

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**NOTES OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING****8th September 2004 – Quadrant Court, Taunton****Present:**

Ian Munro (Chair)	SEEP – Education
Mike Bawden	Swindon Borough Council
Paul Crossley	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Lady Mavis Dunrossil	Gloucestershire County Council
Chris Irwin	SEEP - Transport

Also in Attendance:

David Bowater	SWRA Secretariat
Natalie Greenwood	SWRA Secretariat (note taker)
Andy Wilson	SWRA Secretariat

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mike Byatt, Dorset County Council; Christine Channon, Devon County Council; Andrew Govier, Somerset County Council; Alan Hockridge, North Somerset Council; Howard Thomas, SEEP – Environmental Bodies.
- 1.2 The Chair thanked John Wilkinson for his contribution to the Scrutiny Panel. John has now stepped down and has been replaced by Martin Ross, SEEP for the Business & Economic Sector.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting – PAPER A

The minutes of the last meeting dated 2nd July were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

- 3.1 Item 4.6 action point 2 The panel was informed that Jackie Longworth, Chair of the Regional Assembly is meeting Juliet Williams, Chair of SW RDA on 8th October and that Assembly Leaders will be having a joint meeting with SW RDA in November. The SWRA / RDA relationship will be discussed at both meetings. It was suggested that we should seek greater clarity over respective regional roles over transport policy.
- 3.2 Item 5.3 It has now been established that SW Tourism surveyed the Local Authority spend on Tourism as part of the research that contributed to the consultation document ‘Towards 2015’. The research results will be reported back to the next meeting.
- 3.3 Item 5.4 The Chair thanked Members of the panel present for their feedback. A list of Tourism contacts was circulated at the meeting for Members’ information. Further contact names were suggested.

An amended list is now attached for information. Further suggestions are very welcome.

4. Broadband Communications Technologies Strategic Review – Final Report

4.1 The panel agreed the final version of the Broadband report. It was acknowledged that Broadband is a fast moving subject area where things can become out of date quite quickly. The Chair reassured Members that, as in previous reviews, SW RDA will be invited back to a future meeting of the Panel to provide an update on progress against recommendations.

4.2 Members agreed to sign off the report so that it can go to the Executive Committee on 14th September and then to SW RDA, all Assembly Members, workshop participants, other regional partners and Government Departments.

5. Tourism Regional Strategic Review – PAPER B

5.1 The Secretariat circulated a copy of a letter written to Malcolm Bell, Chief Executive of South West Tourism as part of the consultation on the document 'Towards 2015: shaping tomorrow's tourism' following Malcolm's presentation to the Assembly 12th March 2004. *The letter is attached.*

5.2 The letter highlights two areas of concern for the Assembly:

- the extent to which the Consultation document 'Towards 2015' is effectively integrated with regional policy; and,
- deliverability and implementation.

5.3 Panel Members agreed that the scrutiny review should be strategically focused and assess the 'strategic fit' between 'Towards 2015' and the Regional Economic Strategy (and other agreed regional strategies including the Integrated Regional Strategy). In assessing the broad implementation of the Tourism Strategy, Members agreed that 'value for money' should be a guiding principle and we should particularly consider:

- the contribution of business tourism (conferences etc);
- internal (South West) visitors' contribution to the overall visitor figures;
- the quality of employment in the tourist industry (wage levels, seasonality);
- tourism's impact on local communities – acceptability of tourism to the community;
- the impact on the region's environment;
- access to tourism (issues around disability for example).

5.4 In terms of implementation, Members discussed: responsibilities for delivery; the way in which SW RDA's broader work underpins the strategy; how implementation is to be measured; and, how the strategy is to be reviewed.

5.5 Amendments will be made to the terms of reference to reflect these points.

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5.6 Members agreed that research is required to inform the review and that a programme of interviews and stakeholder meetings should be compiled by the Secretariat. Members suggested that the Chair and other available panel members should initially meet Malcolm Bell.

5.7 Members agreed a provisional timetable of dates:

- Panel Meeting with key policy makers 21st October
- Regional Workshop 30th November
- Bilateral discussions with SW RDA January/February (tbc)

5.8 Subject to the research timescale. Members also suggested a further 'reserve' date be scheduled in during February or March. The secretariat will try to identify a suitable date.

5.9 A venue was suggested for the Stakeholder meeting in October – the Swindon Steam Museum. The Secretariat will make enquiries as to its suitability.

6. Sub Group to consider SWRDA performance reports – PAPER C

6.1 The panel were asked to consider membership of a subgroup to advise on SW RDA performance reports. Members agreed with the role of the sub group outlined in Paper C.

