

Tourism Amenity Investment Support (TAIS) Approved Project Summaries 2017-2018

NORTH WALES

North Wales Tourism – Development of Visitor Experience Hubs

The project is to create what NWT refers to as a Visitor Experience Hubs (VEHs). These hubs will improve the visitor information provision at three locations Caernarfon, Porthmadog and Llangollen. This will be free to access information and includes some innovative digital content. The objective is therefore to create a network of centres or hubs, engage with visitors (and communities) in a more innovative way, and keep alive a contemporary presentation of tourism information to local people and visitors alike.

Conwy County Borough Council – Tourist Signage and Maps

The project is a mix of signage in the county of Conwy split between directional finger posts, at a cost of £30k, and interactive maps on route to Carneddau at a cost of £20k.

The largest element of the project is the installation of at least 10 directional finger posts in rural towns and villages of Conwy to direct visitors to heritage attractions, places of interest and attraction enterprises from a central point. The signs will be bilingual and comply with Conwy CBC's black and gold signage colour scheme. The other part of the project is the production of at least 5 interactive maps that will be installed into the landscape leading to Carneddau.

Flintshire County Council – Redevelopment of Bailey Hill Park

The project is both to improve walkways and promenades in the park to make them accessible, safe and attractive and to interpret the historic features across the site particularly the Motte and the Gorsedd. The upgraded pathways will improve the access for visitors to view all the historic monuments throughout the site and the new seating will encourage visitors to spend longer on site.

A mixture of traditional and new digital media interpretation will be used to highlight the history of the site with the use of stories and peoples experiences. New welcome and orientation signage will be used at the main entrance to lead visitors to the key sites and features around the park. A number of interpretation panels will be situated within the redeveloped Custodian Lodge. All new interpretation signage will be bilingual.

Natural Resource Wales – Coed Y Brenin Visitor Centre

The project is to extend the MinorTaur trail at Coed y Brenin Forest Park. The MinorTaur is a 9km long blue grade mountain biking trail with 3 loops. The project will add a fourth loop to the trail with a further 2 km of single track. The blue grade trail is designed for beginners and intermediates, families, and young children, and some riders with disabilities.

Coed y Brenin Forest Park (CYB) is one of the top mountain bike trail centres in the UK and the aim of the project is to grow both the existing market and new markets such as young mums, prosperous professionals, educated urbanites, inner city communities, minority groups, youth groups and young adults with learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

The 2 km extension is anticipated to increase visitor numbers by another 5k a year. The project is also expected to create a full time catering assistant role at c£18k a year and a part time Business Support Officer.

Harlech Tourism Association (HTA) – Harlech legends

Harlech Tourism Association (HTA) is a long standing association of some 40 years. It has a constitution, elected officers and financial statements. It's income is increased in specific years when grant aid is provided in support of specific projects. It has some experience therefore in managing small scale capital projects, and is currently managing a TPIF project (£50k support).

Gwynedd County Council is leading, with Welsh Government support, in bringing together a plan for Harlech (through external consultants – Chris Jones Regeneration) which at this moment is in final draft stage. Indeed HTA has referred to this plan in its application. Other stakeholders, such as HTA, will therefore be important in helping deliver parts of that plan. The project is as follows: Gateway signage (to Harlech), Footpath & Marker signage, Town Centre Trail, Literary / Art Trail, Capital elements supporting the Legends & Sea TPIF infrastructure project.

Gwynedd Council – Invest in public Conveniences

The project is to improve the public conveniences in 3 key Gwynedd towns that are heavily reliant on tourism.

All 3 towns are key tourism destinations with significant tourist attractions nearby.

Bethesda is a small town situated on the A5 truck road on the edge of Snowdonia where there is a mix of walking trails and the Zipworld attraction on the edge of the town. Bethesda has only 1 public convenience which is located on the high street, close to the 2 main car parks and on the Sherpa Bus route which provides a sustainable transport option for visitors to Snowdonia.

Beddgelert has the legend of Gelert's grave, the SYGUN Copper mine attraction and a railway station on the Welsh Highland Railway line. Beddgelert public convenience is one of the busiest in Snowdonia and is located on the route towards the footpath along the River Colwyn towards Gelert's grave and the National Trust site of Ty Isaf.

