



Planning Policy Statement 16

Tourism

June 2013

Planning Policy Statement 16: Tourism

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) set out the policies of the Department of the Environment on particular aspects of land use planning and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. Their contents will be taken into account in preparing development plans and are also material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

This Planning Policy Statement, PPS 16 'Tourism' sets out the Department's planning policy for tourism development, including the main forms of tourist accommodation and tourist amenities. In addition the PPS provides policy for the safeguarding of tourism assets from development likely to adversely impact upon the tourism value of the environmental asset.

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Preamble

The Department has a statutory duty, laid down in Article 3 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, to formulate and co-ordinate policy for securing the orderly and consistent development of land and for the planning of that development. The Department is required to ensure such policy is in general conformity with the Regional Development Strategy.

The Department's planning policies are normally issued through Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and PPS 1 'General Principles' advises that:

"Planning Policy Statements set out the policies of the Department on particular aspects of land-use planning and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. Their contents will be taken into account in preparing development plans and are also material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals."

This Planning Policy Statement, PPS 16 'Tourism' sets out the Department's planning policy for tourism development and also for the safeguarding of tourism assets. It seeks to facilitate economic growth and social well-being through tourism in ways which are sustainable and compatible with environmental welfare and the conservation of important environmental assets. It embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and to the conservation of biodiversity.

When issued in final form, the policies of this Statement will supersede Tourism Policies SP10 and TOU 1 to TOU 4 of the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI) and also policy CTY 1 of PPS 21 as it relates to the tourism policies of PSRNI. Policies in PPS 21 offering scope for tourism development in the countryside are not duplicated in PPS 16 and will be applied as appropriate to individual proposals. The policies of this Statement will also supersede Coastal Policies CO 5, CO 6 and CO 7 of PSRNI and also those elements of the remaining coastal policies insofar as they relate to tourism development or the protection of tourism assets from inappropriate development. Where the above policies are referred to elsewhere in PSRNI, the policies of this statement will take precedence.

The PPS has been subjected to an equality impact screening exercise in line with the statutory obligation contained in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The outcome of this exercise indicates that the PPS is unlikely to have significant adverse implications for equality of opportunity or community relations.

Nothing in this document should be read as a commitment that public resources will be provided for any specific project. All proposals for expenditure by the Department are subject to economic appraisal and will also have to be considered having regard to the overall availability of resources.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 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 purpose of the PPS.
- 1.2 Tourism encompasses a very wide range of activities. It can include travel and visits for business, professional and domestic purposes as well as for holidays and recreation. Often, more than one purpose may be involved. The duration of tourist trips is also highly variable as it can include the annual family holiday as well as a wide range of shorter visits, weekend breaks and day trips. Tourism is therefore an extremely diverse form of activity which is subject to changing trends in the types, distribution and duration of tourist activity.
- 1.3 Tourism makes an important contribution to the Northern Ireland economy in terms of the revenues it generates, the employment opportunities it provides, and the potential it creates for economic growth. In 2011 Northern Ireland tourism and leisure supported 54 000 jobs (8% of total jobs). During 2011 an estimated 1.45 million overseas visitors stayed at least 1 night in Northern Ireland, spending an estimated £368 million. Tourism spending helps to support a wide range of economic activities. As well as direct spending on holiday accommodation and use of tourist amenities, tourism plays an important role in helping to support the viability of many local suppliers, services and facilities. It improves assets and provides infrastructure for local people and tourists, supports the vibrancy of Northern Ireland’s culture and heritage, and sustains communities.
- 1.4 Through utilising existing environmental, historical, cultural and geographic assets, tourism can be a key economic driver capable of stimulating further growth and development opportunities. This has been recognised by government through investment in various Tourism Signature Projects throughout Northern Ireland. Tourism can also benefit the assets on which it depends for example through assisting in the financing of conservation or enhancement initiatives. In towns and cities tourism can contribute positively to urban regeneration. In rural areas tourism is important to the development of the rural economy and offers, for example, opportunities for farm diversification to supplement farm incomes or for broader rural diversification capable of providing employment. Tourism also has the potential to contribute to meeting broader government commitments aimed at relieving poverty and enhancing social inclusion and cohesion in areas subject to problems of this type.
- 1.5 The WTO promotes sustainable tourism and defines this as: “*tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future*”. It goes on to state that: “ *the objective of*

sustainable tourism is to retain the economic and social advantages of tourism development while reducing or mitigating any undesirable impacts on the natural, historic, cultural or social environment.”

- 1.6 Sustainable tourism development is brought about by balancing the needs of tourists and the tourism industry with those of the destination. This requires management and the land use planning system has a key role in managing tourism-related development through planning policies that provide a framework for identifying appropriate development opportunities and safeguarding tourism assets from harmful development. The planning system also has a role in securing high quality design and integrating tourism provision with necessary infrastructure. In discharging these functions the planning system will ensure that such development is sustainable and achievable without damaging those qualities in the environment which are of acknowledged public value and on which tourism itself may depend.

2.0 Policy Context

Northern Ireland Tourism Strategy 2020

2.1 The Tourism Strategic Framework for Action 2004-2007 (SFA) set out priorities for tourism in Northern Ireland up to 2007 and underpinned the development of the Tourism Signature projects. Since then much has changed both in terms of global trends in tourism and Northern Ireland as a destination presenting new opportunities for how a destination is developed, managed and promoted. These factors coupled with ongoing concerns such as the relatively low level of market share compared with competitor destinations and low levels of tourist spend have prompted a review of tourism strategy. The outcome of this was a draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland 2020 (TSNI) published for consultation in March 2010. The draft Strategy has subsequently evolved into a Tourism 'Priorities for Action' Plan.

Emerging Tourism 'Priorities for Action' Plan

2.2 DETI is progressing a Tourism 'Priorities for Action' Plan which is due to be published in early 2013 subject to Executive agreement. The Plan stems from consultation on the TSNI, and subsequent discussions with key stakeholders which enabled DETI to garner the views of the industry. This ensured that meaningful and challenging tourism targets and commitments were set within the Programme for Government and the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy.

2.3 The 'Priorities for Action' Plan will be the key document for tourism going forward for the period 2014/15 to ensure that tourism commitments in the Programme for Government are delivered. The Plan will provide a strategic direction for the development of Northern Ireland's tourism industry over the next few years and will ensure the commitment of the main stakeholders to a jointly owned and funded plan for action.

