



**Cyfoeth  
Naturiol  
Cymru  
Natural  
Resources  
Wales**

24 February 2014

Visit Wales,  
Department for Economy, Science and Transport,  
Welsh Government,  
QED Centre,  
Main Avenue,  
Treforest Industrial Estate,  
Rhondda Cynon Taff,  
CF37 5YR

Email: [brian.foster@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:brian.foster@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Welsh Government Consultation Document: Regional Engagement and Partnership Structures in the Tourism Sector:  
Response from Natural Resources Wales**

This correspondence includes the attached Natural Resources Wales' response to the consultation on 'Regional Engagement and Partnership Structures in the Tourism Sector'. Our replies to the consultation questions are set out in the attached Welsh Government consultation proforma.

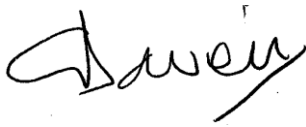
We believe there are good opportunities to improve current regional structures and engagement while improving delivery of tourism within Wales' regions. We support the development of regional engagement teams within Visit Wales to simplify structures and engagement with tourism stakeholders and to better focus resources and integrate delivery of Government's tourism strategy and action plan

In order to grow tourism in Wales it will be important to sustain Government's core funding and support, and also to continue to draw down external funding, notably EU funding. NRW is committed to supporting the economy of Wales and has expressed this through our Corporate Plan and Business Plans, which will be confirmed shortly.

In growing the tourism sector and the contribution it makes to the economy of Wales it is vital that we do so in ways that manage and use Wales' natural resources in a sustainable way. We look forward to working closely with Government, Visit Wales and tourism partners to successfully deliver our shared objectives.

We would love to discuss this further with yourselves and suggest you contact Rhian Jardine at [rhian.jardine@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk](mailto:rhian.jardine@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk)

Yours faithfully,



Ceri Davies

Executive Director for Knowledge, Strategy & Planning

Cyfarwyddwr Gweithredol Gwybodaeth, Strategaeth a Chynllunio

Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru / Natural Resources Wales

Ffôn/Tel: (029) 20466045

Ffôn symudol / Mobile: 07818008865

E-bost/E-mail: [ceri.davies@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk](mailto:ceri.davies@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk)

[ceri.davies@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk](mailto:ceri.davies@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk)

# Regional Engagement and Partnership Structures in the Tourism Sector

## Consultation Response Form

We are seeking views on what regional engagement and partnership structure would work best for the tourism sector in Wales.

Your views are important. We believe that to deliver our strategy it is vital that we have the most effective regional structure in place to allow Welsh Government to engage with all tourism sector interests at the regional level. The consultation will close on 27 February 2014.

To help record and analyse the responses, please structure your comments around the following questions. You do not need to comment on all questions.

If you have any queries on this consultation, please email:  
[visitwales.communications@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:visitwales.communications@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

### Data Protection

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tick the box below. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

5 December 2013 – 27 February 2014		
Name	Jont Bulbeck [for further inquiries or clarifications]	
Organisation	Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru / Natural Resources Wales	
Address	Unit 1, Cantref Court, Brecon Road, Abergavenny NP7 7AX	
E-mail address	jont.bulbeck@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk	
Type (please select one from the following)	Businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Local Authorities/Community & Town Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Government Agency/Other Public Sector	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Professional Bodies and Associations	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Third sector (community groups, volunteers, self help groups, co-operatives, enterprises, religious, not for profit organisations)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Academic bodies	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Member of the public	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other (other groups not listed above)	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Consultation Questions

1. How do you think the Welsh Government should make best use of resources to support tourism across Wales?

Welsh Government could make best use of limited resources by making the support to tourism in Wales as streamlined and integrated as possible e.g.

- providing Visit Wales with sufficient core funding to effectively market destinations in Wales and also Wales' iconic products to the target audiences, rather than Visit Wales being reliant on sourcing external and partnership funding.

- Centralising core funding to Visit Wales to deliver the remit of marketing Wales and its iconic products, backed by a partnership approach (inc. match funding) from the Local Authority Tourism Marketing Areas would be more effective than current arrangements (streamlined, with greater clarity about roles and responsibilities).

- Continuing the approach to product development through draw down of EU funding.

- Keep a balance of destination and iconic products in the tourism marketing of Wales

- Recognise the key role played by Local Authorities in the tourism industry in the past and encouraging, through funding of destination management plans, LAs to continue their involvement with the tourism industry at a destination

level and to be responsible for facilitating the private/public/third sector approach at this level.