Bala is a small gateway town to the Snowdonia National Park and the park's main water sports hub. With the largest natural lake in Wales (Llyn Tegid) and the River Tryweryn Bala is popular for kayakers, canoeists, windsurfers, rafters and hikers. The high street attracts adventure sports and outdoor shops and is very busy in the summer. The public convenience in Bala is located next to the town car park.

National Trust – Upgrade Visitor welcome cabins & car Park (Porthdinllaen and Porthor)

Project is to add 2 new 'Customer Experience Hubs' (CEH) at 2 of the key honeypot beach locations along the Llyn Peninsular. The sites are Porthdinllaen and Porthor (Whistling Sands) which are the most iconic and popular sites in the region with each receiving upwards of 100k visitors a year.

At both sites the NT operate car parks which house outdated visitor welcome cabins. The project is to replace the outdated facilities with fit for purpose customer experience hubs (CEH) which will offer a wealth of information to the visitor through digital and traditional means and fill the void left by the closure of TIC'S in the area. The design of the 2 buildings will follow the learnings from the Porth y Swnt development and will take account of the 'spirit of place' of the sites. The history and culture of the sites will be intertwined in the design. As part of the project the NT plan to establish a third activity provision at Porthor to complement the existing kayaking and stand up Paddleboard offer which has been successful at Aberdaron and Porthdinllaen. The hubs will act as a site for promotion as well as booking for these

activities. The new Porthor building will have new upgraded toilets and new shower facilities.

Cyngor Gwynedd – Upgrade Access & facilities at blue flag beaches

The purpose of this project is to improve access & facility elements at blue flag beaches:

- Abersoch – Improve public & vehicle access road to the beach
- Pwllheli – Upgrade & extend boardwalk access to the beach
- Aberdaron – Upgrade boat launch access & public toilets at the beach
- All Locations – Provide consistent information & safety signage for all beaches
- All Locations – Improve interpretation & directional signage for all beaches

Recent surveys confirmed that 54k people used the Wales Coast Path near Abersoch during 2016/17, 80k people used the main car park in Aberdaron and 15k people used the National Trust toilets in Aberdaron. These visitor numbers emphasise the importance of improving beach access & facilities in the area.

Gwynedd County Council – Upgrade Coach Park and upgrade facilities

In recent years, around £6m has been invested in and around Harlech Castle and this has seen visitor numbers increase by 35% to 102k since 2014/15. However, parking & toilet facilities in the town are substandard and this not only impacts on customer satisfaction but the absence of dedicated coach parking facilities has actually stopped many tour companies from including them on itineraries.

The need for coach parking facilities at Bron y Graig Uchaf car park and improved toilet facilities at Bron y Graig Isaf car park has therefore been identified as a priority, not only within the Destination Management plan but also with all other key public & private sector stakeholders, including the National Park, Tourism Organisations, Harlech Castle and all business proprietors within the town.

The project therefore seeks to address these issues and hopefully provide a catalyst for further future growth within the town. By attracting more coach parties and tour companies to the town, as well as greatly improving their experience whilst they are in the town, this project should have a significant effect on visitor numbers, dwell time and spend. The castle will always be the main draw but other shops, accommodation, cafes & restaurants should also see a significant knock-on effect with this investment.

Canal and River Trust – Create new visitor parking (Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal)

Since Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal became a World Heritage site in 2009 the visitor numbers have incrementally increased by as much as 70% in some locations. Trevor Basin, adjacent to the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, is a major hub for people visiting the World Heritage site and is now attracting over 250k visitors a year.

The general facilities and infrastructure on site are inadequate particularly in the busy season. With the limited parking for both cars and coaches the site at peak times can't cope which causes regular traffic congestion with cars regularly parked on grass verges and neighbouring streets. To address the issue CRT will lease an adjacent land to create a new visitor pay and display car park to accommodate c158 cars and a coach drop off point. A key element of the project is to create a strong sense of place and arrival to welcome visitors to the WHS. At the new car park there will be welcome signage, way marking signs, landscaping of pathways, and artworks to reflect the WHS. All signage will be bi-lingual and branded with WHS livery. CRT

plans to work alongside a number of small businesses who operate on site at Trevor Basin to install new bilingual signage with WHS livery. A new map will be installed to showcase the site and wider WHS corridor.

RSPB Cymru – Improvements to visitor amenities (South Stack)

This project will provide brand new high quality visitor toilets with greater capacity to sustain peak visitor numbers, increase the quality of visitor experience, improve accessibility and increase dwell time at the South Stack destination.

