmental experience for visitors and the local community alike.

## Planning for Tourism

2.7 The planning system, by taking a pro-active role in facilitating and promoting the implementation of good quality development, is crucial to ensuring that the tourism industry can develop and thrive, thereby maximising these valuable economic, social and environmental benefits. At the same time, the planning system aims to ensure that these benefits are achieved in the most sustainable manner possible.

2.8 The example below gives an overview of how one local authority, the London Borough of Greenwich, has worked actively through the planning system to underpin the development of tourism in its area.

### **London Borough of Greenwich**

Greenwich, in south-east London, includes the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site and receives over 8 million visitors each year. Tourism in the area directly employs 6,000 people locally and annually generates £1/3 bn for the local economy. It is a good example of an authority which has recognised the importance of tourism to the well being of the area and has placed tourism at the heart of its ambitious regeneration programme. Close working with the private sector, including attractions, operators and developers has underpinned Greenwich's approach.

The work of the Planning Department has been crucial to its success. This work has included:

- dedicating specific parts of the development plan to tourism and its promotion. This followed from consultation with the tourism sector including the World Heritage Site Steering Group;
- consultation with stakeholders on planning applications and involvement with partners in the preparation of planning briefs;
- preparing a hotel strategy that actively promoted sites to hotel operators & developers. This has led to two new hotels being built and increased visitor spend in the local economy;
- lobbying with private sector partners for improvements in public transport. This has helped secure investment in light rail, underground and river transport services;
- active engagement with small hoteliers and owners of bed and breakfast establishments to give advice on planning matters;
- securing contributions to tourism initiatives through s106 agreements, and voluntary contributions for marketing; and
- working with developers and operators to secure local employment and business opportunities.

2.9 The remainder of this guidance sets out how effective planning for tourism can be undertaken. In particular:

- section 3 sets out the principles of the planning system and the framework that it provides to plan for tourism;
- section 4 sets out how stakeholders, including the industry and community should be involved in drawing up plans for tourism and identifies data and techniques that may assist;
- section 5 examines how tourism developments can be made more sustainable and what some of the main planning considerations will be when tourism developments are proposed; and
- section 6 identifies initiatives which can help proposals for tourism development to be processed effectively.

2.10 Annexes are included which provide material on:

- planning for different kinds of tourism accommodation;
- use of conditions for tourism accommodation;
- suggested data sources and techniques for tourism planning; and
- national planning policies that may be relevant to tourism;

# CHAPTER 3

## A Planning Framework for Tourism

### Principles of the planning system

- 3.1 Tourism is an important industry. Its future development will be secured by tourism developers engaging with the planning process and by those operating the planning system recognising that importance. This section sets out the principles of the English planning system which governs all forms of development including planning for tourism.
- 3.2 Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations. The planning process provides the opportunity to help to make new development more sustainable, both through the preparation of development plans and when decisions are taken on specific schemes. The outcomes should be developments which:
- provide well-designed, safe and accessible development, and create new opportunities that will improve the well being of individuals and the regeneration of communities;
  - result in the more efficient use of land and bring forward sufficient land to meet a wide range of expected needs;
  - provide a supportive framework for economic growth and successful business;
  - create vibrant, vital and viable town centres;
  - reduce the need to travel; and
  - protect and enhance the natural and built environment and safeguard natural resources.

This section looks specifically at development plans and how tourism issues can be addressed in those plans. Chapter 5 considers some key issues of sustainability in relation to individual developments.

## Plan-led system

3.3 The planning system in England aims to realise these objectives of sustainable development through a ‘plan-led’ system of development plans prepared by regional planning bodies and local planning authorities. These plans lead the subsequent development by setting a framework which helps to provide both an overall strategy for that development and policies for the determination of individual development proposals. Where these plans contain relevant policies, applications for planning permission should be determined in line with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. These plans have a number of key characteristics:

- they provide developers, businesses and communities with certainty and predictability about future development in an area;
- they are transparent so that users can readily understand them and the information and assumptions upon which they are based;
- they are flexible so that they can be adjusted to meet changing circumstances and priorities. Planning authorities must ensure that plans are kept up to date and report annually on how their plan’s policies are being achieved; and
- they are drawn up with community involvement and present a shared vision and strategy of how the area should develop to achieve more sustainable patterns of development.

Development plans should reflect and build upon the Government’s statements of national planning policies<sup>11</sup>.

3.4 The development plans prepared by regional planning bodies and local planning authorities are known respectively as regional spatial strategies (RSS) and local development frameworks (LDFs). Planning policy statement 11 (PPS11) provides advice on the preparation of RSS and planning policy statement 12 (PPS12) provides advice on the preparation of LDFs.

3.5 The preparation of RSS is a statutory requirement. They:

- provide a broad development strategy for the region for a fifteen to twenty year period;
- should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- are locationally, but not site, specific;
- are focused on delivery mechanisms which make clear what is to be done by whom and when;

<sup>11</sup> The series of Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) can be viewed on the ODPM website at [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)

- should be well integrated with other regional strategies, including any regional tourism strategy;
- should address sub-regional issues where appropriate; and
- provide a spatial framework to inform the preparation of LDF documents, local transport plans and regional and sub-regional strategies and programmes that have a bearing on land use activities.

3.6 Local development frameworks should be:

- based on a clear understanding of the economic, social and environmental needs of the area;
- clear, succinct and easily understood by all;
- underpinned by a comprehensive and credible evidence base; and
- ‘front-loaded’, seeking consensus on issues and taking key decisions early in the process.

3.7 Development plans are expected to take a spatial planning approach which integrates land use policies with other policies and programmes. The aim should be to co-ordinate spatial plans with urban and rural regeneration strategies, regional economic and housing strategies, community strategies and local transport plans. Wherever possible, spatial plans should be consistent with these other strategies (including any strategies for or relating to tourism) and be drawn up in collaboration with those responsible for them.

3.8 Development plans should have a clear vision about the pattern of development they are seeking to achieve in the area and clear objectives for achieving it. These should reflect the needs and problems of the communities in that area. They should be concerned not just with what can be built where and in what circumstances but also how the range of social, economic and environmental objectives will be achieved through plan policies. The plans should focus on outcomes, with specified indicators so that the progress made by the policies in meeting these desired outcomes can be measured.

## Developing Tourism through Strategies and Plans

### **REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGIES (RSS)**

3.9 At the regional level, regional planning bodies will need to decide how to deal with tourism in their RSS. Specifically they will have to decide whether:

- to treat tourism as an issue in itself;

- to subsume it within another issue such as economic development; or
- to deal with it as a consideration affecting a number of issues like the economy, the environment, regeneration and transport.

They should do this on the basis of the overall approach that they are taking in their RSS and in the light of the information they have gathered (see next section on data and techniques).

3.10 Whatever the chosen approach, the RSS should make clear:

- its vision and strategy for tourism in the region;
- how this contributes to broader regional objectives;
- what level of growth in tourism it is trying to achieve; and
- what the spatial characteristics of this will be.

Where the regional development agencies (RDAs) have produced Regional Tourism or Visitor Economy Strategies, the RSS should draw on these as well as providing a context when such strategies are reviewed. They provide greater detail than the Regional Economic Strategies and may have specific spatial or locational dimensions. The West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy contains the following vision for the future of tourism in the region, and an important context for RSS review.

