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INVESTMENTS LIMITED

10th January 2002

Sir Reg Empey MLA
Minister
Department of Enterprise, Trade &
Investment
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
BELFAST
BT4 2JP

Dear Minister

Thank you for your letter of 29th December 2001. From the outset may I say that I fully endorse your comments about the importance of the Giant's Causeway World Heritage site both in terms of tourism and environmental conservation.

However, I have two areas of concern.

- (1) I understand that on 7th December, along with Alan Clarke, NITB, you met a delegation from Moyle District Council including Councillors and Council observers to discuss a way forward for a Visitor's Centre at the Giant's Causeway. It is my understanding that at the meeting you indicated that funds may be available via NITB for a Visitor's facility but only if Moyle entered into partnership with the National Trust. This feedback, if accurately reported, is alarming for a number of reasons:-

* When the site was on the open market, the National Trust was a commercial bidder just like Seaport Investments Ltd.

* The National Trust has interests at the World Heritage Site over and above its heritage and environmental stewardship role i.e. is involved in the purchase of the Causeway Hotel, as well as holding a commercial lease from Moyle District Council to operate a shop and tea room.

* Funding offered with this type of condition suggests significant preferential treatment to the National Trust.

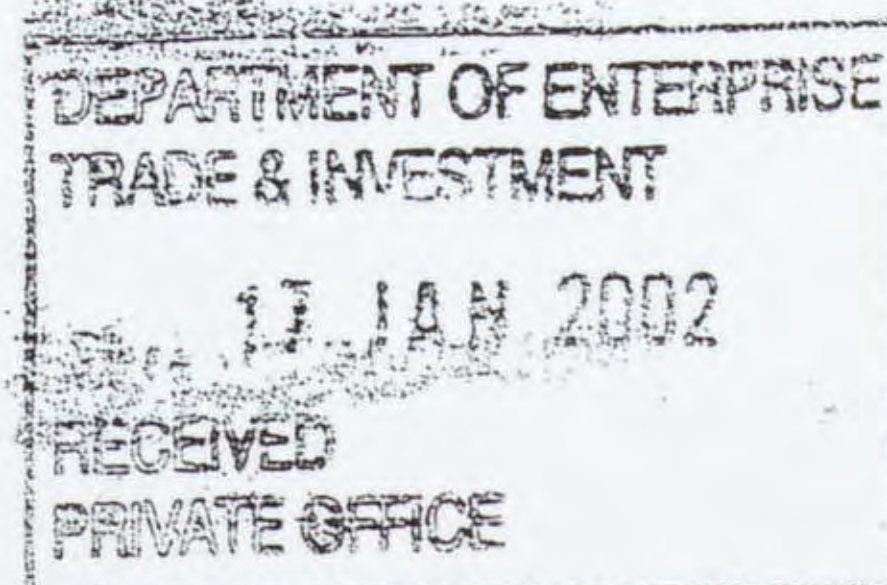
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Does DETI have a mandate to facilitate funding based on such a condition? If so, what criteria have the National Trust fulfilled to achieve preferred status?

In spite of this I do take some comfort from the opinion expressed in your letter that you are still of the view that "private sector involvement" is "a possible model for the way ahead". However, it is my understanding that this view was not expressed at the meeting.