2.4 Key targets are to increase visitor numbers to 4.2 million and tourist revenue to £676 million by December 2014. The longer term targets set out in the draft TSNI remain unchanged i.e. to double the earnings from tourism to £1 billion and increase visitor numbers to 4.5 million by 2020.

Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2035

2.5 The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) is the spatial strategy of the Executive. It aims to provide long term policy direction with a strategic spatial perspective to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors in investment and other decision making.

2.6 In terms of land use planning, the RDS provides an overarching strategic framework and spatial context for development plans and planning policies. By

statute, all new development plans and planning policies / guidance must be in general conformity with the RDS.

2.7 Promoting a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure (RG4) is one of five elements of regional guidance set out in the RDS aimed at underpinning sustainable economic growth in Northern Ireland.

2.8 The guidance set out in RG 4 seeks to apply this sustainable approach to tourism development in the following ways:

- *Promote a balanced approach that safeguards tourism infrastructure while benefiting society and the economy.* Under this heading it is recognised that all new or extended infrastructure required to support the tourism industry needs to be sensitively sited with proper regard to both the tourism need and the natural and built environment.
- *Improve facilities for tourists in support of the Tourist Signature Destinations.* Under this heading the RDS encourages a joined up approach amongst stakeholders in regard to investment in access, accommodation and visitor facilities so as to effectively support the Destinations and secure maximum tourism benefit.
- *Encourage environmentally sustainable tourism development.* Under this heading the RDS recognises that the development of tourism infrastructure needs to be appropriate to the location to ensure that the natural assets are protected and enhanced.

Other Government Strategies

Rural White Paper Action Plan

2.9 The Rural White Paper Action Plan (RWPAP) which is being led by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has been developed to provide a framework for the Executive in seeking to address key challenges in rural areas both now and in the future over the next 10 years. Our rural areas face particular challenges as regards growth, jobs, infrastructure provision and access to services and the RWPAP provides an opportunity to look at what we do to support our rural areas and think innovatively as to how best we target our limited resources. Key themes include building a sustainable rural economy, rural/urban linkages, access to services, sustaining rural communities and utilising the countryside for the betterment of the region. The Action Plan is related to these themes and has taken account of cross Departmental discussion and wider stakeholder engagement.

2.10 The RWPAP notes that there are opportunities for the rural economy to grow and employment prospects to be enhanced through tourism and by ensuring a

strategic fit with tourism priorities. Accordingly, tourism is specifically included in two of the actions listed in the Action Plan. Firstly, there is an ongoing commitment that DETI as the lead Department will continue to support opportunities for revenue creation from visitors in rural areas through leading on the implementation of a Tourism 'Priorities for Action' Plan. Secondly, that DOE as the lead Department will seek to increase the contribution made by rural tourism by promoting the sustainable use of our natural and built heritage.

3.0 Policy Objectives

3.0 The aim of this Planning Policy Statement (PPS) is to manage the provision of sustainable and high quality tourism developments in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment.

3.1 The objectives of this Planning Policy Statement are to:

- facilitate sustainable tourism development in an environmentally sensitive manner;
- contribute to the growth of the regional economy by facilitating tourism growth;
- safeguard tourism assets from inappropriate development ;
- utilise and develop the tourism potential of settlements by facilitating tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale;
- sustain a vibrant rural community by supporting tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale in rural areas ;
- ensure a high standard of quality and design for all tourism development.

4.0 The Role of Development Plans

- 4.1. Development plans set out how future development will be accommodated in the plan area over the plan period within the overarching strategic framework provided by the RDS. Currently these are prepared by the Department's local area planning offices but it is intended that development plan preparation will fall to local government upon the broader transfer of planning functions.
- 4.2. The preparation of a development plan provides a key opportunity for planning authorities to consider how best to facilitate the growth of sustainable tourism in their areas.
- 4.3. There should be early consultation between the plan team and district councils, relevant government departments and other key agencies such as the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to assess potential and to identify opportunities and constraints relating to tourism development. This will, where relevant, assist in the formulation of a balanced tourism development strategy tailored to the needs and assets of the particular locality. Such a strategy could incorporate:
 - how future tourism demand is best accommodated;
 - the safeguarding of key tourism assets;
 - the identification of potential growth areas and activities e.g. through the designation of Tourism Opportunity Zones¹;
 - environmental considerations resulting from tourism development ;
 - the contribution of tourism to economic development, conservation and urban regeneration.
- 4.4. The extent to which a development plan engages in the preparation of a tourism development strategy and the associated tourism policies that flow from it is largely a matter for local determination and may depend upon existing or anticipated levels of tourism activity in the plan area or the identification of locally important tourism issues. The promotion of tourism through the Tourism Signature Projects and the Tourism 'Priorities for Action' Plan, should be recognised by development plans, where relevant, as government has demonstrated a commitment to enhancing the tourism product in such areas backed by significant levels of investment.

¹ Tourism Opportunity Zones may be designated through a development plan and identify areas that offer opportunities for a range of appropriate tourism schemes subject to the suitability of particular sites (based upon normal planning considerations) and the cumulative impact of proposals.

- 4.5. Development Plans will also need to consider how certain requirements of regional tourism policy as set out in PPS 16 are to be addressed locally, for example in regard to the safeguarding of tourism assets.
- 4.6. Pending the transfer of the development plan function to local government, such Plans should also have regard to Tourism Area Plans prepared by local councils.
- 4.7. Some existing and emerging development plans contain specific tourism policies tailored to the needs or opportunities of their areas. Tourism policies in such plans will be afforded substantial weight in the determination of planning applications, provided they are not deemed to be in contravention of the aims, objectives and general thrust of PPS 16 in facilitating sustainable and high quality tourism development in appropriate locations.

5.0 Existing Policy Provision for Tourism Development in the Countryside

5.1 Proposals for tourism development in the countryside will be facilitated through PPS 16 (policies TSM 2 to TSM 7) and other planning policy documents that provide scope for tourism development in the countryside. Tourism development will also be facilitated through local tourism policies contained in some adopted and emerging development plans. A summary of provision that is potentially available through the land use planning system to meet opportunities for various forms of tourism development in the countryside is set out below.

