

[National Assembly for Wales](#)

[Enterprise and Business Committee](#)

[Inquiry into Tourism](#)

Evidence from Conwy County Borough Council – TOU 22

Inquiry into Tourism

1. Conwy County Borough Council Perspective

- 1.1 Tourism is a very important part of the Conwy economy, supporting 11,625* full-time equivalent jobs directly or indirectly.
- 1.2 Tourism brings in £688m* revenue to the County's economy annually. Llandudno recognised as number 8 in the top ten UK tourist destinations (Trip Advisor).
- 1.3 Conwy supports 70,000 bed spaces (24% of North Wales stock)

*Source: Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor [STEAM]

- 1.4 Geographically, our core target markets continue to be the North West and the Midlands. However with improved accessibility, one of our priorities is to reach new prospective visitors to the area from London, the South East and Yorkshire.

2. The clarity and strength of Wales's tourism "brand"

- 2.1 Tourism businesses that we have engaged with over the last 3 years are generally dissatisfied with the identity of the Wales tourism brand. It does not appear to have any prevalence outside of Wales.
- 2.2 It is no coincidence, that following our investment into prioritising Outdoor Tourism through our Destination Management Plan, significant new developments have, and are, being developed. Snowdonia, for example, is witnessing the investment of some of the best attractions in the world. We feel there is definitely a place for promoting sedate activity and rolling countryside, but believe that far more needs to be done on promoting the 'adrenalin' side of the outdoors, as for this area of the Country, it is fast becoming our best offer.

In addition it promotes Wales as being '**young, adventurous and vibrant**'.

- 2.3 The heritage offer is also very important. We have an abundance of heritage sites and stories across Wales to promote, especially to the international market. The recent development of the 'Princes of Gwynedd' story across

Conwy and Gwynedd supported by Cadw is an excellent example of translating historic stories into a 21st century digital technology offer.

2.4 The new structure within Visit Wales has an opportunity to revisit the branding of Wales and articulate our history, countryside and adrenalin offer through a 21st century digital approach.

3. The effectiveness of Welsh Government attempts to maximise the value of the domestic tourism market

3.1 This market is predominantly driven by the Local Authorities tourism marketing teams, supported by the regional partnerships. Grants from these partnerships have allowed areas to prioritise their marketing activity

4. The effectiveness of Welsh Government attempts to maximise the value of the international tourism market

4.1 We believe that Welsh Government has some way to go on this, both from the perspective of the consumer and engaging with the trade. Our experience is that Europeans generally are aware of Wales, but have no idea where it is or what it offers. Ireland, Scotland and England all steal a march on Wales.

4.2 We are very supportive of any initiatives from Visit Wales to increase the market presence of Wales in the international market on the basis that such initiatives are supported by finding “new money”. There needs to be continued support for the existing and emerging initiatives currently being developed at the local level with the local authority and destination management partnership often supported by assistance, both practical and financial, from the Regional Tourism Partnership and Visit Wales.

5. The success of Visit Wales marketing activities

5.1 The quality of the product is very good, extremely visual and the print is always of a very high standard. Most marketing activities at a local level have been undertaken with support from the regional partnerships. This has allowed Authorities to engage PR companies, develop innovative initiatives like the ‘Conwy Card’.

6. The sufficiency and effectiveness of Welsh Government resources targeted at promoting tourism and supporting Welsh tourism businesses, and whether it represents good value for money

6.1 From a business support perspective, Tourism is up there with other key sectors. There are clear links with Welsh Government in terms of personnel, it has its own funding stream through TISS, and local grants also pick up on tourism projects.

6.2 Having a Tourism Partnership in North Wales was a useful link and reference point for businesses. We will have to wait and see what the future brings with the demise of TPNW.

7. How the Welsh Government monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of its tourism support and marketing activities

7.1 The use made of opportunities for funding and other support from the EU;
We believe there is a great opportunity for Tourism to maximise the benefits that European funding have to offer. Conwy are the lead body on behalf of five other partners of an Interreg 4a Outdoor Tourism project. This has proved to be extremely successful.

8. The success of Welsh Government efforts to increase the quality of Wales's tourism offer

8.1 There are almost 1,000 accommodation providers within Conwy County Borough, but only around 320 of these properties have a current Visit Wales grading. However, we are pleased to note that we have some excellent 4 star (83) and 5 star (35) establishments, some of which will have been aided by Welsh Government grants to achieve these star gradings.

8.2 We believe that there should be stronger messaging about connectivity to Liverpool and Manchester airports and the accessibility of Wales.

9. The extent to which the marketing and development of tourism in Wales makes the most of Wales's cultural, historical and natural assets

9.1 Culture, history and natural assets: I believe that these are key selling points for Wales, the history and environment are outstanding and can compete with most nations.

10. The impact of major events on Wales's tourism economy, and the success of Welsh Government attempts to maximise this

10.1 I believe that major events have a tremendous impact on local areas and give a great boost to the economy.

10.2 Conwy Council has worked very closely with the Major Events Unit in Welsh Government to support and attract national and international events to North Wales.

10.3 We believe that the role of the Major Events Unit is crucial in securing world class events to Wales and that it would not be viable or practical for organisations such as Local Authorities to do this in isolation. The Major Events Unit has the resource and brand behind it to "knock" on the doors of governing bodies/event organisers to raise awareness that "Wales is open for Businesses and a fantastic location for events".

- 10.4 It is our belief that they have done this very successfully to date and North Wales has benefited from a number of key events due to their input and commitment.
- 10.5 Conwy as a county has worked in partnership with them to secure a number of events to the area such as; Commonwealth Mountain and Ultra Distance Championship, Wales Rally GB, World Trail Championship, Tour of Britain and World Mountain Championship in 2015.
- 10.6 Conwy County Borough Council believes that major events are crucial in providing a lively and dynamic experience for tourist visiting the area. This is recognised by the importance the Authority has put on major events by having a Corporate Events Strategy and an in house events team. We see events as a key economic driver because of the economic benefits they bring to an area, as well as the ability to offer skills and employment.
- 10.7 We have thoroughly evaluated the return on investment that Conwy County Borough Council's support has brought to the County and for every £1 that the Council has invested, the County has seen a return of over £12. Events are crucial to the economy of Conwy County, and North Wales as a whole, and we would welcome the opportunity to look at a more strategic approach to how Local Authorities across North Wales resource events and co-ordinate major events.