



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru The National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Menter a Busnes The Enterprise and Business Committee

**Dydd Iau, 12 Mehefin 2014
Thursday, 12 June 2014**

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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,
cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included.

**Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance**

Mick Antoniw	Llafur Labour
Rhun ap Iorwerth	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Keith Davies	Llafur Labour
William Graham	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Conservatives (Committee Chair)
Julie James	Llafur Labour
Eluned Parrott	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Lowri Gwilym	Rheolwr Tîm—Ewrop ac Adfywio, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Team Manager—Europe and Regeneration, Welsh Local Government Association
Huw Lewis	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau) Assembly Member, Labour (The Minister for Education and Skills)
Pat McCarthy	Uwch Ddatblygwr Polisi a Rheolwr Gweithredu, Llywodraeth Cymru Senior Policy Developer and Implementation Manager, Welsh Government
Huw Parsons	Rheolwr Marchnata a Thwristiaeth, Cyngor Sir Caerfyrddin Marketing and Tourism Manager, Carmarthenshire County Council
Yr Athro/Professor Annette Pritchard	Athro Twristiaeth, Cyfarwyddwraig Canolfan Ymchwil Twristiaeth Cymru, Prifysgol Metropolitan Caerdydd Professor of Tourism, Director of Welsh Centre for Tourism Research, Cardiff Metropolitan University
Ken Skates	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (Y Dirprwy Weinidog Sgiliau a Thechnoleg) Assembly Member, Labour (The Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology)
Yr Athro/Professor Julie Williams	Prif Gynghorydd Gwyddonol, Llywodraeth Cymru Chief Scientific Adviser, Welsh Government

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Siân Hughes	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Michael Lewis	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Claire Morris	Ail Glerc Second Clerk
Siân Phipps	Clerc Clerk

Robin Wilkinson

Gwasanaeth Ymchwil
Research Service

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:18.

The meeting began at 09:18.

Cyflwyniadau, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **William Graham:** Good morning and welcome to Members, witnesses and any members of the public. The meeting is to be bilingual—headphones can be used for simultaneous translation from Welsh to English on channel 1, or for amplification on channel 0. The meeting is being broadcast and a transcript of the proceedings will be published later. May I remind people to turn off their mobile phones? I remind Members and witnesses that there is no need to touch the microphones; they will come on automatically. In the event of a fire alarm, I ask people to follow directions from the ushers. I have apologies from David Rees, Byron Davies, Joyce Watson and Dafydd Elis-Thomas. There are no substitutions.

Ymchwiliad Dilynol i Sgiliau Gwyddoniaeth, Technoleg, Peirianeg a Mathemateg (STEM) (Sesiwn 8) Follow-up Inquiry into Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Skills (Session 8)

[2] **William Graham:** I welcome our witnesses and thank them for their written papers, and I ask them to give their names and titles for the record.

[3] **The Minister for Education and Skills (Huw Lewis):** Good morning, Chair. I am Huw Lewis, Minister for Education and Skills.

[4] **The Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology (Kenneth Skates):** I am Ken Skates, Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology.

[5] **Professor Williams:** I am Julie Williams, chief scientific adviser to the Welsh Government.

[6] **Mr McCarthy:** I am Pat McCarthy, senior policy manager in the Department for Education and Skills.

[7] **William Graham:** Thank you very much. I am going to start the questions today. Could I ask both Ministers about the importance of continuing professional development in science particularly, to ensure that science teachers are adequately trained to teach their subjects and enthuse their students?

[8] **Huw Lewis:** Of course, Chair, the Welsh Government recognises absolutely that continuing professional development needs to be at the core of our concerns, particularly in the twenty-first century when so much is being asked of our schools system. You, I am sure, took note of my announcement earlier in the week concerning the new deal for teachers, which is a new departure, in the sense that it will provide a level playing field and an entitlement for high-quality—world quality; world-class—CPD for each and every teacher. Schools will be responsible, through the headteacher, for drawing up a development plan, which will have to spell out how it balances the needs of the school in relation to CPD alongside the needs of the individual professional and their development as a professional. I am confident that we will see steps forward in terms of access to CPD right across the country, having done this.

[9] **William Graham:** One thing that came out in evidence, particularly in our last session, was the need to encourage students to start science as soon as possible. Would you have a view on that?

[10] **Huw Lewis:** I am sure there might be varying views among educationists, and I am sure that the professor would have something to say about this. My own instinctive feeling, and the Welsh Government certainly follows this policy, is that as early as possible is best. Of course, the foundation phase does encourage through the guidelines around it the exploration of the world, and that includes very early observation, and even measurement at that stage as well, which are the beginnings, really, of sparking a young person's curiosity as regards science. I can see that Julie is dying to come in.

[11] **Professor Williams:** I think it is never too early to inspire children, but it depends how you package science. You need to be very clever in the way that you teach science and do it in a way that is really relevant to young children. However, children as young as three are experiencing science. For my grandchildren, one of their favourite programmes is *Nina and the Neurons*, so they are soaking up science through entertainment from a very early age. We need to explore ways of introducing science to children and inspiring them and showing how interesting it can be. This is something that I am trying to work on with a media group, for example. Within Wales we have very good science television in Welsh. S4C has been very supportive. We do not have the same amount of focus in Wales in English, and that is something that I want to work with the BBC and ITV on. It is a way of inspiring children. However, in terms of education, and how you actually teach and support primary school teachers, that is a major area that I would like to look at, with ideas around STEMnet ambassadors, bringing in the enthusiasts that we have in science, both in industry and in academia, and connecting them to primary schools and secondary schools, and primary school teachers. That is something that we are working on at the moment.

[12] **Huw Lewis:** If I may, Chair, it is very timely that the committee is engaged in this sort of thinking and this sort of inquiry, because Professor Graham Donaldson is currently out and about around Wales conducting a very wide-ranging review of the curriculum for Wales. We will be constructing the first bespoke, made-in-Wales curriculum, and of course issues around STEM and how that feeds into the system will be a very live subject for the professor. It may well be worth, if you have not already—I do not think that you have—asking the professor to speak with you. I think Professor Williams is also correct to mention that we have to have a mind to support, particularly at the primary stage. It does concern me that we have a shortage of subject specialists in our primary system, not just in terms of STEM, actually, but in many subjects—music and sport would be another two that would be of concern. I have asked John Furlong, who is looking at the ITT situation in Wales at the moment, to bear this in mind prior to him coming back with recommendations for me about initial teacher training.

[13] **Keith Davies:** Gwnaf ofyn yn Gymraeg. Un o'r problemau rwyf yn ei weld y dyddiau hyn mor belled â bod pynciau STEM yn y cwestiwn yw cyngor gyrfaoedd. Gallaf i roi enghreifftiau i chi o fynd yn bersonol i ysgol a thrio cael yr ysgol i gynnig mathemateg pellach i blant a dirprwy yr ysgol yn dweud wrthyf, 'Wel, yn yr ysgol hon, mae'r rhieni eisiau i'r plant un ai i wneud cemeg, ffiseg a bywydeg oherwydd eu bod nhw'n mo'yn mynd i mewn i'r gwasanaeth iechyd neu maen nhw'n gwneud

Keith Davies: I will ask my question in Welsh. One of the problems that I see these days as far as STEM subjects are concerned is careers advice. I can provide you with examples of going personally to a school and trying to get it to offer further mathematics for children, and the deputy at the school telling me, 'Well, at this school, parents want their children either to do chemistry, physics and biology because they want to go into the health service, or they are doing French, history and English in order to go into the

Ffrangeg, hanes a Saesneg er mwyn mynd i mewn i'r gyfraith.' Dywedais i, 'Beth am beirianeg? Beth am wyddoniaeth?' 'O does dim diddordeb gan rieni yn yr ysgol hon yn y pethau hynny.' Ni wnaf i enwi'r ysgol. Mae'r ysgol yng Nghaerdydd mewn ardal eithaf cefnog. Fodd bynnag, un o'r problemau sydd gennym ni, rwy'n credu, nawr yw Gyrfaedd Cymru, sydd wedi newid. Felly, mae dau gwestiwn gennyf. Pwy sy'n mynd i roi'r cyngor i'r plant am yrfaedd a phwy fyddai'n ei roi ar bynciau STEM? A yw'r bobl sy'n rhoi cyngor iddyn nhw yn mynd i'w roi'n ddiduedd?

law.' I said, 'What about engineering? What about science?' 'Oh, parents in this school have no interest in those things.' I will not name the school. It is a school in Cardiff in quite a privileged area. However, one of the problems that we have at the moment, I believe, is with Careers Wales, which has changed. So, I have two questions. Who is going to provide the advice to children on careers and who would provide that on STEM subjects? Are the people who provide them with advice going to do so in an impartial manner?

[14] **Kenneth Skates:** Shall I take that question?

[15] **William Graham:** Please.

[16] **Kenneth Skates:** The role of providing impartial guidance lies with Careers Wales. The role of providing awareness, if you like, and advice on careers and the world of work, fundamentally lies with the school. There is anecdotal evidence—you have identified it this morning—that some schools are not being as responsible as others. What I would say, though, is that I have got no problem in advice being based around labour market information that is sensitive to local employment and economic prospects. I think that is only fair and right, and that is something that Careers Wales is looking carefully at with the new website, which will go live by the end of the year.

[17] **Keith Davies:** Pryd ddylai plant gael y neges? **Keith Davies:** When should children get that message?

[18] **Kenneth Skates:** Okay, let us separate out here—I think that Richard Spear did when he attended—the difference between career and work awareness and career and work advice. I think that it is right and proper that awareness should be encouraged from the earliest age, but advice should be focused at key stages. So, for example, I have a three-year-old nephew who is obsessed with tractors. It may well be that he would like a career as a farmer; it may well be that he would like to build and design tractors. We do not know yet. We are encouraging that inquiry into and focus on what he enjoys, and that is right. The foundation phase should be doing that for all young people, but it would not be appropriate for me, with him being just three years old, to be telling him, 'Oliver, you need to be thinking about maths, physics and chemistry at GCSE or at A-level.'

[19] **Keith Davies:** Why not, Ken? [*Laughter.*]

[20] **Kenneth Skates:** So, it is absolutely vital that awareness is encouraged throughout education, and throughout a variety of means as well, so, for example, we have the enterprise troopers that encourage creative thinking and enterprise, we have skills competitions, which we are performing incredibly well at, and we have got the ambassadors, as well, in terms of the STEM ambassadors and the apprentice ambassadors. So, you continually make sure that there is awareness of careers and of the world of work throughout education, but that, at critical times, you are offering cast-iron, sound advice and guidance that is impartial and based around labour market intelligence and future jobs growth trends.

[21] **Julie James:** May I just come in on that? We had quite a lot of evidence to show that children who come from families with STEM parents, if you like, are far more likely to be

aware of what science-based education can provide in the way of careers—engineering and so on—than children from other backgrounds. I think that the anecdote that Keith was telling you very much highlights that, namely, if you have parents who think that science leads only to careers in the health service, you get a very skewed idea of what the labour market actually looks like. The other thing is that we know that we are desperately short of engineers. So, I do think that we need to do something about Careers Wales and the schools having a wider range of science-based careers in mind when their staff and teachers help people make those really crucial choices for year 10—I always have to figure that out, because I want to call it ‘third year’. *[Laughter.]*

09:30

[22] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, I think that you are absolutely right and that is a fair analysis of the current challenge. We have set up the strategic forum on careers development, of which, this week, I have invited Julie to become a member. I think that, alongside what Careers Wales is currently doing, and the plans that it is putting in place to enhance its online presence, it is also worth bearing in mind that we are also in the development stage of the ESF-funded programme for enhanced employer engagement with schools. This will be a game changer in terms of work exposure and work experience. I think that it is wrong—I think, again, that Richard Speer identified this—for us to see work experience as a sheep-dip exercise, where you basically apply the same rule and the same formula to every single young person, and send them out for a week to get so-called work experience where, often, they are in the back office of an engineering firm, whereas what they actually wanted to experience was the hands-on mechanics. The enhanced employer engagement programme will be far more nimble and intelligent; it will involve, first and foremost, identifying those young people who are at risk of disengaging, and giving them enhanced support in terms of work exposure and experience, but it will also bring together employers to get the employers from the local area into schools, which will really boost this. We already have 36,000 employers, I think, on the Careers Wales database, but what we are doing will be encouraging stronger ties between schools, colleges and key employers. That does not just mean the larger employers; it can also mean the smaller employers and the public sector employers that are prevalent in the area, which is particularly important in places such as Powys, as I think that we have heard in previous meetings.

[23] So, you get the employers, engage with the schools, and you get further education engaged with higher education, with the schools and employers. The key here, as well, in terms of engineering, is that there is a big challenge for many employers within the STEM sector, but particularly the engineering sector, in terms of offering the meaningful work experience that young people wish for. So, for example, it is right and proper that Airbus UK does not allow young people onto the shop floor. What we are seeing more of—at the moment, our activity is focused on women—is collaboration with further education, where young people are able to experience the workplace in a safe environment of, in this case, Deeside College, in its apprenticeship facility. That has the added bonus of then exposing young people to vocational pathways and apprenticeships. So, you are basically hitting two birds with one stone there. We are going to be encouraging far more of that with the enhanced employer engagement programme.

[24] I do not want to take up too much more time, but in this area as well we have the ongoing development on the youth guarantee prospectus, which forms the fundamental part of the youth guarantee, that is, the offer and acceptance of a suitable place post-16. With the development of the youth guarantee prospectus, which is taking place at the moment, we will have the ability to enable young people to identify all opportunities in the local area, where there is the growth, and where there is a future demand, at an earlier age. That, alongside Careers Wales’s development of the website for younger people, and for them to access it at any age, I think, will be a game changer.

[25] **Julie James:** I am glad to hear you refer to the website, because it is awful.