#### **West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy (VES)**

##### **The Vision**

What this strategy is seeking to achieve – a vision for 2010 and beyond:

*The West Midlands visitor economy will be recognised for its continuing growth, and for the excellence of a number of sophisticated, world-class urban and authentic rural destinations for business and leisure visitors, which showcase the region's creativity and its heritage, celebrate its diversity, and set new standards for quality and sustainability.*

Elsewhere in the VES it notes that it:

*suggests a focus of investment in selected destinations, both existing key destinations and potential significant destinations of the future. It identifies destination infrastructure and services as high priority areas of investment for the region's current key destinations, and the continuing need for city centre investment and rural regeneration to create the visitor destinations of the future. This should assist the spatial strategy in achieving diverse and distinctive cities, towns, sub-regions and communities with Birmingham as a 'world city' at its heart.*

3.11 The RSS should also make clear what the key tourism characteristics are and how these are expected to change during the period of the strategy. This should cover:

- what the scale and distribution of tourist activity within the area is and what it is likely to be. The strategy needs to be clear what degree of change it is

seeking to oversee, what the nature of that change will be and where it will occur;

- likely future trends and change in volume, distribution and type of activity. There needs to be an understanding of what the underlying trends are and how the strategy intends to respond to the opportunities which they present;
- what the implications of those trends are for land-use, traffic flows, and the transport system. It should explain the extent to which these trends are (i) dependent upon improvements to the transport network and (ii) where they are likely to increase the need for such improvements;
- identification of areas within the region where there are, or are likely to be, any problems associated with growth or decline in tourism. For example, it might be necessary to reconcile demand for tourist accommodation with the need for affordable housing within an area;
- how increased demand for tourism might be best accommodated. It might be that the provision of accommodation and attractions should be increased in towns adjoining existing resorts in order to spread the benefits and to diffuse pressures;
- environmental impacts of tourism and, where these have adverse effects, how they can be tackled;
- the need to protect key tourism assets. In addition to features that already have statutory protection (eg national parks), there will be other features such as the wider environment, the quality of beaches, choice of accommodation, availability of sports and leisure facilities and the presence of 'night life' that are important in sustaining the attractiveness of the area; and
- ways in which tourism can contribute positively to other objectives eg economic development, regeneration, rural diversification, conservation, and environmental improvements.

### **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS (LDFS)**

- 3.12 LDFs should comprise a number of development plan documents including the core strategy, site specific allocations of land and area action plans. Any need for further development plan documents, or supplementary planning documents, should be identified in the local development scheme, the purpose of which is to inform the public of the planning authority's programme for the production of local development documents<sup>12</sup>. In a similar way to regional planning bodies, those preparing LDFs will need to decide how to deal with tourism issues within the framework. Like RSS, the approach should seek to produce a plan which is integrated with other strategies that have been prepared for the area, including any that relate to the future of tourism.

<sup>12</sup> For further information on the contents of LDFs, see Planning Policy Statement 12 : Local Development Frameworks.



- 3.13 In those locations where the future development of tourism is a key issue for the local authority, it will be appropriate for the core strategy to cover tourism issues together with any objectives relevant to tourism. In other local authorities it may be that the plan's broad approach to economic growth and regeneration sets the framework for the future development of tourism. In these cases this relationship should be acknowledged and taken into account in the development of the core strategy.
- 3.14 Those preparing LDFs should consider whether any policies for tourism are needed beyond what is set out in the core strategy. In determining the scope of the work required and what planning documents should be prepared, it will again be necessary first to decide whether tourism is to be addressed as a single issue or as part of a wider topic, such as economic growth. Where site allocations for tourism are made, these should follow from the objectives set out in the core strategy. In some areas in which tourism and its growth are a key part of the spatial strategy, it may be appropriate to depict this in spatial terms in the core strategy such as in a key diagram. In specific locations where development for tourism is particularly crucial to meeting the plan's objectives, the core strategy could propose an area action plan to focus and programme the elements of that development.
- 3.15 In order to keep policies to a manageable number, authorities should aim to support the policies affecting tourism in the core strategy in the following ways:
- putting detail on matters such as mitigating the effects of development (e.g. by landscaping) into supplementary planning documents;
  - putting good practice messages in other documents or in supporting text; and
  - not repeating national or regional policies in LDFs, although LDFs should indicate how the objectives and any targets for tourism contribute to those set out in the RSS.<sup>13</sup>
- 3.16 Where tourism is an important element of a LDF, the approach will need to be based upon a robust understanding of the characteristics of, and trends within, the tourism industry based on similar issues to those set out in RSS (see paragraph 3.11).
- 3.17 Bournemouth offers an example of where such an analysis of trends has occurred. This has provided the basis for the planned approach of diversifying tourism facilities at an important tourism destination whilst at the same time retaining the essential tourist accommodation. Although this was done through its preparation of its Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance under the previous system of development plans, the approach in terms of analysis and response would be equally applicable to a LDF approach.

<sup>13</sup> More specific advice about drafting policies for LDFs, including those for core strategies, is contained in 'Creating LDFs' and in 'Policies for Spatial Plans', which is available on the Planning Officers' Society website at [www.planningofficers.org.uk](http://www.planningofficers.org.uk)

### **Bournemouth Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Bournemouth Local Plan, adopted 2002 and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Tourism, adopted in 2004 both emphasise the need to diversify tourism facilities. This need manifested itself in particular through the continued loss of hotels despite planning policies aimed at retention. In its analysis, the Plan has noted that Bournemouth's popularity as a prime holiday destination has been offset by other markets opening up, such as short breaks, activity holidays and business and conference tourism.

The Local Plan has recognised the need to respond to this and for the seaside resort to serve a variety of functions and widen its economic base as a shopping and commercial centre. In response to this, the plan contains policies for the defined Town Centre Tourism Area and Tourism Core Areas as the hub of tourism facilities containing major tourism related facilities such as theatres, cinemas, night clubs, shops and restaurants, the Gardens, Pier and beach; Bournemouth International Centre; and hotels, guest houses and blocks of self catering accommodation.

## **Devising Good Tourism Policies**

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- 3.18 The strategy for tourism in the emerging development plan will provide the context for producing any specific policies for tourism. Whilst policies need to be developed to suit the particular circumstances of an area, there will be certain common features of a good tourism policy. Where specific tourism policies are included in a plan, they should aim to:
- maximise the benefits of tourism, in particular ensuring that the development is able to reach its potential to contribute to tourism in the area and for local communities to enjoy those benefits;
  - identify optimal locations, for example to maximise synergies with other tourist attractions and to promote opportunities for access by public transport;
  - integrate development with its surroundings both in terms of design and layout and in the way that the service or facility is able to function; and
  - avoid adverse impacts, for example by disturbance to activities on adjacent land.
- 3.19 Planners will need to understand and often reconcile a number of important factors when preparing such policies, in particular:
- **market demand** – sometimes market demand will exist in a very precise location. This might be to do with prominence or accessibility. In other cases the demand will be of approximately the same level throughout a wide area;
  - **environmental impact** – this can have a large number of facets, such as visual and noise impact, impacts on an historic setting, impact upon

biodiversity and upon landscape quality. Impacts may be positive, negative or a mix of both;

- **transport and accessibility** – travel is an inherent element of tourism. Whilst recognising that it is a principle of the planning system to seek to promote more sustainable transport choices, improve accessibility and reduce the need to travel, this may be particularly difficult for some types of tourism projects or for areas that are poorly served by public transport;
- **functional links** – whilst some forms of tourism may, in commercial terms, be able to be directed to a variety of locations (e.g. a hotel) others will be much more specific in their land use requirements (e.g. a visitor centre for a cathedral);
- **regeneration benefits** – tourism developments have the potential to bring jobs to an area, to improve physical appearance and to support local businesses and services. Plans to bring tourism into an area will often be developed in order to realise some of these advantages; and
- **labour supply** – the amount and quality of the labour supply will vary from place to place. Planning will often seek to locate new development where the need for jobs exist or where the population might benefit from a wider range and quality of employment.

The importance of these factors may vary for different developments and over time.

- 3.20 Tourists visit different areas for different reasons and to enjoy different experiences. It follows that the built infrastructure required for tourism will therefore vary from area to area. Tourism is certainly not a ‘one-size fits all’ product. In particular, different approaches may be needed in urban areas from those in rural areas.

