BLUE SAIL▸

VISITORS PLACES DESTINATIONS

FUTURE OF TOURISM ON SCILLY: GREEN FRAMEWORK

TECHNICAL PAPER FOR ISLAND MARKETING

APRIL 2011

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1   BACKGROUND

ABOUT THE *FUTURE OF TOURISM ON SCILLY* STUDY

Between September 2010 and March 2011, Blue Sail carried out a study into the future of tourism on the Isles of Scilly, in consultation with local people. We were asked to advise on how tourism can continue to support the islands, the islands' economy and the islanders' quality of life.   We focused on how Scilly can stay competitive in the future, while retaining its unique character and special environment. Part of Blue Sail's brief is to produce a Green Tourism Framework to ensure that any proposals emerging from the Study are compatible with the principles of sustainable tourism.

Our overall recommendations for the future of tourism in Scilly are summarised in two standalone documents that will be sufficient for most people's purposes: the **Blueprint Report** and the **Blueprint Action Plan**.

For those who need or want to go into our findings in more depth, there are also a number of detailed technical papers:

▶ **Green Framework (this report)**

▶ Product Improvement Plan

▶ Marketing Plan

▶ Tourism Organisation Report

▶ Research Summary

▶ Research Plan

▶ Storyboard

▶ Consultation Meetings Report

▶ Marketing Workshop Report

Technical papers are online at www.scilly.gov.uk/community/tourism

2   TOURISM AND THE SCILLIONIAN ENVIRONMENT

The quality of the Scillonian landscape and marine environment is fundamental to the distinctiveness and character of the islands. The combination of landscape, biodiversity, tranquillity, local character and custom, clean air and sparkling seas creates the strong 'sense of place' that differentiates Scilly from other holiday destinations. This distinctive character is the primary appeal to visitors.

'Sustainable' or 'Green' tourism is about managing tourism so that it protects or even benefits the environment while generating employment and other benefits for local people and providing opportunities for businesses to flourish. Green tourism has become a popular, and in some cases, abused concept in recent years. To avoid accusations of 'greenwash' and the alienation of a sceptical public, any green tourism policies must be:

▶   central to the decision making processes of a destination

▶   and seen to deliver what they promise.

 Policies must take into account not just the high-profile impacts of tourism – landscape erosion, community disruption, over-development – but also the less obvious impacts on the environment and service infrastructure – on biodiversity, air and sea water quality, domestic water supply and quality, waste generation and disposal.

Green tourism policies must also take account of the character and custom of an area. This is particularly true on Scilly where there is a strong sense of difference from mainland UK in the pace of life, scale of business and community cohesion. These things generate for the visitor a sense that Scilly is a place where the more stressful aspects of modern life have been avoided, a place that it is 'old fashioned in a good way' and 'traditional'.

There is a balance to be found in maintaining the sense of a different and better quality of life on the islands, while responding to market demands for consistent quality and modern concepts of service provision. Success will be in recognising those elements of current market demand that can be co-opted into 'the Scilly way', improving the visitor experience to ensure the retention of a viable visitor economy, without reducing its distinctiveness.

3   ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: A DYNAMIC APPROACH

We have designed the Green Tourism Framework in 2 parts.

▶ First, a set of potential actions that can be put in place through the accompanying Product Improvement Plan to support the tourism industry in reducing energy and water use, conserving the landscape and biodiversity of the islands, reducing carbon emissions and promoting Scilly's local distinctiveness.

▶ Secondly, we have created a 'Limits of Acceptable Change' Schedule to identify, monitor and control the impacts of tourism on the environment.

The 'Limits of Acceptable Change' approach builds a picture of where the impacts of tourism are being felt now in Scilly, and where there may be impacts in the near future. To make the Framework effective, the tourism sector needs to work with local environmental interests and service providers to understand existing and potential impacts, and establish limits on tourism growth and change in order to manage those impacts. Where limits are already being exceeded or are close to being reached, the Schedule identifies mitigation measures to reduce the impacts. These measures should then form part of the islands' overall tourism strategy and programme – prioritised in terms of the severity of the impacts, the urgency in reducing the problem and the resources available.