[26] **Kenneth Skates:** That is something that, early on, when I was appointed, I raised with it. The point that I made was that, when I first went to the website, I stopped counting at 38 the number of options that you could hit on the home page. It needs to be very clear; it needs to be easier to navigate. The other thing that I did yesterday at the latest meeting of the strategic forum on careers development was to ask for a future meeting to be based around analysis and predictions of how young people will be seeking careers information and advice by 2020. Already we know that, to some extent, Facebook is becoming antiquated. That is what young people are telling us. How will they be seeking advice, news and information by 2020? So, we will be meeting with experts in communications and computing to make sure that the architecture that we will put in place in the coming months, and over the course of the next year, will be robust enough to last for several cohorts of young people.

[27] **William Graham:** Eluned is next.

[28] **Eluned Parrott:** Thank you, Chair. I want to return to the role of Careers Wales in delivering careers advice. When it gave evidence, it clearly pointed to focusing its proactive activity at the key junction points in young persons' pathways and year 11 was the place where it focused most attention.

[29] However, we have had evidence here and also in my own experience of advising students going to university for many years, in Cardiff University, I would see a lot of young people who, in year 9, had made the wrong choice and it had prevented them from then going on to study the degree that they wanted to do or going into the career that they wanted, particularly, perhaps, dropping chemistry at GCSE and then not realising that they could not go into bio-medical sciences without chemistry, because they had the wrong sciences, essentially. Alternatively, it could be things like dropping French at GCSE level and then not being able to do English at Oxbridge. Those are the kinds of things that, perhaps, young people are not seeing early enough. The question is, really, in order to make sure that this is not happening and we are not cutting down on young people's opportunities at that stage, do you see it as a role for Careers Wales to be more proactive at year 9, or do you think that there is a training need for teachers to help them to understand the things that they need to be thinking about when they are giving young people this informal advice at that point?

[30] **Kenneth Skates:** I think that the Member raises a really important point here and I would say that both are required. Also, we have long heard that it would be helpful for teachers to spend time in industry and that, again, is where we are hoping that the enhanced employer engagement programme will serve another purpose.

[31] I know that when Richard Spear came here the example was of the student choosing needlework or needlecraft, was it not?

[32] **Keith Davies:** He wanted to do electronic engineering.

[33] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, exactly. That is a perfect example. We need to make sure that programmes that are funded—of course, under the new funding formula, STEM-based programmes will be in an advantageous position now—meet the needs of the outcome, which is, essentially, the employability prospects of young people. However, to answer your specific question, we need to do both.

[34] **Eluned Parrott:** So, what are you doing in that regard?

[35] **Kenneth Skates:** First of all, with the enhanced employer engagement programme,

we are going to be exposing teachers more to the world of work, so that their advice can be based on experience as well as assumption. It has often been based on assumption, but it needs to be based on experience and intelligence, which is what the ESF programme will seek to achieve.

[36] In terms of Careers Wales offering more advice, I think it has already appeared to say that it is focusing more on year 9 and making sure that the right guidance is offered.

[37] **William Graham:** Thank you. Rhun is next.

[38] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** A allwn ni symud ymlaen at addysg uwch? Rwy'n meddwl yn eich tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig, rydych chi'n dweud, Weinidog, bod diwygiadau addysg uwch yn 2012 wedi rhoi'r sector mewn sefyllfa llawer cryfach i fuddsoddi mewn darpariaeth STEM. A allwch chi siarad mwy am hynny, yng nghydestun y ffaith bod y premiwm pynciau drud bellach wedi'i dynnu oddi ar sefydliadau a bod pryderon difrifol ynglŷn â hynny?

Rhun ap Iorwerth: Could we move on to higher education? I think that in your written evidence, you state, Minister, that reforms in HE in 2012 have placed the sector in a far stronger position to invest in STEM provision. Could you tell us a little more about that in the context of the fact that the expensive subject premium has now been removed from institutions and that there are serious concerns about that?

[39] **Huw Lewis:** I am very glad that the Member has asked me this question, because it gives me the opportunity to clarify this situation and it is important that everyone is clear on how the money now flows from the public purse towards Welsh HEIs. Unfortunately, I think, during some parts of the conversation around funding in higher education, it has suited some people perhaps to obscure the reality of the situation.

[40] Essentially, the bulk of the resource from the public purse that flows into HEIs now goes through the student—in other words, it is in the student's back pocket as they walk through the entrance of the institution—and that has changed the pattern entirely of the way that resources flow. It is to do with student numbers and it is to do with recruitment and it is much less to do with the terms and conditions of grant that HEFCW has, in the past, used to ensure the public good in terms of the relationship with higher education. Of course, HEFCW continues to have those resources, but they are much reduced. It was not more than two or three years ago that HEFCW was, perhaps, writing cheques for about a third of the resources of your average HEI in Wales, although there is variation. Next year, it will be down to 10% and for some HEIs it will be less than 10%. So, the pattern has changed, but the important thing to grasp is that, because of the way that we finance our students in Wales and the generosity of that system, the overall resource for higher education continues to grow. If I have my figures right here, in 2011-12, the HE sector was receiving about £1.26 billion. By 2015-16, that will have gone up to just shy of £1.5 billion. There is no other part of the public realm—of course, universities are not part of the public sector, but they are in the public realm—that is enjoying that soundness of health in times when there are really quite vicious UK Government cuts that we are having to deal with in Wales.

[41] So, there is a very robust financial contribution from the Welsh public to the HEIs, and it is increasingly their responsibility to organise how they distribute resources within a given institution. It is not the case anymore that HEFCW can pull those levers of terms and conditions of grant to the same extent that it used to, hence the need for the Higher Education (Wales) Bill, of course, which is going through the Assembly at the moment.

[42] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** What evidence do you have that that is helping STEM, though, because that is what we are talking about today?

[43] **Huw Lewis:** I am not aware of it either helping or hindering STEM in a Welsh context.

[44] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** However, it was a priority to help STEM; is it not anymore?

[45] **Huw Lewis:** Of course, it is a priority and HEFCW, as I say, continues to have an allocation of about £15 million for expensive subjects. However, we are evolving into a new regime here, where it will be necessary for the conversation between HEFCW and HEIs to change over time, so that it is not a conversation about, ‘Well, these are your terms and conditions of grant’; it will be much more about HEFCW regulating, for the good of Wales as a whole, where exactly the emphasis in a given HEI needs to be. Of course, there will be a conversation there; these are autonomous institutions, and the conversation has to be based on co-operation. However, we will have a completely different dynamic behind the conversation.

[46] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Again, I bring us back to the fact that this is an inquiry into STEM in particular. What are you hoping to see higher education institutions doing to make sure that, under the new regime, STEM is helped to move forward and that there continues to be increased investment in STEM? I think that there is agreement that that is necessary.

[47] **Huw Lewis:** Of course, I would make very clear to HEFCW—in terms of the remit letters that I would hand over to it, for instance—that this is a Welsh Government priority. However, the tactical decision making, if you like, and the conversation between HEFCW and HEIs is an arm’s length one, and we have to balance the autonomy of the institutions against this.

[48] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** I have just one last question. Should it not be more of a Government responsibility to set strategy in exactly this kind of area, rather than just washing your hands and telling universities, ‘Get on with it; we would like STEM to be a priority, but it is up to you, really’?

[49] **Huw Lewis:** There is a very dynamic conversation, which I would hardly describe as washing one’s hands of this situation. However, if you are proposing that we nationalise the universities then that is quite a different conversation, is it not?

[50] **William Graham:** We have supplementary questions from Eluned and Keith.

[51] **Eluned Parrott:** On this point, I wonder whether I could ask Professor Williams—you are the voice of the scientific community in Government—what concerns the scientific academic community has raised with you regarding funding for expensive subjects, and what representations have you made to Government on this matter.

[52] **Professor Williams:** I think that it is important to have a strong focus on STEM in higher education, and I have made those representations. I think that what I am also providing is evidence to show where we are in terms of STEM scientists—research scientists—in Wales.

09:45

[53] Those figures will emerge in the next few months, but it is clear that we are down some several hundred scientists in Wales in the STEM area. However, HEIs are aware that if they want to achieve their ambitions of being research-active universities and of being universities that are climbing up the league tables, which are very important, then STEM must be at the heart of this. So, there is a lot of recognition among universities that this must be their ambition. The Minister is correct that they decide on the allocation of their budget and, yes, they have received a reduction in a particular area, but it does not mean that they have to

reduce that area; they can change their budget and decide what areas they prioritise and what they do not.

[54] So, I think that what I am providing is the evidence of where they are and where we are in Wales in terms of research scientists. We have some excellent scientists and those we have are punching well above their weight. If you look at the recent Elsevier report, it shows that we have 0.14% of world scientists and yet we produce 0.3% of all publications, 0.7% of the really top, highly cited publications and 0.86% of publications associated with patents. So, we are producing impact and excellence. So, there is a great argument that we need more of these scientists and that is something that is now being seen more clearly by universities.

[55] **Eluned Parrott:** But if I may say, Professor Williams, funding that comes into universities to pay for research pays for research and is ring-fenced for that purpose, as I am sure that you are very well aware. Similarly, funding from patents is more flexibly used within HEIs. However, the question is whether the money is there to teach the more expensive subjects in universities, because you cannot divert research funding into that kind of work.

[56] **Professor Williams:** No, but I am talking about your whole balance of what you invest in in the university—how many particular scientists and lecturers that you have in certain areas. Universities have the ability to change those priorities and the actual number of individuals who would teach in that area. So, that would come out of the teaching budget and although the teaching budget may have been changed, it does not prevent universities from putting more money into STEM subjects if that were strategically important. What I am trying to produce is the evidence to show that that should be strategically important.

[57] **William Graham:** Time is moving on. Keith is to come in very quickly and then we will hear from Julie on this subject.

[58] **Keith Davies:** Yesterday, in the Children, Young People and Education Committee, we talked about the higher education Bill. Part of that Bill is on finance and that there should be a code and the person who decides in the end whether or not that code is acceptable for individual HEIs is the Minister. It seems to me that when you develop the detail of the code, you can respond to the question that Rhun asked and say, 'I'm not happy with what this HEI is putting forward because the percentage for STEM subjects is not what I want it to be'. But, I do not know the detail of the code yet.

[59] **Huw Lewis:** The code has not been written, but you are quite right—you have put your finger on a very important issue. Essentially, that higher education Bill, as I have said, will change the dynamic of the conversation between Government, HEFCW and the institutions. We have to be aware, though, as we draft this legislation, that universities are autonomous bodies; they are not state run and that autonomy is protected and respected by me. However, there is space within Wales and there needs to be a much more connected strategic conversation about the needs of Wales vis-à-vis what HEIs get up to and what they prioritise and where they decide their resources go. It is a good time to be doing this. As I have said, there is new legislation coming in. If we get that right, it will give us better traction, but also universities are in a very good place financially over the next few years within Wales. So, we need to have that conversation. The legislation is not everything; that conversation needs to be about more than legal regulations and constraint or whatever. It also needs to be about recognition within Welsh higher education that it is a part of the community of interest of Wales. STEM is one standout example, I think, and Julie has pointed to the overall shortage in the Welsh economy of scientists and engineers, and she is quite right. That is having an effect on how economically prosperous we are; we need to turn to our HEIs to have a conversation about how we put that right. My fear at the moment is that Welsh HE is too used to acting as individual organisations. There is not enough attention paid to what

Wales needs, and when you consider that there is a hefty contribution from the Welsh public to their financial wellbeing, I think that that conversation needs to be progressed, and I will be saying a lot more about that over the coming months.

[60] **William Graham:** I would like to make progress, if I may. Julie is next.

[61] **Julie James:** Both Ministers will not be at all surprised that I want to ask you about computing as a subject in schools—a topic, I think it is fair to say, that I bang on about at some length. This is for both Ministers, and for the professor as well, what is your view of the current state of computing as a subject in schools, distinct from ICT, so coding in particular, and what are we going to do about getting ourselves back into a lead position?

[62] **Huw Lewis:** This is part and parcel of that all-encompassing curriculum review that Professor Graham Donaldson is involved with. I know that he is very concerned that we get this agenda right when it comes to computing—ICT as it was. I am also very concerned that we do not—. I will certainly not make decisions in haste in my office about what the latest article I read informs me is the best way forward, or the latest expert who speaks out on the issue. I would rather get this right and build this and integrate it into our curriculum proper rather than make hasty decisions, which I think is the case with what is happening in England at the moment, where the Minister for education in England is making flamboyant announcements about changing computing in the curriculum, while he knows full well that he does not have a workforce that can deliver on it because the professional development has not been integrated with the change. We are not going to do that in Wales; we are going to do this properly. It may well take—. I know that the ICT steering group is a fantastic group of people that has helped us out here and given us insight into this issue. I know that it is impatient, but it is important that this is integrated across the curriculum and that we get those elements of what we are asking teachers to deliver clear in our minds, and that, in parallel with that, we are actually delivering the training for the professionals to be able to deliver in the classroom.

[63] **Julie James:** I am very glad to hear you say that. Obviously, we are very well aware of the ICT steering group's recommendations. Dr Tom Crick has given evidence to the committee, and the Minister will know that I attend the Technocamps events very regularly down in Swansea and so on. I am very glad to hear you say what you say; I absolutely endorse that, and obviously we need to get it right. However, we also need to make sure that we implement it so that we do not lose a whole cohort of students to being what Tom Crick himself would say are just users rather than makers of computer software. The ICT curriculum, as it stands at the moment, as I am sure you know, Minister, is dreadful, really, and it puts people off. We have people dropping out of computing A-level in droves because they think that it is more of the same of that very user-orientated, almost secretarial ICT course that we currently have. While I absolutely agree with you that the evidence needs to be there and that we need the teachers to support it and so on, we also do not want three or four years-worth of our young people being debarred from what is one of the major growth areas for employment. It is one of the base skills that you need for nearly all other science—if you cannot sort out your computer programme, you really cannot do more very much scientific research or teaching these days. So, I suppose what I am saying is: can we get on with it?

