

EPIC adventure in north Wales

It is the UK's only Alpine Coaster, and is set to further boost north Wales' credentials as a world class adventure destination. Zip World is also the new location for the EPIC installation.

The Fforest Coaster has received funding through Visit Wales Tourism Investment Support Scheme. Following the Year of Adventure in 2016 – investment in the sector signals further growth and development in Adventure tourism in Wales.

Research has shown that the Year of Adventure – the first of Wales' themed years -was a big success for the industry. Visit Wales marketing activity for 2016 generated an additional £370 million for the Welsh economy – which is an 18% increase on 2015. This shows visitors were definitely influenced by Visit Wales marketing before taking a trip to Wales.

Following the official opening, the Economy Secretary, said:

“The Year of Adventure has shown that Wales is a world class adventure destination, the Lonely Planet's listing of north Wales as number four in their ten best places in the world to visit in 2017 was the icing on the cake, especially as they mentioned the way the the former industrial landscape has been reinvented and repurposed to create a series of truly world class attractions.

This recognition is testimony to the commitment and partnership working between public and private sector to deliver a world class visitor experience. This exciting addition to the Zip World family will no doubt attract many more to the area. I wish the team at Zip World every success for the coming season and congratulate them on their commitment to invest in product innovation.”

Zip World Co-founder, Sean Taylor, says:

“Adventure tourism is booming in north Wales. In fact, we are so confident in its future that we have invested more than £5.5 million in the last 12 months to help consolidate its rightful position as an adventure capital.

“A recent economic impact study on Zip World revealed that since 2013, Zip World attractions has generated £121 million for the north Wales economy and created more than 218 jobs with over 93% of these jobs going to local people. We believe that we have a winning formula -: our world-class customer service; innovative adventures and our ability to leverage Snowdonia's beauty to create an unforgettable visitor experience.”

The EPIC installation has also appeared at the Zip World Fforest site for the official opening. EPIC was a focal part of the Year of Adventure campaign and has undergone a makeover over the winter to reflect the Year of Legends theme for 2017. The sign has been refreshed and recovered with illustrations of our most popular and well known legends. Visitors will be able to read all about the stories behind the legends as these are printed on the base of the sign which measures 4 meters high and 11 meters wide. This year's campaign film with Luke Evans is also a feature of the sign; with a QR code to view the film printed on the sign.

[International Arthur film showcases Wales during Year of Legends](#)

During Wales Year of Legends, the new epic film from Warner Bros. Pictures and Village Roadshow Pictures – King Arthur: Legend of the Sword releases internationally 12 May and UK wide 19 May showcasing some of Wales epic landscapes which will inspire international audiences to find out more about Wales' wealth of legends and links with Arthur.

Thursday 11 May 2017

In the lead up to the release date, Visit Wales has partnered with VisitBritain on a digital campaign 'Where Stories Become Legends' which showcases legendary locations in King Arthur's Britain to an international audience. The campaign features an exclusive behind-the-scenes video of writer/director/producer Guy Ritchie, writer/producer Lionel Wigram and the film's stars Charlie Hunnam and Jude Law on location talking about the epic British landscapes used in King Arthur: Legend of the Sword and the emotions they inspire – film can be viewed on this link: [Exclusive behind-the-scenes video on location for King Arthur: Legend of the Sword](#) (external link).

Cabinet Secretary for the Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates, said:

“The release of the film during our Year of Legends is perfect timing as we explore Wales' many legends and bring the past to life this year.

The film is a high profile showcase to Wales' epic scenery as well as to our potential as a film location. This is the latest in a long line of high profile productions that have filmed on location in Wales, with support from Wales Screen, helping to boost local economies and promote the stunning locations on offer, internationally.

I hope that the film will inspire many to visit us during our Year of Legends, and to take part in their own epic story during 2017.”

The locations from the film include Llyn Gwynant, Capel Curig and the Wye Valley.

BAFTA Cymru and Pontio have secured a special preview screening of the new film ahead of the UK release date. Audiences in Wales will have an opportunity to see the magic up on the big screen in the Pontio Arts and Innovation Centre, Bangor, North Wales on Sunday 14 May at 8pm.