To make the Schedule effective and dynamic, we recommend that

▶ a core islands-wide set of limits is agreed and jointly adopted by the tourism sector, key environmental agencies and the CIOS

▶ they are reviewed – and amended as necessary – annually, by a group representing the main interests on the islands

▶ a set of agreed limits is produced for each of the off-islands to reflect their characters and economic make-up; these will be companion documents to the core islands-wide limits.

The rest of this paper is a short assessment of the main issues surrounding green tourism on the islands and an initial Limits of Acceptable Change Schedule.   It is the Schedule that needs to be taken on, reviewed, and developed in consultation with the AONB, Wildlife Trust, the Duchy, CIOS departments, the business sector, and the community to make it a shared and living tool to manage change in tourism on Scilly.

4   THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM

To establish an initial structure to the Limits of Acceptable Change Schedule we have indentified, below, the main areas where tourism has an impact in Scilly. We have shown the positive impacts of tourism as well as the negative. Loss of the positive impacts may well be an unacceptable change.

There are potential changes to the environment arising from global warming – changing flora, sea level rises, water shortages. While these may not be having an immediate impact, certain actions can increase the likelihood of these changes taking place, or start to mitigate their potential future impact. These are taken into account in the Framework development process.

LANDSCAPE QUALITY
Aim: To maintain and enhance the quality of the open and built landscapes on the islands and avoid any physical or visual degradation and loss of amenity value.

The quality of the Scillonian landscape, both urban and rural, is an essential ingredient of the visitor offer. Changes to the landscape are overwhelmingly due to the human influence on it – inappropriate development, farming practice, introduction of non-native flora, poor condition of the public realm – and can all be managed. There are no major concerns relating to visitor numbers or pressure on sensitive landscapes at present although there is some evidence of the agrarian landscape suffering from a shift in emphasis towards wholly visitor-based businesses.

Potential Negative Impacts	Positive Impacts
Development of tourism facilities in inappropriate locations or at inappropriate scale	Strong economic impetus to retain landscape amenity
Footpath overuse and erosion	
Loss of farmland and traditional farming practices	Secondary income for landowners to support agricultural activity
Potential erosion of historic monuments and features	Visitor interest leads to conservation of historic features and museum collections

BIODIVERSITY
Aim: To maintain and enhance the conservation of natural areas, wildlife and habitats and minimise any damage to them

The islands' land and marine biodiversity is a significant driver for tourists, and in particular for birdwatchers and divers. Concerns have been expressed over the disturbance of breeding colonies on the uninhabited islands at key times.

Potential Negative Impacts	Positive Tourism Impacts
Disturbance to breeding colonies/nesting sites on uninhabited islands	Attracts visitors, especially in shoulder months
Disturbance to the sea bed from ad hoc mooring	
Loss of habitat to development	

TRANQUILLITY
Aim: To maintain at current levels the levels of background noise generated by tourism driven enterprises and activities

The peace and quiet of the islands is a major draw to visitors. Increased use of private cars on St Mary's has been identified as a concern, and any increase in helicopter and plane traffic would need to be managed so as to ensure that noise levels did not become intrusive. There is no significant problem associated with the use of jet boats and jet skis but they have caused problems in other marine environments and uncontrolled development in Scilly could cause issues.

Potential Negative Impacts	Positive Tourism Impacts
Road traffic especially on St Mary's	Strong economic impetus to retain tranquillity
Increased air transport movements	
Increased use of jet boats / jet skis	

ENVIRONMENTAL PURITY
Aim: To minimise the pollution of air, water and land and generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors

The fresh air and crystal clear seas are a strong attraction for the islands. There is no perceived strong threat to the overall quality of either, but there is some concern about the capacity of the sewerage infrastructure to cope at peak times. Any loss of bathing quality, if made public, could have a very serious impact on the visitor's perception of a destination.

When it comes to waste disposal and recycling, it is important that the volumes of waste generated do not exceed the islands' capacity to process them through the incinerator or ship it off-islands. Greater information provision for visitors about the specific problems faced by the islands and the need for careful waste management could help to encourage reduction.

