The Coach, Tourism and Transport Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute its view to assist the Department in their preparation of a Statement of Strategy for 2017 to 2019.

Coach Tourism contributes in excess of €400 million annually to the Exchequer, in the region of €50 million of this is generated in Dublin alone. There has been a substantial increase in overseas coach touring visitors, particularly in cruise ship tourism with over 180,000 cruise tourists visiting Dublin this year.

In order to maintain and facilitate growth going forward, there is an urgent requirement for a dedicated planning strategy for future development, particularly there is a need for a greater level of engagement and constructive co-ordination between relevant statutory bodies in relation to the following:-

1. To liaise with planners to ensure that there is ease of access, appropriate set down facilities and secure on-site coach parking in any future hotel development, particularly within the confines of Dublin City.

2. There is a requirement for proper and cohesive plans/strategy to provide short stay on-street coach parking in the core City Centre areas to facilitate transfer and disembarkation of passengers in key tourist hubs.

3. A sustainable policy needs to be put in place in relation to the sharing of nationwide public transport infrastructure between the private and public sector. The current proposal for a designated coach park in South Wapping Street is an interim arrangement, with no alternative should the underground DART proposal come to fruition.

By addressing the above concerns, the Department can ensure continued growth in a sector that delivers sustainable employment and increased revenues to the State into the future.