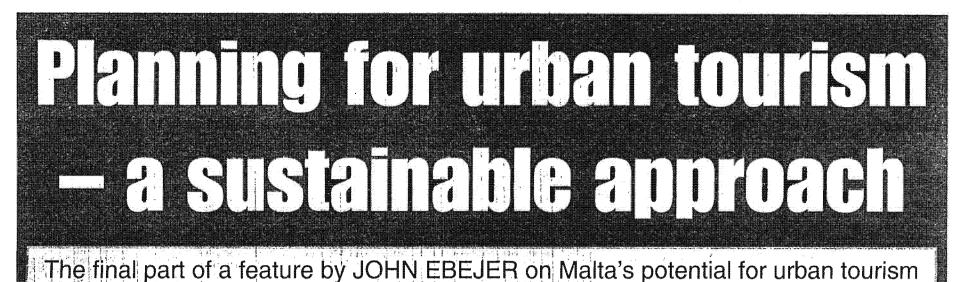
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CITY is dynamic. It is subject to many forces commercial, social and legislative. It evolves, it changes, it grows. The outcome is the product which could make or break urban tourism.

Planning for urban tourism cannot be done in isolation of the overall plaining of a city. Conversely, planning of the city cannot be successful unless it takes on board considerations related to tourism (as well as other sectors). An integrated approach to urban planning is a must if economic and social objectives are to be met.

A concerted effort

Like any other sector, promotion of urban tourism requires a clear strategy set out by Government and the Tourism Authority, with priorities and policies being clearly defined. The review of the Structure Plan is one mechanism that can be used for this purpose but is certainly

not the only one This raises the debate of the Planning Authority's role in policy formulation. For the purpose of this discussion, I will limit myself to two discussion, I will limit myself to two considerations. Firstly, the ultimate responsibility for policy, formulation is Government's, which in turn is answerable to the electorate. The role of the Planning Authority is to pro-vide technical advice, and prepare in accordance, with legislation the rele-vant policy documents within the parameters as set out by Government. For policy documents (such as the

For policy documents (such as the Structure Plan review) to be mean-ingful, they not only require. Government's approval but also its full backing including the actions

tions made by the Directorate. This must be done with reference to the Structure Plan and other policy doc-ument as approved by Government.

tioned that personal agenda may be. Coming back to urban tourism; a

concerted effort is required by the agencies involved so that our prod-uct offer can be improved. This entails the improvement of our urban and rural environment as well as providing additional facilities in support of tourism. Effective coordination between the Tourism Authority and the Planning Authority will maximise results for the time and effort spent. Similarly, the Tourism Authority will need to coordinate with the Environment-Ministry and the local councils.

Tourism capacity

The capacity of a tourist destina-tion is an issue which needs to be considered on two levels - on the national level and on the local or site-specific level. In terms of urban tourism on the national level, capacity can never be a problem for Malta as the tourist intake during the winter and shoulder months will always be less than that for the summer months. On a local level, excessive ly high numbers of tourists visiting a site could create undesirable effects

site could create undesirable effects such as crowding, inconvenience to residents and loss of privacy. Sustainable (surban, tourism requires that the assets which, provide for a pleasant tourist experience are not allowed to deteri-orate in any way. In Malta's case the best illustration of this is Mdina, where excessive commercialisation could undermine the very attractivecould undermine the very attractive-

ness of the Silent City. requires infrastructure and facilities to cater for the tourists' needs such full backing including the actions and the investments of various other Government agencies. Hence, with reference to policy formulation, talk of Planning Authority autonomy is Secondly, the responsibility for evaluating, applications for the adaptive for the second of the benefits of development ites with the Planning unbantourism is that the use of facil-Authority. In this area, it is right for the Authority to decide autonomous-spread throughout, the year and ly on the basis of the recommenda-tions made by the Directorate. This the investment. A Visitor senjoyment of a specific visitor site could be compromised if there are too many visitors at any

The structure plan or Government. There are too many visitors at any one time and/or if the site is poorly cert to make recommendations or presented. To promote urban take decisions inspired by a personal tourism improved management of agenda, which is not in accordance tourist locations is required with to the Structure plan or Government. policy - no matter how well-inten - groups. One could also promoteother visitor sites to spread the pressures. For example, parts of Rabat have the potential to attract a higher number of visitors thereby relieving some of the pressures on Mdína.

In many cases, the issue of capacity arises primarily because of poor management of a resource more then the actual physical limit of that résource.

Designer tourist product

Pressures resulting on the historic heritage could result in its deterioration. One speaker at a recent international conference on tourism argued that a sustainable approach to urban tourism is to create alternative visitor facilities and hence reduce pressures on more sensitive sites. A theme park is the example of what the speaker described as "designer tourist product". To create a designer product, one needs good design, good market awareness and creative individuals. The market research process would not only establish the feasibility of the prod-uct but also facilitates its design once the basic concept has been established.

In developing our tourist product, a building should not be perceived merely as a physical structure. It is the setting, within or around which, people activities take place. It has the potential to be a magnet and attract people to it by means of events. In Malta, this concept has developed well with an increasing number of events, festivities and animations being organised and promoted.

The development of our tourist product cannot be limited to seaside resort considerations. It has to address the requirements of urban tourism.

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The author attended an international conference on Tourism and the City Sustainability and Deve-lopment organised by the Inter-national Urban Development Association. This article considers come of the issues raised with refer some of the issues raised with reference to the Maltese context. It is hoped that the ideas expressed may be of use for the improvement of our urban tourism product.