

NewcastleGateshead Initiative's commitment to sustainability

Mission

As the visitor economy and inward investment agency that delivers for Newcastle, Gateshead and the wider region, NGI's mission is to inspire people to visit, live, learn, work, and invest here. We do this to benefit local communities, creating jobs and opportunities, and contributing towards the preservation and regeneration of our places, culture and heritage. We play our part in delivering the region's sustainable and inclusive ambitions, creating a world-class, distinctive destination today and for future generations.

Through consultation with local, regional and national government, local businesses, residents and other stakeholders, we have identified a picture of success for a sustainable future, a region where:

- Businesses prosper, innovate and generate wealth for the community.
- Business operates in harmony with and restores nature.
- Local cultures thrive; communities are resilient and welcome the world.
- Inward investment is sustainable, supporting positive impacts for our people, our places and our planet.
- Tourism and investment catalyses development of infrastructure and services that supports wellbeing and mobility of the community.
- Visitor economy jobs are coveted and inclusive of a diverse mix of people and cultures.
- Visitors are transformed by a range of authentic and regenerative experiences.

Regenerative tourism framework

Responding to this, on behalf of Destination North East England, we have developed a regenerative tourism framework which is bespoke to North East England and its culture, attributes and challenges. The framework has five pathways around which we focus our visitor economy sustainability commitments and actions.

- Decarbonise and adapt. (Supporting SDG 12 and 13.)
- Foster thriving local business. (Supporting SDG 1, 2, 8 and 9.)
- Invest in people. (Supporting SDG 3, 4 and 8.)
- Connect people and communities. (Supporting SDG 5, 10, 11, 16 and 17.)
- Restore nature, landscapes, culture and heritage. (Supporting SDG 14 and 15.)

Our commitments

NGI is committed to ensuring that its actions are beneficial, in the long term, to each of the pillars of sustainable development: social, environmental and economic. This sustainability commitment is across our visitor economy and inward investment work, and NGI's operations, and is the cornerstone of all projects and partnerships carried out by NGI.

We commit to:

- Being an example of sustainability both in the way our organisation is run and, in our campaigns and events.
- Playing our part, and influencing others, to support Net Zero North East England and local councils in delivering Net Zero plans.
- Setting sustainability KPIs which we will then measure against and report on.
- Integrating sustainability criteria in our procurement policies, specifications and invitations to tender, with a medium-term aim of introducing a supplier code of conduct.

- Responsible management of public money which ensures that the money invested benefits residents, preserves the environmental, architectural and cultural heritage, and supports a fair balance in the needs of residents, visitors and investors.
- Embedding diversity, equity and inclusion into our culture and talent processes; to play our part in building a more inclusive and equitable world, we will start with our own organisation.
- Working towards achieving accreditation with SHINE – the North East Combined Authority initiative which recognises employers who lead with fairness, opportunity and respect.
- Promoting and encouraging (to all relevant audiences including staff) energy use reduction, soft mobility, circular economy initiatives, sustainable food practices and sustainability certifications. We will celebrate good practice.
- In line with the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 at the latest, with an interim target of 50% reduction by 2030 (TBC pending baseline).
- Introducing mechanisms to measure NGL's carbon footprint and developing a climate action plan for the organisation.
- Providing resources to inward investors to help them understand how they can embed themselves locally to support residents and communities e.g. using local suppliers, becoming SHINE accredited.
- Improving sustainability performance of visitor economy businesses through providing, collating and promoting sustainability tools, training opportunities and guidelines.
- Contributing towards sustainable development in the meetings and events industry through assistance in organising greener meetings and events and destination-specific guidance on social impact and legacy.
- Working with VisitEngland and others to improve environmental and social impact measurement tools for the visitor economy.
- Contributing towards the UK Government aim to be the most accessible tourism destination in Europe by 2025 through our Everybody Welcome programme which supports our visitor economy to make improvements in accessibility and inclusivity for visitors and employees.
- Facilitating opportunities to shorten our visitor economy supply chain by connecting local buyers and suppliers, reducing energy and transportation costs, and CO₂ emissions, and supporting local businesses.
- Participation in the Global Destination Sustainability Index (the leading sustainability benchmarking and improvement programme for meetings and events destinations around the world).

Continuous improvement

We aim for continuous improvement and will be building sustainability responsibilities into our job descriptions and sustainability objectives into our appraisals. Our sustainability champions will review the sustainability policy annually, every May, to enable us to respond to changing circumstances and priorities, and our progress. Staff will receive regular training on the policy and their responsibilities as well as opportunities to make positive impacts.

We have a regenerative tourism taskforce of regional stakeholders to support the implementation and evolution of the regenerative tourism framework. The group will provide feedback on progress, bring forward any new or changing challenges and contribute their own expertise for peer-to-peer learning.

Following our sustainability principles will enable us to meet our obligations and commitments, protect the surrounding environment and maintain positive relationships with our community and customers.

Ian Thomas
Chief Operating Officer, NGL
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