RSPB South Stack currently has a small number of visitor toilets; these are not fit for purpose and have become insufficient as visitor numbers have increased. There are no alternative toilets that service the destination. The facilities are not of the standard expected at a major visitor attraction and this affects the quality of the visitor experience.

Isle of Anglesey County Council - Improvements in Llangefni

The project is to improve 3 key locations, the Oriel Mon, Dingle Nature Reserve and Lon Las 566 path, all around the market town of Llangefni. Oriel Mon (OM) was built in 1991 as a purpose built gallery for Anglesey's heritage and culture and to house the Council's collection of art works by wildlife artist Charles Tunnicliffe. The gallery attracted 83,331 visitors in 2016/17.

Next year (2018) marks the 100th Anniversary of the birth of Kyffin Williams, one of Wales' best known artists of the 20th century. There is a permanent display of his works at OM and the gallery is planning an unveiling a life-sized bronze statue of Kyffin Williams at work, which has been donated to OM.

The project is split as follows:

Oriel Mon (OM) improvements include:

- Creation of external seating areas integrated with OM grounds
- Plinth and installation of the gifted Kyffin Williams statue.
- Improved landscaping
- Signage and enhancements with OM's grounds including donation boxes and recycling facilities

MID WALES

Natural Resources Wales – Artwork in relation to Coast path for YOS

To celebrate the Wales Coast Path (WCP) during the Year of the Sea, NRW propose commissioning artwork that will capture the public's imagination, framing our iconic landscape and embodying the path's status as Wales' premium walking route.

Central to this commission will be the role that path plays in linking communities and attracting visitors, leading to increased social and economic resilience.

NRW propose the artwork is created for and placed at the midpoint of the path, in the village of New Quay in Ceredigion. This is a point of resonance as it gives context to the extent and scale of the WCP. We can see a narrative growing around our relationship with the coast and the routes and ways that crisscross along it, connecting people and communities.

Advancing Aberystwyth ar y Blaen – Development Brand & Digital Products

The organisation's four main aims and objectives are to improve access & connections into and around the town, promote & enhance the town's offer, develop a stronger business community with valuable support and strengthen relationships & communication between the private & public sector. In order to ensure the best

possible projects are developed, specialist theme groups have been formalised, made up of a variety of stakeholders.

This 'Digital Aberystwyth' proposal will provide a related cluster of innovative digital products that will include the development of a new destination brand for Aberystwyth. This will align with the Wales Brand in terms of logos, characters, diagraphs & colours and will add value to the visitor experience and help drive economic growth. The three aspects of the project will be as follows:

1. Interactive Digital Signage – 4 signs installed at strategic points around the town, providing multi-lingual information on tourist attractions, events, 'what's on' guides, business directory, mapping system, offers, discounts & QR codes.
2. Town Mobile App & Website – 100 ibeacons installed around the town and within attractions & businesses, to allow the development of historic & architectural trails, virtual treasure hunts, audio/video/360 panorama tours, as well as other points of interest & promotional/directory material.
3. Town Wifi with in-built Analytics – 18 access points installed around the town that will provide free broadband (linked to website) and collect analytical data on visitor's origin, numbers, times & locations that can also be used for subsequent e-marketing campaigns targeting specific groups with details of events & offers.

There will be associated revenue expenditure, including brand development, website development, app content, wifi 'splash' page & marketing activity. They will also deliver a sense of place training programme for all businesses to deliver the key messages but these costs have been excluded from the application.

Natural Resource Wales – Bwlch nan Yr Arian

The project is the construction of an intermediate grade mountain bike (MTB) trail starting from Nant yr Arian Visitor Centre. This new trail has already been designed and costed and will be called the Melindwr Trail to evoke a sense of place.

The project would include four lengths of intermediate graded trail connected by forest road. The total length of the constructed intermediate grade trail will be approximately 9km as it would also use some forest roads.

The trail has been designed primarily to introduce new mountain bikers to off road cycling and single track trails. The new trail will complement the existing proficient and expert grade MTB trails at Nant Yr Arian as well as the new skills park.

Brecon Beacons NPA – Welcome Points Development

The concept is of an integrated gateway and signage project that will welcome car and bus borne visitors into the National Park at the destination's southern boundary, then take them through a journey within the (Cambrian Way) A470 corridor to key Welcome Points.

