

Implementing the Regional Tourism Strategy Through Local Development Frameworks

Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) are central to implementing the tourism elements of the South East Plan. Working alongside the Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism (Communities and Local Government), the South East Plan encourages local authorities to take a proactive and plan-led approach to planning for tourism.

Some of the key matters which local authorities should consider when preparing their LDFs are:-

- Evidence Led Approach

The development of a strong evidence base relating to tourism will enhance policy development. A substantial amount of existing evidence can be drawn upon, including that from Tourism South East but also from local authorities themselves (i.e. local economic development strategies, evidence supporting community strategies). Importantly, developing the evidence base locally may not involve the need for new work to be commissioned but rather may involve the compilation and analysis of existing evidence.

- A Focus on Places

Central to developing LDFs will be the need to show how tourism relates to actual places within a local authority area. By looking at tourism through places, an approach can be taken that ensures tourism forms part of the overall package of policies and proposals for a given area. For example, by drilling down beyond the local authority area opportunities to manage, enhance and promote particular areas can be taken (such as areas with a high concentration of hotels, restaurant zones in larger town centres, or leisure destinations that impact on a concentrated area through traffic and parking). This type of approach to tourism allows it to be addressed in a spatial planning way along with other issues affecting a given place.

- Implementation focus

Central to delivering good outcomes for tourism through LDFs is the need to show how a local authority and its partners in the public and private sector are actually going to make it happen in their area and how change is to be effected. This will require close working with between local authorities and partners to ensure that there is buy-in to the proposals sets out in LDFs.

- Taking Forward the South East Plan

The tourism policies of the emerging South East Plan set out a broad framework for managing tourism in the region. It will be important that LDFs demonstrate how these policies have been considered and have been given effect to. Important considerations include:-

- The role that tourism will play in diversifying the economic base of coastal resorts and securing their regeneration (Policy TSR1);
- The contribution tourism can make to rural diversification (Policy TSR2);
- The need for, and the preferred location of, regionally significant tourist attractions (Policy TSR4);
- The need to protect and promote tourist accommodation (TSR5);
- How visitors can be better managed (Policy TSR6); and
- The need for LDFs to take forward the sub-regional priority areas for tourism (Policy TSR7).

Conclusion

The above seeks to set out some of the matters which local authorities need to consider when implementing tourism issues through LDFs. The Regional Assembly continues to work closely with Tourism South East and local authorities on the implementation of regional and sub-regional tourism policies, including the South East Plan.

Further information about the South East Plan's tourism policies and how they can be implemented through Local Development Frameworks can be obtained by contacting the Regional Assembly's Conformity Team on 01483 555 224 or www.southeast-ra.gov.uk.

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