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UK Tourism in a Low Carbon World

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Meeting Report: Executive summary

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This document is a report by the organiser of a technical meeting set up as part of UKERC's research programme. It is believed to be an objective record of the meeting but has not been separately reviewed by the participants

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NATURAL ENGLAND

Natural England has been formed by bringing together English Nature, the landscape, access and recreation elements of the Countryside Agency and the environmental land management functions of the Rural Development Service. Natural England will work for people, places and nature, to enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public well-being, and contributing to the way natural resources are managed so that they can be enjoyed now and in the future.

Core Organising Team

Carey Newson, Transport for Quality of Life

Kathleen Covill, Natural England

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Executive Summary

This seminar brought together some 25 experts including policy makers, scientists and tourism stakeholders to focus on the relationship between travel, climate change and tourism, and to explore the questions below. It examined the scope for the tourism sector to respond positively to the challenges of climate change, with an expansion in tourism activities that are not reliant on flying.

More specifically, the workshop explored the following questions:

- The broader context: how is tourism likely to be affected positively and negatively by a changing climate and a changing environment, both in the UK and at destinations for outbound tourists?
- How is the market likely to respond to measures taken to deter the growth in air travel? What might be the differing consequences for the industry and the environment of different types of measure - for example, measures primarily aimed at long haul or short haul flights?
- What scope is there for the tourism sector to adapt positively to climate change – identifying new business opportunities whilst contributing to the UK's targets for CO2 reduction?
- What Government actions or policies might be needed to support the sector in responding positively to the challenges of climate change?
- What further research is needed to inform policy and underpin the development of strategies for sustainable UK tourism?

David Quarmby CBE, chair of the Independent Transport Commission, and former chair of the British Tourist Authority, opened the workshop and chaired the morning session. Having presented the context he outlined the purpose of the workshop and chaired the discussions following presentations from the three invited speakers.

Climate Change, Flying and Tourism, Dr Sally Cairns, Transport Research Laboratory and Carey Newson, Transport for Quality of Life

Sally and Carey presented aviation's current and projected contribution to UK greenhouse gas emissions as facts relating to the linkage between UK tourism and air travel. Tourism accounts for a significant 3.5% of the UK economy, and was worth £85 billion in 2005. However, spending by overseas visitors only accounts for some 20% of this spend, as 80% is from domestic tourists – made up of spending on day trips and overnight holidays, little of which is air travel dependent. Interestingly, spending by UK tourists abroad is more than double that by overseas visitors to the UK. The speakers pointed out that even if overseas visitors were twice as price sensitive as UK visitors, there is still more to gain from raising air fares.

Tourism in a changing climate: scenarios and strategies, *David Viner, Natural England*

David discussed four IPCC SRES scenarios and what these might mean for the climate and hence tourism. David explained the Tourist Comfort Index (TCI – developed by Mieczkowski in 1985– an index which is based on climatic conditions) and the 4Ss as being a driver for tourism: sun, sea, sand, security. David showed how climate change might affect the TCI, which is important for many holidays but not all. He also set out how tourism might be affected by climate change for each scenario and how flows of international and UK tourists might change in time. In the future, tourists might avoid the Mediterranean during the hottest months of the year. UK domestic tourism should increase for all scenarios, for flows of both international and domestic tourists to the UK, except for the world market scenario. There is a need for adaptation at all scales, in terms of political; societal; and physical structures.

Expanding low carbon tourism within the UK, *Dr Graham Miller, Surrey University*

Graham explored the scope for expanding and promoting UK domestic tourism, including detailed thoughts on possible strategies for promoting domestic tourism, including product development and marketing. He also covered barriers to expanding domestic tourism and possible solutions as well as future research requirements. Many of the possible strategies or measures suggested by Graham were added to and further developed by participants during the afternoon syndicate sessions.

Syndicate groups: Development of (policy) actions/measures

Participants had 30 minutes to put forward ideas for (policy) actions which would

- a) reduce carbon; and
- b) increase sustainable tourism spending in the UK.

Participants could put forward new measures or develop existing measures. These ideas (many of which are excellent and original) are listed in the Appendix of the full report. The ideas were clustered into themes and participants split into smaller groups to consider and prioritise the ideas, finally focussing on one idea or a set of related ideas they thought were important, worth pursuing and feasible. The group then had to work on this idea in more detail, with the help of a set of questions and a standard poster template with given headings. The posters developed by participants are available in the Appendix of the full report.

