

Government policy for tourism development



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Planning in a nutshell is to make the proposals for development of land within reason and in a consistent and orderly fashion. In other words, the planning system here in Northern Ireland must act to ensure that socially, economically and environmentally, the country keeps moving in the right direction in regards to planning and ensuring that the planning system prioritise and pursue what needs to be done rather than what people want to be done. Creating an area where communities can be proud of and help them thrive is what planning is about. The planning system works for the best interest of the public and wants to ensure that nothing is damaged for the future generation to inherit and hope the future generation continue of the work of preserving the natural environment whilst making the developments here sustainable for a long time.

The topic I have chosen for this assignment is tourism. Tourism as we all know here in Northern Ireland, makes a vital contribution towards our economy. It generates millions of pounds each year which helps make the country function. It provides opportunities and employment as well as infrastructure development. The Northern Ireland Executive has identified and expressed how important tourism here is, they have also identified that it is vital for sustainable growth and development, they've put so much emphasis on Tourism that they want it to be a £1 billion industry by 2020. The regional development strategy (RDS) has recognised as well that tourism is a key element here in Northern Ireland for sustainable economic development. In Regional Guideline 4, we can see that it wants to develop a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure.

The aims of strategic planning policy statement in Northern Ireland in relation to the tourism industry is “ to manage the provision of sustainable and high quality tourism developments in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment” (Durkan, 2015)

Strategic planning for tourism in short, a practical, intensive, idea-packed approach to improving a destination’s opportunities for sustainable ability over a long period of time.

There is also the Regional strategic policy and the objectives for it include making sure sustainable development for tourism is sensitive to the environment. Making sure tourism growth is contributing to the growth of the regional economy. To make sure the quality of design for tourism development is of a high standard. Making sure the rural community remains upbeat and energetic for supporting the development of tourism for the right nature, place and scale. A tactical system has the aim of stretching the resources available through planning. Strategic planning aims to build a cohesive strategy to develop upon destination strengths and learn from the past as well as making sure the right measures are being taken for the future to increase tourism’s positive impacts on the community.

The Local Development Plans councils which are also known as LDP will summon a tourism strategy and with the policies that are adequate they will mirror the aims, objectives and policy approach of the SPPS which will then be suited for the specific circumstances of the plan area. Throughout the world, there are major tourism sights that people take for granted and don’t realise the work the planners have put into ensuring the development is kept

at the best standard it could possibly be kept at, there is no better example than the Machu Picchu, which is the Cuzco region in the country of Peru, is the best example of an ancient sight being kept well through the work of planning. Whilst Miami is a complicated place because it is in a vibrant combination of natural resources, the built environment and cultural assets as well as being one of the biggest holiday destinations in the world which of course boosts the economy of Florida.

The rural communities here in Northern Ireland must manage the tourism development very carefully. Such as ensuring that the natural environment is not at any risk through preparing or maintaining developments for tourism. As well as building B&B's for tourist come in and self-cater for themselves while they are on their trip or holiday.

Land use policy is important in general because of the simple reason we must build carefully and respectfully on our land. Anything built must fit in with the natural environment surrounding the development. It is becoming more and more evident that changes of land use which are being made at regional and national levels of government are having an effect on the economy, the environment and lastly and more importantly, the lives of people. Land ownership here in Northern Ireland has been an issue in the past and present and more than likely will be an issue in the future. The attachments people have to land are something that they find too strong to let go for the purpose of something to be built there that has no significance to them or meaning to them even if it will benefit the tourism industry or the economy as a whole. They wish to hold on to their land because they might

want to protect private interests, livelihoods or because the land has been passed down through their family from generation to generation.

Planning has dealt with these issues before and will continue to do so, an example of this is not far from my Home house in Blackskull, County Down. Where about 400 yards from my house and farm, there is a neighbouring farm with fields facing south. This is perfect for solar panels to be erected which will help the economy in producing energy through renewable sources rather than burning fuels such as coal or gas. The farmer was approached to have these panels put on 2 of his 40 acre fields and he duly obliged. The regulations stated that the panels had to be built at a certain height above the ground so the farmer can still graze small animals such as sheep in the field whilst the panels are there as well so the field is serving a dual purpose and the farmer is also receiving money for the rent of the fields. This is just one example of how planning as overcome an issue of land ownership by compromising.

The Department of the Environment are to achieve goals with respect to the tourism industry in Northern Ireland. With respect to the social aims, keeping buildings such as Crumlin Road Gaol being a listed building because of its history gives a sense of pride for the surrounding area having a building of such quality at their door step. As well as the Titanic quarter, given the link and history the Titanic has to Belfast there is a whole building and quarter dedicated to the ship here in Belfast which again gives the people of Belfast and Northern Ireland something to hold on to and be proud of for making the most famous ship in the world. In areas of Northern Ireland, there are areas of outstanding natural beauty, which is very very hard to get planning

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permission in unless it is in a settlement village or town in the area or unless it could be a tourist attraction that will give the area a sense of pride again. All of these land marks, buildings and areas in Northern Ireland are very well protected by strict planning regulations and these will bring people from all over the world to see them and help the economy. Again the strict regulations ensure that the environmental side of things are being looked after as well because the whole point is that anything that is going to be built in a tourist area, the development must not stand out from the natural surroundings, it must blend in, it should not be a nuisance but rather something that will only enhance the area.

Implementing the right measures to ensure that everything about the tourist development stays intact will always be difficult due to following the policy and the regulations that have to be met. It will be tailored to suit the needs of the local area. The strategy should aim to address the likes of how the future tourism demand is best accommodated, as well as safe guarding the key tourism assets. They should be looking and identifying the key growth areas for tourism as well as considering the situation of the environment in the area. The LDP should also look at the contribution of tourism to the economic development, and urban regeneration. The implementation of the policy could be halted by pressure groups, these are usually a group of people who would come out and make a stance against a politician who is running for election or they would come out and go against something the politician or political party are trying to do, or if someone launches an appeal which can take up to six months to be sorted out correctly. Again sometimes

the implementation can be hard because of the land ownership scenario where people don't want to give up their land.

One of the most important things however is a positive approach should be taken when looking at applications for tourism development but only if the proposals are sustainable, if they are in accordance with the LDP then usually this will result in a high quality form of development. One of the most important considerations to be looked at is the size of the development, whether it will 'stick out like a sore thumb' from the surrounding buildings or developments. It must fit in with the natural environment of the area and enhance the area. As well as all of this the design of the development must be in proportion with the area and they must be appropriate with the site. The design can be a big factor for the tourism because that is what usually draws the people to the attraction and if it in the countryside it must be designated for the landscape and not hinder the natural or cultural heritage. If the development is on the coastline or in an area of outstanding natural beauty then again the right precautions must be taken to ensure that it fits in with the area and does not disturb the natural coastline or hinder the area of outstanding natural beauty which alone itself is a tourist attraction for the development must be perfect there to not hinder the beauty of the area.

Access as well is another factor for implementation, vehicles must be able to access the development accordingly and safely without any hindrance.

Safety as well is the main one because for people to come to the development the most important thing is their safety and the right measures should be taken to ensure that people are not put at risk of any kind.

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