

# 1. Making Tourism Integral to the Strategic Management of Historic Cities

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## ABSTRACT

This paper argues that tourism's voice could and should be heard in the strategic management of (historic) towns and cities because of the opportunities that tourism offers to maximise the value of the cultural built heritage and because of the risks posed by rampant unsustainable tourist numbers. In a European Commission funded INTERREGIIIc network project about incorporating disabled and social access to the cultural built heritage, tourism was unusually given similar weight to spatial planning, local transport, conservation and cultural heritage management. The four year process involved ten towns, led by the City of Chester, with up to fifty local government officers, councillors and experts and apart from the specific results what emerged was the strategic significance of the 'outsider', the visitor, the tourist. Yet none of the towns involved normally incorporated tourism within its strategic thinking and tourism officers were either relatively low level information providers or reported to a local hotel association, with perceived sectional interests. Disabled Access proved something of a catalyst as European Directives and National legislation make local authorities indiscriminately responsible for safe and suitable access to attractions and facilities for citizens and outsiders alike. The concept of an 'Enabling City' was an outcome. Producing tourism professionals trained and educated in tourism and strategic management is the responsibility of particularly postgraduate tourism education

## KEYWORDS

*Historic towns, strategic management, disabled access, tourism education*

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