

Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM
First Minister
Welsh Government
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14 August 2018

Dear First Minister

Scrutiny session on the tourism industry in Wales - 6 July 2018

Thank you for your appearance before the Committee in Aberystwyth on 6 July.

During our scrutiny of key issues relating to the Welsh Government's support for the tourism industry you committed to providing the Committee with further information on several topics. Following the meeting, Committee Members also agreed that I should write with a couple of additional questions. We would be grateful for your responses to the issues outlined below:

Partnership for Growth Strategy: strategy for tourism 2013 - 2020

This Strategy formed a key part of our discussions and Members were keen to explore its current status and key activity currently being carried out under its auspices. We noted that an action plan has previously been published in respect of the first 3 years of the Strategy, but that this approach appears not to have been replicated for the period from 2016.

During the meeting, officials indicated that the previous action plan had been revisited at the end of the time period it covered. However there was uncertainty as to whether the results of that review had been published. Reference was also made to "very detailed business plans" that are shared with industry in relation specific areas of the Strategy.

The Committee would welcome confirmation about the current status of any action plans underneath the Strategy and whether there are any future intentions to produce an action plan, or an update of the progress made, in the period between 2016 and 2020.

The impact of Brexit on the tourism sector

A significant element of our discussion focused on Brexit and the potential impacts it may have on the tourism sector. During the meeting you could not confirm that tourism had been subject to a



detailed impact analysis of the likely impact of Brexit. We would be grateful to receive confirmation as to whether or not such an analysis has been conducted by the Welsh Government to date.

Profile of visitors to Cadw sites

Reference was made to detailed research which has been carried out into the profile of visitors to sites run by Cadw. We would be grateful to receive further information in relation to this, and any actions that were prompted by the results.

Linked to this, we would also welcome any information that you are able to provide in relation to the accessibility of Cadw sites for visitors with disabilities or mobility problems, and the support available.

Business rates

During the Committee's earlier meeting with stakeholders and local businesses, Members heard concerns about the impact of business rates in the tourism sector. In particular, these related to anomalies in the access that different self-catering businesses have to the Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR) scheme. We were told of instances where businesses offering several holiday cottages at a single location do not qualify for SBRR, whilst those providing the same number of units in different places potentially can.

It was also proposed to the Committee that self-catering businesses of this type are increasingly at a disadvantage compared to those who let properties through services such as Airbnb, who may also be eligible for SBRR. We would like to understand whether these situations can be considered an anomaly within the current SBRR eligibility rules and what consideration the Welsh Government has given, or intends to give, to this issue.

Carmarthen to Aberystwyth rail line

Finally, the subject of work to investigate reopening the Carmarthen to Aberystwyth rail line was raised. During this, you committed to provide further information in respect of the anticipated date for the publication of the results of the current feasibility study and the likely next steps following this.

We would be grateful to receive further information on these issues in due course, and thank you again for your engagement with the Committee.

Yours sincerely



Ann Jones AM
Deputy Presiding Officer
Chair, Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister

