

Draft Bridging Island Plan Consultation

Minister for the Environment – Further statement response

SR 59(a) - Policy EV1 - Visitor accommodation

Relevant Policies:

Policy EV1 – Visitor accommodation

Minister's further comment

In light of issues raised during the consultation on the draft plan; and the level of development activity that is currently focused on hotel sites, the Minister for the Environment has asked that the planning inspectors explore the potential for amendment to the draft plan to provide some form of qualified protection to those parts of the island's tourism infrastructure in key locations (see statement response 59).

In so doing, the Minister has suggested that Policy EV1 – Visitor accommodation might be supplemented by the addition of a series of policy tests related to:

- technical or practical viability of enhancement and adaptation to meet industry demands;
- market-testing;
- impact of the character of the area; and
- overall community benefit.

It is acknowledged that the principle of introducing some form of regulation of a change of use away from visitor accommodation to other uses is of significant concern to hoteliers in the island and the Minister has met with industry representatives who have expressed their concern about potential change. The Minister has been advised that further representation is likely to be submitted by industry representatives in this respect.

The Minister is aware that seeking to develop a policy mechanism which seeks to protect and support the island's tourism industry whilst not unduly affecting individual businesses, is a challenge; and that there have been previous attempts to develop policy in this area.

In light of this, as already stated, the Minister wishes the matter to be examined further relative to current circumstances, and for the potential benefits and disbenefits of potential policy change to be explored.

In the event of a change to policy being required the Minister remains open as to the form of policy tests that might be introduced, having regard to the issues and challenges identified by hotel operators.