Sustainable Tourism Management Good Practice Guide

Holiday Parks

Sustainability

VisitEngland™
Sustainability: Doing Business Even Better

Whether you are motivated to cut utility bills, want to improve your environmental impact or enhance the guest experience, taking a ‘green’ or ‘sustainable approach’ makes good business sense.

Rather than being a separate ‘bolt on’, ‘building in’ a sustainable approach is about improving the management of your business – using resources more efficiently, adding to the offer you provide guests and improving your relationship with your neighbourhood and any staff.

VisitEngland’s commitment to sustainable management and quality improvement

VisitEngland is committed to encouraging a sustainable approach among participants in its National Quality Assessment Scheme for Accommodation.

Questions sometimes arise as to how a sustainable approach can complement improving quality and, more specifically, how it relates to the requirements of quality standards.

This guide aims to demonstrate how these two approaches can be complementary as has been demonstrated by numerous businesses across the country.

A guest perspective

Relaxation, comfort and enjoyment are likely to be the motivations for guests, which may seem at odds with a sustainable approach.

So how can a sustainable approach be complementary with a high quality experience?

• While most guests do not actively seek ‘green accommodation’, research indicates that accommodation businesses taking action do have added appeal. This mirrors a trend for incorporating ethical credentials within products as an added element of quality rather than as a separate ‘ethical’ product.

• Many guests will be attracted to a holiday park by the connection with the ‘outdoors’ so will be open to the idea of keeping the local environment special.

• There are many opportunities for ‘win-win’ situations. Eliminating draughts will improve guest comfort as well as reducing energy bills. Offering locally-produced food adds to the distinctiveness of the guest’s meal. Providing enhancing wildlife on-site and providing opportunities to enjoy it will add to the offer of the holiday park.

• Where guest expectations for indulgence have the potential to increase business costs and consumption, using efficient equipment, or renewable energy, will mean this can be accommodated with a lower impact.

1 59% of visitors stated that having green credentials had a positive impact on their likelihood to choose a tourism business compared to 41% stating that it would make no difference (SW England Visitor Survey 2009).

Promoting local attractions can help support other businesses in your area.
Plan for success

Make the most of precious time and money by understanding your starting point and prioritising action.

- **Measure to manage**
  - Monitor use – record meter readings/fuel deliveries and combine with guest nights sold over the same period to compare performance over time.
  - Sub-metering can create a better understanding and control of consumption and costs.

- **Review your business**
  - VisitEngland’s Green Start website at [better-tourism.org](http://better-tourism.org) provides a check list, identifies gaps and develops a tailored plan for your business.
  - Walk round each part of your property looking for, and noting, problems/opportunities.

- **Make a plan**
  - Be realistic – identify some immediate ‘quick wins’ and longer term actions.

Communication

Good communication can add appeal and enhance the guest experience. Done poorly it can feel tokenistic or preaching.

- **Communicating your credentials**
  - Let guests know the actions you’ve taken and, whenever possible, how it will improve their stay.
  - Be creative and visual in ‘telling your story’ rather than technical.
  - The ‘drip feed’ of social media provides a great opportunity for examples to be presented.
  - Never exaggerate on actions taken. Make use of annual awards and/or certification schemes to provide independent proof.
  - Make sure staff are familiar with your policies so that they can explain what the business is doing.

- **Getting guests involved**
  - Guests are more likely to join in if they first see your efforts and are aware of that other guests are taking action.
  - Prioritise a handful of actions and present them positively as choices rather than rules.

Information to enhance your guests’ stay

Information provided in reception and around the park can help guests enjoy the best of the area, providing a richer experience while improving its impact on the local economy and environment.

- **Local culture & heritage**
  - Most guests will be interested to explore the local area. Providing examples of specific areas/attractions will give guests a richer experience of the surrounding area. Highlight current events taking place in the local area.

- **More than ‘A to B’**
  - Promoting on-site facilities/activities could improve relaxation while reducing travel.
  - Focussing on destinations closer to you will save fuel costs and provide a more relaxing stay.
  - Promote the full range of ways that people can explore. Include any available public transport, not forgetting to mention any scenic journeys, the name of relevant bus stops and any special tickets, along with local walks, cycle hire/horse-riding or guided tours.

