

# EU approval unlocks major funding boost for Carmarthenshire

The Pendine Tourism Attractor Project in Carmarthenshire, will feature a new Sands of Speed state of the art museum dedicated to Pendine's historic association with Land Speed; an external enhancement and events facility with exhibition esplanade, and a 42 bed hostel.

The developments at Pendine are part of the Welsh Government's wider EU funded Tourism Attractor Destination programme, led by Visit Wales, which aims to create 13 must see destinations across Wales. The project is designed to address business investment and employment growth within the tourism sector in the regions, and put Wales on the world map as a holiday destination.

Tourism Minister, Lord Elis Thomas said:

"Our aim through the Tourism Attractor Destination programme is to focus efforts and investment on key projects in each region so we have a real impact on Wales' profile in this globally competitive market. Projects such as this in Pendine will give people compelling reasons to visit Wales and I look forward to plans which I have seen today coming to fruition – this will be a major boost for Carmarthenshire and south west Wales."

Cllr.Emlyn Dole, Leader of Carmarthenshire County Council, said:

"The Pendine Visitor Attractor Project, under the EU Attractor Destination Fund will support the development and promotion of Carmarthenshire as a distinctive, high quality year round visitor destination and will establish Pendine as a 12 month a year "day and stay" event destination.

Since 2010, Carmarthenshire County Council has been working on a regeneration master-plan to address the physical and commercial decline of the coastal resort of Pendine. Work has been completed to date to include the Pendine Gateway scheme which improved the aesthetics of the main routes into the village, Commercial Property Enhancement Scheme and the creation in 2013 of a new £800k Promenade. In 2017 the £1m Parry Thomas Centre opened comprising 5 commercially let units, public toilets and external showers."

It is hoped this will deliver an additional economic boost to the regional economy of £3.3m a year.

This announcement follows another boost for the area with a recent

announcement on funding for Celtic Routes project, backed by €1.6m of EU funds, aims to encourage visitors to explore new areas of Wales and Ireland on route to their final tourist destination.

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## **Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales determines an increase in councillors' allowances this year**

The Panel has determined an increase of 1.49% to the basic salary for elected members of principal councils to begin to address the erosion of the salary in relation to average earnings. This will take the basic salary to £13,600.

The Panel banded Community and Town councils into three bandings according to the level of income or expenditure. This is to reflect the wide variation in responsibilities of community and town councils across Wales.

The Panel have determined that the biggest community and town councils must pay £150 per year to every councillor as a contribution towards costs and expenses incurred by the councillor during the year.

They also propose that every community and town council reimburse the costs of care for all members where necessary. These measures are aimed at enabling councillors to effectively fulfil their role.

This final report and the Panel's previous reports and determinations can be viewed [here](#).

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## **Significant support for tenants' fees**

# ban

Last year, [the Welsh Government consulted on proposals to change the way fees are charged by letting agents, landlords and third parties to tenants in the private rented sector](#), following concerns raised by former Cabinet Secretary for Communities Carl Sargeant.

More than half of those who responded to the consultation, including a significant number of landlords, agreed that unnecessary fees should be banned.

The consultation found that there is a broad range in the level of fees that tenants are charged by agents – fees reported by tenants ranged between £50 and £1,700 just for entering into an agreement.

Key consultation findings include:

- 56% of all respondents agreed with an outright ban on unnecessary fees
- When fees are charged, tenants say that, on average, they are charged £249.47 to begin a tenancy, £108 to renew a tenancy and £142 at the end of a tenancy
- 62% of tenants said that fees have affected their ability to move into a rented property, while 86% say that fees have affected their decision to use an agent
- 61% of landlords did not know what their tenants were charged by their agent.

Rebecca Evans said:

“We received an extremely high number of responses to the consultation and I believe that this reflects the strength of feeling on this issue. Some of the fees tenants currently pay up-front are eye-watering and are affecting their ability to move into or within the private rented sector.

“I am keen to work closely with tenants, landlords and letting agents to ensure that the costs people face are reasonable, enabling them easier access to private rented accommodation. I am also seeking opportunities to work with private landlords and agents to improve and modernise the sector for everyone involved.

“Private rented accommodation is a growing part of the housing sector in Wales accounting for around 15% of all dwellings, and I want it to be a secure and attractive option.

“I have already announced my intention to bring forward a Bill which bans fees in the private rented sector. The findings from this consultation add to the evidence that action is needed to address the fees currently charged to tenants. I will now finalise these legislative proposals and introduce a Bill to the Assembly

later this year.”

More than 680 individuals and organisations responded to the consultation and a summary of those responses are being published today.

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## [New law proposed to protect Welsh devolution](#)

Welsh Ministers have serious concerns about the UK government’s EU Withdrawal Bill, which, as currently drafted, allows the UK government to take control of devolved policy areas, such as farming and fishing, once the UK has left the EU.

Assembly members are being asked to consider the introduction of the Continuity Bill as an emergency bill, which seeks to transfer EU law in areas already devolved to Wales into Welsh law on the day the UK leaves the EU. This will provide Welsh businesses with the legal certainty and stability they have long called for.

The Welsh Government’s preference remains for the UK government to amend their proposed EU Withdrawal Bill. But, as so much time has passed without any agreement between the governments on the amendments required, they need to proceed with the Continuity Bill as a fall-back option to protect Welsh devolution.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

“The EU Withdrawal Bill , as currently drafted, would allow the UK government to take control of laws and policy areas that are devolved. This is simply not acceptable to the Welsh Government, or the people of Wales who have voted for devolution in 2 referendums.

“Decisions taken now will affect Wales for decades to come. It is vital these decisions are made in a way that respects devolution.

“We remain constructive partners in talks with the UK government about changes to their EU Withdrawal Bill – and this remains our preferred outcome. However, we are running out of time and have developed our bill to prepare for a situation where the UK government does not adequately amend its bill to respect the devolution settlement.

“It would be irresponsible to refuse to give legislative consent to the UK government’s bill while also not being prepared to put in place our own measures to give clarity about EU-derived law in

Wales relating to devolved matters.

“Let me be clear, our bill will not be an attempt to frustrate or block Brexit. We are simply seeking to protect the current devolution settlement for Wales, while making sure there is legal certainty when the UK leaves the EU. This what Welsh businesses are calling for.

“The vote to leave the EU was not a vote to reverse devolution. The current devolution settlement in Wales has been backed by 2 referendums – in 1997 and 2011. This bill is about respecting the will of the people of Wales.”