

Press information

21/09/2007

National Trust statement urges Minister Foster to consult UNESCO before making planning decisions at Giant's Causeway.

Speaking following the Environment Committee meeting, the Trust's Director for Northern Ireland, Hilary McGrady, said:

"We welcome the Environment Committee's interest following last week's announcement by Minister Foster. The Trust is keen to see the development of world class visitor facilities at the Giant's Causeway that are in keeping with its World Heritage Site status, and which deliver protection of the site in line with UNESCO recommendations. Any planning application for visitor facilities should comply with these recommendations, otherwise it should be refused."

"Given that the Minister and her Department have stated that they have not yet consulted with UNESCO, the body responsible for designating World Heritage Site status, we would urge her to do so before she makes her decision on any application in the vicinity of the World Heritage Site," the Director added.

On Tuesday, the Director outlined to the Enterprise, Trade and Investment Committee the Trust's clear commitment to:

- Protecting the World Heritage Site and its setting, in line with UNESCO recommendations
- Achieving world class visitor facilities in keeping with World Heritage Site status
- Achieving clear value for money for any public investment into visitor facilities, and
- Finding and delivering a timely solution.

"Our objectives are shared by Minister Dodds, and by Moyle District Council, which owns the site of the existing facilities. The National Trust has a strong track record of providing excellent visitor facilities across a wide range of important sites. I am confident that the Trust, working alongside Moyle District Council, is best placed to provide a world class experience to visitors to the Giant's Causeway. We remain focused on securing a workable solution for the Giant's Causeway that is in the public interest," Hilary concluded.

ENDS

For further information or media enquiries please contact:

Maurica Lavery, Communications and Marketing Manager
The National Trust **Tel: 07880804003**