## **TOURISM IN URBAN AREAS**

- 3.21 Tourism can bring benefits to urban areas and help to deliver development that is sustainable. Amongst the particular advantages that tourism can bring to towns and cities is to:
- be the focus of regeneration, or help to underpin it;
  - help to increase urban vitality and support linked trips;
  - be a key ingredient of mixed-use schemes;
  - support important services and facilities; and
  - facilitate improved access by sustainable modes of transport.

3.22 There are many types of tourist and leisure activities that particularly lend themselves to urban locations and which exhibit these advantages. These include:

- hotel, guest house and bed & breakfast accommodation;
- cinemas, theatres and concert and bingo clubs;
- museums, galleries and conference facilities;
- restaurants, bars, pubs, casinos and night clubs; and
- indoor and ten-pin bowling and health & fitness centres.

Planning authorities need to ensure that they have assessed the need for these facilities and have allocated an appropriate range of sites which allow genuine choices to meet those needs<sup>14</sup>. Similarly, it is for developers and operators to ensure that they have anticipated what their need for such sites is likely to be and that they undertake active discussions with local planning authorities about these requirements.

3.23 An example of how planning authorities have worked with the industry to assess and meet demand is provided by Portsmouth City Council. It has recently approached the issue of hotel provision by establishing the need for hotels and then identifying sites through the development plan that could help to meet those needs.

#### **Portsmouth City Council's Hotel Survey**

The planning department and economic development unit undertook a joint study to identify current levels of demand and opportunities for hotel development. Officers consulted with existing city centre hotel developers to determine their needs and levels of satisfaction, and review the potential and optimum number of hotel sites within the city. The study was in response to earlier feedback from business employers over the lack of hotel space.

Following the study, the leisure and tourism land allocations identified in the Local Plan were reviewed and tested against national policies on town centre development. Two hotel sites have been developed and investors are in the process of considering other potential sites.

### **TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS**

3.24 The provision of essential facilities for visitors is vital for the development of the tourism in rural areas. Tourism can:

- be a key element in rural and farm diversification;
- help to revitalise market towns and villages;

<sup>14</sup> DCLG will shortly be publishing practice guidance on assessing needs and identifying suitable locations in the context of town centre development.

- support important rural services and facilities; and
- underwrite environmental schemes and improvements to the built and natural environment.

3.25 RSS and LDF policies should therefore engender a positive approach to rural tourism proposals, applying the following principles:

- Wherever possible, tourist and visitor facilities should be housed in existing or replacement buildings, particularly where they are located outside existing settlements.
- In statutorily designated areas<sup>15</sup> they should seek to conserve and enhance the qualities and features that justified the designation.
- Large-scale tourist proposals must be assessed against the whole range of sustainable development objectives<sup>16</sup>. This includes not only their transport implications but also other sustainability considerations such as how they assist rural regeneration and the well being of communities.

3.26 Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) : Sustainable Development in Rural Areas sets out specific national planning policies on tourism and leisure in rural areas.

<sup>15</sup> For further information see: *Principles for Sustainable Tourism in National Parks and AONBs*, Countryside Agency, 2004

<sup>16</sup> See PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development.

# CHAPTER 4

## How to Plan for Tourism

- 4.1 To ensure that their development plans are effective for future development of tourism and thereby provide a framework to make sound planning decisions on tourism proposals, planning authorities should:
- develop and maintain a thorough dialogue with representatives of the tourism industry;
  - ensure that this dialogue helps to support a sound data base on the characteristics and needs of tourism in the area; and
  - use that data in applying effective techniques designed to ensure that those needs are met as fully as possible.

### Involving Stakeholders

- 4.2 It is likely that a large number of groups and individuals will be affected by strategies and proposals for tourism in a particular area. Planners will need to ensure that they have:
- adequately canvassed and considered all of these views;
  - in particular, received and understood the views of the community affected and those with a commercial interest in what is proposed; and
  - done this at the earliest possible time, in accordance with the principle of ‘front-loading’ that is an element of the new development plan process.
- 4.3 The Government has issued advice about how the community and other stakeholders should be involved at all stages of the planning process. This is contained in its planning policy statements (PPS) and supporting guidance.<sup>17</sup>
- 4.4 In meeting the requirement to consult business interests, the regional planning bodies will need to ensure that the tourism business interests that they engage are sufficiently wide-ranging and representative of this large and diverse sector. Annex D of PPS11 identifies potential participants in the RSS revision process. In addition to bodies in that annex that might be consulted to help develop the regional approach to tourism development, specialist tourism organisations

<sup>17</sup> See in particular *PPS1:Delivering Sustainable Development*; *PPS11:Regional Spatial Strategies; Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives*; and *Creating Local Development Frameworks: A Companion Guide to PPS12*.

such as the Tourism Alliance, the British Holiday and Homes Parks Association and the group of 'Tourism heads' of the Regional Development Agencies will also be potential consultees.

## Key Inputs from the Tourism Industry

- 4.5 Plan-making and review is a continuous process, and this needs to be reflected in the way that stakeholders are consulted and involved. Plan-making bodies should develop constructive dialogues with key players in the tourism sector, and build partnerships with those who have a role in delivery of tourism schemes and programmes.
- 4.6 Above all, there must be constructive and effective engagement with the tourism industry. This will help to ensure that plans are developed with the benefit of a realistic and sustainable commercial perspective, and that those plans relate well to the aspirations of the industry. In particular tourism operators and developers will be able to provide information and views upon:
- **tourism markets, levels of demand and planned investment:** those making plans for or affecting tourism will need to know what the principal tourism activities in the area are, whether these are growing or declining and if there are any specific types of tourism that the industry is expecting to expand;
  - **tourism revenues and broader economic impact:** plans should be based upon a detailed understanding of the economic value of key tourism sectors and the impacts of these in terms of the number of jobs provided and the services and facilities which are assisted by that tourism activity;
  - **tourism labour markets:** plans for tourism should be based upon information about the number of jobs currently in tourism, whether these are full-time, levels of skill and of pay. This information will be important to ensure that where plans may change the number or types of tourism jobs, these are realistic in terms of available labour and that they take opportunities to improve the quality and levels of pay for these jobs wherever possible; and
  - **costs and timings of types of tourism development:** where plans propose new tourism development for an area, these should be based upon sound estimates of the cost and timing of this development. This will be necessary in order to ensure that development proposals are realistic and optimal in terms of the expected benefits. Whilst the commercial decision is distinct from the planning process, those responsible for plan-making and implementation are responsible for ensuring that those plans have a good chance of being realised.
- 4.7 Information of this sort will be important in terms of:
- the development of plans at both the regional and local level;
  - determining what strategy for tourism is most realistic;

- ascertaining what level of benefits might be expected for local economies and communities; and
  - helping support particular proposals, for example to help to demonstrate the benefits of a particular scheme.
- 4.8 Such information will often be complemented, particularly in the urban context, by planning authorities' work on needs assessments for leisure and other town centre uses. Good practice on this process is currently being prepared by DCLG. It will provide information for forward planning of a wide range of land uses of importance to tourism such as cinemas, restaurants, concert halls, health & fitness clubs, hotels and conference centres.
- 4.9 It is clearly in the interests of the tourism industry to ensure that their aspirations, and particularly their land use requirements, are known and understood by those responsible for drawing up plans. The particular advantages of early and active engagement by the industry and its representatives will be:
- to specify site requirements for inclusion in plans;
  - to propose elements of tourism to be included in large scale proposals, such as mixed use and regeneration schemes;
  - to comment upon how well the visions and objectives proposed for plans and strategies reflect the aspirations and expectations of the industry; and
  - to provide an industry perspective on proposed policies so as to influence their final form.
- 4.10 There are a number of other tourism stakeholders who will similarly need to make an input to emerging plans. Their interests will be broad and include those who control a particular tourism resource (e.g. British Waterways), those seeking to protect the environment (e.g. conservation boards for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and those supplying a service (e.g. transport operators). In addition to providing important views, these bodies will often be able to provide information on matters such as:
- the characteristics and attributes of the area which attract tourists, and how these might be protected, developed or enhanced;
  - the nature of, and prospects for, transport infrastructure; and
  - other existing and emerging plans and investment programmes that are likely to affect the area.



### Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East

To progress the development of a Regional Spatial Strategy for Tourism in the South East, the Regional Assembly's Economy Advisory Group established a Tourism Task Group, drawn from a broad range of stakeholders, to manage the process and provide technical advice and expertise. The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) chaired both groups. The task group also comprised senior officers from each of the two regional tourist boards in the South East (subsequently merged to form Tourism South East); the Countryside Agency; the Department for Culture Media and Sport; Sport England; the South East Forum for Sustainability (SEFS); Surrey County Council, as well as the Regional Assembly. The strategy was adopted as a formal alteration to Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (now the Regional Spatial Strategy ) in November 2004.

## Use of Data and Techniques

### DATA

4.11 It is important that strategies and plans for tourism are based upon the best information available. Annex C provides more information about the sources of data and techniques that may assist in planning for tourism. It is for those preparing plans to decide what information they need to gather, and the degree of detail that they will require. To plan effectively for tourism, the following types of information are likely to be required:

- **demographic data** – drawn from census and other Government sources such as the Labour Force Survey and General Household Survey. This information will be used to establish how many people are employed in different sectors, earnings and qualifications, commuting patterns, skill levels and unemployment levels;
- **visitor data** – drawn from surveys of tourism behaviour (e.g. Leisure Day Visits Survey, the UK Tourism Survey and the Attractions Survey), statistics from individual tourism attractions, transport operators, area organisations (e.g. National Parks) and hotel occupancy surveys. The information is likely to have already been gathered, but will not always be free to the user. It is useful for establishing seasonal variations and longer term trends in tourism behaviour, which in turn will be important for planning future provision;
- **economic studies** – these will be used to develop options for particular tourism strategies or to test the business case for a particular tourism development. They may be undertaken by the public or private sector, or a partnership of the two. Such studies are likely to examine how existing patterns of visiting or spending might be influenced by particular initiatives such as the introduction of a new facility, increased bedspaces or new transport links (see also discussion of techniques below); and
- **plans, proposals and programmes** – a further reason for consulting a wide range of stakeholders is for the plan-maker to ensure that he has a comprehensive understanding of any relevant programme that may affect

tourism in the area and therefore the strategy that he is developing. These initiatives will include the investment plans of tourism operators, statutory undertakers and public bodies, and documents that set out longer term aspirations.

## TECHNIQUES

- 4.12 Planners will need to consider what methods they need both to access and handle data and in using it to make robust plans and decisions. A clear and methodical approach will be particularly required in respect of:
- **community involvement and consultation** – including with those who have a commercial interest and those likely to be affected by local changes arising from tourism. This could include:
    - formal written consultation at the outset to establish the nature and extent of local business interests in tourism;
    - focus groups, panels or one-to-one meetings to explore options and support for particular proposals;
    - public meetings and exhibitions to disseminate the plan’s vision for tourism and establish the degree of support for those amongst the wider community; and
    - area forums, workshops and ‘planning for real’ exercises to develop detailed ideas and to promote ownership of the plan’s proposals.
  - **modelling the economic impacts and benefits of tourism** (both in respect of areas and in respect of specific schemes). A good example of the type of economic appraisal that should be carried out for large projects is that provided by the studies relating to an extension of the existing Tate Art Gallery in St Ives, Cornwall.

### Tate St. Ives Economic Feasibility Study

The Tate St Ives experienced a rapid increase in visitor numbers since its opening, while continuing to experience an annual operational deficit. The Tate management is exploring options to expand the enterprise to improve the quality of the visitor experience and achieve greater educational benefits, together with the economic, social and environmental impacts that this could generate.

An Economic Assessment of Tate St Ives, Phase 2 was commissioned by the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) with agreement with Cornwall County Council. The consultancy team reported its findings in July 2004. The study reviews and quantifies the gross and net economic impacts and benefits or value added of each proposed development option against a “do nothing” approach. Economic forecasts are based on projections of visitor numbers for each option. Outputs from the analysis include estimates of the:

- **gross economic impact**, based on the additional number of visitors that Tate St Ives will attract, over and above current numbers. The development’s impact is measured by the employment created and income generated in the area of impact and throughout the supply chain.
  - **net additional economic impact**, including leakage, deadweight, displacement and multiplier effects.
  - **financial benefits**, based on expenditure of the additional visitors on admissions, shop and café and the additional on-site employment it supports; and
  - **wider economic benefits**, including expenditure on suppliers, off-site spending by day visitors, off-site spending by overnight holiday makers drawn to the area specifically to visit the Tate, supply spending by tourism related businesses and the income induced/multiplier effect.
- 
- **visitor behaviour**, including transport choices, use of attractions and accommodation usage. The technique adopted will depend upon why the particular information is being sought. For example, if the development plan is considering whether more overnight accommodation is required in an area, data on use of the current accommodation will be the key requirement. However, patterns of transport use and information about what brings people into the area in the first place will also be important to understand what scope there is for further hotel development and where that could be best located.

- 4.13 When data and techniques are being sought and applied, it is important that those managing and contributing to the process recognise that the same information is likely to be required again at a later date, to assess the plan’s progress and effectiveness. So the selection of data and techniques needs to recognise what the ongoing demand upon resources is likely to be. It also means that co-operative working and partnerships need to be nurtured and sustained to enable such monitoring to be readily undertaken.

# CHAPTER 5

## Key Planning Considerations for Tourism Developments

### Introduction

5.1 This section examines some of the key planning issues which may arise in considering proposals for individual tourism developments. The enormous variety of tourism developments mean that the planning considerations will always vary on a case by case basis. However, the following will apply to most developments:

- **where the development is located** – developments need to be located where they are accessible to visitors (and for many, but not all developments, by means other than just by private car) and where they do not have an adverse impact upon sensitive environments;
- **how they are designed** – developments should be attractive to users, they need to work well in functional terms and they need to use natural resources in an efficient manner; and
- **how they fit into their surroundings** – developments need to respect their environs and complement them rather than detract from them. They should be designed to have a positive impact upon landscape, the historical setting and upon ecology.

### Choosing the best location

5.2 In order to be commercially competitive and thus successful, tourism developers will choose sites that are accessible to visitors, and design their developments in such a way that visitors can readily and conveniently enjoy the attraction or facility. The planning authority will share this objective, but in particular will wish to maximise access by sustainable modes of transport, minimise any congestion that the development might give rise to, and ensure that particular sectors of the population are not discouraged from using the attraction when it is completed. Where the attraction or facility is one which lends itself to an urban location (see paragraph 3.22 above), the local planning authority will seek to ensure a town centre location wherever possible.

5.3 Planners and developers should work together in order to ensure that new tourism developments are as sustainable as possible in transport terms. At the same time, planners will need to recognise that the wide variety of developments

that are inherent in the tourism industry means that there are some developments (e.g. touring sites for caravans) that are car dependent. Wherever possible and feasible for the development concerned, they should look to:

- **locate the development close to public transport interchanges and bus routes** which will not only help to reduce travel by car but also enable a wider range of people to visit the attraction;
- **produce green transport plans** – these are often appropriate for larger schemes where there may be scope to reduce private car travel by providing dedicated bus services or greater access by walking or cycling. Park-and-ride provision can be an element of this, as can schemes which provide discounts for those arriving by public transport; and
- **establish a visitor management programme** – this can be a particularly appropriate solution where an attraction or its surroundings are subject to or the cause of congestion. It may also be advisable where an attraction is fragile or sensitive to use by a large number of people. Visitor management may be achieved by regulating flow (e.g. timed ticket sales) or via development. An example of the latter would be by adding a visitor centre to an historic abbey so that visitors spend less time in the ‘fragile’, historic part of the site, and more time in the modern, purpose built ‘interpretation’ building.

