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# ewelcome

an electronic bulletin from

**Tourism Partnership North Wales**

## Tourism strategy heralds £2 billion bonanza

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## Tourism strategy heralds £2 billion bonanza



*Pictured are, from left, Regional Strategy Director Dewi Davies, Chairman Neil Rowlands and Heritage Minister Alun Ffred Jones AM.*

A new strategy has been launched to boost the tourism industry in North Wales – with the aim of generating a massive £2 billion a year.

The blueprint was unveiled by Minister for Heritage Alun Ffred Jones, who said that tourism was vital to the region's economy.

The industry supports 37,000 jobs and currently generates in £1.8 billion in spending by visitors every year – the aim of the strategy is to increase that figure to £2 billion.

The five-year strategy has been devised by Tourism Partnership North Wales, the body responsible for the strategic development of the visitor economy.

It covers the period until 2015 and includes two three-year action plans that will be updated – one

for North East Wales and the other for North West Wales.

Among the key targets are:  
propelling the area into of the UK's top five destinations for visitors investing in the excellence of the tourism offer, including the burgeoning outdoor activities sector creating a wow factor for visitors by providing a warm welcome, good service in spick and span surroundings so that they enjoy an outstanding experience making the best and most efficient use of our marketing budget through more collaboration with our partners.

The launch took place at the Galeri, in Caernarfon, where Mr Jones said that tourism provided the lifeblood for many small businesses.

He added: "I believe it can make an even greater contribution in future and is a sustainable sector which, properly managed, will continue to thrive for generations to come.

"This is too important to be left to chance. To achieve its full potential, then all involved in tourism need to agree where it is heading and work to a common agenda. That is the purpose of this document - to highlight the importance of tourism, set out a vision for its future, and identify the strategic priorities and action needed to take us there.

"North Wales has a huge amount to offer visitors, but also some work to do if it is to realise its potential. This strategy provides a blueprint for the next five years and I look forward to seeing it come to reality."

The strategy has been commissioned by Tourism Partnership North Wales but overseen by a steering group with representation from all tourism sectors in north Wales.

It has been subject to extensive consultation



with six county-wide meetings and two regional workshops attended by a wide range of tourism interests.

This has been supplemented by further meetings with groups and key individuals. All in all, nearly 200 individuals have been involved in the above process .

According to Tourism Partnership's Regional Strategy Director, Dewi Davies (Photographed right), the world had changed a great deal since the previous strategy was prepared at the turn of the century.

He said: "Along with security concerns, the price of fuel has increased and that means it is more expensive to travel abroad while the current recession means that families have less disposable income.

"At the same time new technology means that more and more people are turning to the internet to buy their holiday services online.

"We also live in a society with a generally ageing population and our challenge is to respond to these ever changing circumstances.

"The competition is stiff because we are up



against more than 2,000 competitor destinations and our new strategy is proof positive that we are up for that challenge.

"We are determined to maximize our advantages so that we re-establish the region as one of the top five UK destinations by capitalising on what makes this area special – the fantastic landscapes, mountains and fantastic coastline."

A key advantage, says Dewi Davies, is that North Wales is close to around 25 percent of the UK population – with 16.5 million people living within a two-hour drive time.

On top of that, the region had a reputation for being a top class destination for outdoor activities – everything from mountain climbing, mountain biking, paddle sports, or just walking.

The strategy has four integrated themes: projecting the region's distinctive strengths, investing in product excellence and providing an outstanding experience and working together in partnership.

Mr Davies added: "We think we should be selling the big tickets of North Wales, whether they are our castles, our great gardens and houses or Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal which was recently given World Heritage Status.

"It is vital that we invest in the excellence of our product so that we can continue to compete against other UK and overseas destinations.

"Our future prosperity depends on improving skills so we are already working closely with the Further Education Colleges, with the outdoor sector, with the holiday park sector, the hospitality

sector in order to make sure that young people are being recruited.

"All too often in the past young people have been forced to live and work outside the area and our strategy id design to counteract this trend.

"Our people are a key strength of the tourism offer in North Wales and strengthening our communities will also help to strengthen the regional economy."