5.2 Tourist Amenity proposals

- New build or extension of existing buildings or use of land – PPS 16 (policy TSM 2)
- Conversion and reuse of an existing building to provide a tourist amenity – PPS 21 (policy CTY 4)
- Proposals involving the reuse or adaptation of existing farm buildings, or exceptionally a new building on a farm – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 11)
- Proposals within Dispersed Rural Communities, as designated in some development plans – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 2)
- A proposal for the redevelopment of an established economic development use in the countryside – PPS 4 (Policy PED 4)
- Proposals that comply with local policies in development plans, for example within tourism opportunity zones or other such areas as may be designated for tourism development by the Plan.

5.3 Single Unit Self Catering Accommodation proposals

- New Build within the grounds of an existing or approved hotel, self catering complex, guest house or holiday park (Policy TSM 5)
- Conversion and reuse of an existing building to provide a self catering unit – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 4)
- Proposals involving the reuse or adaptation of an existing farm building, or exceptionally a new building on a farm – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 11)
- Proposals within Dispersed Rural Communities, as designated in some development plans – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 2)
- Proposals that comply with local policies in development plans, for example within tourism opportunity zones or other such areas as may be designated for tourism development by the Plan.

5.4 Multiple (3 or more) New Build Self Catering Accommodation proposals

- New build – associated with an existing or approved tourist amenity - PPS 16 (Policy TSM 5)
- Proposals involving the reuse or adaptation of existing farm buildings, including (exceptionally) a new building – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 11)
- Proposals within Dispersed Rural Communities, as designated in some development plans – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 2)
- Proposals that comply with local policies in development plans, for example within tourism opportunity zones or other such areas as may be designated for tourism development by the Plan.

5.5 Hotels

- New build – on the edge of a settlement – PPS 16 (Policy TSM 3)
- Replacement of a suitable building in the countryside – PPS 16 (Policy TSM 3)
- New build proposals that comply with local policies in development plans, for example within tourism opportunity zones or other such areas as may be designated for tourism development by the Plan.
- Conversion and reuse of a suitable existing building in the countryside to provide a hotel – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 4)
- A proposal for the redevelopment of an established economic development use in the countryside – PPS 4 (Policy PED 4)

5.6 Guest Houses and Hostels

- New build – on the edge of a settlement – PPS 16 (Policy TSM 3)
- Replacement of a suitable building in the countryside – PPS 16 (Policy TSM 3)
- New build proposals that comply with local policies in development plans, for example within tourism opportunity zones or other such areas as may be designated for tourism development by the Plan.
- Proposals within Dispersed Rural Communities, as designated in some development plans – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 2)
- Conversion and reuse of an existing building to provide a guest house or tourist hostel – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 4)

5.7 Bunk Houses and Camping Barns

- New build proposals that comply with local policies in development plans, for example within tourism opportunity zones or other such areas as may be designated for tourism development by the Plan.
- Proposals within Dispersed Rural Communities, as designated in some development plans – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 2)
- Proposals for a bunk house or camping barn involving the reuse or adaptation of existing farm buildings, or exceptionally a new building on a farm – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 11)
- Conversion and reuse of an existing building – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 4)

5.8 New Holiday Parks and Extensions to Existing Sites

- New holiday parks and extension of existing sites – PPS 16 (Policy TSM 6)
- Minor extension of existing sites – PPS 16 (Policy TSM 6)
- Proposals that comply with local policies in development plans
- Proposal for a touring or predominantly touring caravan / camping sites on a farm – PPS 21 (Policy CTY 11)

6.0 Consultation

- 6.1 In discharging its development management and plan functions relating to tourism development, the planning authority will ensure adequate and proportionate consultation with relevant bodies. Where a proposal is of regional importance it may be appropriate to consult with the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI) and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB). This will allow informed consideration as to whether such a proposal is of genuine benefit for regional tourism, for example assisting in the realisation of the Tourism 'Priorities for Action' Plan. Pending the transfer of planning functions to local government, ongoing consultation with local councils on tourism applications will be important. In this regard the emphasis is to secure strategic responses that indicate the extent to which individual proposals will meet the objectives of a tourist development plan for which the Council is responsible.

7.0 Planning Policies

- 7.1 In exercise of its responsibility for planning control in Northern Ireland the Department assesses development proposals against all planning policies and other material considerations that are relevant to it.
- 7.2 The planning policies of this Statement must therefore be read together and in conjunction with the relevant contents of development plans and other planning policy publications, including the Regional Development Strategy. The Department will also have regard to the contents of published supplementary planning guidance documents.

TSM 1

Tourism Development in Settlements

Planning permission will be granted for a proposal for tourism development (including a tourist amenity or tourist accommodation) within a settlement; provided it is of a nature appropriate to the settlement, respects the site context in terms of scale, size and design, and has regard to the specified provisions of a development plan.

Justification and Amplification

- 7.3 Tourism can be beneficial for urban areas and help to deliver development that is sustainable. It can support existing services and facilities such as retail, catering, entertainment, leisure, and transport as well as promoting a sense of urban vitality. In specific locations tourism can provide a focus for regeneration schemes or may be a key component of mixed use development. Conversely, towns and cities often provide opportunities for tourism to flourish. Tourism benefits from the synergy arising through the concentration of hotels, museums, art galleries, conference facilities, restaurants, bars, cinemas and theatres, often within town centres. Larger settlements, as transport hubs are also readily accessible by tourists.
- 7.4 While the policy will provide for tourism development within settlements, account will be taken of the nature, size, scale and design of the development and its impact on the appearance and character of the surrounding area and neighbouring residential amenity. These considerations and the need for high quality design in particular, will be afforded substantial weight within Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character. Consideration will also be given to development plans, which may preclude tourism development from particular areas within settlements, for example through alternative land use zonings or designations safeguarding the integrity of specific sites such as those of nature conservation importance.

TSM 2

Tourist Amenities in the Countryside

New Proposals

Planning permission will be granted for a tourist amenity in the countryside where it is demonstrated that:

- a) it is in association with and requires a site at or close to a particular tourism attraction located in the countryside, or**
- b) the type of tourist activity in itself requires a countryside location.**

All proposals that include buildings must make provision in existing or replacement buildings, where possible.

Where a proposed tourist amenity is of regional importance or is otherwise significant in terms of the extent of new build or the scale of engineering operations it must demonstrate substantial benefit to regional tourism as well as sustainable benefits to the locality. Such applications must be supported by a tourism benefit statement and a sustainable benefit statement.

Extension of an Existing Tourist Amenity

A proposal for the extension of an existing tourist amenity will be permitted where the scale and nature of the proposal does not harm the rural character, landscape quality or environmental integrity of the local area.