[64] **Huw Lewis:** We are getting on with it. It is not going to take three or four years, for instance, to make that decision on what the curriculum for Wales looks like, and Professor Donaldson will be reporting back to me before the end of year. It is also important to grasp the realism of the situation here. It takes time to take a large workforce and reskill it. That is essentially what you need to do if you are going to do this right. There is coding going on out there in our schools, and there are schools that have taken this on with enthusiasm and are doing some fantastic work with it. There is no constraint upon schools to carry on in the same old-fashioned way, but there needs to be an evolution if this is to deliver properly for our young people.

[65] **Kenneth Skates:** On coding, you are absolutely right—we are going to have a teacher in every high school by September who is able to offer coding. So, work is being done. We had the second Digital 2014 conference last week. It is right and proper that we are coming under pressure from that sector to move as fast as possible, but, as the Minister said, we need to get it absolutely right. Also, it is heartening to see that such a large proportion of young people are now looking positively at computing and coding, and it is quite important as well that we integrate whatever learning that takes place within a school environment with informal forms of learning; 20% of learning in terms of coding takes place via the internet at the moment. So, there is an important need to recognise the emerging skills and the emerging offer via informal channels.

[66] **Julie James:** May I make one last point, with the Chair's indulgence? It is a slightly different point, and you have both heard me going on about this as well. Why do we not teach people to use a keyboard in our primary schools? We still teach them to use ink pens, which almost no young people use at all. I learnt to type in Canada 40 years ago, because people realised that that was a major skill. Why do we not do that?

[67] **Huw Lewis:** I am sure that that is something that Professor Donaldson will be more than happy to listen to and take on board.

[68] **Julie James:** You see people using two fingers to type.

[69] **Huw Lewis:** Yes; I do that, too. [*Laughter.*] It is an issue that I have long mulled over in my mind as to why we do not do that. I would say that handwriting is very important and we do need to teach it as well—

[70] **Julie James:** Of course, but it is becoming less important, I think; that is the point.

[71] **Huw Lewis:** If we made that decision, and it is something we could do in theory, there would be an issue around CPD, because I am sure that most primary school teachers could not teach it at the moment.

[72] **Julie James:** That is a damning indictment, actually, if you think how many years we have all been using keyboards.

[73] **William Graham:** Professor Williams, do you have a point on this?

[74] **Professor Williams:** I would agree that having people in every scientific field who are able to programme is probably essential now, and that has been a change over the last 20 years; that has become essential. So, I would agree that we need to focus on it, but I do not have anything to add in terms of what the Minister said.

[75] **William Graham:** We will go on to Eluned.

[76] **Eluned Parrott:** I wanted to ask some questions about gender stereotyping in STEM teaching and STEM academic pathways and careers. We talked a little earlier about how important it was to be teaching young people to love science very early in their lives, but there is a lot of evidence that there are gender stereotypes in terms of what kinds of pathways are appropriate for women, such as caring pathways for girls, while having other kinds of technology-based pathways for boys. Those stereotypes take root very early on. What should we be doing to tackle those at primary school level?

[77] **Professor Williams:** This is a really complicated problem, and I have thought about it. I have talked to people in Chwarae Teg, which is doing some very interesting work with

gender lensing and teaching parents how role stereotyping might influence children. We are talking about possibly doing something together around science and gender roles. There are no easy answers. I have set up a women's group chaired by Teresa Rees, who has extensive and world-recognised expertise in this area. She will be looking across all ages at females in science. This is one of the areas that I hope she will report back on with solutions. We are looking at solutions rather than identifying the issues any further.

[78] One other thing that we are looking at slightly higher up the career structure is bringing women back into science. I am very keen to do that. I am talking to the Daphne Jackson Trust, which has over a 90% success rate in bringing people back in after career breaks—mainly women—and to sponsor some fellows in Wales to bring more women back and stop losing our talent mid-career.

10:00

[79] So, there are a number of issues. Girls in physics is an obvious issue. We have tried to focus on girls in physics with a number of the National Science Academy projects, such as the physics Lab in a Lorry project and a few others. However, it is a complex issue. It is influenced by everybody in the environment, seemingly—teachers, parents and the culture of the school. We know that, if you are in a single-sex education environment, these biases are less, in that more girls will choose physics, for example, in a single-sex school. So, there is something complicated about the culture there that we need to get to grips with. I do not have a lot of the solutions at the moment, but we are looking into it as a priority.

[80] **Eluned Parrott:** You talked about the culture in our schools, and I would agree that there is an issue there. The Minister mentioned a little earlier that he feels that there is a lack of subject specialists in primary school education, in the sciences particularly. Could you comment on an issue that has been raised with me as a potential cause of unconscious bias, if you like, that, where we do have subject specialists, in maths and science, what we are seeing in the junior school classes is that the specialist will teach maths and science, and that specialist is often the male teacher in the primary school, which seems gives to give the impression that that subject is too hard for the classroom teacher to teach it, so a specialist has to come in because it is difficult, and it is something that the man in our school is going to do? I have had a couple of people raise that with me as parents, from their experience in their own schools. Schools are trying to be more proactive about science, but perhaps doing that is actually a cause of unconscious bias.

[81] **Huw Lewis:** We are in a sort of feedback loop here, are we not, with a previous generation's stereotyping feeding through into the pattern of what the workforce looks like at the moment? What we need to do is not only complicate it, as the professor has mentioned—because, of course, beyond schools, it permeates society—but we need to try to disrupt that. One of the interesting things, and I would encourage Members to discuss with schools and teachers, that the gender-lensing work that the professor mentioned has led to some first-class materials, case studies and educational resources being available now on Hwb, which is an online resource for our teachers in Wales. It is freely available to all schools, and there is some very valuable stuff there that I would encourage all teachers to delve into to inform themselves about the situation.

[82] You are right, this also feeds into a very big issue about where expertise is located within our teaching workforce. That is a big issue, and I intend to tackle that. I am waiting impatiently, really, for John Furlong to report back as regards how we could improve our initial teacher training provision, certainly, with these issues in mind.

[83] **Eluned Parrott:** We are extensively using superstars, if you like, to show people fantastic examples of women who have succeeded. Professor Williams, we use you very often

as an example of a woman who has got to the top of the scientific profession. Inevitably, we use people like yourself and Karen Holford at the engineering school at Cardiff University. Is there a danger that, by singling out the superstars, if you like, we may be at risk of scaring people off by presenting stellar women as opposed to trying to normalise it across the piece that there are more women? Is there evidence that there is a conflict between, as I say, the superstar approach versus a normalisation approach that is trying to make it just a little bit more normal for women to go forward in the sciences?

[84] **Professor Williams:** I think that we need to show that you can have involvement in science in all sorts of professions, and I think that that is an important message to get across. I suppose that using role models who are women is just trying to attack one issue, but we want to go further than that. We need to say it in a variety of jobs. I have thought of using the Welsh rugby team and showing the physiotherapist. These are people you can relate to; you could become that person, and you could actually have a realistic chance of becoming such a person, but you need to have these sorts of qualifications. You need to focus on maths and you need to be thinking about what you are doing in school to get there. So, you need to use people from all walks of life and show that science is important in a variety of roles. So, I agree with that, but I think that that element was used to show that women should consider science.

[85] **Huw Lewis:** Of course. It is worth mentioning, Chair, at this point, that I have asked officials, and there is work going on, to engage a wider range of role models, if you like. So, it is not necessarily about the absolute top flight, but examples of women throughout industry and the public sector who make their way in the world of STEM but are not necessarily Professor Julie Williams. *[Laughter.]*

[86] **William Graham:** I am conscious of the time, so I think that we have to move on now. Mick has the next question.

[87] **Mick Antoniw:** It is four years since the National Science Academy was set up. How well is it performing?

[88] **Huw Lewis:** This is, ministerially speaking, not an issue for me, so I will hand over to the professor.

[89] **Professor Williams:** I have just taken over, from the beginning of this year, at the NSA. Actually, since its inception, it has touched about 20% of children in Wales, and 20% of teachers. It does CPD as well as trying to enthuse children in a variety of ways. So, what I am doing at the moment is to review where we are, what seems to be working well and what may not be working well, to see how we can go forward. I am also taking a broader view with regard to what we are trying to achieve with the NSA, which is, really, to enthuse. As I mentioned earlier, looking at things like the media group and mass media, I was influenced by very good television when I was younger, such as Bronowski's *The Ascent of Man*. If you have really good quality programming, that can permeate through to a lot of people. So, I am taking a broader view as to what we can try to support within the NSA.

[90] **Mick Antoniw:** Obviously, as you say, you are looking into it at the moment. Evidence we have received so far, including other inquiries, such as the Science Advisory Council for Wales inquiry in April 2014, seems to suggest that there is confusion about purpose and objectives, with a lack of strategic approach and loss of impetus. HEFCW says that there is a lack of strategic approach to STEM outreach, and failure to maximise the opportunities offered to provide the co-ordination of leadership and outreach activities. It sounds as though there are some serious problems.

[91] **Professor Williams:** I think that that is slightly unfair, because this is during the time

that my predecessor became ill, and there was not a leader there, and there was not a strategy. That is no longer the state of things, and I intend to take a very personal interest in this. We are looking to build a strategy; we have had workshops with the hubs already, and those are continuing. So, we are drawing in all their advice on where we go further.

[92] I am very interested in working with the consortia and channelling what we can do through the consortia, and I am talking to my colleagues here about that and, hopefully, we can develop that in a more coherent way. So, I think that it is doing some very good things. I think we can do more. I am very interested in STEMnet. We have 1,400 STEMnet ambassadors in Wales. Every secondary school has a STEMnet ambassador. I have asked, and half of them have science clubs run by ambassadors, and although 30% come from academia, 70% come from industry, and local industry. So, this is something that I really want to look at and develop—develop CPD around it, especially around primary school teachers. I think this is an area that we can really develop. I do not think that it will lack a strategy, not by the end of the year, anyway. I hope to report back.

[93] **Mick Antoniwi:** There has been a slight loss of momentum, for understandable reasons, perhaps, but things are being brought back on track.

[94] **Professor Williams:** I hope so.

[95] **William Graham:** Just on that, committee heard previously that you were going to meet in May, and there was some discussion as to whether you met or not.

[96] **Professor Williams:** Yes, the first meeting of the workshop went on in May. Most of the hubs were in attendance. This is just the first of a number. We are also meeting with the Wellcome Trust forum, which is a UK national body that is looking at this very issue, so we are well plugged in with that. We will see what the best evidence is for going forward in this area.

[97] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Is it the case that we are pretty much starting again with the NSA? I think there is agreement that it was a good idea, but that it has more than lost some momentum. The hubs speaking to us did not really know what was going on or what their role was, or what the expectation of them was. Should we think of this as a new start?

[98] **Professor Williams:** Yes, I am reviewing the whole arena, but building on some strengths that have come out of it.

[99] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** On Welsh-medium education, we have taken some evidence on what has been happening on the Welsh-medium side in higher education. Obviously, some very positive steps have been taken in relation to the coleg Cymraeg. One issue is that of publications, written material and so on. Would you like to comment on where you think we are at on moves towards making sure that we do have more material?

[100] **Huw Lewis:** We are not where we need to be. I know that Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has flagged this up as an issue, and it is quite right to do so. In terms of materials, we must always remember that we need to be as aware of the online options as we are of anything else, but I will be working with them to try to encourage partners to remedy this as best we can. I think we have come a long way here, in that the provision that is now out there is unprecedented, really. We do have issues, though, around materials, and we do have issues about awareness and demand, to some extent, as well. So, we have to tackle all these things and keep rolling this agenda forward.

[101] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Is STEM in particular one of the biggest issues that you are having to deal with and that the coleg Cymraeg is having to deal with?

[102] **Huw Lewis:** I would certainly agree with that, if for no other reason than we need more fluent Welsh speakers as teachers in STEM subjects, and in physics in particular.

[103] **William Graham:** I will come back to questions in a minute, but I will just welcome those people from SPTS Technologies and PHS in the gallery today. We will be joining you for lunch later. We will be interested to hear what your comments on our committee will be then. Keith, you had a question.

[104] **Keith Davies:** It is a question and a comment, really. Last week, Professor Richard Davies of Swansea University was here, and he and I shared a problem that not enough children at A-level were doing maths and further maths. The report that we have had from you for today's meeting talks about Miller Research and the fact that, between 2010 and 2012, the number of youngsters doing maths and further maths at A-level increased fourfold. Now, I know that engineering departments in all universities across the UK like people who do maths, further maths and physics, so I am very pleased to see that and I wonder whether we could have some further information on that. I think that Richard Davies would be as interested as I am.

[105] **Huw Lewis:** We do have a support programme that is operating out there, but, yes, I can deliver a note to the Chair to give you the details behind that.

10:15

[106] **William Graham:** That is very helpful; thank you very much.

[107] Thank you very much to our witnesses. Time has beaten us yet again. Thank you very much for your answers to our questions.

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r
Cyfarfod**

**Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the
Meeting**

[108] **William Graham:** I move that

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the meeting for items 4 and 5 in accordance with Standing Order 17.42(vi) and (ix).

[109] I see that the committee is in agreement. Thank you very much for that.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10:15.
The public part of the meeting ended at 10:15.*

*Ailymgynullodd y pwyllgor yn gyhoeddus am 13:17.
The committee reconvened in public at 13:17.*

**Ymchwiliad i Dwristiaeth (Sesiwn 1)
Inquiry into Tourism (Session 1)**

[110] **William Graham:** Good afternoon. The apologies for this afternoon's session are

from Byron Davies, Dafydd Elis-Thomas, Eluned Parrott, David Rees and Joyce Watson. I suggest that we go straight into questions. Could I ask the witness to give her name and title for the record?

[111] **Professor Pritchard:** Thank you, Chair. I am Professor Annette Pritchard, Director of the Welsh Centre for Tourism Research.

[112] **William Graham:** Thank you very much. I will start our questions this afternoon. Could you expand on your view, please, that

[113] ‘Wales is in a situation where we have very low brand visibility, brand awareness and product visibility’?

