Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Tourism Strategy
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Today

• The new Council
• Why are we meeting you today?
• BTS key questions for you
• Over to you = have your say
Tourism in Mid & East Antrim

• Now 11 local authorities in NI (previously 26)
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council:
• Brings Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne together
• Operational from 1\textsuperscript{st} April 2015
• Covers an area of 1,046 km\textsuperscript{2} (7.5\% of NI)
• Population 135,000 = c7\% of NI
• New powers: Planning, Local Economic and Tourism Development, off-street parking and management of water recreational sites; leading the Community Planning process
• “Developing our tourism potential” is 1 of 5 strategic drivers for the area
Tourism in Mid & East Antrim

What are the tourism priorities for the new area?
• Market demand (where visitors are from, how many, what they like, what they want)?
• Tourism products in the destination (attractions, activities, natural & cultural heritage, retail, eating facilities, transport & accessibility)
• Ambitions and aspirations of the tourism trade, community and the new Council itself.

= Tourism strategy and plan for 2016 to 2020
Developing the strategy & plan

• Desk research (market review and policy appraisal)
• Stakeholders discussions
• Electronic survey
• Workshops

= your view to contribute/ have your say
Tourism in an National Context

4.5m visitors in 2014, up 11% on 2013

Total revenue of £751m, of which:
- £514m from GB & overseas
- £238m from domestic
- £68m from ROI

5.2% of NI’s GDP supports 1 in every 18 jobs representing 43,000 jobs.
Recent trends

latest 2014 figures show that:

- overall visitors up 8%
- holiday visitors up 26%
- ROI holiday visitors up 20%
- GB & overseas holiday visitors up 11%

mixed accommodation fortunes:

- hotel rooms sold Jan-Nov 2014 highest on record – up 2%
- more mixed performance in regions
  - B&B sector in decline – 18% occupancy in 2013 versus 27% in 2007

air access:

- air capacity into NI was up 3% in winter 2014
- several new air routes opened up with inbound growth potential
- however, Dublin airport still has almost 9 out of every 10 seats on European routes on the island of Ireland
Tourism in Mid & East Antrim

• Significant growth in 2014
• However, still relatively few visitors (322,000) and spend (£40.5m) = 7% of total overnight trips and NI spend
• Large proportion of day trips and those visiting friends and relatives
• Estimated 3,678 jobs in tourism and tourism related sectors (= 9% of local employment)
Tourism in Mid & East Antrim

Domestic Driven

• High proportion of domestic overnight visitors (48%)
• 12% from ROI and 29% GB, majority of trips from these 3 markets
• One of 4 LAs where over 50% of overnight trips are VFR
• 4 other areas attract more visitors from Europe & North America

Accommodation Base

• 4.5% of NI’s tourist accommodation available (2,000 beds)
• Only 6% of available hotel beds in NI with 62% Occupancy
• 5% of NI B&B/guesthouse/guest accommodation beds
• 3% of available self catering beds in NI
• 2nd highest hotel bed occupancy and 3rd highest guest house B&B bed occupancy in NI
Tourism in Mid & East Antrim

Weaknesses

• Limited accommodation
• Collaboration and Partnerships
• Poor visitor spread and spend along Causeway Coastal Route
• Lack of visitor spend
• High % of domestic visitors
• Under-performance of a key demand generator
• Digital connectivity for businesses and visitors
Tourism in Mid & East Antrim

The opportunities for Mid and East Antrim

- Causeway Coastal Route
- The Gobbins
- Slemish & St Patrick's
- Genealogy - Ulster Scots connections / international markets
- Castles (i.e. Carrickfergus) History & Heritage
- Villages and Places
- Events and Festivals
- Galgorm Resort, spa & castle
- Northern Ireland Open

YOUR REACTIONS TO THESE? WHAT ELSE IS MISSING?
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Questions

What’s the top priority for tourism in the area?
Questions

How can we stimulate partnership between the Council and tourism businesses?
Next steps

• Absorb information from workshops
• More survey results (tell your friends)
• Full analysis
• Resource needs (what will it cost?)
• Views of key stakeholders (Tourism Ireland, Tourism NI etc.)
• How to structure delivery – implications for the new Council
• Draft of plan in March 2016