



Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P-FM 3016-18

Ann Jones AM
Chair
Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister

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Dear Ann

I am writing in response to your letter of 14 August 2018, following my attendance at the Committee meeting held in Aberystwyth University on 6 July.

Partnership for Growth: strategy for tourism 2013-2020

The 'mid-term' review of the strategy published in November 2016 includes a series of revised priorities and actions which follow on from the earlier action plans. As I made clear to the Committee, our priority is to focus on the delivery of existing strategy. As we approach 2020 we will work closely with the industry, in particular through our four regional forums, to shape our next strategy.

The impact of Brexit on the tourism sector

We have considered, and continue to consider, the implications of Brexit for the whole of the Welsh economy including the visitor economy. Our White Paper, *Securing Wales' Future*, notes that 11% of workers in the tourism industry are migrants - 5% from EU countries and that tourism is an area that will be vulnerable. In response, we are working with the tourism sector to boost skills in this area, and with the UK government on future labour issues. The tourism industry in Wales has also benefited from significant funding from the EU.

A steady flow of international visitors is vital to our tourism industry. We are focussing on mature and new markets in Ireland, Germany, the USA and working with commercial partners to extend our reach. This work is underpinned by a comprehensive travel trade tour operator programme, which grew by 28% in value from the top 100 operators last year.

In January I announced an EU Transition Fund supported by an initial £50million to help businesses and public services across Wales to prepare for Brexit, and to help employers retain and continue to attract EU nationals.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Post-Brexit it will be more important than ever to market Wales to the work as a place to live, visit and invest. We will continue to invest in our award-winning Welsh brand, taking a whole-government approach to the way we position ourselves internationally.

Visitors to Cadw sites

At the committee my officials mentioned the detailed research carried out for Cadw (December 2017) on visitor perceptions and knowledge of visiting world heritage sites with a specific focus on Caernarfon Castle. I enclose a copy of that research.

You also asked about the profile of visitors. About two thirds (68%) of visitors to Cadw sites are holidaymakers, although this varies significantly by region of Wales. More visitors to North Wales sites are holidaymakers (87%), compared to sites in South East Wales (47%). In terms of socio-economic groups the majority are from AB and C1 groups. Cadw is working to enable a wider range of people to access its properties, including free entry for foster children and their families and veterans, and also free entry for all on St David's Day.

We are currently conducting a full review of access to Cadw sites which the Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism will set this out in more detail in September.

Business Rates

The new permanent Small Business Rates scheme which took effect on 1 April 2018 aims to support small businesses. Therefore the scheme restricts the relief to two properties per ratepayer within each local authority area.

Self-catering businesses with multiple properties at a single location will still benefit from SBRR on two eligible sites in addition to any Transitional Relief applicable as a result of the 2017 revaluation. Ratepayers owning larger properties or numerous small properties in a complex cannot be considered a small business from a non-domestic rates perspective and it is right that these should contribute their fair share to help support local services. The revenue raised through non-domestic rates in Wales is redistributed in full to local authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners to help fund vital local services.

The views of ratepayers and stakeholders were sought prior to the implementation of the SBRR scheme to ensure the new legislation was both fair and appropriate. The operation of the scheme is being evaluated in relation to self-catering properties and we will monitor the effect on this sector.

Carmarthen to Aberystwyth rail line

Transport for Wales has submitted the Aberystwyth - Carmarthen Rail Reinstatement Feasibility Study report to Welsh Government and the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport will be considering advice on the next steps to be taken with regard to the report's findings. We aim to publish the report by September.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carwyn Jones', with a stylized, flowing script.

CARWYN JONES