[114] **Professor Pritchard:** Yes. I think that you have to split the market into two—domestic and international. In the domestic market, Wales is well-known and it is familiar to people, but it has quite a lot of brand issues and problems that we will explore, perhaps, as the meeting goes on. In the international market, Wales suffers from low brand awareness, low recognition of product and very limited connectivity. Those are actually the same problems that were identified nearly 20 years ago, in 1996. So, we have not really made much progress in terms of developing and establishing a recognisable ‘brand Wales’ overseas. That has led to Wales, really, being the third or fourth visit destination for UK visitors. It is the Anglophiles who like to come, time and again. When they have exhausted everywhere else, they think, ‘Oh, we’ll try Wales’. I actually think that that is starting to happen in some domestic markets, as well, which is problematic, because Wales is highly dependent on the domestic market—that is 90% of its visitors. However, overseas visitors account for 20% of the spend, so, they spend more and they are more desirable from that point of view, but, we have real issues in terms of marketing overseas.

[115] **Mick Antoniw:** Why do you think that is? What is it that we are not doing that we should be doing?

[116] **Professor Pritchard:** Why is Wales less known than everywhere else? That is probably a question that lots of Visit Wales and Wales Tourist Board personnel and Welsh academics have agonised over for quite some time. A lot of it, I guess, is to do with its—. The Irish and Scottish diasporas are much more vocal in places abroad, such as the Irish clubs in America. I have lots of Irish relatives and there are more Irish people who claim Irish descent in America than is realistically possible. I think that they have built strong brands over the years. They have this diasporic element. Actually, a lot of the diasporas are very good at negotiating in a business sense as well, and not just in a social sense. Wales has a diaspora overseas, obviously—quite a big one—but I think that the Welsh diaspora tends to be organised around social events rather than business events, whereas I think that the Irish and the Scots are quite canny, really, and they turn the social events into business discussions as well. So, there is that element.

[117] Also, I think that Wales has tended to be the forgotten part of the United Kingdom in many ways, including media wise. We do not get much attention in the media; we do not get much media output from Wales going abroad, and it tends to be obscured by the UK. If you go to America, there is the classic phrase: ‘Oh, Wales; that is in England’, and that kind of thing. It has not really changed much, even with the success of lots of celebrities who come from Wales and are quite vocal about being Welsh.

[118] **Mick Antoniw:** There are several categories of particular interest in tourism in Wales. One that I am surprised has never really quite latched on in places like America is historic tourism, with castles and so on—all the sort of stuff that is really loved. Is it a problem of not promoting Wales or getting Wales added onto other marketing? We are not

part of anything else, very clearly. When Americans come here, there is Windsor Castle and all those sorts of traditional things, yet the roots of our historic places within Wales are even greater and more concentrated than that. The second aspect to it, of course, is that there has been visible growth in terms of the whole outdoor stuff—Snowdonia, cycling, climbing and all that sort of stuff. What is it that we need to do? Is it just about spending money to keep plugging, plugging, plugging, or is it that we are just not forming the right partnerships, whether it is with English tourism or European tourism?

[119] **Professor Pritchard:** I think that it is both. We are definitely not spending enough money. Wales is dramatically under-resourced. If you compare it with any other tourism development agency in the UK and abroad, it is surviving on peanuts. Wales has as much marketing clout as Glasgow, which is pretty shocking, I think. Then, you add in all of Glasgow's other resources, such as VisitScotland, with a marketing budget of £47.5 million—Glasgow has approximately the same as Visit Wales—the marketing budget of Edinburgh, and the marketing budgets of the highlands and the islands. All of that put together is a significant economic deficit. Actually, it is surprising that Wales could achieve anything on that kind of budget.

[120] So, the budget is key, and everything shows you in tourism that, if you spend money, you get the visitors, because you are creating a perception, you are creating awareness, and you are creating a top-of-mind image. If you are not spending money, you will never be reaching the minds of people. They do not know about Wales. The ironic thing is that Wales has a great product to offer the overseas market, because it is castles and heritage that overseas visitors love. It has culture, it is very compact, and it has more castles than anywhere else in the world, I think. It has a very interesting trail. There could be faith tourism, heritage tourism, adventure tourism and that kind of thing. Different markets go for different things. The European market loves the history and heritage side of things, but it also likes the adventure side of the outdoors, the scenic beauty and everything else. Americans love the heritage. So, there are lots of things going on in Wales that would directly appeal to overseas markets, but first, we do not have the resources to target those markets, and, secondly, we have had marketing powers for 20 years, but the other parts of the UK have had them for longer. We are very dependent on partnerships with VisitBritain, and I think that over the past few years—. I am not sure what has happened to them, but those partnerships are not working very effectively for Wales at the moment. I have done quite a lot of research in preparing for this meeting, which has involved me looking at lots of VisitBritain sites and products, and it is quite shocking how Wales is virtually absent from the digital platforms of VisitBritain. That is key when you think that VisitBritain is saying that over 40% of the traffic to Britain is being driven through the digital platform. If that carries on, Wales is going to be even more invisible than it is now, because we are just not there. If you Google VisitBritain, it comes up as 'VisitBritain—official destination for England, Scotland and Britain'. There is only one other part of Britain—Wales—but it does not come up as 'England, Scotland, Wales', it comes up as 'England, Scotland, Britain', unless they have changed that in the last couple of days.

[121] **Mick Antoniw:** I am sure that others will explore this, but with the money side, how well do we spend what we spend?

[122] **Professor Pritchard:** I think that, considering that we do not have much money, Visit Wales is probably doing a reasonable job in terms of marketing to the domestic market. However, it is not really doing anything in terms of the overseas market, because the money is ridiculous. You cannot be targeting America or Europe on budgets of a couple of hundred thousand pounds. Obviously, Governments have hard decisions to make, but tourism is such an important economic driver and engine. What other industry delivers a return of 20:1 on Government spending? Marketing works—money talks, but marketing works.

[123] The message has to be that we need much more money to make Wales competitive. You can see that, when there was money, Wales was doing better in the international markets. In the mid-2000s, when we had strong marketing budgets that were matched with European funding—we are talking about marketing budgets of £50 million—Wales was doing well. We had the record peak of international visitors to Wales of over 1 million at that time—1.16 million or something like that. Since then, as budgets have decreased and the activity targeted at the overseas market has similarly fallen, visitor numbers have decreased. The correlation is quite clear, really, with spending money—obviously, you spend the money well—but we have a good product that is very appealing to people in the outside world. What we have to do is be able to communicate with them to build that brand and message, and then people come.

[124] **Keith Davies:** Rwy'n mynd i ofyn fy nghwestiwn yn y Gymraeg. Yn ddiweddar, mae Mike Ashton wedi gwneud ymarfer gwerthuso brand ar ran Llywodraeth Cymru. A ydych yn meddwl bod hynny'n mynd i weithio? **Keith Davies:** I am going to ask my question in Welsh. Recently, Mike Ashton has conducted a brand evaluation exercise on behalf of the Welsh Government. Is that going to work, do you think?

[125] **Professor Pritchard:** To be quite honest, I am not totally sure, because I have not heard anything about it. I think that it is a real concern, actually, because he has obviously completed this exercise. However, as far as I am aware—I have not seen any information about it—I have no idea what his brand vision is and I have no idea whether or not Visit Wales agrees with that brand vision. I think that that is a bit concerning. Obviously, I am an academic, so people may say 'They might not want to talk to you', but I think that that is unfortunate. I have a strong reputation in destination branding and I have advised lots of countries around the world on their brands, but I have never really had an opportunity to do that in Wales. There is a bit of an issue surrounding that, because I am not totally sure about the consultation that has taken place to develop that brand and I am not totally sure about what the brand outcomes are.

[126] I think that it is very difficult, because when you are taking a brand to the world, it is not Visit Wales that delivers the brand but the people on the ground—it is the industry operators, the people who serve in the cafes, the ice-cream vendors and the zip-wire operators. Speaking for myself—that is all that I can do—I do not feel that that has been happening at this point in time. I think that it is very worrying, in the sense that you need to bring the industry on board and you need to take the industry with you. If that is not happening, it is going to be very difficult to deliver whatever brand becomes the Welsh brand. However, I think that there are problems, because we need to be consistent; we need to agree a brand and then we need to invest in it because the most successful brands have that investment over long periods of time. Spain and Ireland, for example, have all been investing for decades and the essence of the brand has kind of stayed the same. We are in a situation where we are chopping and changing quite a bit and that is a dilution of resources. We need to agree it and get everybody on board, which of course costs money, but is vital in terms of delivering because the best brands deliver the stakeholders with them.

13:30

[127] **Keith Davies:** Beth sy'n peri pryder imi yw, yn ôl eich papur chi, nid ydych yn gwybod unrhyw beth am y peth ac rydym yn mynd yn ôl i 2012, sef dwy flynedd yn ôl; nid ydych chi'n gwybod unrhyw beth amdano ac yn sicr nid ydym ni'n gwybod dim amdano. Efallai y dylem fod yn gofyn i'r Llywodraeth am ble rydym ar hyn a phwy sydd wedi **Keith Davies:** What concerns me is that, according to your paper, you do not know anything about it and we are going back to 2012, which was two years ago; you do not know anything about it and we certainly do not know anything about it. Perhaps we should be asking the Government about where we are on this and who has looked at it and

edrych arno a'i drafod oherwydd mae'n amlwg ei fod wedi diflannu.

discussed it because it has obviously disappeared.

[128] Yr ail gwestiwn sydd gen i yw: a oes unrhyw densiynau rhwng twristiaeth a buddsoddi yng Nghymru er mwyn cael cwmnïau i ddod i Gymru? A yw'r Llywodraeth ar ddau begwn hollol wahanol o ran hynny ac felly bod tensiynau rhyngddynt? Un peth yr ydym yn ei drafod yn y pwyllgor hwn yw sut i greu swyddi a chael pobl i fuddsoddi yng Nghymru. A oes unrhyw densiynau rhwng y ddwy agwedd?

The second question I have is: are there any tensions between tourism and inward investment in Wales—bringing companies into Wales? Is the Government at two extremes there, which are completely different, so that there are tensions between them? One thing that we discuss in this committee is how to create jobs and get people to invest in Wales. Are there any tensions between these two aspects?

[129] **Professor Pritchard:** I think potentially there are tensions. I think that it is very important to separate the two brands as much as possible. Obviously, they have to have a core that may have similar kind of things, but they are very different markets: the tourism market and the inward investment market are different and I think that if you try to be all things to all people, it is not going to work. Your tourist wants to come for certain things—they do not want to come for what a business person might find attractive. So, it is a balancing act, but countries around the world have managed it. On business investment in Ireland, for example, Ireland has a very distinctive tourism brand—it is all about the craic and enjoying yourself in Ireland in the green fields and meeting Irish people and having fun and all that sort of stuff. There is nothing much about Ireland as it used to be, namely a tiger economy, in the Irish tourism industry. So, I think that there is a tension and obviously you would not want to do something in your tourism advertising that completely alienated the investment market, but I think that it can be balanced. It is very important to retain that distinctive tourism brand and recognise the differences. You are talking to people in different communication channels and different audiences and different venues, so the two need not necessarily be in conflict.

[130] **William Graham:** Picking up on that point then, what you are saying is that it needs a strategy that links both of those things, for example, communications, availability of major retail sites and so on, which appeal to both, do they not?

[131] **Professor Pritchard:** Yes.

[132] **William Graham:** I can see the point that you make in your paper on the way that branding has been done; it is very much cultural or rural, therefore, if you are an industrialist, it does not quite ring the bells that you want to hear.

[133] **Professor Pritchard:** It is difficult because there is a lot of development that has gone on in the highlands of Scotland and there has been a lot of digital development elsewhere, where the main attraction is the great environment—the clean rural environment. I do not think that they would necessarily conflict, but as long as the strategy is in place, to see that they are not directly clashing and undermining each other, then I think that it should be eminently feasible because plenty of other destinations have managed that.

[134] **Mick Antoniw:** To what extent has the demise of the airport over the last few years, et cetera, played a part in the accessibility or even the profile of Wales?

[135] **Professor Pritchard:** There is an issue because when you are going somewhere, you want to fly in as close as you possibly can to where you are going and I think that there has been an issue with Cardiff. Obviously, it has lost a lot of routes and a lot of passengers. I suppose that the thing with Cardiff is that, for a long time, it has basically been an exporting airport, so people went there to take flights for their summer holidays. What we need to do is

make it an importing airport as much as an exporting airport. I do think that that was happening with scheduled flights particularly, but not really with the charter flights. I think that it is vital.

[136] If we could get some hub routes out to America or the middle east, where your end destination is Cardiff, I think that that would work really well. We can see the value of those routes. Edinburgh has just got linked via Emirates air, or whatever the Qatari one is, into Doha, and it is estimated that that will generate about £86 million to the local economy in the first three years of operation. It is already talking about expanding the number of routes or the number of flights that serve it. So, it is very important, but it is going to be a long time before Wales perhaps becomes the first port of call, if it ever becomes the first port of call. However, obviously, if you have that facility, it makes travel a lot easier and it makes people think, 'Right, I'll go there'. We are suffering from the lack of a very well connected airport.

[137] Connectivity goes beyond the airport. It is also things like rail and roads. If London is the major entry point for overseas visitors, then we need to have good links between London and Wales to encourage visitors to come. Equally, Manchester is very important for the north Wales economy. Manchester is the second port of entry, I think, for overseas visitors. So, it is really important that north Wales can take advantage of, and exploit, the opportunities offered by Manchester Airport. That is where the relationships with VisitBritain are key.

[138] It is just not happening at the moment. The content for Wales on VisitBritain's digital platforms is pretty abysmal, in fairness. You can go on and buy tours to Britain and you can click down into your various country pages: Scotland has about 20 plus tours that you can buy and Wales has about four tours that you can buy—all of them are in south Wales. VisitBritain has a 'we recommend' section on that page. In Scotland, it recommends all the Scottish tours; in Wales, it does not recommend any Welsh tours. I think the couple of times I have been on, you can go to Man United's ground or visit York Dungeon, or it suggests something else. However, it is not recommending the tours that are on the Welsh page. Do you know what I mean? We need to really stock the digital content and to make sure that VisitBritain is working for us, not just for the London area. I think that that is what has been happening. I do not think that it is a concern unique to Wales. Every other visit organisation has experienced a decline in overseas visitors for the past five or six years. So, this is a concern that everybody is feeling and VisitEngland is having a conference about it next week.

