

Sch 2 Annex 2 (UPDATED JAN 2025)

Note - This Annex sets out changes to the Tourism Policy TOU 4 and Appendix 2

TOU 4 – Hotels, Guest Houses, B&B's & Tourist Hostels in the Countryside

It is important that all proposals for tourist accommodation are of a high quality and that they meet an identified tourism need or market. They must therefore demonstrate how they make a positive and sustainable contribution to the tourism offer and visitor experience. All development must meet the requirements of GDPOL 1.

(a) Expansion of Existing Hotels, Guest Houses, B&Bs and Tourist Hostels:

A proposal for the expansion of an existing hotel, guest house, B&B or tourist hostel will be permitted subject to the following specific criteria:

- (i) new or replacement building(s) are subsidiary in terms of scale to the existing building(s) and will integrate as part of the overall development;
- (ii) any extension or new building should respect the scale, design and materials of the original building(s) on the site and any historic or architectural interest the original property may have.

(b) Conversion / Replacement or New-Build Tourist Accommodation

Planning permission will be granted for a new hotel / guest house / tourist hostel in the countryside in the following circumstances and will be assessed under the specified criteria:

1) Conversion or Replacement of an Existing Rural Building

A proposal to convert or replace existing buildings in the countryside with a hotel, guest house or tourist hostel will be permitted subject to the following specific criteria:

- the existing building is of permanent construction;
- the existing building and its replacement are both of sufficient size to facilitate the proposed use;
- the existing building is not a listed building;
- where the existing building is a vernacular, or other building that is considered to make an important contribution to local heritage or character, replacement will only be approved where it is demonstrated that the building is not reasonably capable of being made structurally sound or otherwise improved;
- the redevelopment proposed will result in significant environmental benefit;
- overall size and scale of the new development, including car parking and ancillary facilities, will allow it to integrate into the surrounding landscape and will not have a visual impact significantly greater than the existing building;
- the design is of high quality, appropriate to the rural setting and has regard to local distinctiveness;
- access, car parking and other necessary services are available or can be provided without significant adverse impact on the environment, the appearance and character of the locality and road safety.

Refer to related policies ODC 4, HE 3 and HOU 21 regarding the conversion and re-use of existing buildings for other suitable rural uses.

2) New-Build Hotel, Guest House, or Tourist Hostel on the Periphery of a Settlement.

Where there is no suitable site within one of the nine tourism settlements, a new-build hotel, guest house, or tourist hostel may be appropriate on the periphery of that tourism settlement subject to meeting normal planning requirements.

A firm proposal to develop a hotel, guest house or tourist hostel on land at the periphery of a tourism settlement will be permitted if there is no suitable site or opportunities within that tourism settlement or other nearby settlement either through the conversion or replacement of a suitable building(s) and the development is close to the settlement, but will not dominate it, adversely affect landscape setting, or otherwise contribute to urban sprawl.

Sch 2 Annex 2 (UPDATED JAN 2025)

Where the principle of a new building on the periphery of a settlement is established through meeting the above criteria, the Council will apply a sequential locational test, with preference being attributed to sites in the following order:

- land adjacent to the existing settlement limit, subject to amenity and environmental considerations;
- a site on the periphery of the settlement limit which currently contains buildings or where the site is already in a degraded or derelict state and there is an opportunity to improve the environment;
- an undeveloped site close to the settlement where the development could be visually integrated into the landscape.

Any proposed change of use or replacement of a hotel, guest house or tourist hostel approved under this policy to a non-tourism use will be resisted, unless it is demonstrated that the facility is not viable in the long term and there is sufficient alternative provision in the locality to offset the loss of tourism benefit.

See TOU 2 for this type of accommodation within settlements.

Justification and Amplification

12.22 Replacement and/or extension or conversion of an Existing Rural Building: The Council will encourage the sustainable and sympathetic reuse of non-designated heritage assets, such as vernacular buildings or historic buildings of local importance. The potential for the conversion and re-use of suitable rural buildings for tourism uses, including use as a hotel, guest house or tourist hostel, will be assessed under this Policy and Policy ODC 4, (The conversion change of use and re- use of existing buildings for agricultural and other suitable rural uses). Redevelopment of appropriate building(s) for such uses, will be favourably considered in circumstances where the environmental benefit of full or partial replacement will outweigh the retention and conversion of the building. The condition of the building and the economic feasibility of repairing and maintaining it will also be taken into account in assessing such proposals. Good design is of paramount importance and redevelopment proposals must be sensitive to the rural setting and local distinctiveness. Those supplying evidence in relation to the replacement of a non-designated locally important building should be from a suitably accredited and / or experienced conservation background. Reports should provide recommendations for conservation or stabilisation options alongside evidence that all options have been considered and exhausted to retain the structure.