- Consider how best to engage with, organise and focus resources at the regional and local level, notably with local authorities, given the potential for boundary changes following the recent William's report

- Set out clear structures, mechanisms, roles and responsibilities for all tiers involved in delivering the Partnership for Growth Strategy and associated action plan - these are currently not addressed in the documents. Focus resources through the approach set out

2. In your opinion, which one of the following options would best support delivery of the strategy?

- Do nothing – continue with the current structure of regional engagement, funding RTPs at a similar level.
- Establish a regional engagement team within Visit Wales to replace RTPs.
- Procure regional engagement services by competitive tender, based on the current structures.
- Develop new regional engagement structures that are aligned with emerging initiatives such as City Regions and procure specified services by competitive tender.
- Discontinue funding the RTPs while continuing to encourage effective local partnerships to develop within the sector.

3. Why do you think this is the best option?

- Any structure would benefit from certain elements being in place: engagement with all sectors; strong focus and leadership; clarity about roles and responsibilities in the different tiers (notably in delivering the strategy and action plan); responsiveness and flexibility in delivery; also that any changes to current structures don't cause significant diversion of financial, staff time and political resources to achieve the objective sought

Our reason for supporting our preferred option:

- it would remove one layer from the way tourism is managed in Wales and allow more efficient working and greater clarity to the sector about who does what
- it would allow private sector led tourism bodies such as Mid or North Wales Tourism to take the lead to develop initiatives of local relevance, especially marketing, within the context of the P4G strategy and action plan

- it would mean that, once local authorities are reorganised, they could take the lead on public sector tourism work across their new, bigger areas instead of the RTPs
- it would raise the profile of the new destination plans and make them and the partnerships the focus for co-ordination and delivery within the tourism sector at the local/regional level
- it would ensure Visit Wales think regionally at the national level, rather than devolving regional thinking to the RTPs

We would also add:

- In taking forward this option it would require careful thought as to the make up and placement of VW regional teams. In our view an increased regional presence and focus would bring significant benefits to Visit Wales' work.
- The approach would require clarity about the structures, mechanisms and organisations that Visit Wales' regional teams would engage with and that they engage the stakeholders at the DMP level.
- NRW will have difficulty engaging with the DMPs if they are based on current local authority areas due to the large number of partnerships involved. Some clustering of Partnerships is preferable from our point of view.
- As far as practicable, we would not want to see a revised, simplified organisational structure overlaid by additional locally specific structures that re-introduced complexity to new arrangements.

4. What do you think should be the priorities for supporting tourism at a regional level in the future?

Sustainable use of natural resources embedded within tourism development and delivery, including continued greening of tourism businesses

Continuing to draw down external funding to support development of destinations and products in the regions (e.g. NRW development of tourism products within the NRW managed estate)

Effective engagement and communication with stakeholders with associated co-ordination of partnership working.

That the mechanisms and structures are focused on providing a quality experience for visitors to Wales and from within Wales.

Setting out and putting in place clear structures and mechanisms for national, regional and local working for delivering the P4G and associated action plan (this should also provide clarity for stakeholders about where they can best engage in processes)

Clarity about roles and responsibilities with associated reduction in duplication of effort e.g. provision of high quality information and promotion of

recreational activities and products, with an associated reduction of the current multitude of sources of variable quality

Ensuring strategic priorities and actions are expressed and delivered through regional and local mechanisms

Effective relationships, communications, governance and permeability between different tiers: local regional and national.

Destination Partnerships and Plans are effectively embedded within local authority working, or preferably clusters of local authorities

Investment in the product, such as recreation opportunities, quality food and accommodation, but also integration with provision of related services within destinations such as transport

Clear and simplified marketing and promotion of destinations and products e.g. reducing the current complex mix of marketing and information at the local and regional level around tourism destinations and products - or at least providing a stronger presence that more visitors go to as a first resort

Engage with stakeholders for how they will deliver the P4G strategy and actions e.g. NRW is seeking to develop visitor experience plans for key locations on land we manage and to ensure they contribute to providing a high quality experience on those sites, local destinations and thereby provide benefits to visitors, local communities and economies

5. How could a new structure align effectively with emerging regional economic development initiatives?

In developing new structures consideration should be given to priority work related to tourism. Account should then be taken according to the relative importance of such related developments. But as the consultation document notes there is no optimal structure and the focus should be on getting the tourism focus structures right with a best fit to related areas.

Link regional tourism development, delivery and benefits to areas of greatest social and economic need.

Ensure tourism is included within other strategies, plans and mechanisms e.g.LDPs, Regional Strategies and Local Service Boards