



<b>Subject:</b>	Global Destination Sustainability Index 2024 results
<b>Date:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Debbie Caldwell, Climate Commissioner, Claire Shortt, Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Claire Shortt

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To update members on the recent award of 9 <sup>th</sup> place out of more than 100 destinations across the globe in the Global Destination Sustainability Index 2024.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to note the ranking of 9 <sup>th</sup> place in the 2024 GDS Index. Last year Belfast ranked 11 <sup>th</sup> and is now the highest-ranking destination in the UK and Ireland.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<b>Background - Global Destination Sustainability Index 2024 results</b>
3.2	The GDS-Index is a destination-level programme that measures, benchmarks, and improves the sustainability strategy and performance of tourism and events destinations.

	The GDS-Index is aligned with international standards; UN SDGs, GSTC Destination Criteria, UNWTO.
3.3	GDS-Index results for 2024 recognises Belfast as the most sustainable visitor destination in the UK and Ireland and ranks alongside Sydney, Singapore, Oslo and Copenhagen in this year's official Top 10.
3.4	Through the collaborative efforts of Visit Belfast, Belfast City Council and a wide range of tourism industry partners, Belfast now ranks as the most sustainable visitor destination in the UK and on the island of Ireland. The GDS-Index is the leading destination-level performance measurement and benchmarking tool.
3.5	It is a third-party evaluation and scores the destination under the following themes; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental - Includes a city's performance pertaining to its policies and infrastructure, such as climate change commitment, carbon emissions, renewable energies, resource and water management, public transport, and air pollution levels.</li> <li>• Social - Indicates the performance of the city against indicators of SDG integration, Corruption, Personal Safety, Access to Information and Communications, Health and Wellness, and Inclusivity, using external sources such as the Social Progress Imperative Index, and Corruption Perceptions Index.</li> <li>• Supplier - Addresses the sustainability commitment and performance of the local meetings' industry supply chain, including airports, events agencies, hotels, venues, and restaurants.</li> <li>• Destination management performance - Indicates the sustainability commitment, including questions pertaining to maturity of a destination's sustainability and regeneration strategy, leadership, communication of sustainability initiatives (to support client planners), and the accuracy of their reporting on sustainability operations.</li> </ul>
3.6	There are 77 indicators assessing policies and infrastructure, destination management and sustainability performance amongst the tourism supply-chain across each of these themes.
3.7	The survey was expanded this year and now includes regenerative tourism, circular economy practices and enhanced climate action.
3.8	In 2023 Belfast ranked 11 <sup>th</sup> and has moved up to 9 <sup>th</sup> place this year. Glasgow is 12 <sup>th</sup> this year after leading other cities in the UK in previous years. All participating cities in Ireland rank within the top 40.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>
4.1	There are no financial and resource implications.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications</b>
5.1	Any good relations or equality implications will be identified as part of the Council's screening process.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
6.1	<a href="https://www.gds.earth/destination/Belfast/2022/">https://www.gds.earth/destination/Belfast/2022/</a>