[139] With VisitBritain, its targets have changed and its priorities have changed. Before, it used to be that there was a sense that it needed to disperse some of the overseas visitors around the UK—it was the UK then. That kind of happened because people were very conscious of that. Now, it is more about getting numbers and London is seen as the prime driver of that. So, a lot of effort is being focused into driving London tourism up, and it has—it has doubled in 10 years virtually, but that has been at the expense of everywhere else in the UK.

[140] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** You paint a very depressing picture; you have managed to depress me entirely. However, I can certainly confirm that you are quite right about what happens when you Google 'VisitBritain'. I can confirm that you would have the same result if you Google 'VisitBritain Wales'. It still says 'England', 'Scotland' and 'Britain'. That does not happen by accident on Google. Somebody arranges for that to be put up there and it is something that we should take up as individual Members, I am sure, and as a committee. It seems that we need to put the brakes on the decline more than anything now. We have targets, by 2020, of increasing visitor numbers by 10%. What are your thoughts on that? Is it even realistic, and what does it tell us about the ambition that the Welsh Government has about where we could go?

[141] **Professor Pritchard:** It is eminently realistic because the target is for 10% overall

growth, and the domestic market last year recorded growth of 3%. Over the past 10 or 15 years, tourism has recorded steady growth. It has grown year on year over the past eight years by 15%, so I think 10% is eminently achievable. I think that it is a bit under-ambitious. You are going to get 10% without trying very hard. As long as you keep doing what you are doing and you do it reasonably well, I do not think you are going to stretch yourself to get 10% growth over a 10-year period—it is 1% a year, is it not? So, I do not think the growth targets are ambitious enough; I do not think they reflect the strength and potential of the tourism industry. They might reflect the budgets, because without resources—I hate to labour it—Wales can never compete effectively on the domestic scene, never mind on the international scene. I would have thought that 20% growth would be ambitious, but achievable.

[142] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** How would you share that between domestic and overseas markets? Would you be targeting one ahead of the other, or would you be looking for a fairly equal mix?

[143] **Professor Pritchard:** I think that you are always going to look after the domestic market first, because that is your bread-and-butter market—that is 90%. Your operators are going to want you to target the domestic market first, because if you start to lose ground and lose traction there, you are in danger of the whole thing falling apart. We have serious problems in the domestic market; we have a brand challenge there. We do not just have a brand challenge internationally; we also have a brand challenge domestically. So, it is depressing again. We are very reliant on the north-west of England and the west midlands for our tourists in Wales; they make up over half of all tourists to Wales. That is two markets. We need to grow our market share in the other markets of the UK.

[144] The market that everybody wants is the south-east and London. We have lots of challenges in terms of developing our brand in London and the south-east. Research has shown that people are very familiar with Wales—they know where it is, but they think, although it is very beautiful, that there is not very much to do there. So, they think that it is scenic, but it is not aspirational; it is convenient, but there is not a lot to do there; it is geographically close, but emotionally distant. That is a real problem for us, because it ends up with this notion of Wales as being dull, experience light and it has little cachet. What do we love to talk about when we meet other people? We love to take about our holidays, where we are going and where we have been. Wales does not currently have the cachet of Cornwall, Scotland or the Lake District; it is seen as being a bit dull and a bit boring.

[145] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** That is all manageable reputation, because all those things that you mentioned are things that we know about as people who understand Wales, and who know that there is so much to do, such as activity holidays et cetera. These are manageable.

[146] **Professor Pritchard:** They are manageable, and that is where the marketing comes in to build the right brand to communicate with people. That is eminently achievable and it is eminently workable. Look at New Zealand. At the beginning of the 2000s, New Zealand had a terrible problem. It was regarded as a sheep farm at the end of the world; that was the overall image of New Zealand—nothing to do there, highly conservative, boring, not very aspirational and it takes an awful long time to get there. Look what 10 or 15 years of investment in a real brand and real product development has achieved for New Zealand. It is now investing NZ\$116 million in marketing, and it sees tourism as being the prime economic driver. It has achieved a fantastic turnaround in image, perception and reputation. It has taken money, time and resources to get there, but it is eminently achievable for Wales.

[147] **Mick Antoniw:** It is really just the perception, because even reasonably articulate, well read and intelligent people in London have asked me whether they will be able to get a copy of *The Guardian* in south Wales.

[148] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** I think they were taking the mickey.

13:45

[149] **Mick Antoniwi:** Unfortunately, they were not taking the mickey; that is part of the problem. May I pick up on what you said about the numbers with regard to organised holidays? Where Ireland seems to be successful—and Scotland to some extent, among others—is in relation to the people who want to go somewhere, and they want to know that you get to point A and everything is then laid on, et cetera. You see that in lots of countries. I have never seen anything like that here. I am sure that there are some, but I have never seen any organised tours that will take you somewhere and then deliver you back to wherever you want to go—London, Cardiff, or wherever. Why is it that the industry itself has not managed to put together that sort of package? Do we have the hotels and the infrastructure, or is it just that people are focusing elsewhere, or whatever?

[150] **Professor Pritchard:** There are some tours that you can buy, so I would not want to say that there are no tours. Part of the problem, perhaps, is the nature of the industry in Wales. A lot of tourism operators are small, independently run businesses, and they may employ six or seven people, who are very busy in terms of running the business, so they may not have the time or the inclination to start thinking outside the box and thinking about putting things in place to ease the tourism journey. The customer journey is a very important point in tourism, and I believe that it is true that we have not focused enough on it in terms of developing strategies and things like that.

[151] We are beginning to see some products develop around things like the coastal path. I know that, in Anglesey—because I am from Anglesey—there are some products developing where operators are co-operating and they are offering people a tour around the coastal path of Anglesey. You can stay with three different operators, so you walk the whole thing and your luggage is delivered to the next port of call, if you like. So, things like that are happening and they will be very important in terms of exploiting the potential of the coastal path, for instance. That is a massive attraction and is a massive potential selling point, but we need to ensure that we have the product in place so that people can exploit and enjoy it. We need those managed tours, if people want to walk, or whatever. So, there needs to be much more industry action as well in developing those, but they need to be told, ‘Actually, this could be really good for your business’. So, there is a selling message to the industry as well, and a kind of strategic leadership, to make sure that these things are available.

[152] In terms of overseas visitors, there are itineraries and tours planned out for people, and you can Google a seven-day tour of Wales or a 10-day tour of the highlands, or whatever. Those itineraries are there. It is not a difficult place to negotiate your way around, really, and a lot of the people who would come from overseas are independent travellers and they like to enjoy that exploration aspect to holidays. This is terribly stereotypical, but perhaps Americans like to enjoy a more tour-guided experience, especially if they are not particularly familiar with the location.

[153] **Julie James:** On that point, I live on the Gower, so I disagree with Mick’s idea that there are no guided tours; I would say that there are guided tours every hour of every day from about now until about the end of October. That is one of the issues: that we have a couple of well-known landmarks—I have just had a look on the VisitBritain website and it does say exactly what you said, but one of the tours is a tour of Gower—such as Caernarfon castle, Gower, or whatever, and the wealth of experience is perhaps not being exploited. The other thing I noticed is that there is nothing urban at all. So, there is no tour of the old Copperopolis works in Swansea, the birth of the industrial revolution, or anything like that. So, are you saying that VisitBritain does not have enough money to develop that kind of in-depth idea?

[154] **Professor Pritchard:** VisitBritain has a lot more money than Visit Wales. I believe that its budget is about £36 million or £37 million.

[155] **Julie James:** How is VisitBritain influenced? I do not know anything about this, so how would Wales influence that VisitBritain site? How would we get the headline on Google changed, for example?

[156] **Professor Pritchard:** I would imagine that it would be done either by the chair of Visit Wales or perhaps at a governmental level. I am not totally sure, but I would expect that it would be pointed out by the chair of Visit Wales to his counterpart, 'Actually, this is completely unacceptable and inappropriate, and we need to boost Welsh content on digital platforms'. Then it is an issue of whose responsibility it is to boost that digital content. I think that it is probably a bit of both. So, Visit Wales needs to supply VisitBritain with good digital content, and there is plenty of good digital content out there and there are plenty of tours that people can take that can be purchased. So, that needs to be up there. Why can you buy a Historic Scotland pass, why can you buy a National Trust for Scotland pass, an English Heritage pass and a general National Trust pass, but you cannot buy a Cadw pass? At first I thought, 'Maybe Cadw doesn't do passes,' but then, of course, I investigated further, and it does, but they are not on there.

[157] So, I think that it is partly a question of why this has happened—it is very difficult to explain why it has happened. I think that there has been a change in VisitBritain priorities, and I think that it has been focused on different priorities to those that would suit Wales. You can see that. There are tensions in the sense that VisitScotland is increasingly doing its own thing in terms of overseas markets. It has the money to be able to do it; we have not, so we are very reliant on making the VisitBritain partnership work, and we need to make sure that VisitBritain works for Wales as effectively as possible. I think that that needs agreements, and not just these kinds of vague co-operation statements that they have tended to be in the past. So, 'VisitBritain is responsible for marketing Britain and, as part of that remit, we'll look after Wales, Scotland and England'. We need to tie it down much more in terms of saying, 'You're going to do this, this and this, and we'll give you this, this and this and, hey presto, we'll have a great, populated digital site.'

[158] People do not spend much time on these sites. If you are not there straight away, catching their eye, you are not going to get them. It took me about five minutes to find a Welsh product when I was going through the VisitBritain site. Nobody is going to wait that long when they are deciding what to do. 'Two-hour tours from London' is an item that you can search for on the VisitBritain site. The results are all in the south-east and south-west of England, and Bath is the closest. However, they could easily come to Cardiff in two hours and easily have an organised tour, but there is no tour available.

[159] I worked in the public sector—I worked for the Wales Tourist Board about 20 years ago and I worked for the Sports Council for Wales as well. There has always been a kind of tension between London and the provinces, and I think that we are probably regarded as being pesky, moaning people, so I think that we really need to make those partnerships work effectively for us, and they have not been doing so to date. I think that the figures show that, and my worry is that everybody is going to be saying that across the UK—or across Britain, because Northern Ireland does its own thing with Tourism Ireland. So, they are all going to be pulling and putting pressure on VisitBritain, because all the English 'visit' regions have seen their figures fall. So, we are going to be saying the same thing, but we need to get in there first.

[160] **William Graham:** We have a few more questions that we wish to ask you. Rhun, you have a quick question on this.

[161] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Yes. You say that you were with the Wales Tourist Board. I will tell you about my experience as a journalist. In the days of the Wales Tourist Board, which was not perfect by any means—and I declare an interest as my wife used to work for the Wales Tourist Board as well for a short period of time—we used to do a lot of stories on Welsh tourism and, when there was a story, we had somewhere and someone we could go to for comment and for expertise. There was a champion of Welsh tourism in its chief executive, who happened to be a very public person anyway, in Jonathan Jones. We did tourism stories all the time. After the amalgamation of the tourist board into the Government, it took a few months or, maybe, some years of frustration at not being able to even ask questions to anybody about what was happening in the Wales Tourist Board before we ended up not doing any tourism stories anymore, and that was it, because there was no embodiment of the champion of Welsh tourism. Do you agree that it was a regressive step to lose that?

[162] **Professor Pritchard:** To lose the independence of the Wales Tourist Board.

[163] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Yes.

[164] **Professor Pritchard:** My personal opinion would be to say ‘yes,’ because I think that the Wales Tourist Board was an independent organisation. It was not part of government. Its job was to lobby on behalf of the tourism industry and its job was to build tourism, as you say. It had a very visible place. When you become part of government, there are obligations and there are restrictions on what you can say, and I think that that is part of the problem. It is not just in terms of getting tourism stories out there; it is actually looking for information. If you look on the Welsh Government website, the Visit Wales site is very poor in terms of its information, and that is really problematic because the industry looks to Visit Wales to provide the stats, to provide the research, to give it information that it can then use to build and develop the industry. However, if you go on it, it is very limited; it is basically a page. I know some of the research staff and I know that they are working really hard. They have loads of research there but it is not really getting to the people who need it. That is the same thing as with the stories. If there are no stories about tourism in the media, people do not realise the significance. Tourists are seen as a problem, they are not seen as a really important resource—a really important income generator.

[165] **William Graham:** I am sorry to stop you, but we have very little time. Keith, do you want to ask about funding?

[166] **Keith Davies:** Dywedasoch yn gynharach faint o arian oedd yn mynd i Glasgow, a bod Glasgow yn cael cymaint â Chymru. Faint rydych chi’n credu y dylem ei gael i wario yng Nghymru, o gymharu â lleoedd eraill? Pa swm yr ydych chi’n credu y dylem ei gael?

Keith Davies: You said earlier how much funding was going to Glasgow, and that Glasgow was having as much as Wales. How much do you think we should be getting to spend in Wales, compared with other places? How much do you think we should be getting?

[167] **Professor Pritchard:** We have to be looking to get back to levels that we were spending in the mid-2000s. Obviously, European funding can be used to match Government funding, but if your major competitors are all talking about £30 million-plus marketing budgets—so, Tourism Ireland is £36 million, VisitScotland is £47.5 million, and Glasgow is well over £6 million—and we are there with £7 million, we are not going to be able to compete. We are not going to be able to grow markets. When you are an established market and you have brand challenges, you have to be marketing very aggressively, and you need money to be able to do that. So, I think that we really need to be upping the budget for tourism quite substantially to enable Visit Wales to compete. Visit Wales is part of the Government now, and that is the situation until anything was to change, so we need to be

investing in that part of the Government. My worry is that it is losing that kind of lobby function, because it is part of the Government, so you do not work in the same way as you would if you were an independent agency. The problem is that most of our competitors are independent agencies—VisitScotland, Tourism Ireland—so they are all hands-off, or quangos as they used to be called. We are at a disadvantage, in a sense, because we are not, and we are at a disadvantage because we are severely underfunded compared with any other visit organisation.

