



## Strategy and Partnerships

Visit Wales

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Your Ref:

Our Ref:

29<sup>th</sup> January 2009

To Whom it may Concern

## Re: Response to "Destination Management and Marketing in Wales"

### 1. National Parks in Wales

- 1.1 The three Welsh National Park Authorities - Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast, and Snowdonia - are grateful for the opportunity to comment upon the above consultation.
- 1.2 The three independent Authorities collaborate under the name of the Welsh Association of National Park Authorities (WANPA). They work in partnership with each other and other external organisations to promote the interests of Wales' three National Parks.
- 1.3 The National Parks have two statutory purposes in the 1995 Environment Act:-
  - Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park.
  - Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public.

In fulfilling these purposes, the National Park Authority has a duty to:-

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Welsh Association of  
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- Seek to foster the economic and social well being of the local communities within the National Parks.

1.4 Each National Park Authority plans to respond in more detail to local issues generated by the Report. This response will provide an agreed corporate response to issues of national importance. For this reason we will refrain from responding directly to questions posed at the end of sections. We will comment upon several general areas of work raised within the Report.

## 2. Destination Marketing issues

2.1 We support efforts to make the Brecon Beacons National Park into a tourism marketing area along with the current marketing emphasis placed upon Snowdonia National Park, in the North West; and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park in West Wales. Such a move would reflect the role played by the National Park in attracting visitors to South/Mid-Wales. The Park is an iconic destination along with the other two National Parks, recognition of this contribution would mean greater consistency in destination marketing in Wales.

2.2 We welcome the criteria identified in the Report. We agree that a strong national campaign is essential to raise awareness of Wales, and it must reach out beyond Wales to potential visitors from the rest of the UK and beyond. Visit Wales operates within a competitive marketplace and we support efforts to develop strong branding to compete and benefit from these markets.

2.3 We wish to offer the continued use of the iconic National Parks as destinations for future Visit Wales branding because of their value in terms of landscape and the potential which they have to provide opportunities for the development of sustainable tourism. We would welcome future discussions on how this can be achieved.

## 3. Destination Management issues

3.1 We have three issues we wish to raise regarding this section of the Report; the first concerns the role of Visit Wales delivering the tourism product and the level of co-ordination this requires. The second focuses on the role of tourism in rural Wales and the third upon the regional delivery mechanisms.

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- 3.2 **Product Investment:** Visit Wales has an important role delivering the tourism product in Wales through the availability of funding for appropriate infrastructure and projects. This kind of role requires national co-ordination which Visit Wales is best placed to deliver. We believe that investment in tourism is vital due to the unique role played by the sector within the communities of rural Wales and that therefore a dedicated fund such as the old Section 4 fund should be established to support further investment in the quality tourism product. We are concerned that small-scale tourism businesses will lose out if they are expected to compete with larger industries on equal terms. We would also welcome any changes that made the SIF available to public bodies which play such a major part in developing new visitor facing infrastructure.
- 3.3 **Role of Tourism in Rural Wales:** In rural Wales tourism serves additional functions to those of traditional economic development. Rural tourism can also deliver additional Welsh Assembly Government priorities such as community cohesion, social justice, environmental protection and sustainable development. With this in mind tourism has to be considered in a different light to those sectors that deliver “traditional” industrial economic development. Tourism will play an important role in the future development mix of Wales rural areas. This importance will need to be better reflected in the future work of Visit Wales, in funding decisions and in infrastructure investment.
- 3.4 **Regional Delivery:** As far as regional delivery mechanisms are concerned, we want to offer our support for independent RTPs, and question the need to review organisational/structural change at this stage given the evidence that the status quo works. Destination management in Wales requires strong guidance, implementation and particularly co-ordination at a regional level, bridging the space between the national, strategic level and the local delivery level. We see this as the key role for RTPs and urge caution that any attempt to change current arrangements would serve to distract us all from the real challenges of managing and marketing Wales as a destination. Visit Wales needs to explicitly define the destination management roles and responsibilities of these Regional bodies, how these bodies deliver destination management will require further discussion.
- 3.5 Private sector involvement in the Regional Tourism Partnerships requires further examination. We are concerned at the anecdotal evidence that suggests there isn't enough “buy-in” from the private sector. Trade interests may be actively

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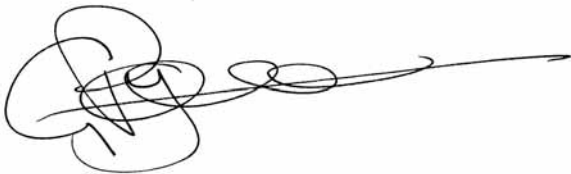
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involved in their Regional Tourism Company but do not seem to participate in their RTP (this isn't the case in Pembrokeshire, where there is no RTC). This deficiency requires further analysis and needs to be rectified.

- 4 Once again, thank you for enabling WANPA to make this contribution to your consultation. This response is a joint piece of work between the three National Park Authorities, however, should you require further clarification of any point, I'll happily assist in the first instance.

Yours sincerely



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