



# LOCAL AGENDA 21 FACTSHEET

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

NUMBER 3

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### 1) Introduction – What is sustainable tourism?



<http://www.visitbritain.com/>

Sustainable tourism or eco-tourism has been defined as “. . . an approach by which the needs and interests of the visitor and the host community are both met without compromising the environment, either now or for the future. Long-term prosperity in the tourism industry involves recognising its interdependence with the environment.” (Local Sustainability Group for South West, 2000).

Primarily sustainable tourism seeks to raise awareness to the tourist/visitor of the potential economic, social and environmental impacts of their visit/stay and highlighting the need for responsible travel, whether in the UK or abroad.

For many areas in the UK and globally, the tourism industry is highly dependent on the quality of the areas' natural and built environment. With the tourism industry growing rapidly each year, with Britain employing 1.75 million people and generating over £50 billion a year (Tourism Concern, UK), it is vitally important that the tourism industry aims to maximise positive and minimise negative impacts on the environment and local community and preserve areas of interest.

### 2) Principles of Sustainable Tourism

As outlined by Tourism Concern, UK, there are 10 main principles of sustainable tourism : -

1 Using resources sustainably = The conservation and sustainable use of natural, social and cultural resources to ensure the longevity of the tourism industry.

2 Reducing over-consumption and waste = Reducing consumption limits the amounts of produced and ultimately the impact on the environment.

3 Maintaining diversity = The natural, social and cultural diversity of an area is vital to both the tourism industry and local communities.

4 Integrating tourism into planning = Important to develop tourism in conjunction with national and local strategic planning frameworks and undertake environmental impact assessments.

5 Supporting local economies = Supporting and protecting local economic activities benefits both local communities and the local environment.



<http://www.oursouthwest.com/RegiSus/tourism.htm>

6 Involving local communities = Consulting and involving local communities can reduce negative attitudes to tourism and promote sense of place, distinctiveness and empowerment.

7 Consulting stakeholders and the public = Consultation can help develop the tourism industry in harmony with existing communities to benefit both tourists and local people alike and the environment.

8 Training staff = Raising awareness of sustainable tourism practices integrates sustainability into work practices.

9 Marketing tourism responsibly = Highlighting sustainable tourism encourages visitors to respect the environment and local community.

10 Undertaking research = Tourism is changing and expanding rapidly, therefore necessary to adapt sustainable tourism methods accordingly.

### 3) Impact of Tourism

The tourism industry itself can have an important role in protecting and improving the landscape and has a responsibility for the environment and communities in which they function. Benefits of tourism include the generation of employment, major economic input, contribution to local infrastructure and support local services. However, negative impacts include damage to local landscape and bio-diversity, seasonal employment problems, increased traffic and congestion and loss of open space. As such a balance is needed.

POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS
Increase in local wealth	Seasonal economy & employment
Generation of employment	Competition for use of local amenities
Benefits for residents from tourism amenities	Increase in crime levels
Contributes to development of local infrastructure	Loss of open space
Increased local diversification	Air quality
Greater choice and supply local goods and services	Litter and graffiti
Regeneration of run down areas	Increase in traffic pollution
Better use built environment	Traffic congestion

### 4) Think Global – Act Local

Increased leisure time and greater disposable income has resulted in people looking further afield for holidays. While going to foreign climes may guarantee sun, it can also cause environmental damage through aviation pollution.



A sustainability checklist could help to improve the positive benefits of your tourist activity and minimise the adverse effects of traditional tourism (The International Eco-Tourism Society): -



- Minimise impact.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.

<http://www.wisegrowth.org.uk/>

- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people.
- Raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental and social climate.
- Support international human rights and labour agreements.

The tourist industry prosperity relies on a high quality natural and built environment and as such when the environment deteriorates so does tourism opportunities.

### 5) Useful Links

Calculate the effect your lifestyle is having on the environment by calculating your ecological footprint via [www.agreeneressex.net/calc](http://www.agreeneressex.net/calc).



Other links: -

- [www.tourismconcern.org.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)
- [www.wisegrowth.org.uk](http://www.wisegrowth.org.uk)
- [www.greentourism.org.uk](http://www.greentourism.org.uk)
- [www.green-business.co.uk](http://www.green-business.co.uk)

[www.gwynedd.gov.uk/.../footprint](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/.../footprint)

For further information on any of the subjects mentioned please contact Helen Speight, Local Agenda 21 Officer on x 6185 or alternatively write to Environmental Services, Council Offices, Weeley, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO16 9AJ.