



REPORT ON THE MISSION TO GIANT'S CAUSEWAY AND CAUSEWAY COAST (UNITED KINGDOM) FROM 16 TO 19 FEBRUARY 2003



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The members of the mission sincerely thank the local and national authorities of Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom for their support, availability and assistance provided to the mission during its work.

Special thanks go to the Minister for Environment and Heritage of Northern Ireland, Ms Angela Smith MP (Parliamentary Undersecretary of State, Northern Ireland Office), and her interest in World Heritage conservation, Dr John Faulkner, Director Natural Heritage, and his staff, Mr Graham Seymore and Ms Ruth Blair from the Environment and Heritage Service, who greatly supported the mission team in its fact-finding. We would also like to acknowledge the great interest of the different stakeholders at the World Heritage site, who provided valuable information on the situation, in particular the National Trust and the Moyle District Council representatives.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The joint UNESCO-IUCN mission to the World Heritage site of Giant's Causeway And Causeway Coast (United Kingdom) took place from 16 to 19 February 2003. The mission was carried out at the request of the World Heritage Committee and at the invitation of the UK Government and the Northern Ireland authorities.

The mission concluded that the values for which the site has been inscribed have been maintained. The site is of outstanding universal value both for its geological phenomena and its natural beauty.

However, a number of potential threats exist, including development proposals, which could threaten the values and the integrity of the site. None of these proposals have been through the full planning process and have been approved. No approval should be given without reviewing a proposed development within the context of the protection and safeguarding of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the World Heritage site and its management.

The site, although inscribed in 1986, has no management plan in place. A Draft Causeway Coast AONB Management Plan of February 2003 was developed in a consultative process. It provides the basis and a first step towards the specific Management Plan for the World Heritage area. Key issues were already discussed at a planning meeting on 18 February 2003, which the mission team attended. Therefore, the mission team does not consider it necessary to apply paragraph 83(ii) (d) of the Operational Guidelines concerning Danger Listing. The AONB management plan would be available in March 2003, whereas the deadline for the World Heritage site management plan would be February 2004.

All stakeholders and local and national authorities are encouraged to work jointly to achieve the adoption of a management plan and an effective partnership towards its successful implementation.

The authorities are urged to consider a solution for any visitor centre development, which will be approved within the management plans for the World Heritage site and the AONB, only after defining the buffer zone of the World Heritage site. At the location of the existing visitor

centre (where the wooden structure was rebuilt after the fire in 2000), a new small visitor centre could be rebuilt in its “footprints” without any extension in size and height to provide the basic and necessary visitor information and interpretation at the entrance to the World Heritage site. The mission came to this conclusion in particular by taking into account the dynamic geological features and on-going erosion processes characteristic of the site, which needs specific visitor information including safety considerations. The mission team also clearly states that no additional development in the vicinity of the main entrance (outside the World Heritage site) should take place.

1 BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

1.1 Inscription history

The site of Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast (N 369) was included on the World Heritage List as the first site of the United Kingdom by the 10th session of the World Heritage Committee in 1986. The site is located in County Antrim, Northern Ireland (55° 15' 0" N, 6° 29' 7" W).

The site was inscribed under natural criteria (i) and (iii) according to the Operational Guidelines of 1988. At the time, the “Committee was informed by the observer from United Kingdom that this property was expected to be declared a National Nature Reserve within the next few weeks.”

1.2 Justification of the mission (terms of reference, programme and composition of mission team provided in ANNEX I and II)

The joint UNESCO-IUCN mission took place from 16 to 19 February 2003. The objectives of the mission were:

- To review the boundaries and the buffer zone of the World Heritage area;
- To review the management plan for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which has the World Heritage site as its core;
- To review all developments at the site (incl. visitor centre) following the decision of the Moyle District Council to offer areas for development (Moyle Council owns 10% of the World Heritage area, at the entrance to the site);
- To assess the exact location and dimension of the proposed developments;
- To assess the potential impact of the proposed projects on the values, the visual setting of the World Heritage site and on the surrounding environment;
- To assess the environmental impact and the feasibility studies foreseen by the authorities regarding these development projects;
- To assess the current situation of the site in terms of management arrangements, planning and state of conservation;

- To present the conclusions and recommendations of the joint UNESCO-IUCN mission is to the twenty-seventh session of the World Heritage Committee that will take place in June/July 2003 (China).

The programme and the composition of the mission team are provided in ANNEX I and II respectively.

2 NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

2.1 Protected Area Legislation – National

The coastline of the Giants Causeway is designated as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) since declared on 24 March 1987 for its diversity of plant communities. In addition much of the coastline including cliffs and beaches, is designated as an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) since 2000. No information was provided for the designation under the IUCN management category system. The entire Causeway Plateau, including the whole World Heritage site, is designated since 1989 as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - legal status is provided by The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order of 1985. The World Heritage site is also designated and protected as a National Nature Reserve under the same Order.

