

Meeting (5) of Tourism Group – 10:30am, Friday, 24 April 2020

Participants:

Deputy Minister, Culture, Sport and Tourism	Welsh Government	Stephen Jones	WLGA
Jason Thomas - Director	Welsh Government	Paula Ellis	SW Forum Chair
Rob Holt	Welsh Government	Phillipa George	SE Forum Chair
Rhidian Morgan	Welsh Government	Sean Taylor	UK TIC Rep
Lucy von Weber	Welsh Government	Anthony Rosser	Uk Hospitality Cymru
Mari Stevens		Dave Chapman	Uk Hospitality Cymru
Ian Edwards	VB Board rep	Michael Bewick	North Forum Chair
Andrew Campbell	WTA	Steve Hughson	Mid Wales Forum Chair
Adrian Greason-Walker	WTA		

Apologies: Jo Corke and Peter Francombe

Version: FINAL

Main points of meeting

1. Update – Jason Thomas

The Deputy Minister and Jason Thomas welcomed all and thanked the group members for their invaluable contribution to the effort to protect the **tourism, hospitality and events sector** in Wales. JT updated as follows:

- Today's meeting would focus on funding pressures and any existing gaps and also the potential easing of lockdown restrictions around the First Minister's framework for easing the restrictions – the 7 questions. The Economic Resilience Fund (ERF) was heavily subscribed, but still open and applications were encouraged.

The DM updated on his activity during the week which had included talking to the various bodies linked to his portfolio area, attending a 9am daily meeting with the FM. There was discussion around the contentious issue of second homes and genuine tourism businesses and how the regulations were being revisited as a result in the coming weeks and the need to engage the community in a positive conversation.

2. Funding pressures – current and predicted

Rhidian Morgan gave a detailed summary of the ERF position which was heavily subscribed. There was frustration by some with the application process which **RM would feedback**. The micro scheme was light touch but the SME scheme involved more due diligence.

JT said that all capital spend was under review. RH ran through a list of potential funding gaps which are attached at **annex A**. Members were asked to advise if they were aware of others.

There was a discussion around furlough and stakeholders suggested the need for it to continue until social distancing ceases to avoid significant negative impacts on the sector, even if it was at a lower level. There was a call for tapering of the furlough arrangements rather than a percentage cut, allowing staff to be brought back in as when the business grows. There was also a danger if business does not pick up then funding would be taken up by accrued annual leave. Some indications that some businesses would have to lose people. **JT also asked to be given any notice of any business immediately on the brink.**

3. Preparing for easing of restrictions

JT referred to the FM's announcement of a framework and seven key tests to help lead Wales out of the coronavirus pandemic – these are now at Annex B along with a link to the guidance. The DM explained it was now possible for us to feed in to the next “3-week review” applying the tests. There was a general discussion around the potential application of the tests.

4. Update - Sector Representatives

Each group member spoke to the written updates which had been circulated. In response to the point about the possibility of the setting up of a recovery plan group for north Wales, the DM said that AONBs and NPAs needed to be involved.

JT said that he was keen to convene a call with some members of this group but also with a wider set of bodies like the NPAs and AONBs, but more would be circulated about this next week. Other comments included:

- guidance issued to Local Authorities needed amending or tightening up in relation to Self Catering Operators as it was not in-line with the VOA Classification of Self-catering properties;
- whilst there had been some progress with insurance companies there was still reports of unhelpful behaviour with some companies;
- further point about the work needed to be done with customers to bring them back when the time was right, and how it would take years if we did not do it right.

5. AOB/Next meeting.

All were thanked for a constructive meeting and we would return to the issues next Friday.

Alyson Burke

24 April 2020

Annex A

Funding gaps identified as at 24 April 2020:

- Sole Traders *
- Businesses operating below VAT threshold. *
- Newly incorporated businesses *
- Companies awaiting business rating valuations -*
- Micro businesses not paying PAYE.*
- Community interests especially churches and cathedrals which are focussed on Tourism.
- Individual operators registered as Limited Companies (paying part dividend part wage)
- New companies who can't show trading records (to show reduction in profits for example).
- B&Bs – live on the premises and therefore pay Council Tax, not Business Rates -
- Micro-businesses who are located within a larger business' premises and therefore fall under their rateable value.
- Zoos –
- Freelance instructors in the outdoor sector for example.

***Members asked to consider any other gaps and let us know**

Annex B

Framework to recovery:

<https://gov.wales/leading-wales-out-coronavirus-pandemic>

Evaluating the impact of potential easements: key indicators

1. To what extent would easing a restriction have a negative effect on containing the virus?

- is the action consistent with assumptions informing the prevailing infection control measures?
- does the action seek to secure an identifiable public health gain?
- does the action reflect the evaluations made of similar actions elsewhere?

2. Is the measure at the low end of risk of further infection?

- can the scale of the measure be adequately quantified?
- is the scale of the action proportionate to the scale of the risk of further infection?
- is the scale of the action communicable in such a way as to avoid confusion about its extent and its limits?

3. How can it be policed?

- how visible is the proposed action?
- is the action already subject to regulation, inspection or surveillance?
- can infractions be sufficiently well defined to be subject to enforcement?

4. Is it capable of being rapidly reversed if it has unintended consequences?

- are arrangements sufficient to monitor the impact of the action?
- is the action sufficiently bounded to allow rapid communication with those engaged in the action?
- have the potential consequences of reversing the action been subject to a risk analysis?

5. Is it a measure of relatively high positive economic benefit?

- can the economic benefit be readily calculated?
- is the measure of economic benefit consistent with WG's commitments to a more prosperous, equal and greener Wales?
- is the economic benefit sectional and/ or narrow in its scope?

6. Does it have a high impact on social and psychological well-being?

- does the measure impact on an identifiable vulnerable or disadvantaged group?
- can the measure be understood and communicated as having an impact on well-being?
- is the measure socially divisive/ cohesive?

7. Does the measure have a high positive equality impact?

- is the measure consistent with the requirements of the Future Generations Act (etc.)
- does the measure have any biases to the detriment of vulnerable or marginalised groups?
- does the measure provide any opportunities for widening participation and a more inclusive society?