

South West Wales Tourism Strategy: Marketing Implementation

1. Introduction

Tourism South and West Wales is one of 3 Regional Tourism Companies in Wales. A company limited by guarantee, it has approx. 1400 trade members from all parts of the tourism industry across the region. All local authorities are also in membership.

The Regional Tourism Companies, along with the Wales Tourist Board, local authorities and the tourism industry have been considering their respective Roles and Responsibilities within the tourism support structure in order to deliver the most coherent and cost effective systems for the benefit of the tourism economy of Wales.

There is now a broad consensus of opinion to move to 'Regional Tourism Partnerships' with the evolution of the Regional Tourism Companies to become the delivery mechanism for tourism support and marketing at the regional level.

Uniquely, Tourism South and West Wales would be split into two organisations in line with the Economic Forum boundaries with the creation of South West Wales and South Wales Partnerships or Boards, but utilising centralised administrative support to retain economies of scale.

2. South West Wales – The Tourism Partnership

Because tourism is a complex industry made up almost exclusively of SME's and micro-businesses, support is provided through a variety of organisations. For example, the current partnership which exists to implement the marketing aspects of the South West Wales tourism strategy comprises:

- Wales Tourist Board
- Tourism South and West Wales
- SW Wales Economic Forum
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
- City and County of Swansea
- Carmarthenshire County Council
- Pembrokeshire County Council
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

- West Wales TEC
- Welsh Development Agency
- Countryside Council for Wales
- Taste of Wales

Efforts are being made to extend the partnership to include a greater proportion of private sector and voluntary bodies in the decision making process, in line with the Assembly's stated principles.

Currently, implementation of the Strategy is being introduced on a pragmatic basis, seeking a consensus from the partnership on those things which can be delivered locally and those which require a regional or indeed national approach.

3. Marketing Requirements of South West Wales Tourism Strategy

Destination Marketing

Debate is ongoing on a national basis in respect of destination 'Marketing Areas' supporting the Wales 'brand'. It is clear however that South West Wales possesses a number of powerful Sub-brands eg. Pembrokeshire and the Gower, which are capable of leading tourism promotion for the region overall. Each of the current Marketing Areas in the Region – Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Swansea Bay – takes part in the UK Coordinated Marketing Campaign to ensure economies of scale in media buying. West Wales is identified as a Region for overseas marketing alongside WTB and BTA.

Product Marketing

The Strategy identifies a number of key 'products' and themes for marketing the South Wales Region:

- Walking
- Cycling
- Pony Trekking/Riding
- Heritage
- Crafts
- Food
- Gardens and Parklands
- Dylan Thomas
- Farm/Countryside Tourism

In addition the partnership has identified the visual and performing arts as another key sector for West Wales, building on the proposal for National Gallery West at St David's.

The delivery of marketing for all of these has regional dimensions. The Regional Tourism Partnership can form the basis for the 'joined up thinking' that is required to link national, regional and local

strategies.

With Objective 1 funding in mind it will be possible to deliver partnership bids at the (in EU terms) ‘sub-regional’ level as well as link in to broader or more local partnerships.

4. Review of Progress

A number of effective marketing partnerships have already been developed involving public, private and voluntary sector organisations:

Case Study 1: "Visit Another World" The Gardens and Parklands of South West Wales

An innovative campaign targeted at the group and travel trade market featuring the gardens and parklands of West Wales. The Millennium projects and Aberglasney give a major boost to the region and are of great interest to the group market.

Partners: City and County of Swansea, Carmarthenshire CC, Neath Port Talbot CBC, National Botanic Garden of Wales, Aberglasney Gardens, National Trust, Gower Heritage Centre, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Millennium Coastal Park, Carmarthenshire Tourist Association, Wales Tourist Board, Tourism South and West Wales.

This project will be launched at the British Travel Trade Fair in Birmingham on 23 March.

Case Study 2: Dylan Thomas

The links and themes between Swansea, Laugharne and New Quay are being developed to form a Dylan Thomas Trail which seeks to capitalise on the region’s most famous author and poet. There will be a strong link to public transport and environmentally sustainable tourism.

Partners: Wales and West Railways, First Cymru Buses, City and County of Swansea, Carmarthenshire CC, Ceredigion CC, Wales Tourist Board, Tourism South and West Wales.

Case Study 3: Festival of the Countryside

Active for many years in Mid-Wales, the Festival’s activities have now extended into rural West Wales promoting a year round programme of sustainable attractions, events and activities.

Partners: Festival of the Countryside, Carmarthenshire CC, Pembrokeshire National Park, Kite Country, LEADER Groups.

Case Study 4: Celtic Trail Cycle Route

An example of a project which links 2 Economic Regions of Wales as part of the National Cycle Network throughout the UK. Marketing of the whole route, which includes accommodation and attraction links, packages and promotion to key market segments, is undertaken on a co-ordinated basis by a dedicated team based with Tourism South and West Wales.

Partners: Sustrans, Pembrokeshire CC, Carmarthenshire CC, Neath Port Talbot CBC, City and County of Swansea, Wales Tourist Board, Tourism South & West Wales.

5. Barriers To Progress

The tourism industry and Economic Forum now need urgent direction from NAFW on Roles and Responsibilities within the tourism support structure, to avoid duplication and ensure that full advantage is taken, on behalf of the tourism SME's in West Wales, of Objective 1 funding.