2.2 Protected Area Legislation - International

Under the European Designation the total area of the World Heritage site is included as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) recognized as internationally important for birds. Concerning European Communities Nature Conservation, the *Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995* provide the basis for implementation of the European Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive). One of its main initiatives is the creation of the network of wildlife sites, the « *Natura 2000* ». This network covers also SACs. The mission notes that the Environment and Heritage Service made a special effort with its « *Habitat Regulations Guidance Notes for Competent Authorities* » (September 2002) towards the implementation of the provisions for Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).

The Statutory Instrument for the above indicated legal status is provided by *The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order* of 1985, which came into operation on 14 April 1985. It is relevant for National Parks, AONBs, Nature Reserves and ASSI. Under this instrument the status of AONB for the Causeway Coast was declared. The *Environment (Northern Ireland) Order of 2002* only replaces the provisions for the Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI).

2.3 Institutional Framework

Under the World Heritage Convention, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is the government body responsible for all World Heritage sites in the UK. The Environment and Heritage Service (Belfast) is responsible for protected areas in Northern Ireland, including the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast, the only World Heritage property in Northern Ireland. No single World Heritage site manager was identified. There are two bodies in charge of the World Heritage area:

- (1) The Moyle District Council, the district where the site is located, owns 10% of the site, mainly at the access point of the site at Causeway Head.
- (2) The National Trust, which owns 90% of the World Heritage area, and which is managing most of the site (including trails, pathways and on-site visitor services)

No specific body was identified officially for any decisions concerning the institutional framework and management of the AONB. The two bodies in charge of the World Heritage area do not seem to have any established reporting system to the « Environment and Heritage Service » (EHS). EHS, however, intends to publish the final version of the Management Plan of the AONB in March 2003, as the consultation process came to an end, and to proceed with the appointment of personnel. A Management Group for the AONB under the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust should be appointed.

It was unclear to the mission team how the different bodies cooperate effectively for the conservation of the World Heritage values. The original nomination of the property dated 30 September 1985 indicates the Moyle District Council, the National Trust and the Department for the Environment as responsible for management and conservation of the coast and states: « These agencies have all worked together in recent years to achieve the high level of cooperation in management which now exists. »

2.4 Management Structure

The National Trust is in charge of the on-site management of the World Heritage area, including technical maintenance of the pathways, repair works necessary for visitor security, as well as a small facility leased from Moyle District Council with tea room and a shop. The Trust also runs a bus service, the Causeway Coaster, which is intended to provide access to disabled visitors to the stones at Grand Causeway.

The Moyle District Council is in charge of the parking arrangements, the restroom facilities and tourist information office, which includes a shop and a theatre, showing a 12min film on the Giant's Causeway ecosystem. The film does not focus only on the World Heritage site, but includes other features along the coast.

The reporting system within the overall institutional and management structure remains unclear. It also seems that EHS of the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland does not receive any management or site-reports on a regular basis. The relationship between the different bodies should be defined in the respective management plans (AONB and World Heritage site).

2.5 Response to the recognition of values under international treaties and programmes

The response to recognize the outstanding values of the Causeway Coast has been in particular concerning the legal framework and recognition of the scientific significance through a number of national and international designations (see above). The mission team notes that these provide in principle a clear legal protection of the World Heritage site, both for the natural values for which it was inscribed (geological, natural beauty) as well as for other associated values (ecosystem, habitat for threatened species) for which the site is also managed. The mission acknowledges the considerable steps taken by the government authorities to provide additional protection to the area since the World Heritage inscription in

1986 (designations as National Nature Reserve (NNR) in 1987, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1989 and included as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in 1995).

3 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES

3.1 Management

Management planning

The Operational Guidelines par. 44b (v) state for natural properties that «The sites...should have a management plan. When a site does not have a management plan at the time when it is nominated ... the State Party ...should indicate when such a plan will become available... ». Furthermore, the mission team reiterates par. 11 of the Operational Guidelines, indicating that «the State Party should provide in addition to the legal texts protecting the property.....an explanation of the way in which these laws actually operate. »

The site, although it was inscribed in the World Heritage List in 1986, has to date no management plan. There has been a planning process for the AONB: drafts were provided in copy to the mission team: firstly, «The Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan of Landscape Design Associate (LDA)» dated 5 December 2002 (ANNEX V); this document, was under review process by an Advisory and a Working Group, and, secondly, «Causeway Coast AONB Management Plan» dated 5 February 2003, (ANNEX VI); with a section on the World Heritage site, («Theme Five - The World Heritage Site in the Context of the AONB»). The mission team was informed that the intention of the authorities is to prepare a management plan for the World Heritage site on the basis of the AONB management plan for the deadline February 2004.

The mission team attended on 18 February 2003 a joint meeting of the Advisory and the Working groups for the Causeway Coast AONB Management Plan. Please find the agenda and list of participants attached as ANNEX VIII. This meeting covered not only specific considerations for the Draft Management Plan for the AONB, but also key issues for the Giant's Causeway World Heritage Site Management Plan. A copy of a proposed management plan structure for the World Heritage site (prepared for discussion), was presented by a Member of the Advisory Group (ANNEX VII).

