

My notes for the Tourism Levy debate

T.E.L.I Assignment 2

Social and community aspects:

Introductory statement:

As tourism grows, so do communities. Today my focus is on social and community aspects of implementing a tourism levy in Wales.

My first point is how implementing this tourism levy is not just about boosting the economy, more importantly it is how extra funds can be used to benefit communities and make a positive change in the country.

1. Visitor levies are used successfully all over the world to support tourism and invest in local communities.

According to the Welsh government “Money raised will be invested directly into the area supporting local tourism”

- This can relate to Maslow's hierarchy of needs as it positively impacts the needs of residents and tourists. It can benefit everything from:

Psychological and safety needs – Improve infrastructure, waste management

Belonging and love needs – Reinvestment in public spaces and community events

Esteem needs – Residents would feel confident in where they live when they see funds being used to improve where they live.

Self-actualisation needs - Preserving local habitats and culture

suggesting that money raised can help

- Protect local areas
- Restore damage from overtourism
- Provide new resources for everyone visiting

2. During my research I found:

“There were 10,698,000 overnight domestic GB trips to Wales during 2019, which was an increase of 6.8%, generating expenditure of £2,003 million.” - Welsh Government

<https://www.gov.wales/wales-tourism-performance-2019>

And

“In 2024, GB residents took 7.61 million overnight trips in Wales with 22.30 million nights and £2.24 billion spent during these trips.” - Visit Wales

<https://industry.visitwales.com/research-and-insights/overnight-visits-wales-gb-visitors>

This could mean in order to maintain or increase overnight visitors Wales needs to be marketed more successfully with tourism promotion. The levy can help improvements across the country with more to offer tourists and local people.

3. This can be specific with each council deciding how the money goes back into the community. For example in national parks it will be used to:

- Clean litter
- Provide bins/ benches and useful facilities
- Preserve the environment

Think about the millions of people a year who visit the beacon beacons causing all the overcrowding, littering and damage to the area.

But in Swansea this could mean a

- Better maintained town centre
- Improved parking
- New attractions and activities in the area
- More options for internet connectivity

- This makes each area improved for local people and tourists, making the tourism levy really positive for Wales to invest in.
- A tourism levy could be beneficial for what it provides – improved job opportunities, local resources/activities, arenas, environmental/sustainability protection, local businesses, cycle paths, parks ect.... According to the Welsh Government.
- Mention where else the levy has been successful

4. In more detail and according to the Welsh Government, revenue is used to :

- Promote the Welsh language
- Maintain and improve infrastructure
- Provide accessibility points in towns and rural areas, making Wales more diverse and accessible for everyone
- Support for sustainable tourism – promoting environmental changes
- Employment opportunities – more jobs as tourism expands and increases – more businesses opening.

5. What makes this fair?

According to the Welsh Government they are being transparent with communities regarding the tourism levy by displaying:

- How much revenue has been collected
- How the revenue has been used

A document will be displayed online every year for residents, visitors and businesses to have access to.

Cost of the levy ranges from 75p for hostels and campsites, to £1.30 for hotels and B&Bs.

6. Destinations where a tourism levy has already been implemented around the world – what it has been used for and what has made it successful in communities:

Austin Texas – Convention centre, grants to local musicians and music venues

Orlando Florida – Tourism promotion “Visit Orlando”, multi billion dollar convention centre, venues, events

Barcelona – Public transport systems, local businesses - marketing Barcelona as a worthy destination

Dubai – Infrastructure, marketing and promotion for the evolution for the city.

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Businesses/Tourism/Tourism-Levy-and-Registration-of-Visitor-Accommodation.aspx>

<https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/105214/pdf/>

Councils could do more to support local initiatives to ensure a successful balance between tourism and the impact on the environment if the government are committed to providing financial certainty.

Reinforced by National Geographic, writers suggest that tourism tax is aimed to “raise awareness of the protection and respect for the city, it is not to make money”.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/what-is-tourist-tax>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/europe-tourist-tax-impact>

Conclusion

Overall, a tourism levy is not about discouraging visitors. The purpose for it to be implemented is for fairness and giving directly back to communities, respecting and protecting our culture ensuring that there is equality in tourism, benefiting everyone.

All references are on the last two slides of my PowerPoint presentation.