[168] **William Graham:** Mick, could you make it a short question?

[169] **Mick Antoniw:** Do you think that, within the whole business portfolio or programme of the Government, it has been absorbed and has become an almost invisible part of other things? Do you think the fact that it is part and parcel of broad portfolios does not give it the visibility—

[170] **William Graham:** This question will be longer than the answer. [*Laughter.*]

[171] **Mick Antoniw:** I apologise.

[172] **Professor Pritchard:** Obviously, it is just an observation on my part, but I think that is probably a fair point. You get kind of absorbed into the overall, so it is very hard to be distinctive and to be fighting your corner, and it is very hard to be bidding for more and more money. Some things that people might have thought would be easier if they were a part of government have, I think, subsequently turned out not to be that way.

[173] **William Graham:** We are almost out of time. I just want to ask you one last question if I may. We had the Ryder Cup, and now we have the NATO summit—ostensibly, the world will be looking at Wales, and Newport in particular, but the Ryder Cup did not provide any dramatic benefits.

[174] **Professor Pritchard:** No.

[175] **William Graham:** What about NATO?

14:00

[176] **Professor Pritchard:** I am very sceptical about what benefit Wales will get from NATO. We must have a real Welsh presence there if it is to have any impact whatsoever. People have to be staying in Wales, eating Welsh produce, flying Welsh flags, otherwise the media just moves on and it goes to the next place, and I think that we will perhaps have a lot of the hassle but no benefit, really. You know, with things like journalists' tours and the like, they could be done alongside the NATO summit, because, presumably, there will be a lot of journalists looking for something to do while they are waiting for the summit to start, but who is going to organise them? Visit Wales is a tiny organisation compared with what it used to be as the Wales Tourist Board. There are something like eight, nine or 10 members of staff—something like that. So, I would not want to decry the job that they are doing, because I think that they are doing their best under very difficult circumstances, and I think that they are committed and, you know, passionate about making the best case for Welsh tourism, but I think that they are constrained by a lack of staff and a lack of resources, and I think that NATO could just be, well, much worse than the Ryder Cup, because at least the Ryder Cup was in Wales, and we had a lot of publicity about that. With NATO, it could just look like 'Wales: somewhere in England', and that would be a disaster.

[177] **Keith Davies:** Has the Ryder Cup not made any difference? In the village where I live, you have golfing tours—

[178] **Professor Pritchard:** Yes.

[179] **Keith Davies:**—and the village pub is always full of people, because what happens is this: there is a lovely hotel there, and they come to the hotel and they have three days of golf. I think that having the Ryder Cup has actually strengthened that.

[180] **Professor Pritchard:** Yes, I think that it has definitely boosted Wales's golf profile. The nature of these big events is that they do move on to the next destination, but I think that Visit Wales has worked quite hard to put in place golf tours and golf itineraries, and you are seeing golf tourism being a growing part of the Welsh product. I think that that is all down to the Ryder Cup; I do not think that it would have happened without it.

[181] **William Graham:** Thank you very much. Unfortunately, time has beaten us. You will receive a copy of the Record in due course. If you have any comments, please let us have them. Thank you very much for your attendance today.

[182] **Professor Pritchard:** Thank you.

[183] **William Graham:** I suggest a five-minute break.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 14:02 a 14:04.
The meeting adjourned between 14:02 and 14:04.*

Ymchwiliad i Dwristiaeth (Sesiwn 2) Inquiry into Tourism (Session 2)

[184] **William Graham:** I extend a warm welcome to our witnesses this afternoon. Would you mind giving your names and titles for the Record?

[185] **Ms Gwilym:** Prynhawn da. Lowri Gwilym wyf i ac rwy'n arweinydd tîm, Ewrop ac adfywio, gyda Chymdeithas Llywodreth Leol Cymru. **Ms Gwilym:** Good afternoon. I am Lowri Gwilym and I am team leader, Europe and regeneration, with the Welsh Local Government Association.

[186] **Mr Parson:** Prynhawn da. I am Huw Parsons, marketing and tourism manager for Carmarthenshire County Council.

[187] **William Graham:** Thank you very much. Perhaps we could make a start on our questions. Julie, could I ask you to start?

[188] **Julie James:** Yes, but you will have to give me 30 seconds to find my questions. [Laughter.] Could you just explain how the WLGA supports local government tourism activity and how it works in general? You probably heard us as you came in exclaiming how bad we thought the Visit Wales website was. Could you explain how you work with the tourist industry and Visit Wales, because I have no idea?

[189] **Ms Gwilym:** Fe ddechreuaf i Rydym yn gweithio'n eithaf agos efo swyddogion twristiaeth ar draws Cymru. Rydym yn mynychu nifer o gyfarfodydd rhanbarthol, lle mae'r awdurdodau lleol yn dod at ei gilydd i drafod twristiaeth yn ehangach efo swyddogion datblygu **Ms Gwilym:** I will start. We work relatively closely with tourism officers the length and breadth of Wales. We attend a number of regional meetings, where local authorities assemble to discuss tourism more broadly with economic development and regeneration officers across councils. Also, we have

economaidd ac adfywio ar draws cynghorau. Hefyd, rydym yn cael cyfarfodydd efo adrannau perthnasol yn Llywodraeth Cymru, ac felly mae gennym berthynas agos ac rydym yn gweithio efo Croeso Cymru fel rhan o'r adran economi hefyd. Felly, rydym yn cefnogi'r swyddogion twristiaeth ar draws Cymru, o ran eu helpu i ddatblygu polisi, ymateb i ymgynghoriadau ac yn blaen, ac rydym yn mynychu cyfarfodydd ar draws Cymru pan rydym yn gallu gwneud hynny.

meetings with relevant departments within the Welsh Government, and so we have a close relationship and we work with Visit Wales as part of the economy department as well. Therefore, we support tourism officers the length and breadth of Wales, in terms of assisting them with policy development, responding to consultations and so on, and we attend meetings the length and breadth of Wales when we are able to do so.

[190] **Julie James:** One of the things that we were just looking at with our last witness was that if you put 'Visit Britain' into Google, you get 'Visit England, Scotland and Britain'; Wales is absent from the title, for example. How would you go about influencing that? That, clearly, is not a good start, it seems to me, from the point of view of tourism in Wales.

[191] **Mr Parsons:** In terms of how the local authorities, as individual authorities, work with Visit Wales, and then through to VisitBritain, you have heard how the WLGA—. Visit Wales arranges to meet with us once a year to talk about its promotional schedule; sometimes that is probably it for us. We then run our own destination management, or we run some promotional plans on the best of our areas. Very often, we will link in Carmarthenshire and south-west Wales with some of the other organisations. In terms of VisitBritain, as a local authority marketing manager, I was pretty much unaware of what the benefits were for my businesses in Carmarthenshire. At the moment, VisitBritain seems very keen on emerging markets, which, in terms of Visit Wales objectives, are Germany, Ireland, America and England, and a lot of the spend is going on these emerging markets. Therefore, the benefit for us, in terms of its spend at the moment, is maybe very low. Certainly, the benefit for Carmarthenshire and south-west Wales might be very low.

[192] **Julie James:** Particularly if Wales does not even feature in the headline.

[193] **Mr Parsons:** Absolutely. From VisitBritain's own research, it said that London is the major one, and even with its emerging markets, it is likely that even current customers, from China or America, do not go outside the traditional well-known areas like Stratford, Edinburgh or London. What does that mean for Cardiff, which is one of our top destinations? At the moment, from a local government point a view, we do not think that VisitBritain, even if it does extend it for Wales, will change anything at the moment.

[194] **Julie James:** So, what do you do to market Carmarthenshire, for example?

[195] **Mr Parsons:** In terms of my tourism activities, marketing has changed very much for us. I have been in charge of tourism for five and a half years. Five and a half years ago, when I picked it up, the role of local government was to do a printed brochure. That was to supply promotional materials for people who wanted them in print. My father and my grandfather were printers and I know a lot about print; it was obvious that that was not going to go on forever. It was all built around taking money from local businesses and we would do their marketing. There is the internet now and businesses are much more savvy, so they do not need the local authorities to do that now. If you had asked us that question five years ago, the answer would be very different to now. We have really looked at how we can make sure—Carmarthenshire is quite a large area—that we try to help the businesses to promote themselves. So, as opposed to us using our limited funds to go straight to the consumer, we try to say that the consumer does not want to go to the local authority website or ask for brochures anymore, but that they want to go straight to the businesses. We then ask the businesses, 'How can we help you, with the money that we have, to do your own promotion?'

[196] In terms of marketing, marketing is about market research and helping product development and that is a really good role for the local authority. In the past, in economic development, there has been a lot of business support, which mainly looked at factories or the industrial side of things. It would seem that tourism, or hospitality, was low on the agenda because it was low paid. That has changed in the last two years. So, now, our local authority, and some of the others in south-west Wales, can certainly offer some of their funds and their support to help businesses grow. So, it is not just about the promotional side, because, in a way, that is not really the role of the local authority. We are not a marketing agency. Our role might be, if the person in Wales that has the biggest promotional budget, which is Visit Wales, it is my job to influence it as much as possible. So, on the front page of its promotional material, there is a picture of castell Carreg Cennen or Laugharne castle, for example. So, I make sure that we feed into its promotions. If it does a promotion on culture with a castle, and then when people ask for information, and the front page of our local websites or our local digital material have beaches, we will lose that interest. So, it is our job to make sure that our county is represented well with them, and that our businesses know about it. It has changed a lot in five and a half years. I think that the roles of most of the local authorities that I have spoken to have also changed as their budgets have gone down. However, with those that have not evolved, there might not be any need for them any longer.

[197] **Julie James:** This is my last question. I do not know whether you have tried to book a holiday in Carmarthenshire as if you were a German tourist, for example—I confess that I did not try until 20 minutes ago—but it is not easy. How do you help them market themselves as individual businesses? Do you have a brand Carmarthen, a destination plan, or something that helps?

[198] **Mr Parsons:** I actually did try to book as a customer to Carmarthenshire—not as a German—just a month ago. I had to work over night and I tried to book. I had to work in Llanelli one night and I tried to book into one of the hotels, but everything was gone. Then I was really trying to do all the websites to find everything. So I did try. I did try the local authority destination website. I am not keen on running gigantic, big websites, because I do not think that the local authority is a marketing company. However, the business has asked us to run a website that does not have accommodation on it, because so many other people can do accommodation better than the local authority. It has asked us to make sure that everything is there; things to do. Businesses say that accommodation do booking websites so much better, and they have told us that in the past three to four years; so, we do not do it. Also, as a local authority, we cannot take bookings.

[199] In terms of branding—we have to be key on that—the brand of Carmarthenshire is a new brand, but it is such a large area that we have some small brands. It is very hard to get one town to agree to its visual brand. At the moment, for example, Kidwelly has the brand of a cat. We are looking into that cat. When I am asking them lots of questions, that cat derives from the plague. So, the town's named brand, that the local councillors want to use, is a symbol from the plague, which, if you are a visitor, is not the most attractive symbol, when the town has a lovely, stunning castle. It is about talking about the best brand for the visitor, but one that the locals are very keen on. We have a destination management plan. We are very loath for the local authority to enforce a visual identity on any community, because it should be its decision. At this moment in time, we are resourcing a number of communities to come up with their own, because then, you can go from Burry Port to Kidwelly to Ferryside, and it will look like you are going into a new area and new communities each time. It is very hard to come up with one for the whole of Carmarthenshire that everyone is happy with. There used to be one five years ago for the Garden of Wales. Everyone in the north of the county was deliriously happy with that because they had gardens, but all of our businesses on the coastline were not happy, and it was very difficult to find one.

[200] **Julie James:** This is my last question, Chair. Do you have any input into this? On the Visit Wales website, for example, there is something called an 'An inside guide to Carmarthenshire'. Do you have input into those sorts of things?

[201] **Mr Parsons:** I would love to say 'yes' all of the time. The answer should be 'yes', but very often, on such a large website it is about trying to keep up with the right material. We have to feature into so many. We probably spend a month of the year making sure that all of our links and material is current, based on what it is promoting. Beforehand, it had very old links. Its promotions have changed for a younger market, and we have to make sure. So, yes, I would say that it is our role to make sure that we feed it with material. I ask my colleagues to make sure that they ring Visit Wales once a week, on a Friday, to see whether there is anything more that we can do for it because we see it as a very viable partner.

[202] **William Graham:** What is your perception of the comparative strengths and weaknesses of Wales's domestic and overseas brands, in your experience?

[203] **Mr Parsons:** Internationally, I think that, reading through the VisitBritain material—. As a local authority we are not so aware of anything that works or not, because Visit Wales handles that. So, I would not say, as a local authority officer, that I have a handle on the overseas brands. I think that I am certainly more aware of the domestic market, if I can answer that one a little bit better. In terms of brand, the brand in England, from the research that we have done—certainly on a lot of visitors—we did around 2,000 surveys last year on visitors to Carmarthenshire, and a high majority of those were from south-east Wales, and a huge majority were from the M4 corridor for us. The brand for Carmarthenshire and Wales, because sometimes they do not know that they are in Carmarthenshire, they just know that they are in Wales, because they do not see some of the signposts, was very high. They think that the people are very friendly, they think that the countryside is stunning and, amazingly, they think that there was a lot to do. The research from four years ago, which was our guidance from the English market from Visit Wales, was that the English felt that the Welsh were not friendly, that the accommodation was poor and that it rained all of the time. However, when people are in Carmarthenshire and we have done that research, that does not come through at all—they are all having a superb time. There is nothing about the stereotypes of the Welsh brand there.

[204] 14:15

[205] **William Graham:** In terms of the stereotypes, with a lot of writers that I can think of—which I am better off not naming—their perception was formed by a family holiday when they came to Wales and they camped and it was wet. That is not good, but it is there. How do we overcome that perception by showing that that is a tiny portion of anybody's experience?

