

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**Date:** 15 March 2000  
**Time:** 9.00 - 12.30  
**Venue:** Committee Room 1, National Assembly Building  
**Title :** Roles and responsibilities – update following extended consultation

***A REPORT FOLLOWING THE LATEST CONSULTATION WITH  
LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS SET OUT  
IN:***

**"FIT FOR THE MILLENNIUM"**

**A REVIEW OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN TOURISM IN  
WALES**

*Wales Tourist Board - March 2000*

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**REPORT FOLLOWING THE LATEST CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON  
THE RECOMMENDATIONS SET OUT IN "FIT FOR THE MILLENNIUM - A REVIEW OF  
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN TOURISM IN WALES"**

**Background**

The original consultation process included WLGA representatives alongside trade and Regional Tourism Company representatives. WTB acted as facilitator for the participants in the consultation exercise.

- The recommendations of the original report are given in Appendix 1.
- The reasons for requiring further consultation are given in WTB's letter of 23 December Appendix 2.

- The WTB's views, following initial consultation, and upon which Local Authorities' further views were sought are given in Appendix 3.

## **Response to Consultation**

- Eighteen local authorities responded. One is due to respond shortly. Three have not yet responded.
- There is clear support for recommendation (i)
- There is support for recommendation (iii) with one qualification. The majority of local authorities insist that, in addition to their delivery of integrated quality destination management, they will retain the right to market their own areas either individually or in partnership with neighbouring authorities should they at any time consider this to be in the best interests of their local tourism economy.
- There is clear support for recommendation (iv)
- There is clear support for recommendation (v) as long as all twenty two local authorities are properly represented.

## **Recommendation (ii) Role of Regional Tourism Companies**

- All respondents, except two, agreed there was a role for a partnership which brought local authorities, public and voluntary sector, and trade together. The two exceptions favoured a direct interface between the local authority and the trade only body whose constitution and activities would be for the trade to decide.
- There was concern expressed by a number of local authorities regarding the possible conflict of interest that could arise when local authority officers and elected members became directors of companies limited by guarantee. These respondents favoured having their representatives sit as partners not directors on Regional Tourism Companies.
- Some concern was expressed that the current make up of RTCs did not encompass a wide enough range of bodies. In reality there is no restriction on RTCs to extend membership to as wide a range of bodies as it wishes.
- All authorities in the Objective 1 area expressed concern that energy expended on discussing structures should not be at the expense of ensuring maximisation of use of European funds.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- Given that only two local authorities expressed the view that they did not see the RTCs as the most appropriate vehicle for public/private partnership there is sufficient support for encouraging the three RTCs to evolve into wider partnership bodies.
- Whilst WTB would wish to have a modest increase in our presence in the regions there is little scope for this given our standstill budgets, running cost limits and the National Assembly's requirement for WTB to strengthen its strategic role. There is scope therefore for strengthening the link between WTB and the RTCs in the same way that the National Tourist Boards of England, Scotland and Ireland have done with their regional bodies all of whom are companies

limited by guarantee. These bodies carry out functions on a regional and local level for the National Board. Service level contracts are agreed and fees negotiated. Local Authorities are major contributors both in time and financial resources to these regional bodies.

- The original recommendation of commissioning a consultancy report to consider how best to finance Regional Tourism Companies and to consider which current WTB functions could better be performed at regional level should now be actioned. This report would also consider the need for competitive tendering to ensure best practice.

## **Appendix I**

### **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING PARTY TO THE MINISTER**

6.1 The Working Party makes the following recommendations to improve the current structure of tourism, to the Minister for his consideration.

- i) That WTB remain the lead strategic body for tourism, and that it retain and expand its core policy and strategic role. To enable it to fulfil this role, it should modestly enhance its presence in the regions.
- ii) That a new national membership body Tourism Wales be created to represent the Tourism industry at the national, regional, local and sectoral levels. This will have implications for the trade, the customer and for the use of resources and it is therefore recommended that an independent detailed evaluation study be commissioned to examine the proposals. The study should assess the best mechanism for creating the new body in terms of value for money and effectiveness and consider the long term implications for the industry, including securing ownership by the industry.
- iii) That local authorities be encouraged to consider focusing their activities in support of tourism on the delivery of integrated quality destination management incorporating visitor management, aftercare and information and ensuring the basic infrastructure and facilities are in place to meet visitor needs. They should also be encouraged to continue to develop further, the Regional/Area Marketing Partnership approach working with WTB and the new Tourism Wales body.
- iv) That local authorities be allocated sufficient resources to enable them to undertake the delivery of integrated quality destination management.
- v) That the Minister's stated intention of establishing a National Tourism Forum for Wales, be welcomed as a means of improving co-ordination and communication between the key players.