Potential Negative Impacts	Positive Tourism Impacts
Increased waste generation from larger no. of visitors increasing consumption	Strong economic impetus to retain air and sea water quality
Sewerage outfall at peak times	Visitors aware of need for recycling from own domestic situations
Waste from private boats	Increase in online marketing and booking reduces paper use
Increased use of diesel fuelled boats	
Littering by visitors on streets and beaches	

WATER SUPPLY
Aim: To minimise the use of water by tourism enterprises and visitors

There are immediate water supply challenges on St Mary's posed by prolonged high usage at peak occupancy times, such as around popular events such as the Gig Championships. There is a long term trend for increased use of water catering for visitor needs. Greater information provision for visitors about the limits of water supply and the need for careful water management could encourage reduction.

Potential Negative Impacts	Positive Tourism Impacts
Capacity reached quickly if 100% occupancy for extended period	
Consumer demand for higher volume showers	
Consumer demand for bed linen and towels laundered frequently	
Consumer demand for dishwashers in s/c premises	

ENERGY USE
Aim: To minimise the use of non-renewable resources by tourism enterprises and visitors

There are no immediate problems with energy provision, although there is still a long-term need to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and move to renewable sources of energy. There has been much debate in other protected landscapes about the use of wind farms and their impact on the visual environment and bird populations. Rising energy costs are having an economic impact on tourism establishments.   Modern consumers are much more aware of the need to reduce energy consumption and are open to actions that support that aim.

Potential Negative Impacts	Positive Tourism Impacts
Increased demand for energy through increased visitor numbers	Visitors aware of need for energy conservation from own domestic situations
Construction of wind farms causing a negative impact on landscape amenity	

BUSINESS SECTOR
Aim: To retain the viability and competitiveness of the tourism industry so that it continues to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term

The success of tourism businesses is critical to the maintenance of a sustainable tourism economy. The main Blueprint Report addresses the core issues relating to future development. The Limits of Acceptable Change approach needs to recognise that some change is necessary as market requirements change but that development must be appropriate in scale, capacity and character of the islands.

Potential Negative Impacts	Positive Tourism Impacts
Development of a mono-economy totally reliant on tourism	Supports local businesses
Imported employees taking local housing space	Provides jobs and wages
	Retention of local services and shops
	Secondary spend supports local service providers
	Supports mainland travel links

COMMUNITY

Aim: To maintain and strengthen the quality of life and access to resources for the local communities, and to engage them in decision-making about the future development of tourism on the islands

The balance between tourism and the host community on Scilly does not appear out of kilter at present. Local residents accept and understand the requirements of the tourism business and the need for visitors to maintain the economy. Individual issues regarding specific developments are dealt with through the planning process, but the Framework needs to be alert to broader issues that arise including local housing being lost to any increased provision of self-catering accommodation.

Potential Negative Impacts	Positive Tourism Impacts
Disruption of daily lives and loss of amenity	Employment and wages
Noise and intrusion into private areas	Pride of place
Loss of local housing	Retention on islands of a range of services and retail

AGRICULTURE AND LOCAL PRODUCE

Aim: To maintain and increase agricultural viability and activity

It is important that farming continues on the islands to maintain traditional landscape features and a diverse economy. There is no evidence of visitors disrupting land management (livestock disturbance, crop trampling, free camping etc). Tourism can provide a vital second income for landowners through accommodation provision. More information for visitors about the traditional and current agricultural practices on the islands may encourage greater understanding and interest in buying local.

Potential Negative Impacts	Positive Tourism Impacts
Displacement of agricultural activity into tourism	Visitor interest in local produce and land management
Visitor disruption to farming practice and livestock	Markets for produce on islands
	Demand for accommodation and farm stays

5   PRODUCT IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

The Product Improvement Plan recommends some positive actions that protect or enhance the environment and community interests. Its recommendations include the following:

▶   Develop and introduce a 'Scilly Standard' sustainable business training, support and awareness programme with advice, visits and workshops on green business practice

▶   Provide better information for visitors on the unique environmental problems facing the islands, and the management processes to mitigate them – produce a simple handout and include a section on the website and in the Scilly Handbook

▶   A coherent information and signing programme for walkers on the islands that improves visitor information but also manages walkers away from areas of environmental sensitivity

▶   Measures to improve links and supply chain between local producers and tourism businesses

▶   Exploration of ways of slowing traffic in Hugh Town Centre and around the quay to reduce traffic/pedestrian conflict

▶   Critical assessment of where townscape presents poor impressions to visitors and research of visitor opinion on priority areas for improvement

▶   Coordination and promotion of the rail sleeper service as exciting and good use of time, as well as a 'responsible' choice of travel

Lower priority actions that may be considered in future are:

▶   The introduction of a visitor payback scheme to support key environmental initiatives

▶   Seeking 'Europarc' accreditation to support the branding of the islands as a sustainable destination

6   LIMITS OF CHANGE SCHEDULE

The schedule below is a draft working tool by which tourism and environmental interests, together, can identify and agree limits of acceptable change.