All Welcome Points are directly accessible to bus passengers except National Park Visitor Centre (short walk) and Llangors Lake. The content of the orientation/information signage will be developed as part of the project and focus on key VW & destination target markets and include information on: the Wales Way; information specific to its location; direct visitors to places offering high quality visitor experiences, within easy reach of the A470, spreading the benefit of the route beyond the immediate corridor.

Elan Valley Trust – Trails & Signage

In 2015 HLF approved £1.8m (to the Trust) towards a project including heritage conservation, habitat restoration, and public access and engagement. With the Trust's £1.5m the total project cost was £3.3m. The TAIS project (a separate project) focuses on a number of added value improvements to the destination, particularly

regarding access and recreational elements, some of which were not eligible under the HLF proposal. The project focusses on:

Project 1: - Dol y Mynach Dam: access, interpretation, signage, gates and pathways;

- Dam Busters site at Nant y Gro: interpretation, signage;
- World War 2 Pill Boxes: access, interpretation;
- Cwm Elan Mine: access, signage & interpretation;
- Elan Dark Skies: car parking, interpretation & viewing platform;

Project 2: - Develop 3 family friendly hubs at Nantgwyllt, Claerwen & Penbont.

Project 3: - Develop a new Elan Woodland Cycle Trail (Blue Trail).

Project 4: - Destination signage & Dark Sky information boards.

SOUTH EAST WALES

Caerphilly County Borough Council – Walking & Cycling Trail

Cwmcarn Forest is a seven mile scenic route through 1400 hectares with views over the Seven Estuary offering a number of outdoor activities from excellent mountain bike trails (four); walking trails; accommodation in the form of caravan, pod and campsites; a lake; and a Visitor Centre providing information, refreshments and gifts. However, visitor numbers have been hit by the closure of the Forest drive from on going infected larch tree felling works (due to continue until 2019) and the subsequent closure of a number of walking and biking trails within the forest. However, the tree felling also offers opportunities to reassess the visitor experience and consider possibilities for alternative activities and upgrading of facilities. The project therefore is

- Expansion of bike trails - providing an additional 3km of new trails;
- Enhancing existing walking trails - upgrading footpaths with new signage throughout the full length of trails including way marking and interpretation at key locations/points of interest;
- New welcome/arrival zones in the main car park - installing a sense of place at arrival including feature dry stone wall; signage, interpretation and artwork; soft landscaping

Monmouthshire County Council – Car Park & Signage (Clydach Gorge)

At present the ironworks is hidden behind the Cemex site and visitors have to take an indirect route to enter the site, the first view of which is then dominated by a National Grid pylon. With the Transfer of ownership to Monmouth Council and the opportunities awarded from completion of the A465, the LA are looking to create a high quality visitor destination to develop the Gorge's potential as a cultural tourism resource, creating a Gateway for visitors and local residents to access the Eastern end of the Gorge. The LA is therefore looking for funding towards the following works:

- consolidate and extend car parking provision, with a new picnic area and landscape setting native woodland planting;
- landscape the former industrial features of the Cemex site and reprofile the area in front of the existing ironworks provide a continuous and improved landscape setting for the ironworks, incorporating new visitor access, create a performance area, a new picnic area and an area for occasional vehicle use / additional parking.
- reconfigure existing and add new signage and visitor interpretation.

Torfaen County Borough Council – Virtual Reality Experience (Blaenavon)

This investment is part of a wider project to develop a series of Virtual Reality experiences for visitors to the Blaenavon World Heritage Site (BWHS), providing the capital elements to a RTEF revenue project where, using Google Cardboard viewers, visitors will be able to experience a virtual reality experience on their smartphone. Under RTEF funding of £50k was formally offered in July 2017 towards development costs using Google cutting edge cost-effective virtual reality technology. As part of the experience, visitors will travel back to the 19th century where using developed animation, they will be able to see how 3 key sites in the World Heritage Site would have looked and sounded, namely; Big Pit National Coal Museum, Blaenavon World Heritage Centre and Blaenavon Heritage Town.

This TAIS application is towards three Time Traveller benches at the 3 key sites. Visitors put on the Google Cardboard viewer and using their own phone (Android and iOS smartphones) can download the app for free and be virtually transported back, using animation to show the workers/community going about their day to day life as they would have in the 19th Century, portraying the hardship and conditions that the workers, families and communities endured but with an edge of humour showing the camaraderie amongst the worker. The 3 benches will reflect the industry in both their design and material used.

