

Visitor strategy for Trolltunga path

Introduction

The Visitor Strategy for Trolltunga is a long term strategy for the best possible management and maintenance of the tourist attraction Trolltunga. The aim of the strategy is to create positive experiences for the visitors and encourage local added economic value whilst protecting the natural qualities of the landscape. The Visitor Strategy has been procured by Hordaland County Council and is financed by ASCENT, an EU-financed project under the Northern Periphery and Arctic programme (2016-2019). The aim of the project is to protect vulnerable landscapes through the building, monitoring and maintenance of hiking paths in sensitive nature. The partners in the project are Ireland, Northern Ireland, Finland, Iceland and Norway. The project's website is www.ascent-project.eu.

Steering committee for the Visitor Strategy:

Hordaland County Council – Marta Rongved Dixon

Trolltunga AS – Rolf Bøen/Åse Marie Evjen

Odda council – Mayor Roald Aga Haug

Odda council – Planning officer Kristian Bondhus Jensen

Hordaland County Council – Snorre Waage

The Governor's office, Vestland County: Øistein Aasland

Norconsult AS have cooperated with MIMIR on the visitor strategy for Trolltunga.

The strategy has been produced working closely with a reference group consisting of a broad selection of local stakeholders in Odda. In the data collection phase, interviews and discussions have been held with approx. 10 people from the public, private and volunteer sector. One open meeting was held in Odda at an early stage in the process and a second open meeting was held immediately prior to the completion in order to ensure that the local community was heard and had the ability to contribute their views to the process and the strategy document. Both meetings attracted around 25 people.

The process was carried out and the document was produced between 6th February and 16th August 2019.

Abstract

The visitor strategy for Trolltunga is a strategy for the sustainable visitor management of the unique nature based tourist attraction Trolltunga. The strategy is based on the premise that the natural qualities of the area, local tourism and added economic value locally and in the region should benefit the local community and visitors alike. The strategy lists the existing legal framework and overarching aims and strategies. In chapter 4, the data available describes the current situation, the considerable increase in visitor numbers over the past few years, the impact on the natural environment and the challenges linked to access, overnight capacity in Odda and the need to introduce measures particularly suited to deal with the large number of foreign visitors with a wide range in ability to complete the demanding mountain hike.

The strategy highlights important targets and focus areas over the next 3-5 years necessary to develop the Trolltunga tourism sustainably. At the time of writing, many measures and

plans discussed in the meetings have already been initiated. This includes the upgrading of the path and the access to the trail head and increased safety measures in order to ensure that visitors have “the experience of a lifetime” visiting Trolltunga. The needs of the visitor is a key focus area. The visitor experience and the quality of the stay in Odda shall increase local economic value without the need to increase the visitor numbers.

The strategy also discusses the vulnerable wild reindeer herd which may be affected should visitors in larger numbers continue onwards from Trolltunga into the Hardangervidda national park, as cabin visitors or wild campers. Relevant measures to limit the increasing numbers of wild campers and cabin visitors include a more active use of the Outdoor Recreation Act and a legally binding regulation plan for the area. Another success factor is further efforts to limit this type of tourism to the existing path to Trolltunga through better information material, as well as removing signposting and markers on paths leading away from Trolltunga and into the national park.

The visitor strategy highlights the importance of good management of the icon Trolltunga and the commitment to fulfilling the criteria for sustainable management required for the natural attraction of Trolltunga to achieve status as a Norwegian Scenic Hike. The strategy discusses these criteria in chapter 7. A vulnerability study and a safety contingency plan is required as part of the criteria and this work is underway. The visitor strategy forms the basis for a more detailed action plan converting the strategy into action. This action plan is not part of Norconsult’s delivery.