The draft Schedule includes examples of limits of change that may be needed to control potential conflicts between tourism development, community interests and good environmental management. The Schedule should be reviewed and agreed by a sub-group of the Scilly Tourism Partnership with representatives of the key environmental and public utilities bodies. Regular review will be needed as new issues come to light, patterns of visitor behaviour change or new tourism-related developments add pressures on the infrastructure and community.

The 3 columns in the Schedule set out:

- ▶ **Limits of Change**: The criteria under which acceptable limits are set. Any breach of these limits would trigger the need to take positive action. The limits set are very likely to need systems of measurement put in place to monitor change. The first step will be to discuss with partners what data they hold and what criteria can be measured reliably.

- ▶ **Mitigation Measures**: If the limits are breached then measures will need to be put in place to reduce the impacts. These should be actions that can realistically be delivered by the tourism sector and their partners.

- ▶ **Priority**: Split between High, Medium and Low – this seeks to identify where the main pressure points are and, as a consequence, where action is most urgently required.

LIMITS OF ACCEPTABLE CHANGE FRAMEWORK 2011-12- *DRAFT*

Subject	Limit of Change	Mitigation Measures	Priority
Landscape Quality	▶ Loss of productive farmland due to shift to tourism uses to be avoided ▶ No increase in footpaths badly eroded and needing repair ▶ No damage to local natural features or historic monuments	▶ Work with Duchy/AONB to bring farmland back into production – improve links between local producers and tourism sector ▶ Programme of footpath closure and re-routing ▶ Restrict access to worst affected - visitor education campaign to reduce damage	Medium Low Low
Biodiversity	▶ Loss of any breeding colonies or nesting sites due to tourist activity to be avoided ▶ No increase in incidents involving damage to sea bed habitats due to ad hoc boat mooring ▶ No loss of important habitats to development unless alternative sites can be provided	▶ Restrict access to vulnerable sites at key times ▶ Work with Duchy Harbourmaster to provide information to visiting boat owners ▶ Specific policies in LDF re tourism development	Medium Low Low
Tranquillity	▶ No increase in complaints from visitors about noise	▶ Work with CIOS to reduce noise intrusion	Low
Environmental Purity	▶ Limits to any increase in waste volumes from tourism establishments to be defined ▶ No increase in marine waste from private boats moored in Scilly	▶ Education programme for businesses and access to green tourism training programmes + visitor education campaign ▶ Work with Duchy to improve information/visitor education	High Medium

	▶ No complaints and incidences of sea water bathers suffering infection ▶ No increase in sea borne diesel pollution due to increased tourist boat usage ▶ No increase in littering by visitors	▶ Support CIOS in seeking resources to update sewerage infrastructure ▶ Support development of alternative fuel sources/solar power ▶ Visitor education campaign to reduce littering/provision of bins at key sites	Medium Low Low
Water Supply	▶ No increase in number of days peak water use reached	▶ Visitor education campaign to reduce water consumption ▶ Green tourism training for businesses	High High
Energy Use	▶ Limit to number of days peak electricity generation reached	▶ Education programme for businesses with access to green tourism training programmes + visitor education campaign	Medium
Business Sector	▶ Limits to loss of local housing to tourism sector	▶ Specific policies in Local Development Framework re tourism development/change of use	Medium/High
Community	▶ No increase in community complaints about the impact of tourism	▶ Identify cause of complaints and work with CIOS to ameliorate problem	Medium
Agriculture & Local Produce	▶ Loss of employment in agriculture to be avoided ▶ No increase in incidents relating to visitor intrusion on farmland	▶ Duchy/ CIOS to consider measures to support continuing agricultural activity ▶ Visitor education campaign to reduce incidents – IOS Visitor Code	Medium Low