

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 18 December 2019 15:24  
**To:** Local Development Plan Team  
**Cc:** DfETourismLiaison  
**Subject:** Publication of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Local Development Plan 2032 - draft Plan Strategy

Dear Sir / Madam

Further to the invitation issued to Tourism NI in October 2019 to comment on the Publication of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Local Development Plan 2032 - draft Plan Strategy, I can provide the below comments on behalf of Tourism NI as a statutory consultee :-

### **TOURISM NI COMMENTS:**

- Tourism NI welcomes the publication of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Local Development Plan 2032 - draft Plan Strategy and the opportunity to comment.
- Tourism NI has engaged and worked closely with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's (LCCC) Planning Dept. over the past two years or more as part of 1-1 Meetings and wider Stakeholder Engagement Meetings and Events and has contributed to the direction and content of the draft Plan Strategy from a tourism perspective
- Tourism NI is also represented on the LCCC Community Planning Partnership as a statutory partner and works very closely with the Council's Tourism Dept on a number of projects and initiatives
- Tourism NI appointed a dedicated Regional Manager for the LCCC area in 2016 and has since supported and part funded a Tourism Strategy 2018 - 22 for the LCCC area and which is currently being implemented
- The Local Development Plan 2032 – Draft Plan Strategy establishes:
  - A clear aspiration to grow the visitor economy through a sustainable approach that will balance the needs of the visitor and tourism industry, with careful protection of the built and natural environment.
  - That the existing city and town hubs, for example Hillsborough and Lisburn, and rural settlements provide the best option for the growth of sustainable tourism accommodation. Settlements typically offer existing services and facilities that visitors enjoy and facilitate a gateway to natural assets.
  - The need for additional hotel accommodation in the district and Tourism NI welcomes the fact that some progress has been made in this area with the development of a new 52-bedroom hotel in Lisburn Square, due to open in 2020.

- Tourism NI is content that the approach outlined seeks to achieve sustainable tourism growth coupled with the preservation of our built and natural assets. The approach is sensitive to the preservation of the natural environment while seeking to enable communities to prosper sustainably.
- Tourism NI encourages policies and initiatives that encourage balanced and sustainable growth of tourism facilities, services and tourism accommodation portfolios within the district councils existing towns and settlements.
- In November 2019, Tourism NI launched its new Experience Band, Northern Ireland - Embrace a Giant Spirit and which features visitor experiences in the LCCC area and Tourism NI will continue to work in partnership with LCCC to develop further visitor experiences in the LCCC area in the months and years ahead.
- The recent re-development and investment of £20m in Hillsborough Castle & Gardens by Historic Royal Palaces as well as the council's recent and ongoing investment in Hillsborough Forest Park has transformed Hillsborough into an attractive and appealing heritage town and experience
- Furthermore, the opportunities that exist around LCCC's council partner status in the Belfast Region City Deal means that further investment in Hillsborough as a tourism destination in the area is being planned. Tourism NI is working with all of the council partners as part of the Belfast Region City Deal to ensure that investment in tourism is aligned to key objectives in the draft NI Tourism Strategy – Tourism 2030, including the doubling of visitor spend to £2b by 2030.
- NISRA research figures indicate that there has been a steady growth in tourism spend in the LCCC area of 24% since 2013 albeit from a relatively low base. In 2018, the LCCC area represented 3% of all tourism spend in N. Ireland.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Publication of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Local Development Plan 2032 - draft Plan Strategy and if you have any further queries, please don't hesitate to contact me

Regards

