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Evidence from National Museum Wales – TOU 23

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales’ submission to NAW Inquiry into Tourism

Clarity and strength of Wales’s tourism brand

In a highly competitive and crowded globalised marketplace, we realise that Wales needs to work hard at raising awareness of the country and its distinct tourism offer. In particular awareness of Wales as a destination needs to be vastly improved, as well as developing positive perceptions. High level activity that is delivered coherently, with clear and succinct messages in targeted channels aimed at defined audiences, are needed to raise profile.

We feel that Visit Wales’s new Partnership for Growth strategy provides a realistic approach that recognises the challenges but defines how Wales can create a more distinct identity as a destination in its own right.

The effectiveness of Welsh Government’s attempts to maximise the value of the domestic tourism market.

We welcome the latest ‘Have you packed for Wales’ multi-channel marketing campaign and are encouraged to see that recent information from the Great Britain Tourism Survey shows a positive trend for tourism in Wales. Recent evidence that market dynamics may be changing towards shorter stays, demonstrate the importance for Visit Wales to be attuned to visiting patterns.

The effectiveness of Welsh Government’s attempts to maximise the value of the international tourism market.

Although Visit Wales have confirmed the rest of the UK (especially London), Germany, Ireland and the USA as their priority country markets, the exact strategy for targeting international tourists has yet to be announced. International tourists are an important priority as research shows that international tourists have higher spending power.

We are aware that Visit Wales are working with Visit Britain for targeting other countries. An example of how Amgueddfa Cymru has benefited, is the Visit Britain China Welcome charter we have signed up to. This gave us the opportunity to run a familiarisation visit with 28 Chinese travel agents and tour operators.

We can create reciprocal opportunities for Amgueddfa Cymru and Visit Wales to work together overseas. For instance, in 2015 we are touring our art collections to four museums in the USA - Palm Beach, Pittsburgh, Utah and Princeton. Similarly, in 2013 we organised an exhibition at the Three Gorges Museum in Chongqing in China.

Visit Wales played an important role in communicating the Peter Blake’s *Under Milk Wood* exhibition at National Museum Cardiff to a broader audience, as part of the DT100 efforts. They targeted travel trade media in particular and encouraged one of their regular travel writers to attend the press launch.

Catrin Brace recently supported the Richard Wilson *Transformation of European Landscape Painting* exhibition at Yale in the USA, encouraging Welsh expats based in New York to visit and securing coverage in an American art magazine. This paves the way for the exhibition coming to National Museum Cardiff in July.

Amgueddfa Cymru plans to more actively target international tourists as part of its marketing strategy. A 2013 CyMAL Visitor Survey highlighted the continued popularity of Welsh museums. As well as telling the story of Wales's history and culture, we also provide attractive all-weather facilities.

Performance of Visit Wales compared with tourism development agencies in the rest of the UK

There's generally been an impression given out that Visit Wales has more limited resources compared to other agencies. We are aware that the recent rationalisation of the tourism regional partnerships, may lead to boosting Visit Wales' resources.

The success of Visit Wales marketing activities

We are aware that the Visit Wales research team carry out a lot of in-depth evaluation of its marketing activities and would expect this to continue.

The work of Visit Britain as it relates to Wales, and the extent of coordination between Visit Britain and Visit Wales.

The presentations given jointly by Visit Britain and Visit Wales at the Vale Resort marketing workshop in 2013, were very helpful for understanding how Visit Britain's activities complement Visit Wales and can help the Welsh tourism sector. A repeat of this format would be helpful for finding out about the latest activity and any new opportunities.

As an organisation, we have welcomed several familiarisation visits from travel writers and tour group operators to our sites instigated initially by Visit Britain.

Even greater support from Visit Britain would not only allow Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales to compete with the UK's other national museums but our products can also give Wales a clearer voice in terms of the Welsh cultural offer on an international stage.

The use made of opportunities for funding and other support from the EU

We are aware that structural funds were used towards making the latest TV commercial.

The success of Welsh Government's efforts to increase the quality of Wales's tourism offer

Customer service is a point of differentiation for many organisations. An all-Wales customer care training scheme to replace the recent Welcome Host should be considered. It may also be necessary to review VAQAS if it is being used as the main tool for monitoring the quality of Wales's tourism offer.

The extent to which the marketing and development of tourism in Wales makes the most of Wales's cultural, historical and natural assets.

Wales's cultural attractions provide reputation-changing experiences and the national museums of Wales tell the story of the country's history and celebrate its heritage. Each national museum has its own unique personality and tells a different story. More than 1.6 million visits visit Wales' national museums each year.

The Partnership for Growth strategy wishes to position Cardiff as an internationally recognised short break capital city. St Fagans National History Museum and National Museum Cardiff have a combined total of one million visitors annually and Visitor Surveys conducted by Cardiff Council consistently show that the national museums score among the top destinations visited in the capital city.

National Museum Cardiff has already achieved much success recently by raising the profile of the art collections with the creation of new galleries and the opening of the National Museum of Art on the first floor of the museum in 2011. Visitor numbers grew by 108,958 between 2009-2012/13.

Future developments at St Fagans National History Museum will strengthen the product offer at Wales's top heritage attraction, benefiting the local visitor economy.

We would welcome the opportunity to work more closely with Visit Wales to actively raise the profile of the cultural attractions. The Cultural Communications Group set up two years ago by Amgueddfa Cymru, is a good practical example of how Visit Wales (and Capital Regional Tourism) has been kept better informed of product news and developments at Cardiff-based cultural venues.

The wider museum sector has also benefited recently through Visit Wales' involvement in a series of marketing and communications training sessions. Sharing information on the support offered by Visit Wales is important for the regional museums, as well as the nationals. We'd like to see this continue.

The impact of major events on Wales's tourism economy, and the success of Welsh Government attempts to maximise this

Whilst we appreciate that high profile sports events help to attract a global viewing audience, as well spending in the local tourism economy, can cultural festivals also be considered.