5.4 There will be some occasions where development for tourism is sought at a location where it will be difficult to meet the objective of access by sustainable modes of transport. The choice of location may have been determined by a functional need, such as in the above example of a visitor centre. Developers and planners may find that in such cases there will be limited opportunities to make the development accessible by sustainable modes of transport or to reduce the number or proportion of visits made by car. For small-scale schemes, the traffic generated is likely to be fairly limited and additional traffic movements are therefore unlikely to be a reason for refusal for otherwise suitable tourism developments.

5.5 In all cases, planners will need to weigh up the other benefits of a tourism proposal against any disadvantages arising from its location. Some of the key considerations will be the extent to which the proposal:

- helps to protect or improve a specific site or general location. Many new proposals offer the opportunity for landscape enhancement, to re-use an historic building or to improve a derelict and unattractive site;
- contributes to tourism in the locality. New tourism developments will usually be beneficial to the local economy and complement the area’s tourism function;
- provides a new facility for the local community as well as visitors;
- assists more generally with diversification of rural economies; and, where appropriate,
- impacts on the vitality and viability of town centres.

## Design and sustainability

- 5.6 Good design is important for tourism because:
- tourism is essentially a commercial activity and its success will depend upon how attractive it is to visitors;
  - in areas with many tourist attractions, it is important that each attraction is perceived as contributing to the overall experience; and
  - wherever tourist proposals are to be situated, it is important that they complement and improve the wider built and natural environment.
- 5.7 Good design is also a key element in achieving development which is sustainable and will contribute positively towards making places better for people. Developments that are well-designed will be more successful. They will last longer and be more liked. As such they will contribute more to the people who live near or visit them and to the surrounding area as a whole. Further material on design issues can be found in PPS1.<sup>18</sup>
- 5.8 Two important aspects of design will be layout and accessibility. Developments that are easy to reach, easy to get around and easy to use are likely to be successful in attracting visitors in the first place and in encouraging them to return. This in turn will assist their commercial success. The details of design are particularly important for tourism because, by definition, visitors are often unfamiliar with the building and its environs. In order to be accessible and used by a wide range of people, tourism developments should be designed to be:
- physically accessible, including to people with impaired mobility and to people with other disabilities such as impaired sight or hearing;
  - socially inclusive, facilitating use by all sectors of the community;
  - a positive contribution to the host community;
  - safe and healthy; and
  - attractive.
- 5.9 The careful design of buildings can also make them more sustainable by reducing carbon emissions resulting from their construction and operation. Good energy conservation and using renewable technologies such as wind power and solar gain can reduce the energy needs of buildings and operating costs, whilst improving their sustainability. An important contribution to sustainability can also be made by the selection and use of appropriate materials. Materials from local sources will have less 'embodied energy' (ie less fossil fuels will have been taken up transporting and perhaps processing them). Locally-sourced material will also provide local jobs, thus strengthening and diversifying the local economy, and making it more likely that the final development will fit well with the local environment.

<sup>18</sup> PPS1 : Delivering Sustainable Development, ODPM, 2005

- 5.10 The re-use of buildings that have become redundant further improves the overall sustainability of new developments. This also often has the advantage of maintaining important and historic buildings and providing continuity in the landscape and townscape. These sustainable attributes, which may be substantial, may offset certain planning objections to a proposal such as poor location or access. So, for example, if a hotel was proposed in a redundant building outside of an existing town centre, the decision maker would need to consider and reflect the advantages of the refurbishment proposal against the disadvantage of the less central location.

## Contributing to the environment

- 5.11 Tourism developments may offer considerable opportunities to conserve and enhance the local environment and its inherent qualities. Such advantages will be important considerations in assessing the overall sustainability, and thus acceptability, of a particular proposal. Developers of tourism projects should therefore consider whether new developments can:
- protect and enhance the visual quality of the site and its surroundings, to ensure that the development fits in well with its environs;
  - respect the historic interest of the surrounding buildings and areas and ensuring that proposals do not adversely affect the historic environment that people value;
  - protect and improve biodiversity. New development should not only protect nature conservation interests (whether it is a statutory requirement or not), but can provide an opportunity to improve biodiversity in an area, for example through the creation of new features of wildlife interest. Such initiatives can complement the wider objectives of tourism developments by increasing the attractiveness of the development to visitors; and
  - achieve small-scale improvements to sustainability, for example by recycling waste, using renewable energy and sourcing produce and materials locally.

# CHAPTER 6

## Determining Tourism Proposals

- 6.1 This section outlines some of the initiatives that developers and planning authorities can take to ensure that proposals for tourism development are processed in an effective and fair manner which will promote optimal outcomes.

### Information

- 6.2 Developers can help their proposals to be determined quickly, and achieve a positive outcome, if they provide adequate and appropriate information in support of their applications. For their part local planning authorities need to make clear what information they will be seeking in support of applications for tourism developments. The information required is likely to vary greatly depending on the nature of the proposal, its scale and its location. For larger proposals there may be a wide range of information needed by the planning authority, including:
- the nature of the visits expected to the development, how many they will be, how long and when they will occur;
  - what seasonal fluctuation is likely and the extent to which there are expected to be joint trips with other activities in the locality;
  - where visits are likely to originate from, and modal split of visitors; and
  - the levels of spend and the amount of money expected to be drawn into the local economy.
- 6.3 Developers can help themselves and the local planning authority by seeking discussions with the authority in advance of submitting their planning applications. Such discussions will be an opportunity to identify what information may be required to be submitted in support of the planning application. They will also be helpful in identifying any planning issues and problems and how these might be resolved.

### Consultation

- 6.4 Consultation is a statutory requirement and thus an integral part of the planning process. However, there are many potential advantages in going beyond the minimum requirements, particularly through getting the community involved at an early stage in the planning of future developments. Local people are likely to be affected in a number of ways by new tourism proposals. They may be users



of a new facility, perhaps even the main users. They may stand to benefit because of jobs or because their businesses may be affected by the presence and operation of the new development. So there can be distinct advantages in involving local people as their knowledge and opinions will allow adjustments to be made to proposals as they are being developed. This might help in overcoming later objections or help to identify ways of making the proposal more attractive and thus more profitable or successful. The level of consultation with the community should be in proportion to the nature, size and scale of the proposed development.

#### **Centre Parcs Holiday Villages**

Center Parcs provides a good practice example of how to approach consultation on tourism development proposals. At their Longleat village proposal they undertook a consultation and community engagement process lasting over 6 months. This preceded the submission of the holiday village planning application. Early meetings with the local planning authority, statutory consultees, national, regional and local bodies, including the tourist board, Regional Assembly, English Nature and others helped to inform the master planning process and helped shape the proposal. Community engagement, through advertised public exhibitions in the local area, also provided a greater understanding of the local community and its own aspirations. This is important given that the holiday village will integrate with the community, providing employment, income and tourism benefits and opportunities for many years to come.

Such engagement can be beneficial for the local planning authority because of the wide range of matters taken into account and the extent to which interested parties have been consulted.

- 6.5 When undertaking such consultation, it is important that efforts are made to be as inclusive as possible and to understand the needs of groups who might otherwise find it difficult to engage with the planning system. This should include providing the opportunity to put forward ideas and suggestions and to participate in developing proposals and options.

## **Additional Guidance**

- 6.6 One way that local authorities can help developers to draw up schemes that will meet the requirements for new development set out in development plan policies is to provide guidance in advance. This can take a number of forms and will depend upon the characteristics of the area and any particular aims for tourism development that the local plan documents have established.
- 6.7 Where the local planning authority is seeking or expecting considerable tourism development in a number of locations in its area, then it might even be appropriate to draw up a dedicated supplementary planning document on tourism developments to deal with such issues as preferred locations, access, transportation and design. This document could explain the key objectives for tourism development and seek to ensure that new development supported the overall vision for tourism. Eastbourne has chosen to prepare a supplementary planning document specifically to provide planning advice to developers and others on how the Council will administer its financial viability test for tourist accommodation as set out in the Core Strategy.