Where possible, such proposals will be expected to be accommodated through the conversion, reuse or extension of existing buildings on site, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not a feasible option. In circumstances where the planning authority accepts a new or replacement building it should be sited and designed so as to integrate with the overall development.

Any conversion, extension or new building should respect the scale, design and materials of the original building(s) on the site and any historic or architectural interest they may have.

Justification and Amplification

- 7.5 A tourist amenity is defined by the Tourism (NI) Order 1992 as an amenity, facility or service provided primarily for tourists but does not include tourist accommodation.**

- 7.6 Tourist amenities are diverse in terms of their nature, scale and function and not all proposals will be suited to an urban location. For example, there may be a functional need for facilities associated with a mountain bike trail to be located in the countryside. A visitor centre may have a specific functional need to be located in close proximity to the particular countryside attraction it is intended to serve. The policy therefore provides for tourist amenities in the countryside where the tourism activity and associated facilities require a rural location in terms of their functional or site / area specific requirements.
- 7.7 The impact of proposals on rural character, landscape and natural / built heritage is an important consideration in their assessment, particularly within areas designated for their landscape, natural or cultural heritage qualities. Proposals associated with particular tourism assets in the countryside will also be assessed against policy TSM 8.
- 7.8 In order to facilitate assessment of regionally significant or large scale proposals, applications must be accompanied by a tourism benefit statement to demonstrate the value of the proposal in terms of tourism revenue and employment opportunity and also how it will further the aims of the Tourism 'Priorities for Action' Plan. The planning authority will refer such proposals to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board for comment in regard to tourism benefit.
- 7.9 Regionally significant or large scale proposals are also required to deliver sustainable benefit to the rural locality and applications must be accompanied by a sustainable benefit statement to demonstrate such merits. Relevant considerations are set out in Appendix 3.

TSM 3

Hotels, Guest Houses and Tourist Hostels in the Countryside

New / Replacement Buildings

Planning permission will be granted for a new hotel / guest house / tourist hostel in the countryside in the following circumstances and will be assessed under the specified criteria:

Circumstances

- (a) The replacement of an existing rural building ;
- (b) A new build proposal on the periphery of a settlement.

Replacement of an Existing Rural Building

A proposal to replace an existing building in the countryside with a hotel, guest house or tourist hostel will be permitted subject to the following specific criteria:

- the building is of permanent construction;
- the existing building and its replacement are both of sufficient size to facilitate the proposed use in accordance with the accommodation requirements set out in Tourism (NI) Order 1992
- the existing building is not a listed building;
- where the existing building is a vernacular building and is considered to make an important contribution to local heritage or character, replacement will only be approved where it is demonstrated that the building is not reasonably capable of being made structurally sound or otherwise improved;
- the redevelopment proposed will result in significant environmental benefit;
- the overall size and scale of the new development, including car parking and ancillary facilities, will allow it to integrate into the surrounding landscape and will not have a visual impact significantly greater than the existing building;
- the design is of high quality, appropriate to the rural setting and has regard to local distinctiveness;
- access, car parking and other necessary services are available or can be provided without significant adverse impact on the

environment, the appearance and character of the locality and road safety.

New Build Hotel, Guest House or Tourist Hostel on the periphery of a Settlement

A firm proposal to develop a hotel, guest house or tourist hostel on land at the edge of a settlement will be permitted subject to the following specific criteria:

- there is no suitable site within the settlement or other nearby settlement;
- there are no suitable opportunities in the locality to provide a hotel, guest house or tourist hostel either through
(a) the conversion and re-use of a suitable building(s) or
(b) the replacement of a suitable building(s);
- the development is close to the settlement, but will not dominate it, adversely affect landscape setting, or otherwise contribute to urban sprawl.

Where the principle of a new building on the periphery of a settlement is established through meeting the above criteria, the planning authority will apply a sequential locational test, with preference being attributed to sites in the following order:

- land adjacent to the existing settlement limit, subject to amenity and environmental considerations;
- a site on the periphery of the settlement limit which currently contains buildings or where the site is already in a degraded or derelict state and there is an opportunity to improve the environment;
- an undeveloped site close to the settlement where the development could be visually integrated into the landscape.

Any proposed change of use or replacement of a hotel, guest house or tourist hostel approved under this policy to a non tourism use will be resisted, unless it is demonstrated that:

- (a) the facility is not viable in the long term, and
- (b) there is sufficient alternative provision in the locality to offset the loss of tourism benefit.

Expansion of Existing Hotels, Guest Houses and Tourist Hostels

A proposal for the expansion of an existing hotel, guest house or tourist hostel will be permitted subject to the following specific criteria:

- (a) new or replacement building(s) are subsidiary in terms of scale to the existing building(s) and will integrate as part of the overall development;**
- (b) any extension or new building should respect the scale, design and materials of the original building(s) on the site and any historic or architectural interest the original property may have.**

Justification and Amplification

Redevelopment of an existing rural building

- 7.10 The potential for the conversion and re-use of suitable rural buildings for tourism uses, including use as a hotel, guest house or tourist hostel, will be assessed under PPS 21. Redevelopment of an appropriate building(s) for such uses, will be favourably considered in circumstances where the environmental benefit of full or partial replacement will outweigh the retention and conversion of the building. The condition of the building and the economic feasibility of repairing and maintaining it will also be taken into account in assessing such proposals. Good design is of paramount importance and redevelopment proposals must be sensitive to the rural setting and local distinctiveness.

New Build Hotel / Guest House / Tourist Hostel on the periphery of a settlement

- 7.11 New buildings for these forms of tourist accommodation should usually be located within settlements in order to take advantage of existing services and facilities, provide ready access for visitors and employees and to minimise the impact on rural amenity and character.
- 7.12 However, it is important that firm proposals for such projects are not impeded due to a lack of suitable land within settlements. Where the case for a location outside a settlement in such an area can be clearly demonstrated; the selected site should be as close to the settlement as possible, subject to amenity and environmental considerations, as this is usually more sustainable than a more remote site.
- 7.13 A proposal must also respect the character of the settlement and its setting in the surrounding landscape. This in turn will require careful site selection, layout, design and landscaping. Proposals which are deemed to be acceptable in principle will be required to include sufficient mitigation measures, including landscaping and design, to

ameliorate any negative impacts and secure higher quality development.