[206] **Mr Parsons:** What you just said there is one of the key points. My family used to either go to Saundersfoot or to Devon, and you cannot say that the weather in Devon is any better than that in Saundersfoot. My family used to choose Saundersfoot not because of the countryside, because it is very similar, but because my dad liked the local Welsh ale; that was the decision maker for us. However, once again, we are relying on what that generation has told the next generation, which is key. That is where we, as a local authority, can really make a difference: making sure that when people are here—and an awful lot of people visit Wales now and an awful lot are having a great time—we have some sort of strategy and resource, perhaps through local authorities and businesses, to make sure that there is not that sieve effect, so that when people come they have a really good time. If they do not, they will let us know through basic things. Therefore, we are not losing people. I have used that sieve effect in every type of job that I have done, from leisure centres all the way through. We concentrate so much effort on promoting to new people that, sometimes, we forget about word-of-mouth

and making sure that those people who are currently here come back again. According to the research, it seems that the people you hear from are the people who have not had a great time, while 99% are having a fab time, because there is so much repeat business, certainly in south-west Wales.

[207] **Mick Antoniw:** I was going to ask you a bit about the second tier of heritage sites and so on. We have the really big sites, like Cardiff castle and Caernarfon castle et cetera, but we have a whole host of really interesting historic sites. I keep mentioning my constituency, where there is the Nantgarw pottery and the Taff's Well thermal spring et cetera; I am sure that it is the same all around Wales. To what extent are they properly co-ordinated into a Welsh strategy? A lot of people, when they go to a big event, will want to go to something that they know about, but they will not just want to do that; they will also want to wander around other things. It seems to me that there is a sense of dysfunction about linking these to each other and making them part and parcel of a broader strategy. Is that a fair comment?

[208] **Ms Gwilym:** A lot of work has been undertaken recently between Cadw and local authorities to create a story and make sure that, for people coming in, there is a story to tell. A lot of effort has been made across Wales, and some European funding is also involved, in terms of destination management. Huw has been involved with Cadw.

[209] **Mr Parsons:** Yes. We are running a £900,000 regional project to try to tie in the lords and princes of the past in terms of providing a story. So you bundle them together. So, if the key markets think that there is not enough to do, you say that it is worth them coming for a couple of days—because the money comes from overnight stays—so that they can visit this site and, like Amazon, you can also 'like' this one. However, there are very much issues on the ground regarding this. For example, in Laugharne in Carmarthenshire, I have the Dylan Thomas boathouse, which is historic, as well as a huge castle, and trying to get them to offer a joint ticket is really difficult. You try to say that you are making it easy for the customer, and that is where we try to start. So we say, 'Let us do that', because we could sell that as a community. Then you try to get the two parties to do it together and, because of different systems and so on, they do not do it. You think that it is quite simple to do and, as you say, you try to build these sites into a trail. For example, as we have done with gardens—we have done an arts and crafts trail, so that people can see that there is more than one reason to visit.

[210] It does not matter if there are also sites over the border, because people do not see the borders; Carmarthenshire has borders all around it, but people will not see those when they go to Pembroke castle or to Carreg Cennen castle. So, I think that that is a job for people on the ground and then we need to try to feed that up; otherwise, we will not move forward, certainly in our rural areas, where, unless people can see a big iconic attraction like an Oakwood or a city, they think that there is nothing to do. However, there are lots of potteries and arts and crafts. You have to get those small places to the wider community, and maybe that is a good role for people on the ground.

[211] **Mick Antoniw:** Is there a role through Welsh local government organisations, the Welsh Government and so on? Is the tourism industry in Wales—domestic and abroad—too fragmented? Is it too tribal, perhaps—looking at your patch without seeing that there is as much benefit in someone even halfway up the country benefitting, because tourists travel around?

[212] **Mr Parsons:** I think that there is an understanding that, certainly with the reductions in budget that local authorities have had over the last two years, we are all in it together. The first battle is to get them to Wales and we will try to carve them up afterwards. Certainly, if you are mature as a manager, if you have more people coming to Wales, you have more of a chance of being in a job, if you want to be as blunt as that. If you are not singing from that hymn sheet, you probably should not be doing that job.

[213] We have to be grown-ups; certainly, we are grown up in Carmarthenshire and south-west Wales. We go to shows with Pembrokeshire and we have worked with Swansea on its football, as well, because there are, obviously, only so many hotel spaces that it can have. We have worked with Ceredigion on a trail for the Teifi, so we very much look outside of the borders in terms of ensuring that the money goes as far as it can. I do not know whether that happens in every part, but I think that if you do not do it, you will be found out pretty quickly now, because you need to ensure that you generate some work for your businesses.

[214] **Ms Gwilym:** I think that it does happen. What we are seeing increasingly is local authorities working together in their regions much more and developing strategic approaches to tourism. Under the north Wales economic ambition board, for example, we now have a tourism work stream that brings all of the partners together with a sector. Also, in the south east and Swansea bay, with the emergence of the city regions, there is definitely a much more strategic approach developing across traditional local authority boundaries.

[215] **Mick Antoni:** Do you think that we sell some of our big institutions and events well enough abroad? By that, I mean: are we too precious with, for example, the National Eisteddfod? Do we sell that as a reason why people should come and experience something? Do you think that we are, culturally, too inward looking as opposed to really opening our doors? Are we quite as welcoming as we suggest that we are?

[216] **Mr Parsons:** That is a very direct question, with the Eisteddfod is coming to Carmarthenshire in a month's time.

[217] **Keith Davies:** Yn Llanelli mae'r **Keith Davies:** The Eisteddfod is in Llanelli. Eisteddfod. [*Chwerthin.*] [*Laughter.*]

[218] **Mr Parsons:** One of the aims for Carmarthenshire, and some of the other areas, is that we have 186,000 residents. We need all 186,000 to sell Carmarthenshire and Wales as a tourist destination. I used to run events for Rank Xerox, and I had to go up to Troon for the golf. If you get within 50 miles of the Scottish border, people pick up on your accent and say 'Are you here for the golf? It is the best golf in the world.' When you go to a bakery, it is 'Are you here for the golf? It is the best in the world.' Even if they could not afford to play golf at Troon, they were selling it.

[219] I go to Llanelli every day for my job. There is a garage in Dafen where I fill up—I have been going there for 14 years. My dream is that, one day, they say 'Are you visiting the area? Machynys golf club is the best in Wales.' That is what we need; we need that ownership at a local level, for the locals to know their part in it. Even if they cannot afford to play at Machynys or they have no interest in golf, it might be that someone next door or a relative is involved in the pub trade or something else. Some areas of Wales have that—more traditional areas, like Tenby and the Gower—but, in terms of some of the new, up-and-coming ones, maybe those people who could sell them and have ownership of promotion on the ground are just not making it happen. We have to keep banging on about the value of what tourism means to the local area and why it is good to have visitors.

[220] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Do people involved in the industry sell the industry well enough? Are people who provide the service in your restaurant and your pub aware of the importance of providing that good service and raising our game in hospitality terms?

[221] **Mr Parsons:** Certainly, the ones that I deal with are very much doing that. I think that one of the reasons that Carmarthenshire has exploded so much is that lots of people who have diversified into tourism have brought a lot of skills from other industries in which they have been. A lot of people in the tourism industry who do well do so because they are very

good; with the ones that do not do very well, it is because maybe they are not. Certainly, the ones that I deal with are very proactive; they see the value. We are quite a rural area, so you find that, if one guest house is full, they will sell the next one.

[222] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Maybe I should clarify that I am probably not talking about the business owners who have a clear stake in wanting to sell their business well; I am talking about people who are working as waiters. We have all travelled, and we know that there is a distinct difference between the levels of service in the United States, for example, and in the UK. It may be because they are paid only by tips, but, whatever, there is a real belief in the need to offer good service. Maybe it is not universal in Wales is my suggestion.

[223] **Mr Parsons:** Everyone around the table has probably had good service and bad service, but I do not have the evidence to say whether it is all-encompassing. I do not see that many coming through and you would think that the businesses could do something about it through the skills. One day you could go into one place and have a bad one, but I do not think Wales has an issue with customers saying, 'Don't go to Wales because it is known for poor service'. I have never seen that in any feedback or research that I have read, but, then again, I do not have the evidence to say that it does not happen.

[224] **William Graham:** Keith is next.

[225] **Keith Davies:** We have been told that there has been quite a decline in the number of overseas visitors to Wales over the past five or six years. Why do you think that is?

[226] **Mr Parsons:** It is a very competitive market. A lot of people have entered the market now, so, although there are the middle classes in some of the larger countries that you thought might benefit you—there has been talk about whether visitors from China could make a big difference to Wales or the United Kingdom—there are lots of other countries entering the tourism market, such as the Gulf states. Very often, they are throwing money at it and therefore maybe they are in front of those clients that would have come to Great Britain and Wales previously or we would have hoped that we could attract. They are outspending us—they are throwing millions at it—and maybe they are more attractive to that type of clientele. So, maybe there is just more competition. I do not think there is evidence to suggest that Wales is any less attractive—it is just that the market is more competitive.

[227] **Keith Davies:** Fe wna'i ofyn fy nghwestiwn yn Gymraeg. Gwnaethom ofyn i'r person oedd yma o'ch blaen am darged y Llywodraeth i godi y nifer sy'n dod i Gymru rhwng nawr a 2020 gan 10%. A ydych yn credu bod hynny yn ddigon da—a yw'n darged rhy fach neu rhy fawr? A ydym yn mynd i gyrraedd y nod?

Keith Davies: I will ask my question in Welsh. We asked the person who was here before you about the Welsh Government's target to increase the number of visitors coming to Wales between now and 2020 by 10%. Do you think that that is good enough—is the target too small or too large? Are we going to achieve that?

[228] **Ms Gwilym:** Mae'n mynd i fod yn eithaf sialens, rwy'n meddwl, i ganolbwyntio ar y farchnad dramor. Efallai bod angen edrych ar y ffordd mae Croeso Cymru yn gweithio, a bod angen newid agweddau ar y ffordd mae'n gweithio. Rwy'n credu bod ambell i sialens i Groeso Cymru. Mae'r ffaith ei fod yn rhan o Lywodraeth y Cynulliad a bod y staff yn weision sifil, o safbwynt datblygu arbenigedd a chynnal y math o *credibility* sydd ei angen efo'r sector, yn

Ms Gwilym: It is going to be quite a challenge, I think, to concentrate on the foreign market. Perhaps we need to look at the way in which Visit Wales works, and there may be a need to change some of its approaches. I think there are a few challenges for Visit Wales. The fact that it is now part of the Welsh Government and that the staff are civil servants, from the point of view of developing expertise and maintaining the level of credibility required within the sector,

eithaf sialens. Mae hefyd y ffaith y bydd y sefyllfa gyllidol yn y blynyddoedd nesaf yn eithaf tynn o ran cynnal y math o gyllideb ac ariannu Visit Wales o fewn Llywodraeth Cymru. Felly, mae'n mynd i fod yn eithaf sialens o ran y targed.

is quite a challenge. There is also the fact that the funding situation over the coming years is quite tight in terms of maintaining the levels of funding and funding Visit Wales within Welsh Government. So, it is going to be quite challenging in terms of the target.

[229] **Keith Davies:** Pam ydych chi'n credu ei fod yn sialens oherwydd ei fod yn fewnol? Pa wahaniaeth mae hynny yn ei wneud?

Keith Davies: Why do you think it is challenging because it is in-house? What difference does that make?

[230] **Ms Gwilym:** Yn draddodiadol yn y gwasanaeth sifil, mae pobl yn symud o gwmpas. Unwaith rydych yn datblygu arbenigedd, rydych yn cael eich symud. Mae'n hynod o bwysig i rywbeth mor *specific* â thwristiaeth, o ran cynnal y berthynas efo'r sector yn arbennig, bod pobl yn gallu aros yn eu swyddi fel eu bod yn gwybod sut mae delio efo'r sector. Mae datblygu'r arbenigedd hwnnw yn hynod o bwysig.

Ms Gwilym: Traditionally in the civil service, people move around. Once you have developed expertise, you tend to be moved. It is very important for something as specific as tourism, in terms of maintaining the relationship with the sector in particular, that the people can remain in post so that they know how to deal with sector. Developing that expertise is hugely important.

[231] **Keith Davies:** Felly, maent yn fwy tebygol o weithio i helpu'r sector os ydynt yn rhan—.

Keith Davies: Therefore, they are more likely to help the sector if they are part of—.

[232] **Ms Gwilym:** Mae angen cydbwysedd, ond mae angen cadw'r bobl sydd yn adnabod cwmnïau twristiaeth ar draws Cymru. Mae'n cymryd amser i ddatblygu perthynas, ac mae'n hynod o bwysig ein bod yn gweld y bobl hynny yn aros yn y swyddi.

Ms Gwilym: You need a balance, but you need to retain those people who are familiar with tourism companies across Wales. It takes time to develop those relationships, and it is extremely important that we see those people remaining in post.

[233] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** O ran datblygu marchnadoedd newydd yn gyffredinol, fel cymdeithas, a ydych yn eiddgar i weld marchnadoedd newydd yn cael eu datblygu?

Rhun ap Iorwerth: In terms of developing new markets generally, as an association, are you keen to see new markets being developed?

14:30

[234] **Mr Parsons:** The strategy that the Welsh Government has produced identified four markets within what is quite a tight economic system. Certainly, the research and the culture shows that England and south-east Wales are key markets—certainly England is. It would be lovely to say that we could do so, but it is about whether we can do that in reality. By identifying the four markets—. Germany is a big new market. We get a lot of Dutch visitors, so we were surprised, when the report came through, that it identified Germany, because we thought that the Benelux countries were stronger, certainly in the south west. I think that the Welsh Government is sensible to choose four, certainly the big one. Our concern would be whether they can sustain the English market as well.

[235] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Efallai y dylwn fod wedi defnyddio'r gair 'sectorau' hefyd,

Rhun ap Iorwerth: Perhaps I should have used the word 'sectors' as well, because, as

oherwydd yn ogystal â mynd allan i chwilio am bobl newydd i ddod i mewn, rydym wastad yn chwilio am sectorau newydd i gynnig iddynt. Rydym yn meddwl am y sector awyr agored, er enghraifft, ac mae'r sector 'cruises' yn fawr yn fy etholaeth i. A ydym angen canolbwyntio'n fwy ar greu'r sectorau hynny ac arbenigedd mewn sectorau arbennig?