- 6.8 Where tourism development is expected just at one or two particular sites within the area, it may be more appropriate to prepare supplementary documents providing design advice to support particular sites allocated in the relevant development plan document. This will help prospective developers to understand the type of development envisaged for the site and how it is expected to integrate physically and functionally with its surroundings.
- 6.9 Another approach might be for the planning authority to provide design guidance for particular types of development, such as for hotels, amusements premises or caravan sites. This will be appropriate where an area has high demand for a particular type of development or when a particular land use is subject to pressures for change or redevelopment.

## Compliance with other statutory regimes

- 6.10 When planning applications for development are made, the proposals may be subject to other statutory regimes as well. Most planning applications also require approval under building regulations, but there are a range of other statutory requirements that certain developments may need to meet or that developers will need to consider when preparing a planning application for development. Examples may include the need to obtain listed building or conservation area consent; the need to provide an Environmental Statement to comply with the requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations; and the need to have regard to the Habitats Regulations, for example in cases where there may be European protected species present on a proposed development site.
- 6.11 Further advice on such matters should be obtained, if necessary, from the local authority before planning applications are submitted.

## Using conditions and obligations

- 6.12 The granting of planning permission will often be subject to certain conditions being met. These conditions may be used to improve the appearance or functioning of the development or to mitigate against adverse impacts. Conditions must be seen to be fair, reasonable and practicable. For example, typical planning conditions for a tourism or leisure development might:
- regulate the hours during which an attraction could open in order to avoid undue disturbance to people living nearby; or
  - require that a caravan site or another type of holiday accommodation be used only for holidays and not as permanent accommodation or as a main residence (see annex B).
- 6.13 Where it is not possible to include matters in a planning condition, for example where the planning authority wishes to secure on-going management or financial payments, they may seek to negotiate a planning obligation with the developer under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Obligations must meet certain tests including being directly related to the

proposed development and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development. One example of a tourism-related planning obligation is at the London Wetland Centre where a bus route and terminal have been created and alterations made to cycle lanes. New cycle racks and storage facilities have also been provided, creating a packet of measures that have substantially increased the overall sustainability of this visitor facility.

# ANNEX A

## Tourist Accommodation

1. Tourism accommodation takes many different forms, including hotels, guest houses and bed and breakfast premises, self-catering, touring and static caravans and camping, and caters for a variety of tastes and budgets. But all are capable of bringing economic benefits to the areas in which they are located. These benefits will need to be assessed alongside other issues such as suitability of the location in terms of its sustainability.
2. The issues that will need to be addressed in considering planning applications for tourist accommodation will vary according to the type, size, and nature of the accommodation being provided. These are considered further below.

## Hotel and serviced accommodation

### GENERAL LOCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

3. The process of identifying suitable locations for hotel and serviced accommodation, whatever its nature, should be an integral part of the plan making process. Local planning authorities and the tourist industry should therefore engage constructively to identify suitable locations in plans for hotel accommodation to meet identified current and future needs. This is particularly important for major hotels – for example those with business, conference and banqueting facilities, or large hotels catering for tourists – where the preference should be to identify town centre sites wherever possible, in line with national policies set out in PPS6. Such sites are the most sustainable in planning terms, since they allow greater access by public transport, contribute to urban vitality and regeneration, and allow visitors to easily access other town centre facilities and attractions. Where proposals for major hotel facilities come forward outside the development plan process, their location should be assessed in line with the policies in PPS6 and the sequential approach to site selection.
4. Proposed locations for other types of hotel and serviced accommodation should also be considered through the plan process wherever possible. The emphasis, whatever the type of accommodation, should be on identifying the most sustainable locations, having regard to national planning policies. But in allocating sites in plans, or considering planning applications that come forward outside of the plan process, developers and planning authorities need to recognise that the particular market being met by the accommodation may influence the nature of the location chosen. So, for example, accommodation catering for those seeking to enjoy the natural environment through walking and outdoor recreation may be better located in a rural area, in or at the edge of the centre of a village or small town, rather than in a major town centre some distance away from the attractions it serves.

5. Whatever the type of hotel or serviced accommodation and whatever its location, it should:
  - fit well with its surroundings, having regard to its siting, scale, design, materials and landscaping; and
  - be in harmony with the local environment (taking account of, amongst other factors, residential amenity, noise, traffic and parking in the vicinity).

## **HOTEL ACCOMMODATION IN RURAL AREAS**

6. National planning policies set out in PPS7 "*Sustainable Development in Rural Areas*" makes it clear that the expectation is that most tourism accommodation requiring new buildings should be located in, or adjacent to, existing towns and villages. PPS7 also recognises that proposals to convert existing rural buildings to provide hotel and other serviced accommodation should be acceptable, subject to any general criteria that may be set in development plans on the re-use of such buildings.
7. National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty attract visitors who wish to enjoy the special qualities of the landscapes and the countryside of these areas. It is important that sufficient accommodation of a suitable range of types is provided for these visitors. However, particular care needs to be taken over the number, scale and location of accommodation facilities in these designated areas to ensure that the particular qualities that justified the designation are conserved. These considerations are best addressed through the plan process wherever possible.

## **HISTORIC TOWNS AND CITIES**

8. Historic towns and cities are an attraction to tourists from home and overseas and there is pressure to increase hotel accommodation in them. Great importance is attached to the preservation of buildings of architectural or historic interest both for their intrinsic qualities and for the contribution they make to our towns and villages, and to tourism. It is therefore important that any proposals for new hotel accommodation in such towns and cities are sensitive to their surroundings.
9. Conversion into hotels is often a realistic proposition for ensuring the retention and maintenance of historic buildings provided it is sensitively handled, does not materially alter the character or historic features of the building, and provided the new use does not generate traffic movements which cannot be accommodated.
10. Many historic buildings in town and country are already in use as hotels. If carefully designed, additions can be achieved without adversely affecting the historic fabric or character and maintain the historic building in viable use. But large-scale buildings in a small-scale setting, buildings which adversely affect the existing skyline, and those which by their design, materials, illumination or building line are out of sympathy with neighbouring historic buildings will normally be unacceptable.

## **MODERNISATION AND EXTENSIONS**

11. Aside from historic buildings, there are many redundant or semi-obsolete buildings – such as closed mills, distilleries, warehouses, or railway stations – that can lend themselves well to adaptation and modernisation as hotels, other forms of serviced accommodation or restaurants. To convert such buildings to compatible use can bring life back to an otherwise wasted asset – thus conserving a useful and often attractive building, improving a neglected site and helping the local economy.
12. Similarly, moderate-sized extensions to an existing hotel or public house, including the addition of bedroom accommodation, can help to ensure the future viability of such businesses. This may satisfy a local need as well as a tourism one, by fully utilising the potential of the site but without any disproportionate increase in scale. In all cases, careful consideration should be given to ensure that the size of the extension proposed is not disproportionate for the location concerned.

## **BUDGET HOTELS, MOTELS, AND TRAVEL LODGES**

13. Where budget hotels are designed to cater for longer stays at a destination (for example, those catering for visitors to historic towns and cities), their location should be considered in light of policies in the development plan and national policies in PPS6 on town centres. Location of such hotels in town centres maximises the opportunities for visitors to easily access other town centre facilities and attractions.
14. Other types of budget hotels and similar types of development such as motels and travel lodges cater more for car-born travellers, often for a single overnight stay – eg business travellers en-route to a destination. In such cases, the preference of developers will be for sites on major traffic routes outside of the centre of large towns or tourist centres. However the aim should be to make any development as sustainable as possible, and it will not normally be appropriate for such developments to be located in open countryside away from major settlements. Edge of town centre locations, for example on a ring road or on a major route out of the town centre, will usually be the most appropriate locations if a town centre location is not suitable, available or viable.
15. For out-of-centre locations, design and layout of the development is likely to be of considerable importance in deciding whether it is acceptable in planning terms. Depending on the setting, an open layout in which careful attention has been paid to achieving a high standard of design and landscaping is likely to be more acceptable than a dense concentration of buildings.
16. Where a proposal includes other new facilities, such as a petrol station or shop, these will have to be considered on their own merits. If they are objectionable in themselves, the fact that they are combined with a hotel will not remove the objections. Restaurants, fast food outlets, leisure, fitness and other facilities open to the general public as well as residents are also sometimes combined with hotel proposals, in which case the extra traffic they are likely to generate and its effect on the highway must also be taken into account.