Structure of management plan

The mission notes that although the AONB management plan may provide a basis, the management plan for the World Heritage site should include the specific World Heritage management objectives, limitations and constraints, management zones, boundaries, and the following management programmes: environmental, public use (recreation, interpretation, education, tourism, public relations), administrative and maintenance, research and monitoring and the integrated development programme including institutional and financial implications.

The management plan should also define the overall objectives and relationships within the buffer zone. The mission team notes there is currently no officially declared buffer zone of the World Heritage site, although the AONB may fulfil this function. The question of the buffer zone of the World Heritage site could be addressed through the zoning within the AONB management plan as a first step. The proposed zoning can be found in the map in ANNEX IX.

Staffing and budget

In 1995 the National Trust employed about 12 staff on a permanent basis and 15 on a seasonal one in addition to volunteer guides. The National Trust had a budget for the financial year 1995-96 of £150.000 £. For 2003 the Trust provided the figures, which are included in Annex XI: 4,5 full time and 15 seasonal staff and a total of £353.000.

3.1.1 Issues of the on-site management

1. Management body

One of the main problems for the actual management of the site is that there is no single body responsible for the management of the World Heritage area. The National Trust manages most of the World Heritage area. A number of documents guide this management, including the Giant's Causeway Maintenance Plan (1994), the Causeway Coast Paths Visitor Management strategy (1994) and Causeway Coast Paths Management and Interpretive Plan (1995). The mission team notes that these plans seem to be outdated, in particular as half of the seaside path has been closed three years ago. The Moyle District Council manages the car park, and the visitor and tourist information centre.

The World Heritage site would benefit if a council or a small management committee were created, composed of all relevant management and decision-making authorities (the Departments Planning Service and Environment and Heritage Service, the Moyle District Council and the National Trust). Consideration should be given to designating one responsible World Heritage site manager who would report to such a committee as well as to the Environment and Heritage Service (EHS).

The mission notes that in addition to all the planning processes indicated above, a new statutory plan, the Northern Area Plan, which will be obligatory, is under preparation by the Planning Service for the whole area of the AONB. The Publication of the Draft Area Plan is programmed for 2003. The mission had no opportunity to review any draft, as the EHS will be only informed in March 2003. In principle, this act should follow the management plan of AONB and it's zoning system and takes in account the already existing protected area orders for the World Heritage site.

Finally, the mission recalls the following issues concerning the World Heritage site, which were discussed by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau at its sessions in 2001 and 2002: ongoing piecemeal development/applications, e.g. the visitor centre outside the World Heritage site, and poor control on development; absence of an integrated management plan (now under preparation); lack of a statutory development plan which recognises the unique nature of the World Heritage site; concern that the current planning system only considers each application on its own merit, but does not consider cumulative impacts.

2. Boundaries and buffer zones

The World Heritage site is very small, 70ha without any defined buffer zone. The limits to the sea are the low water mark - it therefore excludes the seascape and some of the small islands.

The mission recommends that within the overall zoning a clearly defined buffer zone be identified with the main objectives to protect the integrity of the World Heritage site. Consideration may be given by the agencies responsible in a long-term perspective to a revision of the current boundaries to extend the World Heritage property.

3. Tourism management

The main access to the World Heritage site is limited to one area, the Causeway Head where the parking (Moyle District Council), the Causeway Hotel (National Trust) and visitor centre complex (both) are located. There is no single and consistent « World Heritage message » to the visitors at the site entrance. The presentation of the site at this specific access point is currently not appropriate for a World Heritage property, including the signage by different agencies. The mission acknowledges that the fire in April 2000 aggravated the situation, which destroyed the previous visitor centre, which was replaced by a wooden temporary structure.

The mission was informed of numerous other developments in the vicinity of the entrance to the World Heritage site: (1) extension of the Causeway Hotel by the National Trust, (2) application for a visitor centre by the Seaports Investments in the land adjacent to the World Heritage site and (3) an application of a golf resort including hotel and accommodation between Bushmills and the site entrance. These applications were sent to the Planning Service and processing is at an early stage. The application of article 31 of the procedures under the planning act may be applied. The Moyle District Council sent no application so far for the reconstruction of the current visitor centre or any other development proposal by the Council related to the World Heritage property.

The mission team notes that no application for any development proposal should be approved without the overall management plan for the World Heritage site and the AONB and before defining the buffer zone to the WHS.

The mission team furthermore notes, that at the location of the existing visitor centre (where a wooden structure was rebuilt after the fire in 2000), a new visitor centre could be rebuilt without any extension in size and height to provide the basic and necessary visitor information and interpretation at the entrance to the World Heritage site. The mission came to this conclusion in particular by taking into account the dynamic geological features and on-going erosion processes at the site, which need specific visitor information including safety considerations. The mission concludes that no additional development at the existing visitor information site and in the vicinity of the main entrance (outside the World Heritage site) should take place.

Ideas and proposals to create a larger visitor and tourism centre at any other location, should be reviewed within the overall tourism strategy and management planning of the both the AONB and the World Heritage site. Such a centre could cover both the AONB and the World Heritage site and could be beneficial for the diversification of tourism for the AONB and the whole of Northern Ireland, if done properly (including design, presentation, site specific information displays, education, involvement of site management and other stakeholders).