[236] **Ms Gwilym:** Rwy'n meddwl ein bod yn gweld bod hynny'n dechrau digwydd yn barod, yn enwedig ar draws ardaloedd gogledd Cymru. Maent yn ffocysu i mewn ar y cyfleoedd sydd yna i ddatblygu a rhoi ffocws penodol i'r math hwnnw o weithgaredd—gweithgaredd tu allan, ac yn y blaen. Felly, rwy'n meddwl bod hynny'n dechrau digwydd yn barod.

[237] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Sut ydych yn adnabod y mathau o sectorau ble gallai fod lle i dyfu ynddynt? Soniwch am y modelau ystadegol, er enghraifft, yr ydych yn eu defnyddio a'r gwaith ymchwil yr ydych yn ei wneud er mwyn datblygu'r diwydiant yn y ffordd hon.

[238] **Mr Parsons:** I would say 'steal other people's ideas'. That is always a good start. From our destination management plan for Carmarthenshire at the moment, and from Pembrokeshire's plan, you try to identify what works in other areas that could work in yours. Certainly, for us, we have looked at north Wales with envy, in a way, as to how much it has developed its outdoor activity product, having nice hubs of wet-weather facilities as well. We look at those; we try to get the statistics.

[239] We also look for investors, because it is not just about the public sector. We do not run places. You can sit in an office, thinking 'Where is the next big thing going to come from, and how are we going to employ more people?', and, very often, you think, 'There must be people out there'. So, we widen it to the businesses, asking, 'If we can help you, whether it is by rate relief or that we have some land, could we help you to do that?' Sometimes, the ideas come from them organically, because that is what businesses do. Sometimes, it is a role for us, but very often it is not, because we are not in the industry to know about it.

[240] However, if someone comes through with a brilliant idea, very often it is a brilliant idea because they are going to stick their own money into it and they have done all of the research. So, our job, as local authorities, is to try to make that happen. I would love to say that we have hundreds of ideas coming through that we think will really work.

[241] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Are you able to get the data from the Welsh Government to help you? STEAM, the Scarborough tourism economic activity monitor model, is one tool. Do you use that?

[242] **Mr Parsons:** I have to say that I cannot praise enough the development side of Visit Wales. It has really good research. In Carmarthenshire, we have had a lot of new products and businesses being developed, and we did not have a handle on all of the research. Every time

well as looking for new people to come in, we are always looking for new sectors to offer them. We think of the outdoor pursuits sector, for example, and the cruise sector in my constituency. Do we need to be concentrating more on creating those sectors and that expertise in the sectors?

Ms Gwilym: I think that that is already starting to happen, particularly across areas of north Wales. They are focusing in on the opportunities that exist in terms of developing and giving a particular focus to those kinds of activities—particularly outdoor pursuits and so on. So, I think that that is already starting to happen.

Rhun ap Iorwerth: How do you identify the kinds of sectors where there could be room to grow? Talk to us about the statistical models, for example, that you use and the research work that you undertake to develop the tourism industry in that way.

we have asked—. We have had one on the table in the last three weeks for a nice new development and cafe area. We asked for statistics, and, within three days, the development team had packaged it all up for us to help us to help the business. So, anytime that we have asked that side of Visit Wales for assistance and ideas, it has always managed to get some reports for us on things which, probably, we would not have a handle on. In addition, it had a handle on what worked in other areas. So, I have to say that that has been really helpful from that point of view. We can then try to use our own, local data.

[243] With STEAM, at the moment, no-one has a better answer—it is just the standard model. However, very often, the sample range is poor, because businesses do not want to give the local authority their figures, because they think that we are going to do something really horrible with them, when, in effect, we just want to use them as an economic model. I have just done mine for Carmarthenshire. We have 62 caravan and holiday parks, and we found that our figures were based on one, because it was the only one that wanted to give us figures. Pembrokeshire has something like 560, but only two gave figures. When that is multiplied on a Welsh level, it can really change the figures that you are looking at, but no-one has a better answer at the moment.

[244] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** What does that measure?

[245] **Mr Parsons:** It is meant to measure the number of bed spaces in an area and how many people are using those bed spaces, and then, from that, you try to work out how much there is in secondary spend. However, it is like any statistics—it is about what goes in.

[246] **William Graham:** Keith, are you going to ask about funding?

[247] **Keith Davies:** Yes. Again, when the previous witness was speaking to us he criticised the Welsh Government for the amount of funding that it spent on Visit Wales. She compared us with Glasgow. Glasgow spends as much on tourism as Wales does. Do you agree with that? If you do, what shall we do about it?

[248] **Ms Gwilym:** I think it is quite challenging in the financial climate that we are in. There are other ways. We seriously need to think better about how we maximise some of the European funding opportunities, for example, and make sure that we integrate and make better use of a number of different funding streams that we will have access to over the next seven years. So, although it looks small in comparison to other areas, I think there are a lot of opportunities for us to maximise that and to make sure that we have more of a budget and more finances going forward.

[249] **Mr Parsons:** Could I just add something?

[250] **Keith Davies:** Yes, go on.

[251] **Mr Parsons:** All the local authorities look at the figures for Scotland and Ireland and see that they outspend us tremendously, but, my authority being quite small itself, there has always been a bigger spender, and what I try to do is sweat my own assets. It would be lovely if Visit Wales had more access to more money because the more money you have the more times you can tell someone about your offer, but, if that is what is there, let us make sure that we try to work it as hard as possible. I personally think, and some of my colleagues on the local authorities also think, that the promotional side of Visit Wales could sweat its assets a lot more in terms of the money it has spent on its promotional material recently and its engagement with us.

[252] When I took over tourism five years ago, it used to have a couple of meetings every year. That has gone down to one. It is very much, 'Here is the presentation and goodbye'

when we meet in Aberystwyth. We are not saying that the local authorities want to be in control, but there is a lot of expertise. There are a lot of officers who have been on the ground a long time and they know their own patch. We all want to help and, of course, if Visit Wales is doing a promotion it creates interest and if those customers then come through to businesses or the local authority destination websites and they do not reflect the promotion then those customers will be lost. I really would like to see Visit Wales using us a bit more. That is not say that we are going to do this or do that, but we want to be part of helping it. I have an example, which was in the *Daily Mail* three weeks ago, and which angered me. It paid about £37,000 for an advert in the paper on Saturday. We do not get it. It was to promote culture. There was a competition in it. Again, if we can be the check and balance or add some value to its promotional material—plus we have some small budgets of our own. However, at the moment, they are not joined together, and we are not all pushing at the same time. We all want more English or south-east or visitors, but, at the moment, we feel that it could be improved with the money that we have. If we could get more money that would be fab, but, if not, we would like to push a bit more and help a bit more.

[253] **Keith Davies:** Lowri, you were talking earlier about getting European funding and using that. Is enough of that being done?

[254] **Ms Gwilym:** It is early days in terms of seriously exploring the new round of funding. We are working now with Visit Wales and other Welsh Government departments. I just think that there are a lot of opportunities. We not only have the traditional structural funds and rural development funding, there are also the territorial corporation programmes, INTERREG and a number of other themed funding programmes across Europe that we really need to get better at utilising and working together on. So, it is quite early days, but we are very keen as local government. We are doing a lot of work regionally at the moment in terms of developing what we want to do. We really need to sit down with Visit Wales and the wider department as soon as possible just to make sure that we are all developing things that complement each other as well.

[255] **Keith Davies:** The Welsh Government already has a tourism investment support scheme. Has that been effective?

[256] **Ms Gwilym:** Yes. We are very pleased that it looks like that is going to continue into the future as well. We are quite happy with that.

[257] **Mr Parsons:** Certainly, in south-west Wales, where there are lot of smaller businesses, there has been a really big take-up of sustainable initiatives where they are adding value to what they already have. I think that the key thing is helping existing businesses that have shown that they are doing well. We are very pleased that they are going to continue that and, hopefully, put more resources in.

[258] **Mick Antoniw:** One aspect to tourism is, of course, what is happening in the media, on the television and so on. Of course, you get the *MasterChef* programme type of stuff and all those sorts of things, but they can be quite important in terms of the whole produce side, linking in with the local economy and so on. Are there any aspects, in terms of the way in which the media operate, that we can influence?

[259] **Mr Parsons:** Once again, if you are hitting 4 million people who are all engaged in a BBC programme, such as one of the cooking ones, then it is a great way. I often think that the lady from Ammanford, Alex Jones, on *The One Show* is potentially our biggest tourist export. I asked Nigel, the rugby referee, whether he could have a 'Discovering Carmarthenshire' T-shirt on that he could lift up in an international game, which would be hitting 2.5 million people. You are quite right that how they come across can have so much wider benefit. I would love to say that we could rush through a big hamper of Carmarthenshire produce and

they would have it. In terms of the media, I have always thought, with the resources that we have, that we can influence the influencers, which is the sort of thing you were getting on to. We know—the local authorities—that we cannot afford large adverts, but what we can do is influence the journalists to come down and write lovely stories. So, we have invested very heavily in that—very heavily for a local authority—by using our wit and charm to get them down. We have seen a return on the food and the pubs and the businesses working very well with us. We think that that is what we can do to try to make a difference. In terms of the larger programmes, I would love any help possible to do that.

[260] **Mick Antoniw:** Welsh Government spends money promoting Welsh produce and Welsh food, particularly abroad. We spend a set amount on culture and we have Welsh events. We have the Cory Band going all over the world—a world champion brass band that happens to have people from my constituency involved in it, but that is another matter. But, it does not seem to me that there is a joined-up plan linking all these things—these people who are travelling the world and all these produce events we have abroad—that actually links in with the identity of Wales very clearly. Are we missing a trick there?

[261] **Mr Parsons:** Yes, if it is possible. I would try to sell anything to anyone. You are quite right. For example, in Burry Port, there is a very famous cockle manufacturer; every chip shop in the whole of south-west England has Parsons cockles on their shelves. Brecon Carreg water is the major bottler for Boots. If you can somehow link that through so that everyone, when they pick up that product, has a warm feeling about Wales, it would be fab. We did a promotion with Pedigree Chum, which did not cost us any money, but, within three days, for our dog-friendly product, we had 92,000 dog-interested people, who had bought Pedigree Chum, who then linked to our website. That gives you an example of the number of hits. We did not have to pay for that. It just so happens that there are two dog-food manufacturers in Carmarthenshire that we are looking at as well. So, those links are there, but sometimes you need to—. That is not a typical local authority thought. I am quite lucky that I am allowed to do that. There is some real material to play with. We have some very good products. People want those ideas. It has to be slightly quirky, in a way, but you hit masses of people. Of course, there can be trouble if it bounces back on social media the wrong way. That is why you have to be careful that they are not seen as drones. It is not like we can have 10 famous people and we are paying them. It has to come across that they want to do it. That is the clever way of doing it. I would personally agree with you.

[262] **Keith Davies:** At this committee, a few months ago, we had a television producer and we were talking about European funding. His company produced *Hinterland*, which is now being broadcast worldwide. Is Visit Wales doing anything about that, building on that?

[263] **Mr Parsons:** I do not know. I know that the film commissioning side of Visit Wales tries to promote areas for people to come and film. I have seen things in some of media about *Hinterland* and what it meant for the—. Of course, they talk about the brooding under-material of the Welsh countryside, and you are reading that thinking, ‘Goodness me, that sounds like the Yorkshire moors on a November day’. I suppose it is about using the right material for the right market. If we are in May or June and people are reading that in a TV guide for 2 million people, they are thinking, ‘I don’t know if I want to go to a moody, brooding place in the middle of nowhere’. The right material is when, for example, the last James Bond film was interested in using an area in the Brecon Beacons for *Skyfall*. We started, as a local authority, to release it that we had seen Daniel Craig in Carmarthen and things like that. So, there was a lot of potential build up and we would have had a lot of mileage if that film had happened in the Brecon Beacons as opposed to Scotland. I would hope that, if *Hinterland* is going well, Ceredigion and the businesses there are using it as much as possible.

[264] **Keith Davies:** We have other examples; I have friends who live in Barry, and the

number of visitors to Barry because of *Gavin and Stacey* is unbelievable.

[265] **Mr Parsons:** And that was to a core English audience.

14:45

[266] **Keith Davies:** Yes, that was just an English audience, but with *Hinterland* we are going into Europe. That is why I asked about *Hinterland*.

[267] **Mr Parsons:** I always think that there is an opportunity for a local business to jump on the success of a tv programme. I am sure that, in Barry, there is a local person who has a T-shirt stand and a tour and such things, so, maybe, if they could see the material of *Hinterland* and do the tours, they would be organic.

[268] **Ms Gwilym:** What is probably missing at the moment is a whole-Government approach, because you have Visit Wales in a particular department, you have a European external affairs division that is leading on the strategy, and you have the agriculture department that is leading on the food side. So, I think that there is room for improvement in terms of developing a wider cross-Government approach to working with partners in terms of the brand and selling Wales as an entity.

[269] **Keith Davies:** I think that you are right. I think that the Minister for Natural Resources and Food has produced a document on food in Wales today, but it is not linked to tourism or anything.

[270] **William Graham:** We have just about run out of time. I will ask a last question, if I may. On major events, we have had the Ryder Cup in Newport and we have the NATO conference now; do they help us at all? Can that be channelled into giving an impression of Wales worldwide?

[271] **Ms Gwilym:** Yes. I think it is one of the success stories. We have had a number of positive examples across Wales where local authorities are really working well with the major events unit. There have been good examples in north Wales, for example, Conwy County Borough Council works closely with that particular unit to attract some big events. So, that is one of the positive stories to tell, I think, and we would like to see that continuing in the future in terms of the focus of work. It is one of the positive messages that we have had as part of this exercise. People feel that that is working quite well.

[272] **William Graham:** Good. Thank you very much for your evidence today and for your answers to our questions.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 14:47.
The meeting ended at 14:47.*