- **Visitor donations**
  - Join, or set-up a voluntary ‘gifting’ scheme where a business collects funds for a local charity.
  - Alternatively make a corporate donation to a local environmental or educational charity.
**Customer care & housekeeping**

- **Arrival**
  - Prior to arrival ensure that publicity and pre-arrival information makes guests aware of local and on-site shopping options so that they buy local.
  - Make sure that welcome information contains information about heating/electrical controls (if applicable) and recycling.
- **Cleaning products**
  - Consider using low impact phosphate and chlorine free cleaning products, alongside microfibre cloths, that reduce the amount of cleaning liquid. Look for the EU eco-label and buy concentrated to reduce packaging and costs.
- **Recycling**
  - Many guests will be willing to recycle during their stay if opportunities are simple.
  - Provide clear and attractive signage and think about which items are best in individual rooms and which would be best in dedicated recycling areas.
  - Alternatively a business may choose to do their own segregation as part of their housekeeping or use a waste company that segregates as part of the service.
- **Brief staff**
  - Make sustainable practices part of induction/ongoing training and invite suggestions.
  - Consider forming a ‘green team’.

**Exterior**

- **Grounds, gardens and frontages**
  - Consider using materials that are in keeping with the local environment and encourage wildlife through bird boxes, wildlife areas etc.
  - Provide information on any wildlife to look out for or create a trail/activities if you have particularly good opportunities in your grounds. This could be something guests do independently or led by a member of staff.
  - Use water butts and other water saving gardening products. Time watering for the start and end of the day.

**Public bathrooms**

- **Toilets & urinals**
  - Older toilets (without dual flush) can be retrofitted with a water-saving device. Use [this guide to choose the appropriate device](#).
  - Ensure all urinals have controls (ideally presence detectors).
- **Showers & basins**
  - Fit basin taps in public bathrooms with push taps/infra-red controls. Add aerators to mixer taps.
  - Aerated shower heads add air to provide the same force with less water. Tests show 40% savings, with 80% judging the shower experience as better/as good as previously.

**Public areas/site facilities**

- **Décor**
  - Use could be made of local art and/or photography including images depicting local scenes, historical, or heritage related images – it all adds to a visitor’s enhanced sense of place.
- **Laundrette**
  - Laundry equipment consumes significant energy and water – check efficiency and running costs when purchasing/hiring.

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**Heating & cooling**

Being a key element of guest comfort, business costs and impacts makes this a priority:

- **Keep it in** – Insulating roofs and unfilled cavity walls is very cost effective. Use double/secondary glazing whenever possible. Prioritise areas kept at a high or cold temperature (e.g. pools, cellars).
- **Draughts** – Draught-proofing has excellent returns. Keep seals/brushes in good condition.
- **Heat generation** – Ask for an efficiency test to be included in boiler services – if below 80% efficiency consider a replacement. Consider renewable heat (e.g. ground source heat pumps, solar thermal). Instantaneous water heaters may be a more suitable solution for shower blocks. Don’t forget to insulate pipes.
- **Controls** – Install controls that allow a greater range of set timings and the start time to be adjusted to outside temperatures. Ensure that heating is turned off/down between stays. The optimum temperature for stored hot water is 60°C.

**Fact**
### Lighting

- **Natural light** – Ensure that windows/skylights are kept clean, curtains are fully drawn and consider suntubes. Keep lampshades/fittings clean to improve performance.
- **Prioritise** – Focus improvements where lighting is on for longest – typically external lighting, corridors and other public and ‘back of house’ areas.
- **Lighting** – LEDs (available in a range of formats) cost a fraction of tungsten/halogen lighting to run and last much longer. Unlike compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) they are instantly bright. Check for the brightness (measured in lumens) and the warmth of the colour (measured in kelvins).