Concerning tourism and transport means, the mission team notes that the current parking place at Causeway Head may not be sufficient. However, any enlargement or relocation near the entrance of the site should not be recommended. Instead of encouraging people to use private cars to direct access to the site, other transportation means should be explored seriously. These include: shuttle services with electric buses, linking the existing Heritage Railway at the outskirts of Bushmills and using it as public transport means to access the Causeway. All car parking facilities need to be reviewed in the overall tourism strategy. Diversification of transport could also include access to the World Heritage site by boat, which would provide for new visitor experiences.

The mission team was informed about the closing of the seaside pathway for the past 3 years between Port Reostan and the east end of the site. The mission encourages the authorities to consider re-opening at least a part of it to enable tourists to have access to one of the main visual impressions of the Causeways Coast, which are the Amphitheatre and the Spaniard Rock. Expert advice by geologists should be sought to limit any structural and engineering works for visitor safety in order not to damage the main geological values of the property. The mission noted considerable maintenance work on the upper pathway and fences and acknowledges the delicate balance between the natural experience of the Causeway and visitor safety and health consideration.

The bus service from the Visitor Information to the Grand Causeway is currently not environmentally friendly. Consideration should be given to replace it with electric minibuses to enable disabled visitors to see a part of the site, but not for the general public. The reduction of this service would be also beneficial for visitor safety along the road, in particular at congestion days (summer Sundays).

The design of footpaths, roads as well as other facilities should be done with natural materials appropriate to the site and should avoid any introduction of artificial products. Continuous consideration should be given to prevent erosion during pathway construction or enlargement.

The mission team was informed that the Heritage Railway is privately owned and that the buildings adjacent to the entrance were recently renovated and enlarged, including train storage cabins at Causeway Head. The railway runs from the outskirts of Bushmills to the Causeway Head, but is a separate heritage entity and is currently not used as major visitor transportation. Consideration could be given to visitor information and parking at the entrance point of the railway. However, any such considerations need to be reviewed within the overall tourism strategy and AONB management plan.

The World Heritage site would benefit from an overall coordinated tourism management strategy of the whole area. This overall strategy should include long-term and short-term visitation, the different access points to the site and take into account the different transportation means (electric coaches from Bushmills, existing heritage railway and links to the Northern Ireland railway system or public transport system as well as any new possibilities).

The management of the World Heritage site should be integrated into the overall strategy for the whole region, however the mission concludes that the site managers (The National Trust and the Moyle Council) of the World Heritage area are responsible for site-specific visitor management.

4. Local communities and development

The mission recognizes that the World Heritage site is a motor for regional economic development and an important income source for Moyle District Council. Currently there are 500,000 visitors per year with a predicted increase, as the site is the major tourist attraction and the only World Heritage site in Northern Ireland. Consideration should be given to integrated sustainable development as foreseen with the designation in 1989 of the AONB and the provisions in the Draft Management Plan. Critical is the involvement of local communities to include them in a partnership for shared heritage protection. Furthermore, the

linking of different tourist attractions in a joint marketing could be considered, both on the level of the AONB, but also on the World Heritage level (e.g. World Heritage sites in the Republic of Ireland).

5. Economic issues and financial implications

The mission notes that the only indirect entrance fee comes through the car parking (5 pounds admission per car). The mission was informed that these benefits go directly to the Moyle District Council and not back into the management and presentation of the World Heritage site. Any benefits from the National Trust Tearoom and shops go back into the site, as well as income from the bus shuttle in the site (1 pound per person). The National Trust therefore informed the mission that a considerable deficit has to be covered through other income from the Trust.

The mission considers that income through different services (car park, bus, information centre, theatre etc.) should go into the site management according to the management plan for operational costs. Through a joint policy regarding transportation and visitor management it could be ensured that the tourism income from transport systems and visitor centres could be shared and at least partly be directed into the site management.

6. Other issues

The mission also reviewed the overall situation concerning access to the World Heritage site and visited the **access point at Dunseverick Castle** from which tourists could hike the North Antrim Cliff Path (from East to West). The mission considers that such a site could be also be considered as an access point with the appropriate facilities. This would provide also for other income sources including for local communities (through bed and breakfast etc.). Furthermore, this could take reduce pressure from the main entrance point.

The mission acknowledged the work of National Trust, which provides for **education programmes**. The mission encourages the use of the World Heritage Education Kit both for educational programmes at the National Trust facilities and the local schools in the Moyle District.

The mission also notes the important **cultural heritage** of the area, including the mythology of the creation of the Giant's Causeway and the ship wreck site of the Armada «Gerona» treasures, now displayed in the Ulster Museum in Belfast. The history of the geological discoveries and originals of the basalt formation are also part of the cultural heritage of the region and internationally. The intangible cultural heritage related to the natural phenomena should be taken into account in the display and interpretation for the World Heritage site. Links with the other location of basalt stones in Staffa Island, Scotland, referred to in the legends, could also be explored.

