

Meeting (8) of Tourism Group – 10:30, Friday, 15 May 2020

Participants:

Deputy Minister, CST	WG	Stephen Jones	WLGA
Jason Thomas - Director	WG	Paula Ellis	SW Forum Chair
Rob Holt	WG	Phillipa George	SE Forum Chair
Jo Corke	WG	Sean Taylor	UK TIC Rep
Lucy von Weber	WG	Anthony Rosser	UK Hospitality C
Rhidian Morgan	WG	Dave Chapman	UK Hospitality C
Ian Edwards	VB Board rep	Michael Bewick	North Forum Chair
Andrew Campbell	WTA	Steve Hughson	MW Forum Chair
Adrian Greason-Walker	WTA		

Version: FINAL

Main points of meeting

1. Update – Jason Thomas:

- The FM would be outlining his roadmap to “unlocking our society and economy” at 12:30 and JT thanked the group for assisting throughout the crisis, that had enabled officials to ensure the sector’s views were represented;
- The revised regulations came into force on Monday. There was a discussion about the confusion arising out of difference in arrangements in England and Wales.
- The DM had raised the plight of the tourism, hospitality and events sector at a Culture Committee hearing on 12 May even though they were not in its remit, stressing importance.
- JT had clarified the legal position in regards to golf courses;
- The DM, and Minister for IR&WL had had a productive discussion with the FM and the senior tourism team about the sector’s recovery. FM had been impressed with the paper provided and this was thanks to the work of this group resulting in well-informed briefing for Ministers and the FM certainly understands the plight of tourism, hospitality and Events.
- the next steps would be for the group to continue to work together and for industry-led guidance to be drafted over the next two weeks in readiness for any possible lifting of restrictions. Any lifting of restrictions would be led by public health advice.
- all had welcomed the extension of the furlough arrangements until October, but further detail was awaited. However it was clear that the UK Government had listened.
- WG had also written to the Treasury making the case for additional funding for Wales. This letter was to be shared with the WG EIS Committee and a link would be shared to the group.
- The proposed 14 day quarantine requirement for those arriving in the UK had provided a further challenge to the industry. The UK Tourism Minister was raising this at the highest level.
- Several UK Taskforces had been established including one on Recreation & Leisure and another on Pubs & Restaurants. TIC was being repurposed to work on the former. The DAs would feed into all the taskforces but only as UK Government saw fit. For this, events were part of the visitor economy.
- RM gave an update on the latest position on the ERF, and how pausing the ERF was allowing consideration to be given to those not currently covered by the Fund and how a further phase of funding might be configured.
- Consideration also needed to be given to longer term budget planning for the next 1-2 years. DC suggested we might look at the overall economic contribution of a business before deciding whether to invest more grant long-term. DC suggested that Research around this issue would be helpful.
- JC ran through Wave 3 of the Wales Tourism Business Barometer, which had thrown up some powerful figures, a summary would be included in the VW newsletter. It was clear from the discussion which followed that despite the unprecedented support it continued to be a challenging time businesses.

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Updates from Sector Representatives

Wales Tourism Alliance

- AC spoke to the WTA update paper circulated. AC had raised with UK Minister at the TIER meeting the impact on Wales of the PM's announcement last Sunday. AC also said there would be a Cross Party Group on Tourism next Tuesday which the DM was attending.
- AGW asked about the possible traffic light system in the roadmap and how they would be enforced and what the legal basis might be.

Mid Wales Region

- SH informed the group that he had received a large number of questions and requests from some individuals for individual responses. The Group agreed that it was impractical to provide individual responses as the purpose of the group was to receive the views of the sector and use these to help shape government thinking. Updates would be given to Members in the forthcoming Forum meetings where there would also be the opportunity to ask questions of VW Officials.
- SH said there shouldn't be disparity in rules between England and Wales otherwise there could be commercial inequalities. He also said that more support was needed from UK Govt, particularly for events which would be last to return. SH also volunteered to work with RH on setting up an events body and working on a paper. .
- RH said he would check whether testing for the virus would need to take place before people could return to work. PE said that some staff would be having contact with vulnerable guests. RH said he would check the position on testing.

North Wales Region

- MB mentioned confusion from businesses about when they can open in view of different arrangements in England. Members also wanted consideration to be given to 'Stay at Home' signage in North West Wales.
- LAs had raised the issue of STEAM data and its consequences on their funding. JC said there would be an update on this next week.
- MB also mentioned the deferred rental period for commercial properties coming to an end in June. RH said that there had been guidance to landlords on this and would send the link.

Sean Taylor

Did not want to envisage a scenario where two identical businesses and one was open in England and the other not in Wales. There was a body of work to be done on planning this. Also needed to consider how the season could be extended.

South West Wales

- PE was pleased to see a roadmap being announced; there was also enthusiasm in the region for a kite mark standard and perhaps some of the groundwork on preparing templates etc could be done now.
- PE agreed on the commercial equality point and also asked about testing of staff and guests. PE also lobbied for an additional bank holiday and for more to be made of St David's Day next March as the return of the sector perhaps.

South East Wales

- PG welcomed the roadmap and understood the traffic light method but asked for some specific dates in the future so that people had more certainty. RH said that providing dates was very difficult presently and any dates would be driven by public health considerations. Community views needed to be respected around reopening and managing expectations around what would and would not be open. We did not want Wales's reputation to be

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damaged. LvW said that she would attend the forums next week to talk about messaging and sensitivities and people were still worried about a second wave.

Ian Edwards

-IE had had lobbied the CBI about how tourism businesses would struggle with the new furlough arrangements from August and how the sector needed to be considered as a special case.

-VB was considering how it needed to change and adapt given that its primary role was now dormant; and the need to promote the home market. VB was keen to work with the DAs on a joint campaign and as we would all be competing for the same people it made sense to be involved. LvW said that VW was working with VB but there were some reservations.

WLGA

-SJ said that a rural forum was to be established and they were keen for tourism to feature. RH said that he would be happy to attend any CEO Forum.

-SJ said that Leaders were cautious and as things were reopening, more burdens were on public services – LAs would be heavily involved in contact tracing and standards in care homes etc.

UK Hospitality Cymru

-AR reinforced IE's earlier comments about how challenging this crisis was for the sector. He also understood the reason for no dates in the roadmap but the sector needed to plan. AR felt that difficult decision might be needed on staffing soon.

-DC thanked the group for letting UKH to lead on the protocols and explained how it would be a joint document with all partners identified on the front page. The draft document was a good start with some gaps and DC asked the group to comment /offer text/ talk to him.

-JT said this was a big piece of work and that it would be necessary to have something ready to go by the end of the next 3-week review period.

Alyson Burke
15 May 2020