6.2 The Secretariat reported that the Futures Group had already considered this at their recent meeting and had put forward Alan Hockridge, Amanda Wilkinson and Nicky Morrison.

6.3 Mike Bawden volunteered to join the subgroup. It was agreed that the Chair of Scrutiny Panel should be on the group. It was also felt that all Panel Members should be available as 'deputies' for the group to provide backup for nominated Members.

7. Meeting with Geoff Wilkinson – update from Chair

7.1 The Chair reported that he had had a good meeting with Geoff Wilkinson, Chief Executive of the RDA on 30th July. The letter from the Scrutiny Panel that highlighted recurrent themes in recommendations provided a basis for discussion. Geoff had acknowledged that Panel recommendations had had a vital impact on SW RDA's thinking – particularly on how the agency communicates its role and operations and how it publicises its funding criteria. Geoff thanked the panel for raising the issues. The Chair will write to Geoff to follow up the discussion.

8. Future Topics & Timing

8.1 Members were asked to identify possible topics for scrutiny in 2005 and beyond. SW RDA's key sectors approach is to be reviewed next year and the Panel agreed that a scrutiny of this would be valuable. The timetable for the completion of the Tourism review would dictate the timing of the next scrutiny exercise. Members made further suggestions for reviews including the South West coastline, food processing and farming (which may well be picked up in the sector review) and transport infrastructure.

8.2 Members agreed that it would be sensible to focus scrutiny reviews on the strategically important topics in the Regional Economic Strategy and the largest areas of RDA funding. The Panel agreed to consider this again at a future meeting.

Chair (signature).....

Date

Malcolm Bell
Chief Executive
South West Tourism
Woodwater Park
Exeter
EX2 5WT

28th April 2004

**South West Regional Assembly response to:
Towards 2015 - Shaping Tomorrow's Tourism**

Thank you for the opportunity for the Regional Assembly to respond to the above consultation on the future of tourism in the region. May I also thank you for the presentations that you gave to both the full Regional Assembly on the 12th March and to the Regional Forum on the 6th February. I think these both proved to be excellent opportunities to raise the tourism agenda in the region and to outline the key principles of the new strategic approach proposed for tourism in the South West.

The Regional Assembly recognises the important roles that tourism and the tourist industry play in the South West, and supports the need for a clear strategic vision and set of priorities to guide support for the sector over the next decade. Indeed, the Regional Assembly (SWRA) will wish to work closely with SW tourism in the development of its strategic priorities, to ensure that the SWRA's responsibilities around the integration of the regional strategies, regional planning, and a range of regional policies around waste, transport and the environment (all of which pose significant issues for tourism) provide appropriate support for the delivery of tourism objectives.

The response to the consultation given in this letter has been formulated following discussion of the strategy at the Regional Futures Group - the Regional Assembly member group responsible for the preparation of the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS). This group is well placed to review the strategy as it is tasked with considering the range of regional policies and strategies in the South West and the extent to which they are mutually supportive and consistent with the South West's overarching needs and priorities for the future, expressed in the regional issues report "Trends and Challenges for the South West" and the emerging priorities for the IRS.

Overarching comments

The SWRA welcomes the clear presentation and promotion of the SW in the strategy. The focus on the qualities of the region and its attractiveness as a tourist destination does much to raise the profile of the region and people's perception of it, both inside of and outside the region, which the Regional Assembly supports.

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The consultation document is also to be applauded for its brevity and clarity. The document is easy to read and well presented and conveys its messages clearly. The helpful identification of trends likely to effect tourism up to 2015 – the drivers of change – and an assessment of likely opportunities for the sector, together provide clear grounding for the principles and priorities stated in the strategy.

The Regional Assembly supports the broad parameters of "Towards 2015" and the priorities identified, and considers them to be in the spirit of the objectives emerging through consultation on the Integrated Regional Strategy¹. It is particularly encouraging that issues facing the tourist industry are set within the context of wider issues in the region around public infrastructure, pay, and the quality of the environment, for example.

The remaining points and observations do not question the broad thrust of "Towards 2015", they are largely to do with issues considered to be missing from the consultation, the extent to which "Towards 2015" is effectively integrated with regional policy and, deliverability and implementation.

Sharing of data and research

Members of the Regional Assembly are aware of the significant amount of data and research that has inputted into the preparation of "Towards 2015". Members are keen to explore some of this information further - particularly on the analysis of trends in the region that inevitably has implications beyond the tourist sector. The brevity of the document itself has already been applauded so it is not being suggested that more information needs to be included within the strategy itself. Nevertheless this means that research and data must be made readily available and easily accessible.