## CAR PARKING

17. Maximum car parking standards for hotel and serviced accommodation may be included in development plans. Where such standards are not included in plans, planning authorities will need to consider what are appropriate levels of parking, based on the market which the hotel serves, its location and availability of public transport facilities. In addition, for those hotels where a substantial part of the parking needs are attributable to public rooms used mainly for functions which attract non-residents, then the availability of public parking in the vicinity of the hotel will also need to be taken into account.
18. Planning authorities should also take account of the proposed arrangements for service loading and unloading and setting down space for visitors. Organised tours demand adequate loading and unloading facilities for coaches. Access and waiting areas should be designed with this in mind. Access points should be sited so as to minimise turning movements across traffic and to avoid congestion of the highway caused by vehicles queuing to pick up or drop passengers. Developers should discuss proposed access arrangements with the highway authority at the earliest possible stage.

## Holiday, touring caravan, and chalet parks

19. In the UK as a whole, the parks industry accounts for tourist spend of some £3.23 billion<sup>19</sup> each year, accommodating some 22% of all holiday bed nights. The industry comprises holiday chalets, caravan holiday homes, pitches for touring caravans, motor-homes and tenting and all types of self-catering accommodation. Holiday parks are the largest provider of rural tourism bed spaces.
20. PPS7 provides advice for planning policies and development proposals for static holiday and touring caravan parks and holiday chalet developments. Planners should carefully weigh the objective of providing adequate facilities and sites with the need to protect landscapes and environmentally sensitive sites. They should examine the scope for relocating any existing visually or environmentally-intrusive parks away from sensitive areas, or for re-location away from sites prone to flooding or coastal erosion. However, the high land values associated with holiday parks, the cost of infrastructure and possible planning issues relating to a proposed site may make such proposals impractical and unviable.
21. This advice recognises that planning provides an opportunity to improve the attractiveness of such developments to those who visit them and as features in the landscape. The *Environmental Code for Holiday parks, Caravan and Camping Sites, and Park Home Estates*<sup>20</sup> advises park owners on fulfilling the industry's commitment to environmental protection. *Holiday Parks: Caring for the Environment – a guide to good practice* (1991), published by the Countryside Commission, remains an important reference document that

<sup>19</sup> UKTS 2003

<sup>20</sup> Park home estates are outside the scope of this Guide, as they are residential and not tourist developments.

includes many case studies directing holiday park operators toward best practice. Planners should work with owners and developers of sites to ensure that the most is made of these opportunities. Where there is an identified demand for new or expanded sites, planners should ensure that environmental impacts and impacts on visual amenity are minimised.

22. New sites that are close to existing settlements and other services will generally be more sustainable as some local services may be accessed by means other than by car. Similarly caravan storage facilities that are close to existing settlements may have less adverse impact and be more sustainable. However, there may be valid reasons for extending or improving existing holiday parks that are not located close to existing settlements by virtue of their support for successful local businesses and the provision of employment. Authorities should also consider how the proposal will affect tourism in the area, particularly in terms of its economic and environmental impacts.
23. Local planning authorities may attach conditions to planning permissions for holiday parks to ensure that they are used for holiday purposes only. However, with better caravan standards and the trend towards tourism as a year round activity, authorities should give sympathetic consideration to applications to extend the opening period allowed under existing permissions. Annex B covers these matters in more detail.

## **STAFF ACCOMMODATION**

24. For many types of holiday parks, a residential managerial presence is often essential, to achieve quality service to the customer, security for the property, and to meet the obligations of health and safety regulations. Accommodation may sometimes also be needed for key members of staff. As far as possible, suitably located existing dwellings should be used to meet these accommodation needs. But where this is not a feasible option, and particularly in locations where suitable housing is not available, or is unaffordable, it may be necessary to provide new, on-site accommodation for managerial and/or other staff. In such cases the conversion of any suitable available existing buildings should be considered first in preference to the construction of new and potentially intrusive housing development in the countryside.
25. PPS7 makes it clear that isolated new houses in the countryside require special justification for planning permission to be granted. PPS7 further states that one of the few circumstances in which isolated residential development may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable agricultural, forestry and certain other full-time workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of their place of work. There will be some cases where the nature and demands of the work concerned make it essential for one or more people engaged in a tourism enterprise to live at, or very close to, the site of their work. Local planning authorities should give consideration to the essential needs of all businesses located in rural areas, including tourism and should apply the policies set out in PPS7 – in particular those in Annex A. Planning conditions can ensure that such accommodation is occupied for this purpose only.



## Other forms of self-catering accommodation

26. PPS7 advises that local planning authorities should support the provision of other forms of self-catering holiday accommodation in rural areas where this would accord with sustainable development objectives. The re-use and conversion of existing non-residential buildings for this purpose may have added benefits, e.g. as a farm diversification scheme.

## ANNEX B

# Seasonal and Holiday Occupancy Conditions

1. The nature of holidays in this country has become increasingly diverse, in location, in season and in duration. Many people go away several times a year, often for short breaks and not exclusively in the summer months. Much of this demand is for self-catering accommodation – whether in new or converted buildings or in caravan holiday homes. This spread of demand improves the use that is made of this accommodation and so is advantageous to the businesses which provide it and to those host communities which are supported by the spending that it generates. It can help to reduce the disadvantages of seasonal employment, including the difficulties of retaining trained and experienced staff.
2. Whilst extension of the season has these advantages, the demand for this accommodation may occur in areas in which the provision of permanent housing would be contrary to national or local policies which seek to restrict development, for example in order to safeguard the countryside. The planning system can reconcile these two objectives through the use of occupancy conditions designed to ensure that holiday accommodation is used for its intended purpose. Planning authorities commonly impose such conditions when granting permission for self-catering holiday accommodation. Chapter 6 above explains the general use of conditions with planning permissions.
3. One type of condition frequently used for holiday accommodation, particularly in holiday areas, is known generically as a ‘holiday occupancy condition’. The aim of such conditions is generally to ensure that the premises are only used by visitors and do not become part of the local housing stock. There are three principal reasons why a planning authority might seek to do this:
  - in order that national or local policies on development of the countryside are not compromised. Often the conversion of redundant rural buildings to holiday accommodation provides a means to retain those buildings without introducing a level of activity that would occur with permanent households;
  - to avoid occupation by permanent households which would in turn put pressure upon local services. Permanent households may place demands for local schools and social and health services that would not normally arise from visitors. Moreover, in remote locations the cost of providing these services is greater. It may therefore be reasonable for the planning authority to place an occupancy condition when properties are being built or converted for residential use; and
  - to strengthen tourism in a particular area by ensuring that there is a wide range of properties available to encourage visitors to come there on holiday.

Planning authorities will frame these conditions according to local circumstances, and in accordance with general Government advice that conditions should be reasonable and fair. They will also need to frame them so that they can be readily enforced by the authority but in a way that is not unduly intrusive for either owners or occupants.

#### **Controlling use of holiday caravan and other holiday park accommodation**

East Riding of Yorkshire Council established a joint working group to establish the best approach to secure holiday use of caravan parks. This group comprised councillors and council officers; representatives from the British Holiday and Homes Parks Association Ltd; the park operators and their agents; and the caravan manufacturers. It concluded that planning conditions needed to be stronger, requiring documentary evidence of occupiers maintaining a primary residency elsewhere to be provided.

