

Cross Party Group on Tourism

Meeting Minutes

Date: 14/02/17

Location: Conference Room C

In attendance:

Name	Title
Suzy Davies AM	Chair of the CPG on Tourism
Eluned Morgan AM	
Russell George AM	
Huw Irranca-Davies AM	
Jacqueline Janssen	WASCO
Jan (John) Meulendijk	WASCO
David Chapman	BHA
Adrian Barsby	WTA
Paul Loveluck	WTA
Adrian Greason-Walker	WTA
Liz Williams	
Huw Pendleton	
Liz Williams	Pembrokeshire Tourism
Merlin Tolley	BH&HPA
Huw Pendleton	BH&HPA
Amanda Davies	Wales Tourism Alliance Tourism Advisory Board
Craig Lawton	CPG on Tourism secretary
Mark Isherwood AM	
Peter Cole	UTB

Apologies:

Name	Title
Neil McEvoy AM	
Neil Hamilton AM	
Adam price AM	

Summary of Meeting:

Amendments were made to the previous minutes as follows:

In 2000 Business Rates were about £2,000 per ~~£100,000 turnover~~

In 2005 Rateable Values increased to £7,500

In 2010 Rateable Values ~~again~~ increased to £13,000

~~Some businesses have found they have been going to court every five years to challenge the VOA decision. In many cases they have been successful.~~

Some businesses are now finding they will have to go to court again (making it twice in five years). Not many businesses are successful in obtaining a meaningful reduction - that number is actually quite small. Rosemoor's won ruling (we ourselves) was very much an exception: one that does show that the VOA can and does go wrong in a big way.

DC from BHA advised that the business he referred to as a case study was a Llandeilo business, not a Llandudno business

Businesses had seen increases as much as: £25,500 up to £28,250 and £16,500 up to £25,000

SD updated AM on the response from the VOA regards business rates formula as well as latest from the Assembly's Record of Proceedings regards business rates policy from Welsh Government. (Both attached for reference).

DC updated that he is shortly having a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and will update following this

EM asked whether certain tourism sectors impacted more than others regards business rates.

Discussion followed regards facilities available in businesses and those that local authorities supply themselves, eg tourist information and toilets

Calls were made for VOA to attend the CPG to discuss further their formulas and how they calculate business rate increases

SD asked whether they had been to any Assembly Committees to give evidence.

RG advised that may have attended Economy Committee. Since confirmed they have not attended VOA.

VOA have previously given evidence at Pembrokeshire County Council.

HID suggested that there are is very mixed examples of good and bad experiences for businesses.

LW said she was advised that VOA could not deal with appeals or help with providing information until 1 April 2017.

Resolved: Once again to push for a representative of the VOA to attend the CPG to discuss process and decisions with members

PL provided updated to members of CPG on WTA work regarding Brexit. They are presently consulting with members regards this and are looking at the opportunities and challenges that it poses.

Set out that both Welsh Government and UK Government need to adopt the right policies for this to be a success and need to consider what levels intervention and support are needed at and what will result is best outcomes.

Set out a number of key areas:

1. Need a strategic development framework by 2020
2. Support for greater capital investment and improvement
3. More meaningful marketing budget for Wales tourism. Scotland has £55 million this year. Wales needs around £25 million

At present Wales has £10 million for tourism and another £4 million for events.

To add further to comparisons, Scotland has around 1,000 people working on tourism policy projects as well

4. Policy on taxation that will encourage the tourism industry, both regarding VAT and rates. WTA would like to see this done in conjunction with the UK Government as opposed to further taxation being administered by Welsh Government.
5. Policy to improve skills and ensure EU national stay. A bridge between FE and HE is needed
6. More work on key tourism infrastructure, such as broadband and signage

Discussion followed about role of apprenticeships, skills, training, how hospitality and tourism jobs and roles are seen both by young people and job seekers and also by employers.

It was agreed that there needs to be greater link up between courses taught in schools, colleges and universities and what roles are available in the work place and that employers are looking to fill. This partially comes from greater engagement between the sector's employers and colleges, universities, and Welsh Government.

Image of tourism and hospitality sector jobs also needs to be improved.

It was agreed that there is an opportunity for Wales to led the way in policy on skills and training around tourism.

AGW added that further research is needed into this so that meaningful data and information is available

HID added that would be difficult to get agreement between all sectors and regions of UK and Wales regarding migration figures due to different experiences.

SD added that David Jones MP, Minister for Exiting the EU, gave evidence to Assembly Committee recently and confirmed that EU citizens should be able to remain

Agreed that discussion with colleges, skills providers and trainers, and Welsh Government is key to progressing discussion and getting clarity regards training and apprenticeships policy.

Resolved: To contact Welsh Government Minister for Skills, Julie James AM, to ask for her to attend CPG meeting.

Following this will also approach groups like Collegau Cymru, Federation of Small Businesses, People First, and the Skills Observatory to discuss training and apprenticeships surrounding tourism and hospitality.

PL reminded CPG that tourism is important to and as a result of other issues and industries as well. Gave example of how WTA gave evidence to the Climate Change and Environment Committee regarding how policies relating to this can impact on tourism.

Agreed by CPG that would do as follows:

Write to the VOA calling for representative to attend the CPG to discuss process and decisions with members

Invite Welsh Government's Minister for Skills to attend and discuss skills and training policy and objectives as well as engagement with business, in particular tourism and hospitality.

To the also write to groups like Collegau Cymru, Federation of Small Businesses, People First, and the Skills Observatory to discuss the same.