The SWRA's Regional Futures Group would welcome the opportunity to have a session with staff from SW Tourism to discuss the background to the strategy and the research that underpins it in more detail.

Relationship to other regional strategies in the South West

Whilst "Towards 2015" makes many cross-cutting connections to issues across a range of areas of public policy, no explicit mentions are made to other regional strategies. The tourism strategy must demonstrate how it will integrate with other key regional strategies. Particularly important are the emerging Integrated Regional Strategy, the Regional Economic Strategy, the Regional Environment Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy/Regional Transport Strategy, but other strategies including, Housing, Food and Farming, Health, and Learning and Skills all have bearings on the deliverability of the tourism strategy.

It will be important that the tourism strategy actively demonstrates its compatibility with other strategies, and shows how it is taking forward objectives expressed in other strategies. The corollary of that is that it will be important to maintain a dialogue with key regional agencies responsible for strategy making to ensure that other strategies are reviewed to ensure that they help deliver objectives for tourism in the SW.

¹ South West Regional Assembly. (2004). *A report of consultation on "Trends and Challenges for the SW; Key issues facing the future of the South West"*.

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Some useful cross-references to other regional strategies need to be made, but equally, if not more important is the dialogue that needs to take place to ensure that strategies in the SW are adopting a truly integrated approach.

The Regional Assembly is particularly keen to have an ongoing dialogue with SW Tourism on how the strategies it is currently preparing (the IRS, the RSS/RTS, and the Regional Waste Strategy) can support the delivery of objectives around tourism and visa versa.

Sustainability

The SWRA is pleased to see the profile given to delivering truly sustainable tourism in the South West and considers that the region has a real opportunity to proactively demonstrate what sustainable tourism means in practice. SW Tourism will be aware of the important section within the Regional Environment Strategy (shortly to be published) on tourism. This will be invaluable in ensuring that tourism activity maintains and enhances the region's environment, which is what brings many tourists to the South West.

The SWRA also welcomes the reference to every major tourism decision being considered for its impact on communities, on quality of jobs, on the landscape, on existing buildings and activities, on the public infrastructure and the industry (p3).

The SWRA would like to work closely with SW tourism to explore further how it is intended that these issues will be actively factored into decision making in the future.

Who are the SW's tourists?

The strategy does not explicitly acknowledge that a significant proportion of tourist trips in the region are from existing SW residents, not just from people outside the region. The SWRA would like to know what impact this understanding has had on the strategy presented in "Towards 2015".

A related point is that the Regional Assembly feels it is important to acknowledge that improving the region's environment, transport infrastructure and economy for the benefit of the South West's residents is to the benefit of tourists. A truly cross-cutting approach needs to acknowledge this rather than emphasising the improvement of the region for the benefit of tourism in isolation. This is the how "Towards 2015" currently reads.

Missing issues

There are a number of issues that are not covered in any detail within "Towards 2015" which the SWRA considers merit inclusion within the strategy.

1. Transport. Consultation on the development of the Integrated Regional Strategy has shown that issues around transport infrastructure rate extremely highly on the regional agenda. Tourism brings with it particular transport challenges, which need mention in the strategy along with proposals for how they might be tackled in the future. Synergies with the Regional Transport Strategy will be important.

2. Business tourism. The consultation document makes little mention of the significance of business tourism in the South West – particularly the conference market in places like Bournemouth. The conference market may offer important out-

of-season employment opportunities in some parts of the region, and needs to be acknowledged.

3. **Regional inequality and social issues.** Consultation on the IRS has identified a number of significant social issues in the region and some of these are highlighted in "Towards 2015" such as low pay within the industry. The strategy does have a part to play in addressing some of the significant intra-regional variations in the performance of the region (on a range of measures) and in tackling deprivation and disadvantage. The strategy needs to show how it will promote an inclusive approach to tourism, both in terms of those working within the industry (e.g. how the sector can offer opportunities to those from more disadvantaged communities) but also in terms of the tourist experience (e.g. making sure that tourism is open to those with access difficulties and those who do not use cars).

4. **Shopping as a tourist activity.** The current and potential revenue to the region from tourist activity related to shopping is significant. "Towards 2015" does not currently make reference to the role of shopping as a tourist activity.

