

Practitioners Advisory Group

By email: info@nppfpractitionersadvisorygroup.org

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Tourism Alliance Submission

National Planning Policy Framework: proposed draft from the Practitioners Advisory Group

1. Introduction

The Tourism Alliance was established in 2001 as the voice of the UK tourism industry. It comprises 50 tourism industry trade and marketing associations that together represent some 200,000 business of all sizes throughout the UK (see Appendix 1 for membership list). The Tourism Alliance's mandate is to work with government on issues relevant to the growth and development of tourism and its contribution to the economy. We are therefore responding to the draft National Planning Policy Framework in that capacity.

2. Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Tourism Alliance broadly supports the draft NPPF and the proposed definition of sustainable development which recognises economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainability.

However, the Alliance will urge government to ensure that there is appropriate acknowledgment of the tourism industry's needs in the NPPF.

The vast majority of tourism businesses are SMEs and microbusinesses for whom, it is widely acknowledged, the interface with the planning system is fraught with administrative burden, expense and frustration. It should also be recognised that tourism, and the economic, social and environmental benefits it can bring to host communities, is often poorly understood and suffers from ill-informed prejudice.

Further, tourists do not have representation at local level, despite their contributions to the local economy. It was therefore welcomed that, on 12 August 2010, the Prime Minister recognised the role of tourism in support economic recovery. He said: *'Tourism presents a huge economic opportunity. Not just bringing business to Britain but right across Britain driving new growth in the regions and helping to deliver the rebalancing of our national economy that is so desperately needed...'*

In the light of government's hopes for the tourism industry's contribution to economic recovery, it would therefore be perverse to fail to provide the necessary support through the NPPF – without which the sector would be severely constrained in its ability to enhance and adapt its product to raise quality and satisfy market demand.

The following pages include our proposals (on track changes as requested) for changes to your draft NPPF that could deliver essential support to the tourism industry which generates revenue, jobs and facilities for local communities

3. Succinct Guidance

The Alliance welcomes that the Practitioners Advisory Group, in its covering letter to the Minister of State, sees merit in succinct guidance for the preparation of local plans.

In the 'Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism' (DCLG, May 2006) the tourism industry has, in essence, such a document that has proved invaluable to the sector since its publication. The Department consulted with the Tourism Alliance in the development of the Guidance and the result is the better for it.

Such guidance is essential to inform local authority officers in their consideration of planning applications; it is impractical for this knowledge to be independently collated at the local level; it would be neither affordable nor an efficient use of resources for each local authority to set about acquiring such expertise.

The Alliance will, in due course, respond to government's consultation on the proposed NPPF. Meanwhile, we would welcome the support of the Practitioners Advisory Group through appropriate amendment of its draft NPPF.



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National Planning Policy Framework

A proposed draft from the Practitioners Advisory Group

May 2011

Delivering sustainable development

Core planning principles

p.6

- local planning authorities should be proactive in driving and supporting the development that this country needs. They should make every effort to identify and meet the housing, business, [tourism](#) and other development needs of their areas, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth

Local Plans

p.8

The Local Plan must set out the **strategic priorities** for the local planning authority. This should include policies to deliver:

...

- the provision of retail, leisure, [tourism](#) and other commercial development;

BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS

p.10

Local planning authorities should use this evidence-base to assess:

- the requirements for land or floorspace for economic development, including both the quantitative (how much) and qualitative (what type) requirements for all foreseeable types of economic activity over the plan period, including for retail ~~and~~ leisure [and tourism](#) development;

Business and economic development

Promote the vitality and viability of town centres

p.18

Local planning authorities should plan positively to promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. As part of their strategy local planning authorities should:

...

- allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, commercial, [tourism](#), community services and residential development required in town centres. This should include an assessment of the need to expand defined town centres to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable sites. It is important that retail ~~and~~ leisure [and tourism](#) needs are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability. Local planning authorities, therefore, should undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable sites;

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- set policies for the consideration of retail ~~and~~ leisure [and tourism](#) proposals which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres; and...

Support the rural economy

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Local planning authorities should support sustainable economic growth in rural areas by taking a positive approach to new development. They should set policies to maintain a prosperous rural economy and to support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit rural businesses, communities and visitors and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres.

Local authorities should, wherever possible, locate new leisure and tourist facilities and accommodation in existing or replacement buildings, particularly where they are located outside existing settlements. Facilities or accommodation requiring new buildings in the countryside should, where possible, be provided in, or close to, service centres or villages but may be justified in other locations where the required facilities or accommodation are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available for re-use.

Extensions to existing leisure and tourist facilities and accommodation should be allowed where the scale of the extension is appropriate to its location and where the extension may help to ensure the future viability of such businesses.

Local authorities should also recognise that, in areas statutorily designated for their landscape, nature or cultural heritage qualities, there will usually still be scope for tourist and leisure related developments, subject to appropriate control over their number, form and location to ensure the particular qualities or features that justified the designation are conserved.

Appendix 1

Tourism Alliance Members

ABTA – The Travel Association
Association for Tourism in Higher Education
Association of Leading Visitor Attractions
Bed and Breakfast Association
British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers & Attractions
British Beer & Pub Association
British Destinations
British Educational Travel Association
British Holiday & Home Parks Association
British Hospitality Association
British Marine Federation
Business In Sport and Leisure
Business Visits and Events Partnership
Camping and Caravanning Club
Confederation of British Industry
Confederation of Passenger Transport UK
Country Land and Business Association
Cumbria Tourism
East of England Tourism
English Association of Self Catering Operators
English UK
European Tour Operators Association
Farm Stay UK
Guild of Registered Tourist Guides
Heritage Railway Association
Historic Houses Association
Historic Royal Palaces
Holiday Centres Association
Hoseasons
National Caravan Council
Mersey Partnership
National Trust
New Forest Tourism
Outdoor Industries Association
Resort Development Organisation
South West Tourism
The Caravan Club
Tourism for All
Tourism Management Institute
Tourism Network North East
Tourism Society
Tourism South East
UKinbound
Visit Cornwall
Visit London
Visitor Attractions Forum
Welcome to Yorkshire

Observers

Local Government Association
VisitBritain
VisitEngland