As a result the planning committee agreed that future planning permissions for holiday caravan parks, holiday log cabins and holiday chalets shall normally be subject to the following conditions:

- (i) the caravans (or cabins/chalets) are occupied for holiday purposes only;
- (ii) the caravans (or cabins/chalets) shall not be occupied as a person's sole, or main place of residence;
- (iii) the owners/operators shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names of all owners/occupiers of individual caravans/log cabins/chalets on the site, and of their main home addresses, and shall make this information available at all reasonable times to the local planning authority.

The reason for these conditions is to ensure that approved holiday accommodation is not used for unauthorised permanent residential occupation. The register required in (iii) above shall normally be collected by the caravan site licence holder or his/her nominated person.

4. Another type of condition that may be appropriate for tourist areas is known as a 'seasonal occupancy' condition. This would seek to restrict use of holiday accommodation during particular times of year, perhaps to protect the local environment. This could be used if, for example, use of the premises or the site might affect an important species of bird during its breeding season or when it is winter feeding. Local planning authorities will need to balance the need to impose seasonal occupancy conditions with the wish to avoid exacerbating the seasonal nature of tourism in the locality and its possible adverse effects upon local businesses and jobs.

# ANNEX C

## Data Sources and Techniques

1. Planners will need to consider relevant quantitative data, including data relating to the economics of tourism development, in both the plan making process and in respect of specific proposals. Development plans (regional spatial strategies and local development frameworks) must be based upon a sound evidence base which has been subject to a rational appraisal. This will need to include an explicit rationale for the vision and strategy for tourism which is being proposed, based in part upon the economic benefits that have been used to justify it.
2. Currently there are five main surveys at the national level. These comprise:
  - United Kingdom Tourism Survey (UKTS)
  - Leisure Day Visits Survey (LDVS)
  - International Passenger Survey (IPS)
  - United Kingdom Occupancy Survey (UKOS)
  - Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions (SVVA)

The first three of these surveys rely on information from individuals while the last two depend upon returns from businesses. A report to the DCMS on the Review of Tourism Statistics has identified some shortcomings of these surveys and set out recommendations on how the data retrieval and statistical inadequacies could be improved. The DCMS-appointed working party set up to prioritise recommendations from the Review decided that the top priority was to improve UKTS, which covers movements within the UK.

### Tourism Satellite Accounting

3. Tourism Satellite Accounting (TSA) is a technique that seeks to calculate the value of tourism in a way that allows it to be compared with other industries. Preparation of a TSA involves creating a set of 14 interlinked tables, each showing a different aspect of tourism. Collectively, the tables make it possible to identify the branches of tourism which generate the most value added, those that create the most jobs and those for which gross fixed capital formation is highest. The technique can be applied at different levels, providing the base data is available, to help to assess the contribution that tourism makes to regional economies.

4. Some preliminary work is in progress in England to investigate the utility of TSA for regional planning purposes. At present, however, most regions rely on information obtained through the UK Tourism Survey regional data, the International Passenger Survey and the UK Day Visits Survey.
5. This information has been used to produce:
  - estimates of the numbers of domestic and overseas visitors visiting the area, broken down into length of stay and purpose of visit;
  - estimates of the volume of day visitors and the purpose of visits; and
  - estimates of the accruing visitor spend and the impacts of this spend on different sectors of the local economy.
6. In order to process the data, regional tourist boards and other regional bodies have relied principally on two spreadsheet based models of regional and local economies. These are the Cambridge Local Area Model (see Box below) and the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) (see Box overleaf). The first of these, developed by Geoff Broom Associates at Cambridge Econometrics is franchised to regional tourist boards, which operate the model on behalf of those local authorities who chose this method. STEAM is also a commercial product developed and owned by Global Tourism Solutions.

#### **Description of the Cambridge Model**

The Cambridge Local Area Model provides an estimate of the volume and the economic effects of tourism activity in a selected area. It can operate at different levels according to budget and the quantity of local tourism data available. The model has been applied at regional, county, district levels and to discrete areas such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Parks. It is a spreadsheet model with a menu driven approach. In its basic form, the model:

- estimates the volume and value of tourism activity including day visits within a local area;
- estimates employment supported by visitor spending;

Outputs from the model include estimates of:

- value and volume of staying trips by domestic and overseas staying visitors, with breakdowns for purpose of visit and accommodation used;
- the number of nights spent by overseas and domestic visitors;
- value and volume of day trips;
- direct visitor expenditure by different sector; e.g. accommodation, eating/drinking, shopping, attractions, transport/travel;
- impact of associated multiplier and linkage spend; and,
- an indication of the level of direct and indirect employment and induced jobs resulting from the wages of people in direct and indirect tourism employment.

(ETB and TMI, 2003)

### **Description of the STEAM Model**

The STEAM Model can be applied in any area that is capable of providing the minimum four inputs shown below:

- information on occupancy percentages each month for each type of accommodation;
- bed stock of each type of accommodation;
- attendance at attractions/major events by month;
- TIC visitors by month.

The STEAM report provides annual and month-by-month numeric outputs for the years of study and a comparison with previous surveys using the same method, including:

- distribution of visitor spending;
- revenue generated by the main categories of visitor;
- annual number of visitor days spent in the area by category of visitor;
- total count of all visitors annually;
- full-time employment generated by visitor spending.

(ETB and TMI, 2003)

## **Local surveys and methodologies**

7. Planners may identify a need for local surveys to establish the need for a specific tourist related development. So planners considering hotel accommodation need to have a detailed understanding of the level and demand for accommodation within their area. Portsmouth City Council's survey to assess capacity for hotel accommodation is described in chapter 3 of this guide.
8. In Newquay, Restormel District Council has been faced with a large number of applications for change of use and redevelopment of hotels. The existing policies were unable to address these circumstances and, whilst worried about the loss of hotels, the authority was losing appeals. It commissioned Humberts Leisure to advise upon the state of the current market for tourist accommodation in Newquay and the reasons behind the current market pressures. This work provided the foundation for the authority's planning policy framework for dealing with applications.

# ANNEX D

## National Planning Policies

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and earlier Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) set out the Government's national policies on different aspects of land use planning in England. They provide the national framework for planning authorities to draw up their statutory development plans. Given the broad diversity of the tourism industry, many of these will be relevant in planning for tourism.

Current national policies are set out in the following PPSs and PPGs:

PPS1	Delivering Sustainable Development
PPG2	Green Belts
PPG3	Housing
PPG4	Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms
PPG5	Simplified Planning Zones
PPS6	Planning for Town Centres
PPS7	Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPG8	Telecommunications
PPS9	Biodiversity and geological Conservation
PPS10	Planning for Sustainable Waste Management
PPS11	Regional Spatial Strategies
PPS12	Local Development Frameworks
PPG13	Transport
PPG14	Development on Unstable Land
PPG15	Planning and the Historic Environment
PPG16	Archaeology and Planning
PPG17	Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
PPG18	Enforcing Planning Control
PPG19	Outdoor Advertisement Control
PPG20	Coastal Planning
PPG21	Tourism <sup>21</sup>
PPS22	Renewable Energy
PPS23	Planning and Pollution Control
PPG24	Planning and Noise
PPG25	Development and Flood Risk

Some PPGs are currently subject to revision and will in due course become PPSs.

All current PPGs and PPSs are available on the website at: [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)

<sup>21</sup> The Government has announced that from 1 September 2006 PPG21 is cancelled.

This Good Practice Guidance offers practical advice to ensure that planners understand the importance of tourism and take this fully into account when preparing development plans and taking planning decisions. It also aims to help those in the tourism industry to understand the principles of national planning policy as they apply to tourism and how these can be applied when preparing individual planning applications. It advises how planners and the tourism industry should work together to facilitate, promote and deliver new tourism development in a sustainable way.

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