Destination Management Programmes (DMPs)

The Regional Assembly is keen to hear more about the proposed new DMPs and arrangements for taking them forward (see also comments below). Concern has been expressed that existing arrangements that are considered to be working well in parts of the region ought not be simply discarded in favour of a new system. Further clarity on what DMPs will mean in practice - how they will be effectively delivered and by whom - may help allay some concerns, although recognition at the strategic level, that flexible approaches which allow for local solutions, needs also to be included.

Deliverability and leadership

"Towards 2015" says little about the resources, or the partnerships and institutional arrangements required for delivery. The Regional Assembly would like to know if an action plan is planned to show how particular elements will be taken forward, and how progress against delivery will be measured.

Clarity about whose responsibility it is for delivery – particularly where solutions may come from outside the sector – will be critical to success. For example, increasing the availability of childminders in some parts of the SW will be key to realising the potential of the easy pre-school brand cluster, but this is not an area that SW Tourism can easily address on its own.

It is important that SW Tourism shows clear leadership in promoting tourism and in addressing the issues facing the sector. Clear leadership requires people across the region to have clarity over the roles and responsibilities of different organisations engaged at the strategic level. The SWRA would like reassurance that this clarity exists and that delivery organisations are clear of the structures at the regional and sub-regional level.

It is also important that it is clear from the outset how the strategy will be monitored. Particular concern has been expressed about whether the contribution that tourism makes to the overall GDP of the region, will be an adequate measure of success on its own, as it says little about the nature of tourist jobs created, the quality of the tourist

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experience, or the extent to which the SW is effectively promoting sustainable tourism.

What next?

The Regional Assembly is looking forward to the opportunity to consider further the issues facing tourism and responsibilities for delivery in the SW later on in the year, when the Regional Assembly will be using its scrutiny function to explore the work of the RDA in supporting tourism.

In the meantime, the Regional Assembly's Regional Futures Group is particularly keen for further discussion on the development of the tourism strategy and would welcome the opportunity to discuss the strategic priorities with SW tourism directly.

I hope these comments and observations are helpful, but please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss any of the above further.

Bryony Houlden
Chief Executive

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Organisation	Contact	Title
Association of West Country Tourist Guides	Malcolm Surl	Chairman
Bath and North East Somerset Council	Bill Cotton	Economic Development Officer
Bath and North East Somerset Council	Cllr Nicole O'Flaherty	
Blackdown Hills AONB	Corinne Matthews	Tourism Officer
Bournemouth International Centre	Clive Tyers	Head of Conferences & Exhibitions
Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Economic Partnership	Ian Cambrook	General Manager
Bristol Airport	Tony Hallwood	
Bristol City Council	Sue Lutkenhouse	Economic Development Officer
Bristol Tourism and Conference Bureau	Kathryn Davis	Commercial Services Manager
British Resorts Association	Peter Hampson	
Carrick District Council	Samantha Groom	Tourism Officer
Cheltenham Tourism Forum	Cairns Boston	Chairman
Christchurch Borough Council	Ann Simon	Tourism Manager
Cornwall Tourist Board	Deborah Smith	
Cornwall TUC	Sheila Johns	
Cotswold District Council		Tourism Manager
Cotswold Water Park Society		Office Manager
Countryside Agency	Louise Thornhill	Director
CPRE	Christina Morgan	Chairman
Culture South West	Sue Kay	Executive Director
Dartmoor National Park	Alison Kohler	
Department of Culture, Media & Sport	Iain Newton	Regions and Local Branch
Destination Marketing UK Ltd	Philip Cooke	Managing Director
Devon and Cornwall Business Council	Neill Mitchell	CEO
Devon County Council	Janet McCarthy	Economic Development Officer
Dorset County Council	David Walsh	Tourism Officer
Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership	Jude Sargeant	Press & PR Manager
DTA	Peter Farrington	Chairman
East Dorset District Council	Rachel Limb	Tourism Officer
English Heritage South West	Tony Rees	Regional Manager
English Nature	Basil Greenwood	
English Riviera Tourist Board	Deidre Makepeace	Marketing Manager
Environment Agency - South West	Richard Cresswell	Director
Exeter City Council	Victoria Hatfield	Tourism Development
Exmoor National Park Authority	Martin Evans	Head of Recreation & Tourism
Exmoor National Park Authority	Ron Morrison Smith	
Federation of Small Businesses	Viv Rayner	
First Buses - South & Wales	Jo North	Regional Commercial Director
First Great Western	Glenda Lamont	Commercial Director - Swindon
Forest Enterprise	Chris Marrow	Forest District Manager
Forest of Dean District Council	Nick Rawlings	Economic Development & Tourism Manager
Gloucestershire First	Stan Jones	Managing Director
Gloucestershire Tourism	Chris Dee	Manager
GOSW	Sally Edgington	DCMS
GOSW	Duraid Silarbi	DCMS
Government Office South West	Mike Ashworth	
Great Western Enterprise	Nicky Morrison	Chief Executive
Heart of England Tourist Board	Sir William Lawrence	Chairman
HERDA - SW	Steve Schofield	Business Relations Officer
IoD South West	Simon Face	Regional Director
Isles of Scilly Tourism	Richard Wilcox	Tourism Manager
Learning Skills Council	Neil Roberts	Skills Development Manager
LGA	Marilyn Groves	Economic and Development Policy
Mendip District Council	Cllr Ken Maddock	Leader of Council