12.23 New Build Hotel, Guest House or Tourist Hostel on the periphery of a Settlement: Where there is no suitable site within a tourism settlement, a new build hotel, guest house or tourist hostel may be appropriate on the periphery of that tourism settlement subject to meeting normal planning requirements. New Build Hotels, Guest Houses or Tourist Hostels should usually be located within settlements in order to take advantage of existing services and facilities, provide ready access for visitors and employees and to minimise the impact on rural amenity and character. However, it is important that firm proposals for such projects are not impeded due to a lack of suitable land within settlements. Where the case for a location outside a settlement in such an area can be clearly demonstrated, the selected site should be as close to the settlement as possible, subject to amenity and environmental considerations, as this is usually more sustainable than a more remote site.

12.24 There can be tourist accommodation which is marketed under short-term-let tourist accommodation such as B&Bs and serviced/self-catering **properties. Some B&B uses and some self-catering properties are not considered to be development requiring planning**

Sch 2 Annex 2 (UPDATED JAN 2025)

permission in urban and rural situations; however, where there is a new-build or material change of use, planning applications are required and countryside proposals will be assessed under this policy, TOU 6 and ODC 4 as relevant. Short-term-let tourist accommodation will be monitored and reviewed over the period of the LDP.

12.25 A proposal must also respect the character of the settlement and its setting in the surrounding landscape. This in turn will require careful site selection, layout, design and landscaping. Proposals which are deemed to be acceptable in principle will be required to include sufficient mitigation measures, including landscaping and design, to ameliorate any negative impacts and secure higher quality development.

12.26 All applications must provide sufficient evidence to indicate how firm or realistic the particular proposal is and what sources of finance are available (including any grant aid) to sustain the project including:

- detailed information to illustrate that there is no reasonable prospect of securing a suitable site within the limits of the particular settlement or other nearby tourism settlement;
- justification for the particular site chosen and illustrative details of the proposed design and site layout.

12.27 It is important that all proposals for tourism accommodation in the countryside are of a high quality and that they meet an identified tourism need or market. Any new-build or substantial expansion proposals must therefore demonstrate how they make a positive and sustainable contribution to the tourism offer and visitor experience - see Appendix 2 for details of a Tourism Benefit Statement and a Sustainable Benefit Statement.

12.28 The grant of planning permission will not in itself allow for inappropriate alternative uses if an approved scheme for some reason does not go ahead. While the Council cannot require business enterprises which become uneconomic to continue, alternative land uses will only be approved if there is sufficient alternative accommodation in the locality to provide for tourism benefit. The Council's Tourism Department is to be consulted with regard to such applications and Tourism NI will also be consulted for developments of a significant scale.

Sch 2 Annex 2 (UPDATED JAN 2025)

Appendix 2 – Tourism Benefits and Definitions

Information on Tourism Benefit Statement & Sustainable Benefit Statement

Developers are advised to engage with the Council at an early stage to ensure that all necessary information for any tourism development proposal, as considered necessary is provided. The Developer is advised to refer to the relevant General Development Principles and Policies in Chapter 7, as well as information that may be required for certain tourism development projects including the following:

Tourism Benefit Statement:

- (a) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Certain tourism developments, depending on their nature, scale or location may be likely to require Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under the provisions of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017. Schedule 2 of the Regulations lists a number of categories of development, including defined tourism and leisure related projects, which will be likely to require an EIA if they meet or exceed the thresholds specified in the Schedule. In addition, where such development is located within a “sensitive area”, EIA will also be required if it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment;
- (b) Transport Assessment. A Transport Assessment may be required in order to evaluate the transport implications of the development proposal, where it is likely to have significant travel generating uses. The DfI’s Transport Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance for Development Proposals will provide detailed information on this process and should be considered;
- (c) Details on the viability of the proposal in terms of tourism revenue and employment and increased visitor numbers to the Region/NI and the District;
- (d) Sufficient evidence to demonstrate how realistic the particular proposal is and what sources of finance are available (including any grant aid) to sustain the project. Provide information on an identified tourism market and marketing plan;
- (e) Justification for the particular site chosen and illustrative details of the proposed design and site layout.

Sustainable Benefit Statement:

- (a) Details that the proposal will enhance the range and quality of tourism attractions and facilities in the local area;

Sch 2 Annex 2 (UPDATED JAN 2025)

- (b) Details that the proposed development will extend the tourist season in the local area;
- (c) There will be significant utilisation of local goods and services, including trades and crafts;
- (d) That the proposal is an important element in farm or broader rural diversification;
- (e) That the proposed development will help to protect or improve an environmental asset associated with either the natural or built heritage;
- (f) That the proposed development will enhance biodiversity, for example through the creation or improvement of wetland or woodland habitat.