The mission was also informed that a proposal for an **offshore wind farm** or series of electric generating wind turbines by the B9 Consortium is under discussion. The mission notes the concerns by NGOs about the potential visual and other impacts to the site. The mission recommends that any such proposals have to be reviewed in the context of the management plan of the AONB and the World Heritage site.

4 ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE SITE

4.1 Review whether the values on the basis of which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List are being maintained

The mission notes that the values for which the site has been inscribed have been maintained. The site is of outstanding universal value both for its geological phenomena and its natural beauty.

The mission, however, notes that a number of potential threats exist, including development proposals, which could threaten the values and the integrity of the site. None of these proposals have been through the full planning process and have been approved so far.

The mission furthermore notes that the Draft Causeway Coast AONB Management Plan of February 2003, which was developed through a consultative process, provides the basis and a first step towards the specific Management Plan for the World Heritage area. The AONB management Plan will be available in March 2003, whereas the deadline for the World Heritage site management plan is February 2004. Therefore, the mission team does not consider it necessary to applying paragraph 83(ii) (d) of the Operational Guidelines.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations concerning values, integrity, zoning and buffer zone

1. The mission team emphasises that the site was inscribed under criterion (i) for its geological values and under criterion (iii) for its outstanding natural beauty. In particular for the conservation of the natural beauty, the landscape setting is crucial. The mission recommends to carefully review all zoning arrangements in order to preserve the landscape values of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty surrounding the World Heritage site. No developments, which could potentially threaten these values, should be allowed.
2. The mission highlights the provisions of the Operational Guidelines concerning the conditions of integrity of a natural World Heritage property. To provide for best protection of the values and integrity of the World Heritage site, the mission recommends the establishment of an appropriate and clearly defined buffer zone. This could be linked to the proposed zoning plan of the AONB.

Recommendations concerning the state of conservation of the site

3. The mission concludes that the values for which the site has been inscribed have been preserved. The mission underlines that the property is a dynamic geological site with on-going geological processes and coastal erosion phenomena, which have to be managed as such. The mission welcomed the continuous scientific research carried out by the National Trust, Government Agencies and other bodies including universities both on the geological values and ecosystems, which provides the on-site management with the relevant baseline information for effective management of all values of the property. It encourages the relevant bodies to provide research results to the

management bodies for relevant on-site application with regard to presentation, site information, and visitor safety.

4. The mission encourages the authorities concerned to continue enhancing the state of conservation of the site, its surrounding Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the seascape linked to it.

Recommendations concerning management: The mission noted a number of issues of concern related to the on-site management and makes the following specific recommendations

5. The mission team urges the Government and the agencies to work towards a consistent World Heritage site management plan taking into account all the stakeholders in the actual management of the World Heritage site in a coordinated fashion.
6. The mission team recommends that within the overall zoning (management plan for the World Heritage site and the AONB) a clearly defined buffer zone be identified with the main objectives to protect the integrity of the World Heritage site. Consideration may be given by the agencies responsible in a long-term perspective to a possible revision of the current boundaries to extend the World Heritage property.
7. The mission team recommends creating a council or a small management committee, composed of all relevant management and decision-making authorities (including the Departments Planning Service and Environment and Heritage Service, the Moyle District Council and the National Trust).
8. The mission team recommends appointing a person/body responsible as «site manager» for the overall management of the World Heritage site. This one responsible World Heritage site manager or coordinator would report to such a committee/council as well as to the Environment and Heritage Service (EHS).
9. The mission team encourages all agencies and bodies to work towards a consistent World Heritage tourism management, including interpretation and presentation appropriate for a World Heritage site of outstanding universal value. The current situation at the entrance of the site, following the fire of 2000 is not appropriate and needs to be addressed in a speedy and joint decision making process. The mission team urges all responsible bodies to proceed with the (1) establishment of a small visitor centre at the entrance of the site (at the current location without extension), (2) appropriate signage with a clear World Heritage message and (3) appropriate infrastructure upgrading. The current size of the structure and footprint should not be exceeded.
10. The mission team recommends that no application for any development proposal should be approved without the overall management plan for the World Heritage site and the AONB before defining the buffer zone to the World Heritage site.
11. World Heritage has to be seen in the regional context and can provide benefits for local communities and visitors alike. Therefore the mission urges the local, regional and national authorities, agencies and the private sector to jointly consider a diversification of tourism facilities in the region which would not impact on the World

Heritage values and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In this regard, the mission team considers that the area at Dunseverick Castle could also be considered as an access point with the appropriate facilities, thus reducing some pressure from the main entrance point.

6 ANNEXES

ANNEX I Terms of reference

Goals and objectives of the mission:

- (a) Obtain a balanced evaluation of the state of conservation of the the World Heritage site of Giant's Causeway And Causeway Coast (United Kingdom) based on available information, scientific evidence, and consultation with relevant organizations.
- (b) To review in particular:
 - the boundaries and the buffer zone of the World Heritage area;
 - the management plan for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which has the World Heritage site as its core;
 - all developments at the site (incl. visitor centre) and the exact location and dimension of the proposed developments;
 - the potential impact of the proposed projects on the values, the visual setting of the World Heritage site and on the surrounding environment;
- (c) Prepare practical recommendations to be presented to the authorities and to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (June/July 2003).