The following ten ideas were developed into poster proposals:

1. Tourism product "Eco-Labeling"
2. Reducing emissions from aviation
3. Major financial investment in tourism product development
4. Restore and sustain funding of national tourism agency (Visit Britain) to fulfil necessary leadership role for sustainable tourism development
5. Improving transport/tourism information
6. Better marketing of Britain's tourism opportunities
7. Rural transport infrastructure and services
8. Sustainability – awareness and understanding for domestic tourism
9. National sustainable tourism policy (tourism sector's contribution to UK carbon reduction target)

10. Tradable personal carbon allowances

The policy proposal posters developed by participants were displayed around the room and participants were asked to inspect/review the proposals during the refreshment break. At the end of the break, participants voted for the proposals they thought would have the most impact as regards carbon reduction impact and increased spending on sustainable UK tourism. The voting was intended to encourage reflection and stimulate discussion. It was noted that while most posters received votes of one colour or another, there was a marked divide between the red and blue votes with some posters receiving mainly blue and some mainly red. There was a strongly supported suggestion for a research effort to focus on assessing and bringing together the economic and carbon reduction benefits of these policy proposals.

Next Steps:

- It was suggested that there is work which could be done with the regional agencies. This would be something practical that could be pursued across the board, not just the regional tourism agencies.
- There is a need to gather together existing research/evidence.
- More evaluation of integrating economic and carbon reduction benefits of actions and policy measures would be useful.
- Many research questions were identified:
 - What is the impact of Climate Change on UK tourism locations?
 - What is the contribution of the global and UK tourism industry and it's components to climate change?
 - What would be the impact of, say, an EU aviation fuel tax on internal EU and international tourism flows? On internal EU travel, on the flow of resources from Annex 1 to non-Annex 1 Countries?
 - How will tourism stakeholders (e.g., travel operators, airlines, airports individual businesses) adapt to the impacts of climate change and mitigation policies?
 - If international travel is included in the Kyoto Protocol (II) or any other international agreements (e.g. ICAO) and what would be the impact on global and regional flows?
 - How will changing tourism impact upon:
 - The UK economy
 - Regional economies
 - The rural economy
 - What will be the impact upon the natural environment:
 - Development
 - Transport infrastructure
 - Access
 - Yield analysis of domestic versus international tourism to establish the full value of different kinds of tourist. This analysis needs to include social and environmental analysis, as well as economic.
 - Model expansion of domestic tourism to establish how tourism destinations will be affected
 - Is promoting UK holidays more sustainable at the global level when the reduction of both positive and negative impacts of tourism at overseas destinations are considered?
 - What form of information on sustainability are consumers most receptive towards?

- How do we create consumer empowerment within tourism to make tourists feel as if their individual actions can make a difference?
- Market research designed to inform a campaign to persuade UK tourists currently taking more than one holiday abroad a year to choose UK destinations for short breaks: e.g. what are key drivers for this market and the most persuasive messages?
- Research to identify and evaluate potential economic benefits of reducing flying and reducing growth in flying
- Research to identify key funding/policy opportunities for improving UK-based holiday opportunities for low-income families (NB a fifth of two-parent families and nearly three-fifths of lone-parent families are unable to afford a week's holiday that does not involve staying with relatives.¹) This would assist in addressing equity issues raised in relation to curbing aviation.
- Quantification of different tourism drivers for policy purposes: Regress TCI numbers against visitor numbers in order to look at the effect in a change of TCI; there was also support for qualitative research.
- Research to support alternative economic models with full allocation of environmental costs and benefits
- More research, including evaluation, to explore and bring together the benefits of carbon reduction and economic development of various UK tourism promoting measures
- Personal carbon trading: wider pilot studies needed
- Include tourism initiatives in community regeneration schemes (RDA brief/responsibility) and encourage DCMs and RDAs to sponsor world class events and community based festivals: research study to assess costs and benefits of this approach, including evaluation of benefits of UK tourism; also assess financial impact relating to regional airports.
- Gather evidence and further develop understanding of tourism and its impact on the natural environment (including challenges and opportunities) and understanding of impacts of climate change and measures to restrain air travel on tourism demand.
- Research support may be needed with the design, monitoring and evaluation of Visit Britain led (with RDA/LNP4E support) eco-labelling tourism scheme.
- As part of an effort to raise consumer awareness of sustainability and domestic tourism, record consumer and industry opinions and monitor cost-effectiveness of public funds invested.
- To support efforts to improve transport and tourism information: research to assess how important is info in changing travel choice; audit of existing initiatives; evaluation and development of more effective measures/strategy.
- Research requirements relating to reducing emissions from aviation:
 - Implications for EU ETS allowance prices
 - Measurement of emissions reductions from EU ETS
 - Identification of potential for longer term emissions reductions

Haezewindt P and Christian V (2004) Chapter 5: *Living standards*, in National Statistics (2004) *Focus on social inequalities*, The Stationery Office, London