Key Tourism Definitions / Information

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| B&B | Overnight sleeping accommodation for visitors providing a cooked breakfast and the daily servicing of bedrooms. B&Bs should meet the requirements of the Tourism (NI) Order 1992 and the Tourism Categories of Tourist Establishment (Statutory Criteria) Regulations (NI) 1992 and hold a current Tourism Northern Ireland certificate in order to sell overnight accommodation. |
| Guest House | Overnight sleeping accommodation for visitors in separate rooms comprising not less than 3 double bedrooms, providing breakfast and an evening meal and the daily servicing of bedrooms. Guest Houses should meet the requirements of the Tourism (NI) Order 1992 and the Tourism Categories of Tourist Establishment (Statutory Criteria) Regulations (NI) 1992 and hold a current Tourism Northern Ireland certificate in order to sell overnight accommodation. |
| Tourist accommodation | Overnight sleeping accommodation for tourists provided by way of trade or business. |
| Short-term Lets | Definition and information to be provided by the Council at the time of adoption. |
| Tourism Asset | Any feature associated with the built or natural environment which is of intrinsic interest to tourists. |

Sch 2 Annex 2 (UPDATED JAN 2025)

Indicative list of tourism assets within the District as referred to in Policy TOU 1 Safeguarding of Tourism Assets.

A fuller list of tourism assets is included in Evidence Base document EVB 12 Appendices 5 and 6 (Hyperlink to list to be added), provided by the Council's Tourism Department. Note that the following list not exhaustive (nor are the EVB 12 lists) but some examples of items considered to be tourism assets are set out below:

| Asset type | Name | Address |
|---|---|--|
| City | | |
| Visitor attraction / scheduled monument | Derry City Walls | Derry-Londonderry City centre |
| Visitor attraction / historic building | Guildhall | Guildhall Street |
| Visitor attraction | Murals such as at Free Derry Corner / Bogside, Derry Girls, Amelia Earhart, etc. | Various locations |
| Visitor attraction | City Cemetery, especially 'celebrity' graves | Lone Moor Road |
| Parks & gardens / iconic bridge | St. Columb's Park and Peace Bridge | City centre |
| Elsewhere in District | | |
| Outdoor recreation / scenery | Scenic / angling rivers e.g. River Foyle / Mourne / Derg /Glenelly / Faughan | Across the District |
| Outdoor recreation / scenery | Sperrin AONB, specifically Sawel / Dart/ Moat / Bessy Bell Mountains, Glenelly Valley | Various, east of Strabane, south of Claudy |
| Historic site | Loughash Wedge Tombs | Loughash Road, Donamana |
| Historic building | President Wilson Ancestral Home | Spout Road, Dergalt, Strabane |
| Historic building | Gray's Printing Press & Tearooms | Main Street, Strabane |
| Historic demesnes / buildings | Derg Castle, Harry Avery's Castle, Baronscourt Estate, Prehen House | Castledearg, Newtownstewart, Baronscourt, Prehen-Derry |

Tourist amenity An amenity, facility, or service provided primarily for tourists, but does not include tourist accommodation.

Indicative list of tourist amenities within the District referred to in Policy TOU 3 Tourist Amenities in the Countryside and TOU 6 Self-catering Accommodation in the Countryside

An extensive list of tourism attractions and amenities is included in Evidence Base document EVB 12 Appendix 4 (Hyperlink to list to be added); note that this list is provided by the Council's Tourism Department and many of these do not constitute a 'tourist amenity' in Planning terms, that meets the above definition. The following list is not exhaustive, but some local examples of tourist amenities are set out below:

| Amenity type | Name | Address |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| City | | |
| Independent retail /artisan goods | Craft Village | Shipquay Street, Derry |
| Entertainment | Brunswick Moviebowl & Indoor Fun | Brunswick Lane, Pennyburn Ind Estate |
| Visitor attractions | Museum of Free Derry | 55 Glenfada Park |
| Theatres | Millennium Forum | Newmarket St |
| Cultural | Tower Museum | Union Hall Place |
| Elsewhere in District | | |
| Activity centres | Oakfire Adventures | 227 Glenshane Road |
| Attraction - children | Sperrin Fun Farm | Banagher-Feeny |
| Outdoor recreation | Sperrin Giant's sculpture – Nowanois | Legcloughfin, Cranagh, Glenelly Valley |

Sch 2 Annex 2 (UPDATED JAN 2025)

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Outdoor recreation | Golf clubs | Various |
| Leisure | Wild Atlantic Distillery & Gin School | Aghyaran, Castlederg |
| Arts and entertainment | Alley Theatre and Arts Centre | Railway Street, Strabane. |
| Multi activity - fishing, hunting, food. | Baronscourt Estate | Baronscourt, Newtownstewart |