Vale of Glamorgan Council – refurbishment of car park and toilets at Dunraven Bay

The Vales Destination Plan objectives include developing a prosperous visitor economy and with the main beach car park and the car park to the Heritage Coast Centre in a poor state of repair, the local authority recognises the need to upgrade the basic infrastructure of the area to help improve the visitor appeal. Therefore works proposed:

- resurfacing of the main beach hard standing car park, surfacing of the small car park to the side of the Heritage centre and the resurfacing of the public forecourt to the front of the Heritage Coast Centre. The works will ensure that there are adequate areas for disabled access/ parking; the parking areas are clearly marked, improving traffic flow on site and maximising parking space.
- safe pedestrian walkways areas, ensuring that visitors accessing the site will benefit from improved access and a direct route onto the Wales Coastal Path
- a total refurbishment of the external toilet block at the Heritage Coast Centre; each toilet will be fitted with energy efficient hand dryers and energy efficient light systems
- improvements to the shower/wet room to ensure that it complies with DDA regulations and that it is fit for use by all including ramp access into the facility. This new wet changing area will enable community groups and third party commercial organisations the opportunity to develop their product offer and help develop the site as a focal point for outdoor waterbased activities.
- new methods of refuse/litter storage and collection to enable the site to meet Blue Flag status.
- Improvements to the main signage at the visitor centre.

SOUTH WEST WALES

Neath Port Talbot CBC – Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan

Currently car parking within Pontneddfechan is informal with parking along the main road into the village. With no alternative car park provision within close proximity to

the entrance of the Waterfall walks, visitors are parking irresponsibly causing the road to become dangerous, resulting in regular concerns and complaints from the community. The resolution of car park pressures in Pontneddfecahn is identified as a specific priority action within Neath/Port Talbot's Destination Management Plan (DMP) as well as part of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority DMP which identifies a clear intention to work towards a resolution. Visitors are also left with a *poor visitor* experience.

The project is therefore to create approx. 43 off road car parking spaces at the Visitor hub at Pontneddfecahn increasing the capacity of existing parking provision, safer parking facilities and significantly enhancing the visitor experience and dwell time.

Neath Port Talbot CBC – Margam Country Park

There is currently a lack of reliable car parking, particularly when ground conditions are wet; only 180 all weather car parking spaces available. Additionally, the Orangery is a large wedding venue and conference venue, and over the last 2 years the range of events offered have increased; holding over forty major and minor events annually.

In order to improve the visitor experience and meet its potential for larger and high profile events, investment is needed in creating more reliable parking spaces. The project is therefore the installation of a grass reinforcement system across 7,300 sq. metres of existing grassed car parks, supporting an additional 300 all weather spaces. This would not only provide more all weather car parking but would create a surface suitable for more frequent and heavier vehicle, providing reliable parking provision suitable for access by coach operators and allow the park to offer a diverse range of events during the Autumn and Winter months such as high quality food festivals, music and sporting events and Christmas themed events.

Pembrokeshire Coast NPA – The Walled Garden, Carew Castle

The project is the development of the Walled Garden at Carew Castle, creating additional and aspirational spaces to relax, explore, enjoy and engage as part of the experience already on offer. It will elevate the site into a first-class visitor attraction, rivalling other larger castles and ensuring Carew's place amongst the must-see destinations of Wales. The restored Walled Garden will include;

A place for nature - the current hard-surfaced and inhospitable area will be rejuvenated into a high quality garden combining landscaping and native planting to attract wildlife, bees/ insects and resident bat population; fruit and vegetables relevant to the Tudor period, promoting sustainability; useable spaces for visitors, schools, communities, cultural events .

A place for adventure – creating an adventure play area with oversize 'castle' building blocks for visitors to construct a castle of their own design along with fun wooden structures to explore and enjoy including a Giant play sculpture based on the legend of sleepy, cave-dwelling giant 'Skomar Oddy' who wakes only once every hundred years.

A place to inspire - a separate 'secret garden' entrance, specifically for visitor groups of children, i.e. schools summer camps who will be taken on a journey back in time to when Henry Tudor was on the throne.

A place to enjoy – a permanent tented area providing a venue for various cultural events including craft and food fayres, acoustic music, theatre, puppetry, craft sessions and workshops.