### Dining

**Local produce**
- Guests will appreciate the opportunity to taste specialities of the local area and the use of local products. Provide interesting information about your sources and ensure staff are briefed.
- Have a range of local food and drink available in site shops and make guests aware of nearby opportunities to buy products as souvenirs such as farmers markets/farm shops. You could even invite some local producers onto the Park as a regular event.

**Food preparation**
- Choose energy efficient kitchen equipment, researching running, as well as purchase, costs and look into capital allowances (see ‘website’ section).
- Keeping equipment clean improves efficiency as does keeping heating and cooling equipment apart whenever possible.
- Check seals on oven, fridge and freezer doors to ensure that they are performing efficiently.

### Shop
- Provide guests with a range of locally produced souvenir items.

### Pools
- Ensure recommended temperatures are followed: 29°C leisure pool, 40°C spa with air temperature 1°C above the pool temperature for guest comfort and to reduce condensation
- Ensure covers are used for pools and hot tubs/jacuzzis. Liquid covers can also help outdoor pools.
- Ensure insulation is maximised and that heat loss through draughts/door opening is minimised.

### Food waste

You pay twice for waste – once to purchase, once to dispose – so minimisation is essential. On average 21% of food waste arises from spoilage; 45% from food preparation and 34% from consumer plates.
- **Monitor** – Analyse which are the key food items that are getting wasted. In most accommodation it is potato, bakery, fruit and vegetable products.
- **Portion sizes** – Offering choices will better match the serving to the portion desired.
- **Focus on** the food delivery, storage and use of items with a short shelf life – these are most vulnerable to being wasted.
- **Have clear waste separation in the kitchen** so that items are disposed of in the correct containers.
- **Sign up to** the ‘Hospitality and Food Service Agreement’ which aims to reduce packaging and increase the proportion of food-related waste that avoids landfill.

### FACT

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## Useful websites

If you'd like to find out further information about the following areas please access these useful links.

### General advice & help
- **bettertourism.org** – A self-check audit that produces a tailored plan for your business, along with case studies and other resources.
- **coastproject.co.uk** – Information on a wide range of topics and opportunities to post questions and participate in discussions with fellow tourism businesses through this networking site.

### Energy
- **carbontrust.com** – Aimed at larger businesses but containing detailed topic guides, including a hospitality guide information on tax relief for new energy efficient appliances.
- **yougen.co.uk** – Accessible information on renewables and increasingly energy efficiency which includes blogs and help on finding a recommended installer in your area.
- **which.co.uk** – While only members can access product reviews, the website also contains excellent advice on a range of energy efficiency areas such as choosing appliances, lighting and boilers.

### Water efficiency
- **wrap.org.uk/content/rippleffect-water-efficiency-businesses** – An initiative providing free business support (mainly online and phone based).
- **europeanwaterlabel.eu** – Products that have achieved water efficiency standards.

### Waste (including food waste)
- **wrap.org.uk** – Information on actions that can be taken to reduce waste and the opportunity to sign up to the Hospitality and Food Service Agreement.

### Food and drink
- **localfoods.org.uk** – Useful search tool for farmers’ markets, farm shops near your business.
- **soilassociation.org** – Information on organic food and food miles.

### Travel
- **transportdirect.info** – National travel planning website offering door-to-door journeys by car, bike or public transport, a day trip planner, nearest car park, carbon emission calculators and much more.
- **traveline.info** – Choose your region and the website provides the opportunity for individual bus stop timetables, lists of public transport within 20 a minutes walk and journey planning options.
- **travelengland.com** – Highways Agency website with the latest road conditions & roadworks.

### Certification, awards and communications
- **visitengland.com/green** – Links to all certification schemes currently endorsed by VisitEngland.
- **visitenglandawards.org** – The annual national awards include a ‘sustainable tourism’ category.
- **visitengland.com/green** – Search for the ‘Keep it Real’, a comprehensive guide on communicating sustainability to guests.
- **futerra.co.uk** – Research, examples and advice on how to communicate sustainability creatively.

### Water management
- **environment-agency.gov.uk** – For information on how to go about saving water and some very good case studies on water saving initiatives in hotels in Wales (enter “hotel case studies” in Search box).

For more information please visit **visitengland.com/green**