- 7.14 To allow informed consideration all applications made under this policy will be expected to be accompanied with the following information:
- sufficient evidence to indicate how firm or realistic the particular proposal is and what sources of finance are available (including any grant aid) to sustain the project;
 - detailed information of an exhaustive search to illustrate that there is no reasonable prospect of securing a suitable site within the limits of the particular settlement or other nearby settlement;
 - justification for the particular site chosen and illustrative details of the proposed design and site layout.

7.15 The grant of planning permission will not in itself allow for inappropriate alternative uses if an approved scheme for some reason does not go ahead. While the planning authority cannot require business enterprises which become uneconomic to continue, alternative land uses will only be approved if there is sufficient alternative accommodation in the locality to provide for tourism benefit in line with the Tourism 'Priorities for Action' Plan. The planning authority will consult with NITB in making this assessment.

TSM 4

Major Tourism Development in the Countryside – Exceptional Circumstances

A proposal for a major tourism development in the countryside will be permitted if it meets all of the following exceptional circumstances:

- (a) demonstration of exceptional benefit to the tourism industry ;**
- (b) demonstration that the proposal requires a countryside location by reason of its size or site specific or functional requirements;**
- (c) demonstration of sustainable benefit to the locality.**

All proposals brought forward under exceptional circumstances must be accompanied by a statement demonstrating how the proposal meets the 3 criteria.

Justification and Amplification

- 7.16 This policy makes provision for major tourism development projects in the countryside in exceptional circumstances for proposals that offer exceptional benefit to the tourism industry in Northern Ireland. The ability of the proposed development in itself to attract tourists to Northern Ireland will be significant in assessing whether it will offer exceptional benefit to the tourism industry. A further consideration will be the extent to which the proposed development meets a regional or sub-regional market need that is identified in the Tourism ‘Priorities for Action’ Plan.
- 7.17 This policy will not facilitate approval of relatively minor proposals for tourism development, for example a single guest house or small scale self catering development, as such proposals are unlikely in themselves to offer exceptional benefit to the tourism industry or be of a scale that requires a countryside location. However, a proposal that offers a tourist amenity likely to attract significant numbers of visitors along with a commensurate level and quality of visitor accommodation will fall to be considered under this policy.
- 7.18 To allow informed consideration all applications made under this policy will be expected to be accompanied with the following information:
- A tourism benefit statement that will demonstrate the value of the proposal in terms of tourism revenue, increased visitor

numbers to Northern Ireland and the locality, and also how it will further the aims of the Tourism 'Priorities for Action' Plan.

- Sufficient evidence to demonstrate how realistic the particular proposal is and what sources of finance are available (including any grant aid) to sustain the project.
- Justification for the particular site chosen and illustrative details of the proposed design and site layout.
- A sustainable benefit statement taking account of the considerations set out in Appendix 3.

7.19 All such proposals in the countryside to be considered under exceptional circumstances will be subject to consultation with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the relevant local council or council grouping concerned with tourism development in the general locality.

7.20 It is anticipated that the requirement for the type of tourism development that might be regarded as exceptional in the context of this policy will diminish through time as market needs are met. Accordingly, this policy will be subject to review in consultation with Northern Ireland Tourist Board and local government.

7.21 The impact of proposals on rural character, landscape and natural / built heritage is an important consideration in their assessment, particularly within areas designated for their landscape, natural or cultural heritage qualities.

TSM 5 Self Catering Accommodation in the Countryside

Planning approval will be granted for self catering units of tourist accommodation in any of the following circumstances:

- (a) one or more new units all located within the grounds of an existing or approved hotel, self catering complex, guest house or holiday park;
- (b) a cluster of 3 or more new units are to be provided at or close to an existing or approved tourist amenity that is / will be a significant visitor attraction in its own right;
- (c) the restoration of an existing clachan or close, through conversion and / or replacement of existing buildings, subject to the retention of the original scale and proportions of the buildings and sympathetic treatment of boundaries. Where practicable original materials and finishes should be included.

In either circumstance (a) or (b) above, self catering development is required to be subsidiary in scale and ancillary to the primary tourism use of the site.

Where a cluster of self catering units is proposed in conjunction with a proposed or approved hotel, self catering complex, guest house or holiday park and / or tourist amenity, a condition will be attached to the permission preventing occupation of the units before the primary tourism use is provided and fully operational.

All permissions for self catering accommodation will include a condition requiring the units to be used for holiday letting accommodation only and not for permanent residential accommodation.

The overall design of the self catering scheme, including layout, the provision of amenity open space and the size and detailed design of individual units, must deter permanent residential use. To this end, permitted development rights in respect of plot boundaries will also be removed.

Justification and Amplification

- 7.22 This policy provides sustainable opportunities for self catering tourist accommodation in the countryside particularly in areas where tourist amenities and accommodation have become established or likely to be provided as a result of tourism initiatives such as the Signature Projects.

- 7.23 The policy will provide for sustainable economic benefits because new self catering accommodation linked with an existing tourism enterprise can create synergy by enhancing its usage, economic viability and attractiveness to tourists. In turn this will support wider tourism initiatives.
- 7.24 The policy will also provide sustainable environmental benefit through focusing self catering development in existing nodes of tourism activity, thereby avoiding random development throughout the countryside and safeguarding the value of tourism assets.
- 7.25 Where units are proposed in association with a tourist amenity, the policy requires that the tourist amenity must be a significant visitor attraction in its own right. In assessing this, the planning authority will consider the nature and scale of the tourist amenity. Relevant considerations in this regard are likely to include visitor numbers and the provision facilities linked to and enabling usage of the amenity, for example berth for boats, buildings for use as changing areas or the storage of recreational equipment, and car parking. To assist in this assessment, the planning authority may consult with NI Tourist Board and / or local tourism bodies.
- 7.26 Where self catering units are permitted on the basis of an associated tourist accommodation or a tourist amenity, it is imperative that the primary tourism use which provides the justification is in place and functioning, before the units become operational. The policy therefore requires a condition to be attached to approvals to this effect. Exceptionally, such a condition may not be attached by the planning authority in circumstances where self catering units are to be provided in association with a tourist amenity, such as a golf course, which has a long lead in time prior to it becoming operational. However, this exception will only be applied where there is no hotel or other element of the overall development proposal that could provide a revenue source during the lead-in time required for the tourist amenity.
- 7.27 The requirement for approved self catering units to be retained in tourism use and not used for permanent residential accommodation will seek to ensure that tourist accommodation is available to benefit local communities in rural areas and that the unauthorised use of approved tourist accommodation as a private dwelling(s) does not occur.
- 7.28 Permanent residential use of self catering units will also be deterred through design. Such units will be required to demonstrate an informal site layout with communal open space only. Informal road layout without designated car parking will also be required. Informal car parking provision should not, where possible, be directly associated with the units. DRD Roads Service will not adopt these access and parking areas. Individual units must be of appropriate

design for holiday use, for example rural cottage style, with possible restrictions on floorspace and building height. Plot divisions between units by means of fences or walls will be prevented through the removal of permitted development rights.