ANNEX II Programme of the mission

| | |
|---------|---|
| | Monday 17th Feb 2003 |
| 10am | Meet representatives from National Trust and Moyle District Council (both owners of site) at the Giant's Causeway WHS to discuss management issues. Site Visit |
| 1pm | Lunch |
| 2pm | Meeting with Government representatives from NITB, DETI, Planning Service and EHS |
| 6.30pm | Drinks reception with representatives |
| 7pm | Launch of Shared Horizons – A Policy Statement on Protected Landscapes in Northern Ireland by The Environment Minister, Mrs Angela Smith |
| 7.30pm | Dinner |
| | Tuesday 18th Feb 2003 |
| 9.30am | Site visit and report writing |
| 12.30pm | Lunch |
| 2pm | Joint meeting of the Causeway Coast AONB Management Plan Advisory and Working Groups |
| 4.30pm | Depart to Belfast |
| | Wednesday 19th Feb 2003 |
| 9am | Transfer to EHS Offices in Belfast for report writing |
| 4 pm | Transfer to airport later in the day. |

ANNEX III Composition of the mission team

UNESCO World Heritage Centre

Dr Mechtild Rössler (head of mission), Chief, Europe Unit

IUCN

Mrs. Marija Zupancic-Vicar, IUCN
Former Vice-Chair of the World Commission for Protected Areas

ANNEX IV Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau

25th session of the World Heritage Committee and its extraordinary Bureau (Helsinki, 11-16 December 2001)

Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast (United Kingdom)

III.129 The Bureau noted that the Centre received a number of letters, notably from the National Trust, raising concerns with regard to commercial development in the area surrounding the site, and the private sale and redevelopment of a complex for visitor facilities. These letters were transmitted to the State Party for comments and to IUCN for review. IUCN noted that the Department of Environment announced that it would bring forward proposals for the production of a management plan for the entire Causeway Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which includes the World Heritage site, later this year. IUCN noted that major development, including the re-development of the visitor centre, should be considered in the context of such an integrated management plan and must be compatible with its status as a World Heritage site.

III.130 The Observer of the United Kingdom informed the Bureau that concerning the visitor centre and related development proposals, a decision was taken on 4 December 2001 not to sell any land. Furthermore he stated that the management plan for the World Heritage site is under preparation.

III.131 The Bureau requested the State Party to provide a report on the situation of the site by 1 February 2002 for consideration by the twenty-sixth session of the Bureau, to include progress with the production of the management plan for the Causeway. The Bureau expressed its concern with piecemeal development in and around the site, in the absence of such a plan.

26th session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee (Paris, 8-13 April 2002)

Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast (United Kingdom)

XII.36 A detailed report on the site has been provided via letter and electronic mail from the Department for Culture, Media and Sports dated 11 February 2002. IUCN stated that the report noted that the management plan for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which has the World Heritage site as its core, is now under preparation. An issue paper was prepared for public consultation by March 2002, which will be followed by a draft plan in June 2002. A final version of the plan is then to be lodged with the Department of Environment of Northern Ireland (DOENI) in November 2002. DOENI intends to publish the agreed AONB management plan in January 2003. Through the United Kingdom Observer, DOENI undertakes to keep the Bureau informed on progress on the plan.

XII.37 In early 2001, the Moyle District Council had offered the site for development. The State Party report noted that a number of planning applications had recently been lodged relating to the area immediately adjacent to the World Heritage site. These applications will be determined under the Northern Ireland planning process. IUCN received some reports expressing concern with threats to the integrity of the site, and more specifically on the following issues: ongoing piecemeal development/applications and poor control on development; absence of an integrated management plan; lack of a statutory development plan which recognises the unique nature of the World Heritage site; concern that the current planning system only considers each application on its own merit, but does not consider cumulative impacts.

XII.38 One of these reports noted that the bid for tender for the visitor centre is the same developer who is already undertaking development in the land adjacent to the site (conversion of a listed building to a public house), and has three other applications pending (Arts, Crafts and Cultural Centre; 60-room hotel and separate tea room). The Bureau noted that the State Party letter of 11 February stated that the decision to sell the land was again reversed by the Moyle District Council on 6 February 2002, and that the Council intended to take the lead in redeveloping the visitor facilities.

XII.39 The Bureau reiterated its concerns about piecemeal development and the absence of a clear buffer zone with special planning provisions that would prevent such development occurring. There is potential for cumulative impacts which could cause irreversible damage to the setting and environmental context of the site. The Bureau noted that the State Party report in December mentioned that the DOENI "has commenced preparation of the Northern Area Plan which will provide the statutory planning framework for development in the area up to 2016. The plan will formulate local planning policies accordingly. As an interim measure, and in advance of the planned adoption of this plan in 2003, the current policy provides for a 4-km radius around the World Heritage site within which all development proposals will be subject to particular scrutiny."