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Modbury TIC	Frank Mullery	Manager
National Express	Mike Lambden	Head of Corporate Affairs
National Trust	Antonia Nichol	Regional Policy Officer
North Cornwall District Council	Graham Facks-Martin	Tourism Officer
North Dorset District Council	Alice Gugan	Tourism Officer
North Somerset Council	Vanessa Settington	Visitor Services Manager
North Wiltshire District Council		Tourism Officer
Painswick Rococo Garden	Paul Moir	Director
Penwith District Council	M Foxley	Tourism Officer
Plymouth City Council	Councillor M Fox	
Plymouth College of Further Education	Fiona Ackroyd	Project Manager
Plymouth Economic Development Group	Andrew Huckerby	
Plymouth Gin	Richard Smith	
Plymouth Marketing Bureau	Janet Sherriff	Marketing Officer
Plymouth Sub. Regional Economic Parnetship	Rose Gripaios	Strategy & Research Manager
Poole Tourism	Graham Richardson	Tourism Manager
PPS Hotels and Guest House Association		
Purbeck District Council	Cllr M Shakesby MBE	
Quality South West	Brian Edwards	Regional Operations Manager
Queenswood Hotel (Weston)	David Horler	Hoteliers Assoc Representative
Restormel Borough Council	Paul Wright	Tourism & Cultural Services Manager
Riviera International Centre	B Cole	Managing Director
Salisbury District Council	Graham Gould	
Shaftesbury & District Tourism Association	Charles Dieppe	Vice Chairman
Somerset County Council	Judith Crisp	Tourism and Marketing Manager
South Hams District Council	Robert Green	Marketing and Tourism Officer
South West Chamber of Commerce	Nigel Hutchings	CEO
South West Coast Path Team	Ros Love	South West Coast Path Co-ordinator
South West Lakes Trust	Evelyn Stacey	Director
South West Museums Libraries and Archives Council		
South West Tourism	Malcolm Bell	CEO
Southwest Trains	Mark Dunn	Station Manager
Sport England South West	Paul Hudson	Senior Research & Information Manager
Stroud District Council	Diane Bragg	Tourism Officer
SW Chamber of Rural Enterprise	Tim Reed	
SW Chamber of Rural Enterprise	Robin Head	
Swindon Borough Council	Jonathan Cunningham	Tourism Consultant
SWRDA	Simon Hooton	Acting Director Strategy & Communications
SWRDA	Jodie Potter	Tourism Advisor
Taste of the West	Mike Otter	
Teignmouth & District Hotel & Caterers Association	R L Bailey	Chairman
Tetbury TIC	Mike Watkins	Tourism Manager
Tewkesbury B C	Julie Wood	Tourism & Economic Development Manager
The Eden Project	Elizabeth Steel	Marketing Manager
The Tank Museum	Markerting Assistant	Lee Major
The Training Partnership	Jayne Stroud	Director
Torbay Development Agency	Maureen McAllister	Director of Regeneration & Tourism
Tourism Skills Network South West	Phil Helmore	Regional Project Manager
TUC SW	Nigel Costley	
University of Gloucestershire	Keith Donne	
University of Plymouth	Nicola Griffin	Conference Manager
Virgin Cross Country	Brian Johnson	Franchise Director - London
Wessex Trains	Prof Jeremy Whitaker	Deputy Managing Director
West Country Cottages	Carol Nicholson	Partner
West Devon Borough Council	Janet Rosser	Tourism Officer

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West Dorset District Council	Julia Critchley	
Weymouth & Portland Borough Council	Simon Williams	
Wiltshire & Swindon Economic Partnership	Caroline Lewis	Manager
Wiltshire Tourism	Dot Williams	Tourism Manager
WWF	Mark Ellis-Jones	Regional Policy Officer