- 7.29 The policies in PPS 21 relating to the conversion and reuse of rural buildings, farm or forestry diversification and development in dispersed rural communities may provide other opportunities for small scale, including single unit, self catering accommodation in the countryside.

TSM 6

New and Extended Holiday Parks in the Countryside

Planning permission will be granted for a new holiday park or an extension to an existing facility where it is demonstrated that the proposal will create a high quality and sustainable form of tourism development.

The location, siting, size, design, layout and landscaping of the holiday park proposal must be based on an overall design concept that respects the surrounding landscape, rural character and site context.

Proposals for holiday park development must be accompanied by a layout and landscaping plan (see guidance at Appendix 4) and will be subject to the following specific criteria:

- (a) The site is located in an area that has the capacity to absorb the holiday park development, without adverse impact on visual amenity and rural character;
- (b) Effective integration into the landscape must be secured primarily through the utilisation of existing natural or built features. Where appropriate, planted areas or discrete groups of trees will be required along site boundaries in order to soften the visual impact of the development and assist its integration with the surrounding area;
- (c) Adequate provision (normally around 15% of the site area) is made for communal open space (including play and recreation areas and landscaped areas), as an integral part of the development;
- (d) The layout of caravan pitches / motor homes is informal and characterised by discrete groupings or clusters of units separated through the use of appropriate soft landscaping;
- (e) The design of the development, including the design and scale of ancillary buildings and the design of other elements including internal roads, paths, car parking areas, walls and fences, is appropriate for the site and the locality, respecting the best local traditions of form, materials and detailing;
- (f) Environmental assets including features of the archaeological and built heritage, natural habitats, trees and landscape features are identified and, where appropriate, retained and integrated in a suitable manner into the overall design and layout;
- (g) Mains water supply and sewerage services must be utilised where available and practicable.

Justification and Amplification

- 7.30 Holiday parks are important for the domestic tourism market in terms of the volume of rural tourism bed spaces they provide² and the economic benefits that flow from this scale of tourism activity. Wider economic benefit also accrues to Northern Ireland by employment created through the installation of units and park infrastructure and ongoing maintenance and servicing. Social benefits may also be realised through the provision that holiday parks often make for accommodating extended family units, providing a safe environment for children and fostering a sense of community amongst users. Such parks may offer a range of accommodation, including static caravan holiday homes, holiday chalets and pitches for touring caravans, motor-homes and camping, as well as a diverse range of infrastructure and amenity provision.
- 7.31 The scope for integrating a new holiday park, particularly a static park, or a large scale extension to an existing facility is often limited by the extent and layout of such development and by specific locational preferences such as proximity to the coastline outside of settlements. Appropriate site selection is therefore crucial in order to ensure visual integration into the landscape and to avoid detrimental impact upon environmentally sensitive sites. The best prospect for identification of suitable sites is through the development plan system and it is anticipated that emerging development plans will fulfil this role, taking account of the provisions of this policy and the relevant Tourism Area Plan(s).
- 7.32 The policy provisions also reflect the importance of design, layout and landscaping in order to achieve high quality development that integrates into the landscape and respects the surrounding rural context as well as providing a pleasant environment for users of the holiday park. These requirements appear to reflect recent trends within the holiday park industry which are to a large extent driven by customer demand for improved space standards, greater privacy, generous provision for amenity open space and a pleasant landscaped environment. It is acknowledged that new holiday parks incorporating these elements may typically require somewhat larger sites than traditional high density parks. This factor makes good site selection all the more important. In this context, a high quality proposal in terms of layout and landscaping will still be refused planning permission if the site is fundamentally unsuitable.

² In 2009 there were 142 holiday parks in Northern Ireland providing some 15000 caravan pitches or 60000 bedspaces.

7.33 Further guidance on site layout and landscape design is set out in Appendix 4.

TSM 7

Criteria for Tourism Development

A proposal for a tourism use, in addition to the other policy provisions of this Statement, will be subject to the following design criteria:

Design Criteria

- (a) a movement pattern is provided that, insofar as possible, supports walking and cycling, meets the needs of people whose mobility is impaired, respects existing public rights of way and provides adequate and convenient access to public transport;**
- (b) the site layout, building design, associated infrastructure and landscaping arrangements (including flood lighting) are of high quality in accordance with the Department's published guidance and assist the promotion of sustainability and biodiversity;**
- (c) appropriate boundary treatment and means of enclosure are provided and any areas of outside storage proposed are screened from public view;**
- (d) utilisation of sustainable drainage systems where feasible and practicable to ensure that surface water run-off is managed in a sustainable way;**
- (e) is designed to deter crime and promote personal safety;**
- (f) development involving public art, where it is linked to a tourism development, needs to be of high quality, to complement the design of associated buildings and to respect the surrounding site context.**

In addition to the above design criteria, a proposal will also be subject to the following general criteria (g – o).