## **Appendix 2**

23 December 1999

To all 22 Local Authority Chief Executives

Dear Colleague

At the request of the National Assembly Economic Development Committee I am writing to all 22 local authorities asking you once more to let me have your authorities' views on the issue of Roles and Responsibilities which has exercised both the public and private sector for over a year.

I wrote to you in August with a bilingual copy of the full report "Fit for the Millennium - A Review of Roles and Responsibilities in Tourism in Wales". This report was produced at the request of the then Minister Mr Hain where WTB acted as facilitator for the participants in the consultation exercise.

Many of the members of the Economic Development Committee felt that insufficient time had been given for consultation and that they had been contacted by individual local authority elected members claiming they had not been involved in the consultation process.

To save money I am not sending you yet another full copy of the report but only a copy of the recommendations.

Following the initial consultation the recommendations remain the same with some further clarification required for point (ii) which is covered in the attached note which also sets out WTB's preferred position.

I would be grateful if you would let me have your authority's views by 18 February. If your authority's views have not changed since your earlier correspondence then a brief note to that effect would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

**JONATHAN JONES**

Chief Executive

### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. In recommendation ii) of the working party to the Minister, now to the National Assembly it was suggested that a new national membership body "Tourism Wales" be created to represent the tourism industry at the national, regional, local and sectoral levels.
2. The implication was that the current 3 Regional Tourism Companies, companies limited by guarantee

would either merge or, as membership organisations decide their own future.

3. During the consultation process it became clear that trade members feel the most loyalty when organisations are run at a local level and as a result there was little or no enthusiasm for a national membership body unless there was strong local representation. In addition, the creation of yet another tier and body was seen as creating further confusion.

4. The WTB has made its position clear. It is not intent on seeing the demise of the current Regional Tourism Companies but it does want these bodies to evolve, as must WTB itself, to deliver a better service to the industry and to the consumer.

5. The RTCs accept the need for change and are already embarking on joint activity and are investigating common membership. Such a move would strengthen the small operators position on the recently formed Wales Tourism Alliance, the body which lobbies on behalf of all sectors of the trade and for which the RTCs provide the secretariat.

6. The Government has asked WTB to recommend a way forward against the background of previous consultation and to share these views with the local authorities.

7. The WTB fully endorse recommendation i, iii, iv and v of the Roles and Responsibilities working party.

8. The WTB, whilst respecting the right of local authorities to act independently, wishes to see the partnership between L.A.s, WTB and the trade continue.

9. The WTB wishes to see this partnership strengthen to the point where the partnership body may take a greater lead on local and regional issues against the background of a national strategic framework.

10. The WTB considers that the regional partnership bodies should in boundary terms, mirror the 4 Regional Economic Forums and the 4 Regional Committees of the National Assembly.

11. The WTB recommends that Regional Tourism Companies be renamed as Regional Tourism Partnerships - continuing as companies limited by guarantee but with more emphasis on partnership working whilst still required to cover their own costs.

12. Regional Tourism Partnerships to continue to provide a membership scheme which moves towards pan Wales fees and benefits.

13. RTPs to encourage and support Area Marketing Partnerships where these ATPs could equate to a single Local Authority, a group of Local Authorities or a whole region.

14. An independent detailed evaluation study be commissioned to examine how best to finance the

Regional Tourism Partnerships and to consider which functions are best carried out at national, regional and local level with a view to greater efficiency and better value for money.

15. WTB would continue to invite representatives of the Regional Tourism Partnerships to sit as observers at WTB Board Meetings. WLGA would also be invited to nominate an observer to attend WTB Board Meetings. WTB would continue to hold 4 public Board Meetings, one in each of the 4 regions, every **year**.