

# Sustainable Tourism in Wales

Peter Davies

Sustainable Development  
Commissioner

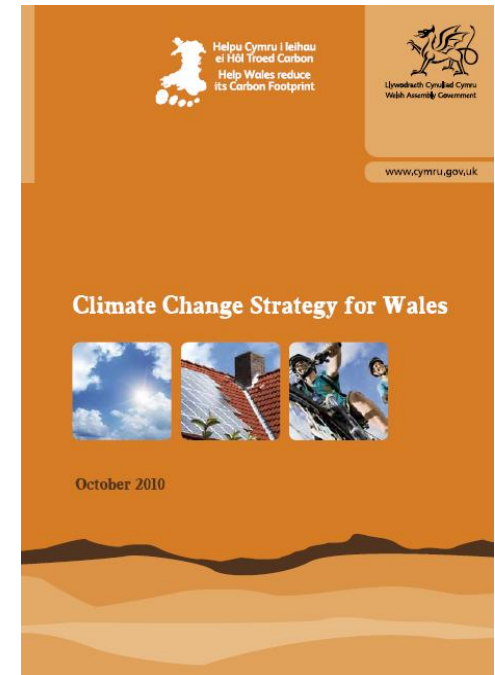
Chair of the Climate Change  
Commission for Wales

# The Sustainable Futures Commissioner

Supported by Cynnal Cymru

- establishing the practical actions that Welsh Assembly need to take to deliver its legal duty to promote sustainable development
- building consensus on the action that is needed across all sectors and communities in Wales
- reporting back to the Assembly Government on the blockages and recommending solutions for the delivery of policies and programmes to make Wales more sustainable.
- providing advice on the long term arrangements for the provision of independent advice on sustainable development
- Provide independent commentary within the Assembly Government's statutory Sustainable Development Annual Report
- Chair the Climate Change Commission for Wales

# Climate Change Commission for Wales



**Advise** Government Mobilise **action** across sectors

Build **consensus** across sectors

**Report** on progress

# Sustainable Development Scheme: One Wales: One Planet



Enhancing the *economic, social and environmental wellbeing* of people and communities, achieving a *better quality of life* for our own and future generations in way which:

Promote *social justice and equality of opportunity*, and;

Enhance the natural and cultural environment and respect its limits - using only our *fair share*



# Sustainable Development Bill

The Labour Manifesto made commitments to:

- *“Legislate to embed sustainable development as the central organising principle in all our actions across government and all public bodies.”*
- *“Legislate to put in place a new independent sustainable development body for Wales, following the Tory-led UK Government’s decision to scrap the Sustainable Development Commission.”*

The First Minister announced that these commitments would form part of the programme for Government in the new administration

**“We will be seeking to legislate to embed sustainable development as the central organising principle in all our actions across Government and all public bodies. A sustainable development Bill will put in place a new independent sustainable development body for Wales, following the UK Government’s decision to scrap the Sustainable Development Commission.”**

# Sustainable Development Bill

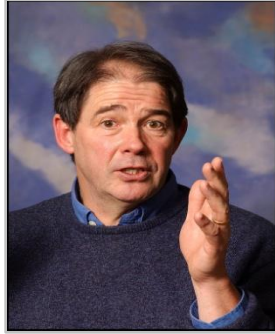
The Bill would propose that:

- Welsh Ministers have a duty to promote sustainable development in the exercise of their functions;
- Public bodies in Wales for which the Welsh Government has devolved responsibility have a duty to promote sustainable development in the exercise of their functions; and that
- Sustainable development is the central organising principle of the Welsh Government and public bodies in Wales for which the Welsh Government<sup>4</sup> has devolved responsibility.

# Vision of a sustainable Wales

- People more strongly focused on *environmental, social and economic responsibility*, and on local quality of life issues, and there is *less emphasis on consumerism*;
- Economic regeneration is undertaken with *sustainable development at its core*, and promotes low carbon, low waste ways of working.
- Wales' historic environment and heritage is *sustainably managed* and is *accessible* to all, *sustainable transport* options for visitors are more commonplace, and this underpins *Wales' brand as a sustainable tourism destination*.

# How do we want the rest of the world to see us?



*“Wales has the advantage of being one of the most picturesque places in Europe and it is bang on people’s doorstep. If it could be viewed as the New Zealand of Europe [with] a clean, green and safe image... it would have a huge impact on its future”*





# Sustainable Tourism – Understanding of Concept

**Staying Visitors were asked what the terms *sustainable tourism* or *responsible tourism* meant to them (unprompted):**

- **Tourism that minimises the effect / harm on the environment 40%**
- **Encouraging future visits 14%**
- **Respecting nature / the environment 11%**
- **Money put back into local economy 8%**
- **Good service 8%**
- **Locally produced food / products 6%**

**Only 8% said that they did not know what the terms meant.**

# Visitor Survey

- **85% responded strongly to attitudes towards Wales in having beautiful scenery**
- **The most highly endorsed of the environmental statements was choosing a holiday destination that *preserves its culture and heritage* with nearly three quarters (72%) saying this was *very important***
- **18% actively looked for environmentally friendly accommodation rising to 26% amongst overseas visitors**
- **3/10 rated their trip as excellent in terms of giving them a ‘unique Welsh cultural experience’**