General Criteria

- (g) it is compatible with surrounding land uses and neither the use or built form will detract from the landscape quality and character of the surrounding area;**
- (h) it does not harm the amenities of nearby residents;**
- (i) it does not adversely affect features of the natural or built heritage;**
- (j) it is capable of dealing with any emission or effluent in accordance with legislative requirements. The safeguarding of water quality through adequate means of sewage disposal is of particular importance and accordingly mains sewerage and water supply services must be utilised where available and practicable;**
- (k) access arrangements must be in accordance with the Department's published guidance;**
- (l) access to the public road will not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic;**
- (m) the existing road network can safely handle any extra vehicular traffic the proposal will generate;**

- (n) access onto a protected route for a tourism development in the countryside is in accordance with the amendment to Policy AMP 3 of PPS 3, as set out in Annex 1 of PPS 21.**
- (o) it does not extinguish or significantly constrain an existing or planned public access to the coastline or a tourism asset, unless a suitable alternative is provided;**

Justification and Amplification

- 7.34 The general and design criteria are intended to achieve satisfactory forms of tourism development and a high standard of design. These criteria will therefore be used to assess individual proposals for tourism development in conjunction with the other specific policy provisions.
- 7.35 Good design is important for tourism development projects because the ability to attract tourists will often be influenced by the visual quality of the development and its success in reflecting local character and distinctiveness. Accessibility and ease of use are also important design considerations. Developments that are easy to reach, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists, users of public transport and people with mobility impairments, are likely to be successful in attracting visitors in the first instance and encouraging them to return.
- 7.36 The contribution of public art to the appearance and character of an area cannot be underestimated. It demonstrates civic and corporate pride and can enhance the quality of the physical environment for the benefit of residents and tourists.
- 7.37 Sustainable development can be delivered through good design, for example the reuse of redundant buildings for tourism purposes rather than new build on greenfield sites. Sustainable development can also be promoted through design which secures good energy conservation and the use of renewable technologies such as wind power and solar gain to reduce future energy needs. The use of sustainable drainage systems for tourism development will ensure that surface water runoff is managed in a sustainable way, thereby reducing the potential for localised flooding and pollution of watercourses.
- 7.38 Biodiversity is one of tourism's greatest assets and is fundamental to its long-term sustained growth. Enhancing biodiversity will be encouraged in order to reduce any negative impact of tourism development.

TSM 8

Safeguarding of Tourism Assets

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would in itself or in combination with existing and approved development in the locality have an adverse impact on a tourism asset (as defined in paragraph 7.39 of the J&A and in Appendix 1 Glossary of Terms) such as to significantly compromise its tourism value.

This policy provides for the safeguarding of all tourism assets, including those which are subject to protection for other reasons under various legislative or policy instruments and those which are not subject to such protection.

Justification and Amplification

- 7.39 For the purposes of this statement, a tourism asset is defined as any feature associated with the built or natural environment which is of intrinsic interest to tourists.
- 7.40 The safeguarding of tourism assets from unnecessary, inappropriate or excessive development is a vital element in securing a viable and sustainable tourism industry. To allow such development could damage the intrinsic character and quality of the asset and diminish its effectiveness in attracting tourists.
- 7.41 There are many diverse features or combinations of features associated with the natural and built heritage in Northern Ireland which are of intrinsic interest to tourists. Some examples may include Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Conservation Areas and historical and archaeological sites. However this is not an exhaustive list. Future development plans that incorporate a tourism strategy will identify key tourism assets within the Plan area.
- 7.42 The policy is applicable to all forms of development which may impact adversely upon a tourism asset. Adverse impact will include visual impact, for example within an area of high landscape quality or in a Conservation Area, either of which could be important for attracting tourists. Adverse impact upon a tourism asset could also arise through other sources, for example odour, noise, dust or pollution of air or watercourses. What constitutes 'adverse impact' and the determination of the extent of its influence are matters of planning judgement and each case will be assessed on its merits.
- 7.43 However, this policy is not intended to prevent all development. Development that will not significantly compromise the overall tourism value of the asset may be facilitated. Where the tourism asset is large scale, for example an AONB, key locations of tourism value at a local level should also be safeguarded. Development of a

tourist amenity intended to provide sustainable access to or interpretation of a tourism asset, as provided for through policy TSM 2, will be required to be sensitive to its inherent qualities and setting that underpin its tourism value. Future development plans that identify tourism assets will provide further guidance as appropriate.

- 7.44 Some tourism assets are already subject to protection from inappropriate or excessive development through statutory designation, existing planning policy, or development plans and sometimes by a combination of all of these measures. This policy is intended to complement such measures in the specific interests of tourism while affording protection to other undesignated environmental assets on the basis of their tourism value alone. The requirements of non-planning legislation, particularly in relation to public health and the regulation of environmental pollution may obviate the need to regulate the inappropriate development through the application of this policy.

APPENDIX 1 – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Tourism	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 (World Tourism Organisation).
Tourists	Includes both overnight visitors and same day visitors.
Tourism Asset	Any feature associated with the built or natural environment which is of intrinsic interest to tourists.
Tourism Development	Development of a tourist amenity or tourist accommodation.
Tourism Opportunity Zones	As designated through the development plan process. Within these areas, favourable consideration will be given to proposals for tourism and recreational development.
Tourist Amenity	An amenity, facility or service provided primarily for tourists, but does not include tourist accommodation (Art 2 Tourism NI Order 1992).
Tourist Accommodation	Overnight sleeping accommodation for tourists provided by way of trade or business (Art 2 Tourism NI Order 1992).
TSM	Abbreviation for Tourism. This prefixes each of the 8 tourism policies.
Hotel	As defined by the Tourism (NI) Order 1992 – Categories of Tourist Establishment (Statutory Criteria) Regulations – Schedule 1 – Criteria for Hotels <i>A hotel shall provide overnight sleeping accommodation for visitors in separate rooms comprising not less than 15 double bedrooms, of which 100% shall have an ensuite bathroom*</i>

Guest House	<p>As defined by the Tourism (NI) Order 1992 – Categories of Tourist Establishment (Statutory Criteria) Regulations</p> <p><i>A guest house shall provide overnight sleeping accommodation for visitors in separate rooms comprising not less than 3 double bedrooms</i></p>
Hostel	<p>As defined by the Tourism (NI) Order 1992 – Categories of Tourist Establishment (Statutory Criteria) Regulations</p> <p><i>A form of tourist accommodation for the letting of single beds in bedrooms or dormitory rooms with mostly shared facilities</i></p>
Self Catering Establishment	<p>As defined by the Tourism (NI) Order 1992 – Categories of Tourist Establishment (Statutory Criteria) Regulations – Schedule 4 – Criteria for Self Catering Establishments</p> <p><i>A self catering establishment shall comprise one or more self contained units providing furnished accommodation (including sleeping accommodation and catering facilities) for visitors.</i></p> <p>*</p> <p>**</p>
Holiday Park	<p>For the purposes of PPS 16, a holiday park is defined as a caravan site licensed under the Caravans Act (NI) 1963, which in addition to static caravans, may also contain holiday chalets or cabins, pitches for touring caravans, motor homes and tenting +</p>
Touring Caravan Site	<p>For the purposes of PPS 16, a touring caravan site is defined as a caravan site licensed under the Caravans Act (NI) 1963, which provides pitches for touring caravans and may in addition also provide pitches for motor homes and tenting +</p>

*Other criteria are listed under the Categories of Tourist Establishment (Statutory Criteria) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992

** The Tourism Order defines a self catering unit as including “houses, cottages, apartments or rooms, bungalows, chalets, cabins and caravans”. For the purposes of PPS 16, Policy TSM 6 excludes caravans.