XII.40 The Bureau expressed its concern that knowledge of the two planning processes underway may be intensifying development proposals around the site, and requested information from the State Party as to whether the AONB and normal planning processes provide sufficient protection of the area adjacent to the site. The Bureau encouraged the State Party to delineate a buffer zone as part of the Northern Area Plan and AONB management plan processes. Finally, the Bureau urged the State Party to implement the 4-km special zone during the drafting period of the Northern Area Plan, and to consider a moratorium on commercial development until such time as both the AONB management plan and the Northern Area Plan are further advanced".

26th session of the World Heritage Committee (Budapest, 24-29 June 2002)

26 COM 21 (b) 24 Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast (United Kingdom)

*Documents: WHC-02/CONF.202/2
WHC-02/CONF.202/17*

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Notes the state of conservation report and the decision by the Bureau contained in document WHC-02/CONF.202/2, paragraphs XII. 36- 40;
2. Notes the new information that a mission has been invited to the site.

ANNEX V The Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan, Landscape Design Associate (LDA), draft of 5 December 2002

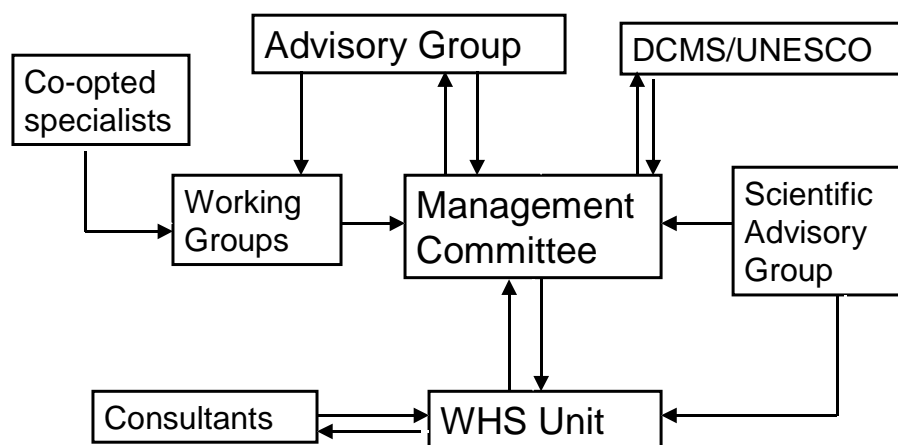
(not included here)

ANNEX VI The Causeway Coast AONB Management Plan, Environment and Heritage Service, draft of 11 March 2003;

(not included here)

ANNEX VII Copy of a proposed management plan structure for the WH site (prepared for discussion), submitted by a Member of the Advisory Group, Prof. B.J. Smith & K.O'Neill, Queens's University Belfast

Possible management structure



ANNEX VIII Agenda of a joint meeting of the Advisory and the Working groups for the Causeway Coast AONB Management Plan, 18 February 2003

(not included here)

ANNEX IX Proposed zoning of the AONB

(not included here)

ANNEX X Map of the World Heritage Site (as inscribed in 1986)

(not included here)

ANNEX XI Information provided by the National Trust concerning staffing and budget for the World Heritage site management

The Giant's Causeway is the key property in what we term as our North Antrim properties. This includes a number of open spaces along the North Antrim Coast including Carrick-a-Rede, White Park Bay and Murlough. Staffing in the North Antrim properties is as follows, with percentages of time devoted to Causeway duties in brackets:

Property Manager (50%)
Direct Works Manager (30%)
Nature and Conservation Warden (50%)
Membership and Recruitment Officer (50%)
Visitor Services Manager (50%)
Education Officer (100%)
Wardens - 2 (50%)
Guides - 5 (seasonal 100%)
Retail and Cafe staff 10 (seasonal) 100%

In addition to the paid staff the Trust has a team of unpaid volunteers who participate in all of our functions at the Causeway. The staff at the Causeway is assisted by staff from the Regional Office (including myself as Project Director) and by the Trust nationally in certain areas of expertise. This includes area such as nature conservation, health and safety, access and other scientific functions. The costs at the Causeway can be summarized as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Salaries etc.: | £252k (including an apportionment for volunteer activity) |
| Other staff costs: | £14k |
| Property and equipment costs: | £51k |
| Other costs: | £26k |
| Total | £353k |

These costs are offset by £105k net profit gained from the shop and café run by the Trust at the site and do not include the shop and café overheads (including the full commercial rent paid to Moyle Council). The Trust receives no income from car parking or from the transit bus on site.

As the site runs at a significant deficit and has also been declared inalienable (i.e. the Trust has declared, under statute, that it will retain the site in perpetuity) the Trust has had to invest approximately £5m in an endowment to ensure that it has sufficient income to maintain the site over the long term.