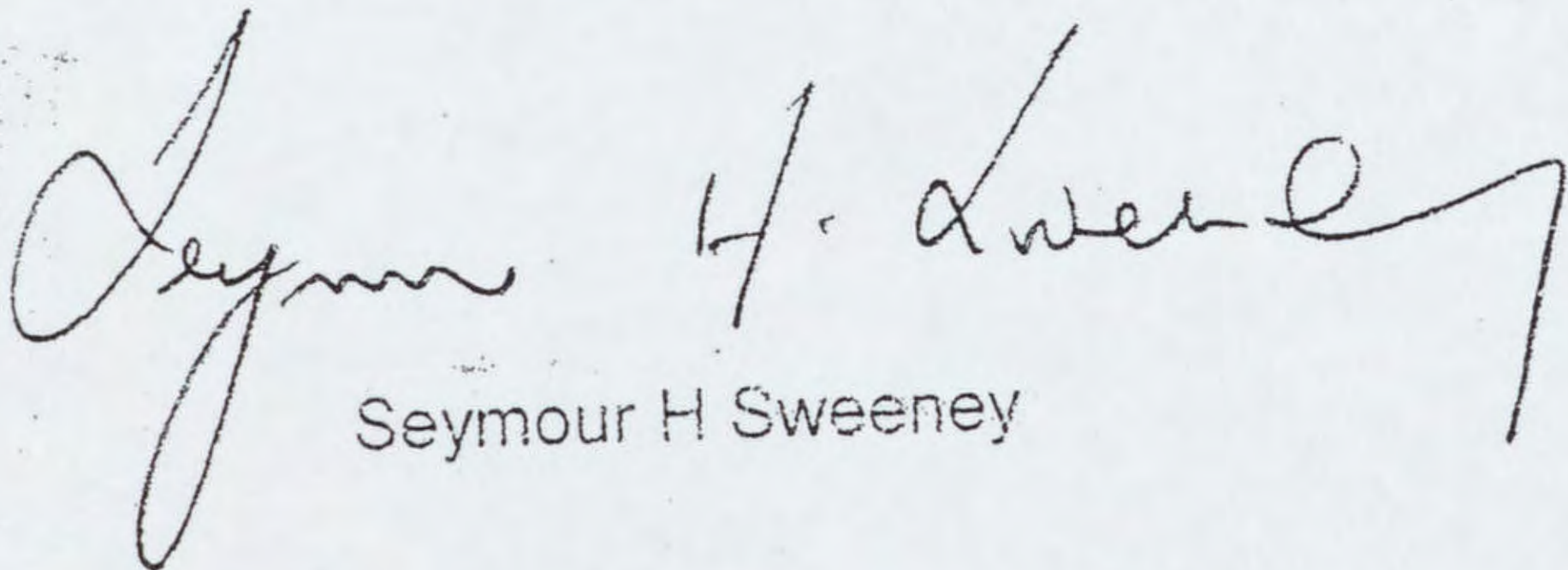
- (2) Setting aside the original proposal submitted to Moyle District Council, I feel that Seaport Investments Ltd could make a significant contribution to the broader issue of sustainable tourism in the Moyle area if given the opportunity by virtue of ...
- Seaport's land ownership encircling the World Heritage Site thereby allowing improved road access, better parking facilities and visual enhancement of the approaches to the site.
 - Seaport's team which has a proven track record in working on other UNESCO World Heritage Sites resulting in much appropriate expertise as well as an in-depth knowledge of the Causeway area.
 - Seaport's extensive market research carried out at the site between June and September 2001 to ascertain the tourist requirements and provision of facilities in any new centre to be built.
 - My corporate experience with plcs both in Northern Ireland and abroad at senior management and director level combined with operational involvement in tourism provision on the North Antrim coast with ownership of hotel, pub/restaurant and self-catering facilities.
 - An ongoing commitment to tourism in the area further demonstrated by outline plans submitted to the Planning Service for (i) a 3/4 star, 60 bedroom hotel adjacent to the Causeway representing a £4 million investment and 80 jobs (The NITB have indicated their support in the past for a second hotel at this location); (ii) a thatched roof tea room opposite the Nook representing a £0.5 million investment and 12 jobs.

- Ownership and development of the Nook pub/restaurant due for completion in summer 2002, representing a £0.5 million investment and offering 30 full and part-time jobs.
- Seaport's ongoing process of seeking approval for an Arts and Crafts centre with the potential of creating 24 jobs.

The Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government highlights a commitment to review opportunities to use private finance in order to increase investment and provide innovative and value for money solutions. Seaport is willing and capable of creating a significant number of jobs in Moyle's tourist sector. I would welcome the opportunity to explore areas of common ground with you, the Council and others to provide the optimum solution to tourism provision in the Moyle area.

I firmly believe that this can best be achieved by a meeting with myself and any one or a number of our professional team. I do hope that this can be arranged in the near future and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Seymour H Sweeney