+ Tourism developments that are not defined under the Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.

The following categories of tourist accommodation established by the Article 12 of the Tourism (NI) Order 1992 and Amendment - Categories of Tourist Establishment Order (NI) 2011, have no specific policy provision included in PPS 16: Bed & Breakfast Accommodation, Bunk Houses, Campus Accommodation, Guest Accommodation.

APPENDIX 2 – INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

Developers are advised to engage with the planning authority at an early stage to ensure that all necessary information required to determine the application is available from the outset. Information that may be required for certain tourism development projects is set out below.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Certain tourism developments, depending on their nature, scale or location may be likely to require Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under the provisions of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999. Schedule 2 of the Regulations lists a number of categories of development, including defined tourism and leisure related projects³, which will be likely to require an EIA if they meet or exceed the thresholds specified in the Schedule. In addition, where such development is located within a “sensitive area”⁴, EIA will also be required if it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Development Control Advice Note 10 Environmental Impact Assessment provides general guidance for prospective developers on this matter.

Transport Assessment

Under PPS 3 ‘Access, Movement and Parking’, large scale development projects likely to generate significant volumes of traffic may require a transport assessment to be submitted along with the planning application. The Draft guidelines to Transport Assessment in Northern Ireland (2004) issued jointly by DRD and DOE provides detailed information on this process.

Tourism Related Information

Information may be sought for any tourism development proposal, as considered necessary by the planning authority, to determine an application. Information specifically required by Draft PPS 16 to facilitate assessment of applications for various forms of tourism development in the countryside is detailed in the document.

³ Ski-runs, ski lifts and cable cars and associated developments; Marinas; Holiday villages and hotel complexes outside urban areas and associated developments; permanent camp sites and caravan sites, theme parks.

⁴ The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 defines a sensitive area as: an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI); an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); a National Park; a World Heritage Site; a scheduled Monument; or European Sites as defined in regulation 9 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 such as a Special Protected Area (SPA) or a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

APPENDIX 3 – TOURIST AMENITIES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Sustainability Assessment

Economic Sustainability

- the proposed development will result in locally significant employment and / or training opportunities;
- a significant level of spend expected to flow into the local economy;
- the proposal will enhance the range and quality of tourism attractions and facilities in the local area;
- the proposed development will extend the tourist season in the local area;
- significant utilisation of local goods and services, including trades and crafts;
- the proposal is an important element in farm or broader rural diversification.

Community / Social Sustainability

- the proposed development will, in addition to meeting tourist needs, provide facilities (recreational / cultural / social) that can be accessed by the local community;
- The proposal will contribute to a local community regeneration scheme.

Environmental Sustainability

- the proposed development will help to protect or improve an environmental asset associated with either the natural or built heritage;
- the proposed development will enhance biodiversity, for example through the creation or improvement of wetland or woodland habitat;
- utilisation of 'green' technology, for example recycling waste, utilisation of renewable energy, reduction of CO2 emissions;
- utilisation of sustainable drainage systems where appropriate (SUDS);
- sustainable design in line with BREEAM standards for the environmental performance of buildings;
- development of 'green' transport initiatives, for example dedicated rail or bus links between the amenity and a nearby settlement or linking several tourist amenities in the locality;
- use of a visitor management programme for larger scale proposals or to mitigate against damage to fragile sites;

Locational Sustainability

- the proposal is accessible by public transport, walking or cycling;
- large scale proposals are conveniently accessible from the regional strategic transport network;

- the proposed development is conveniently located with respect to existing tourism development in the local area.

APPENDIX 4 - LANDSCAPE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR HOLIDAY PARKS

Matters which need to be addressed in preparing a layout / landscaping plan include the following:

1. The creation of an appropriate link with the surrounding landscape (eg a dense tree belt may be appropriate in a heavily treed part of the countryside, but in an open landscape may draw attention to the development rather than allowing it to blend into the surrounding countryside).
2. Appropriate boundary treatment, taking account of point 1 above and reflecting needs for shelter, screening and privacy. Buffer zones of at least 3 metres in width should be retained and kept free of development on the inside of all boundaries.
3. Informal layout of caravan units / motor homes / chalets characterised by the use small informal clusters separated by appropriate landscaping and the avoidance of 'regimented' rows of units that typically results in a detrimental visual impact (a 'sea' of caravans effect).
4. The avoidance of long straight lines for roads and paths with due regard to the protection of key views from the holiday park. An exception to this may arise where an avenue is an appropriate design element.
5. Integration of ancillary buildings, hard landscaping and facilities such as car parks and water points by reflecting local design characteristics, the use of local materials and appropriate planting. The use of muted colours (usually green tones) for caravan units / chalets may be appropriate particularly for those close to site boundaries.
6. The use of permeable surfaces for caravan pitches, hard landscaped areas and car parking in order to safeguard against flood risk through surface water run off.
7. Appropriate planning and selection of planting taking account of function, suitability for prevailing soil and climatic conditions (eg coastal environments), durability, seasonal changes and ease of maintenance. Planting will be required for a variety of functions including:
 - linking the holiday park into its wider landscape setting,
 - enhancing the visual character of the development and promoting a distinctive sense of place,
 - boundary treatment and screening,
 - creating visual diversity in the layout,

- integrating public and private open spaces into the design of the holiday park,
 - softening the visual impact of accommodation units and ancillary buildings and facilities,
 - adding definition and interest to accesses, particularly footpaths and cycle tracks.
8. Retention and enhancement of existing natural features such as ponds, copses of trees and hedgerows. This may also apply in some instances to archaeology and features of the built heritage.
9. The provision of communal open space should be considered as an integral part of the design in order to :
- meet formal and informal recreation and amenity open space needs,
 - contribute to the attractiveness of the development,
 - create a safe, convenient and accessible space for all holiday park users, particularly children, the elderly and people with disabilities,
 - reduce the need for people to seek open space outside the park,
 - enhance security through providing opportunity for on site activity.

Reliance on the use of residual areas of unused land for open space provision will not be acceptable.

