

Discussion Comments on Draft Sustainable Tourism and Action Plan

Background

1. The Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan was circulated to VISIT Forum members, some NPA Board members and NPA staff on 1 February 2005. Many have responded positively to the draft report noting that it is a strong and extremely comprehensive strategy.

Incorporation of Comments

2. The comments fall broadly into 3 types:
 - a) Issues raised which require discussion and agreement on whether they should be incorporated by the VISIT Forum with the guidance of Richard Denman. These are summarised in annex 1 and include the majority of comments received up to and including 15th February 2005.
 - b) Comments which can be incorporated without VISIT Forum discussion and these including a slight change of emphasis on wording or terminology; and suggestions for additional information or statistics.

With the timescale and funding allowed for the development of the strategy, there was no allowance for any new research to be undertaken. Therefore the references within the strategy are to existing and emerging reports and strategies. The background research was completed by the consultants at the end of December 2004 and therefore any significant developments or finalised reports that have emerged since then may not have been taken into account.

Where there are specific suggestions for additional information, efforts will be made by Park staff to incorporate these within the existing timescale. These comments are summarised in annex 2, and if any VISIT Forum member has a comments on these, they should be forwarded to the Sustainable Tourism Officer by 18th February.

- c) Minor typos and change of wording will be incorporated directly into the final version of the report.

Timetable for Finalising the Report

3. To meet the timetable for application to Europarc, the following timetable is proposed:
 - **17-22 Feb** Incorporate all comments from VISIT Forum meeting and seek additional information as requested by members where possible.
 - **23-24 Feb** Final read through and confirmation of any late comments to be incorporated by 2 – 3 volunteers, ideally from previous Strategy sub-group and Park staff. Produce covering Board Paper for presentation of Strategy and Action Plan to March Board meeting.
 - **2-7 Mar** Completion of Europarc Application, see Paper 1

- **11 March** Presentation to NPA Board seeking the endorsement of the final draft strategy. In January 2004, the Board endorsed the development of a Sustainable Tourism Strategy and the successful application for, and implementation of, the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism as one of the seven key priority issues for tourism. Further, in February 2005 it approved expenditure to commission consultants to produce the Sustainable Tourism strategy so that the application to Europarc could be submitted in spring 2005. A final draft version will be presented to the Board, and this version will have been sent by post to Europarc. Any comments and outcomes from the NPA Board will be sent by e-mail to Europarc to meet the 15th March.
- **15 March** Application arrives at Europarc

Publication of Documents

4. It is envisaged that once finalised, the Strategy and Action Plan will not be published as a glossy version because it needs to remain a practical working document that is easy to update and take account of the many emerging strategies of both the Park and key partners. It will be widely circulated, placed on the website and made available to anyone who requests it.
5. As a result, the production of a shortened version of the report for wide circulation is currently being investigated. This will be an A5 booklet, approx 16-20 pages with photographs and graphics and will also include visitor survey information that will be of use to tourism enterprises. It is suggested that this is distributed to all tourism enterprises on the current database to raise awareness of the Strategy and Action Plan, and the current members of the VISIT Forum. It could also provide a list of Park staff with contact details for all those who have an involvement in tourism and visitor services.

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