ANNEX XII List of participants at meetings and other events, 17 and 18 February 2003

Monday 17th February 2003 (morning): Site Visit to Giant's Causeway in the morning

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Ms Ruth Laird | National Trust | Regional Director |
| Mr Graham Thompson | National Trust | Project Manager, |
| Mr Chad Townsend | National Trust | North Coast Area Warden |
| Mr Kevin McGarry | Moyle District Council | Director of Leisure |
| Mr Graham Seymour | Environment & Heritage Service | Assistant Director, Countryside & Coast |
| Miss Ruth Blair | Environment & Heritage Service | Higher Scientific Officer, |

Monday 17th February 2003 (afternoon): Meeting with Government Departments

| | | |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Mr Malcolm Briant | Dept. Enterprise, Trade and Investment | Assistant Secretary |
| Mr John Cleland | Dept Of Environment Planning Service | Chief Planner |
| Mr Jim Cavallerous | DOE Planning Service | Divisional Planning Manager |
| Mrs Louise Browne | Northern Ireland Tourist Board | Policy and Planning Manager |
| Mr Graham Seymour | EHS | Assistant Director |
| Miss Ruth Blair | EHS | Higher Scientific Officer |

Monday 17th February 2003 (evening): Launching of a "Shared Horizons. Statement of Policy on Protected Landscapes in Northern Ireland"

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Angela Smith | Department of the Environment | Minister |
| Antonia Carrlocke | DCMS | |
| Graham Seymour | EHS | Assistant Director |
| Ruth Blair | EHS | Higher Scientific Officer |
| Dr John Faulkner | EHS | Director of Natural Heritage |
| Richard Rogers | EHS | Chief Executive |
| Kevin McGarry | Moyle DC | Tourist Development Recreation Manager |
| Jim Cavelloros | Planning Service | Divisional Planning Manager |
| Alan Clarke | Northern Ireland Tourist Board | Chief Executive |
| Tom McGrath | NITB | Chairman |
| William Graham | Moyle District Council | Chairman |
| Ruth Laird | National Trust | Regional Director |
| Patrick Casement | NT | Chairman |
| Geoff Nutall | NT | Campaigns Manager |
| Wavell Moore | Coleraine BC | Chief Executive |
| Mrs Olive Church | Coleraine BC | Mayor |
| Lucinda Blakeston-Houston | CNCC | Chairman |
| David Irwin | CC&GHT | Chairman |
| Brian Graham | Uni of Ulster - Advisory Group | Professor |
| Bernie Smith | Queen's University Belfast - Advisory Group | Professor |
| Judith Kelleman | DUCHAS – The Heritage Service of the Dept. of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. Advisory Group | Divisional Ecologist |
| Bob Brown | CNCC - Advisory Group | Regional Director RSPB |
| Mike Starrett | Heritage Council - Advisory Group | Chief Executive |

Tuesday 18th February 2003: Advisory Group

| | | |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Brian Graham | Uni of Ulster - Advisory Group | Professor |
| Bernie Smith | Queen's University Belfast - Advisory Group | Professor |
| Judith Kelleman | DUCHAS - Advisory Group | Divisional Ecologist |
| Bob Brown | CNCC - Advisory Group | Regional Director RSPB |
| Mike Starrett | Heritage Council - Advisory Group | Chief Executive |
| Mr Jim Cavalerous | Planning Service | Divisional Planning Manager |
| Antonia Carr-Locke | DCMS | |
| Claire Kinkead | EHS | Minute taker |
| Graham Seymour | EHS | Assistant Director |
| Ruth Blair | EHS | Higher Scientific Officer |

Tuesday 18th February 2003: joint meeting of Advisory and Working Groups

| | | |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Brian Graham | Uni of Ulster - Advisory Group | Professor |
| Bernie Smith | Queen's University Belfast - Advisory Group | Professor |
| Judith Kelleman | DUCHAS - Advisory Group | Divisional Ecologist |
| Bob Brown | CNCC - Advisory Group | Regional Director RSPB |
| Mike Starrett | Heritage Council - Advisory Group | Chief Executive |
| Mr Jim Cavalerous | Planning Service | Divisional Planning Manager |
| Claire Kinkead | EHS | Minute taker |
| Graham Seymour | EHS | Assistant Director |
| Ruth Blair | EHS | Higher Scientific Officer |
| Mr Roy Bolton | Bushmills Inn | Proprietor |
| Mr John Baird | National Trust | Regional Rural Surveyor |
| Mr Graham Thompson | National Trust | Project Manager |
| Mr John Young | Roads Service | Traffic Engineer |
| Mr Kevin McGarry | Moyle District Council | Tourist Development Recreation Manager |
| Mr Peter Mawdsley | Moyle District Council | Director of Direct Services |
| Ms Moira Mann | Coleraine Borough Council | Acting Head of Development Services |
| Mr Peter Harper | Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust | Project Manager |
| Mr Ken Bustard | Planning Service | Senior Planning Officer |
| Ms Christine Butler | Dept of Agriculture and Rural Development | Countryside Management Advisor |
| Ms Kate O'Neill | Queens University | Research Officer |
| Mrs Louise Browne | NI Tourist Board | Policy and Planning Manager |
| Antonia Carr-Locke | DCMS | |