# Sustainable Tourism in Wales

- **Sustainable Tourism Framework** launched in 2007
- The framework sets out Visit Wales' key sustainable challenges as follows:
  - Promoting local prosperity
  - Supporting community well being and involvement
  - Minimising tourism's environmental impact
  - Protecting and giving value to natural heritage and culture
- **Sustainable Tourism Forum (STF)** and task and finish groups
- WG Sustainable Development strategy –
  - **One Wales: One Planet** : *Wales to be recognised internationally as a leading sustainable tourism destination*



# Achievements to date



- Wales Coast Path – best region in Lonely Planet Guide 2011
- In 2011, Tenby has been named Wales' **top** beach and the 5<sup>th</sup> best in the UK by users the international travel website, Tripadvisor.
- In 2010, the National Geographic National Geographic Traveller magazine rated the Pembrokeshire Coast as joint **2<sup>nd</sup>** best coastal destination in the world!
- In 2009 November / December edition of National Geographic Traveller Magazine, Wales was ranked **7<sup>th</sup>** among 133 destinations in the 6<sup>th</sup> annual survey of destination authenticity and stewardship.
- In 2011 **41** beaches and **5** marinas achieved the international prestigious Blue Flag Awards
- In 2011, **46** beaches were also awarded the highest water quality Green Coast Award ensuring that beaches are clean, safe and well-managed.



# National Tourism Awards

## Award – Going beyond green

**Winner – Wern Growth Services,**

**5\* Bunkhouse, Llangattock, Powys**

- Wern Growth Services puts sustainability theory into practice with a ground source heat pump, which provides free carbon neutral warmth all year round together the technologies making the building very energy efficient.
- Wern Watkin also encourages guests to buy from local suppliers while they are at Llangattock and try to encourage visitors to use alternatives to the car.



# Sustainable Accreditation – UK approach

- Visit England, Visit Wales, Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Fáilte Ireland have developed a single system to endorse the quality of operations and criteria of sustainable tourism certification programmes operating in and across these countries.
- This is particularly important in the light of increased awareness of sustainability by consumers as well as the media, which will be quick to highlight perceived ‘green wash’ and thereby undermine the credibility of the entire sustainable tourism accreditation agenda.
- To date, only one UK accreditation scheme, Green Tourism Business Scheme, (GTBS) has been successful in receiving the Visit Britain validation. Other schemes are currently under assessment and awaiting approval.



# Sustainable Tourism Online Toolkit

When launched, the new Sustainable Business Toolkit (updated version of GYB) will be an online and interactive tool designed to help and support tourism businesses to improve the sustainability of their business.

It will:

- Provide advice and guidance and practical and inspiring case studies
- Enable businesses to assess the current performance of their business in a number of key areas e.g. energy, waste, water.
- Produce a bespoke action plan with ideas and advice on where businesses can make improvements and how.
- Will address not only environmental issues but looks at where tourism businesses can contribute to their local community and promote welsh culture too.
- Will be hosted on the DM website dedicated to the Sustainable Tourism Forum where interested parties can log in and find out more.

# EU Convergence - Environment for Growth (E4G) projects – Visit Wales

- **The National Trust** was chosen to create a centre of excellence on the Llŷn. The aim is to create a facility to work as a regional ‘hub’ at the heart of **Aberdaron**.
- **Pembrokeshire coastal centre of excellence** - This Centre of Excellence will deliver high quality facilities, enabling visitors of all abilities access to the coastline all year.
- **Swansea Bay centre of excellence** – **This Centre of Excellence** will provide the necessary infrastructure to support the Bay as a centre of excellence for watersports.
- **North Wales Cycling Centre of Excellence - Denbighshire** - Cycling opportunities at Coed Llandegla, Clwydian Range, Llyn Brenig and Betws y Coed
- **The Eryri Centre of Excellence project – Gwynedd**. The project is based in four sustainable tourism sites in Southern Snowdonia. Coed y Brenin, Glanllyn near Bala, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Coed y Brenin
- **The One Historic Garden Centre of Excellence** - The work will be undertaken through capital enhancements, improvements to sustainable management and an integrated marketing campaign
- **The Neath Port Talbot cycling centre of excellence** - This project aims to expand on the current off-road cycling offered to visitors to the South Wales area; Afan Forest, Cwmcarn, Gethin Woods, Merthyr Tydfil.



# Destination Management

- Promote the proposed integrated approach to destination management and marketing via the DMwales.com website which was launched in 2011
- Establish informal destination partnerships at the local level involving public, private and third and voluntary sectors
- Ensure wider industry and action groups are communicated with and involved within these destination partnerships

# All Wales Coast Path

**First  
Weekend  
in May 2012**



# Learning from New Zealand?

*“Sustainability is very important to Kiwis, but it’s sustainability in its broadest possible sense. It includes its communities, language, culture and produce as well as its environment.”*

**So, can the sustainability agenda in Wales also take this approach, with a focus around its communities, language, culture and produce? In other words, get to the heart of the people, the way they live, feel and think?**