This is the latest film to hit the cinema screens which has been filmed in Wales. further information on other films featuring Wales can be found on this link: [Epic film locations](#) (external link).

“Let’s keep up the pace on local government reform” – Mark Drakeford

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“I congratulate all councillors – both new and returning – who were elected last week.

“Local government plays a vitally important role in the lives of every person in Wales. Councils provide the services which educate our children, care for the elderly, dispose of our waste and light our streets.

“Wales’ newly-elected councillors have taken on a valuable role in our society and know the many responsibilities that come with public office.

“The coming weeks will be busy as new administrations are formed and council leaders are elected. Councillors are facing many challenges but none of us must lose sight of the wider issue of local government reform.

“After I announced new proposals for local government reform last year, I have been encouraged by the willingness of leaders to engage and I’ve had some very constructive and positive conversations.

“I want to continue this dialogue and work with council leaders in the same spirit of mutual respect as we take the next steps in reforming local government in Wales.

The Cabinet Secretary added:

“Inevitably, we will not always agree but I want to stress this is not an open-ended process – I will listen to different views but we will be moving forward with mandatory regional working.

“The Welsh public have heard us talking about local government reform for many years and the time has come to bring this to a long-lasting resolution.

“We have had thoughtful and well-considered responses to the White Paper consultation and I will shortly set out our next steps.

“I will be writing to council leaders over the coming weeks and am very keen to meet with them over the next few months as we discuss how we can move forward and build a solid working relationship for the years to come.”

[North Wales Shortlist for new Development Bank of Wales HQ](#)

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates revealed that sites in and around the Wrexham area were being actively considered for the bank’s new headquarters.

The news comes as Finance Wales, which will evolve into the Development Bank of Wales, confirms that last year was its busiest yet in the North Wales region.

Ken Skates said:

“My decision to locate the headquarters of our new Development Bank in North Wales is part of a wider commitment we have as a Welsh Government to spread prosperity and jobs across to every region of Wales. Having the bank in North Wales will mean it is ideally located to make the most of the huge opportunities associated with the growth of the cross border Financial and Professional Services sector.

“Finance Wales is already doing great work in the North Wales area and has just confirmed that last year was its busiest yet in the region.

“We are now actively considering two potential sites in and around the Wrexham area for the Development Bank’s headquarters which we

believe will allow us to build on this success.”

Giles Thorley, Chief Executive of Finance Wales said:

“The strong appetite for investment we have seen over the last year is testament to the ambition in the North Wales economy. We don’t see that as the end of the story and feel that the region has huge potential for further growth. During the year we strengthened the investment team based in North Wales and we are currently looking at further recruitment which, once complete will more than double our presence.”

“Finance Wales’s overall impact last year of £26.6m into 43 businesses is a great result but we shouldn’t be complacent. As we move forward towards the Development Bank of Wales it will be vital that the new organisation has a strong presence in all regions as we scale up to support more micro to medium sized enterprises.”

Latest figures show that last financial year Finance Wales directly invested £7.7m in North Wales securing private sector leverage from other investors of £19m.

The Development Bank of Wales will be tasked with providing more than £1 billion of investment support to Welsh business over the next five years and will ensure micro to medium businesses in Wales have greatly improved access to finance, support services and management advice.

It will create and safeguard over 5,500 jobs a year by 2022 and will be tasked with increasing annual direct investment to £80m by that date.

The Economy Secretary confirmed that senior management will be represented at the head office, including the current Director of Risk, Compliance & Legal at Finance Wales. The Welsh Government has also agreed that any new services offered by the Development Bank that will be located in North Wales

The Development Bank remains on course to launch later this year subject to regulatory approval.

[Galácticos and Bianconeri set for a world-class croeso in sporting showpiece](#)

With the line up for the men’s UEFA Champions League Final now complete,

Economy Secretary Ken Skates has outlined what two of the world's biggest clubs can expect when they come to Wales in June.

With around 170,000 additional visitors expected in Cardiff and an estimated global TV audience of 200 million across 200 countries and territories, few events can match the Champions League Final for size and scope. Cardiff is expected to be incredibly busy and alive with not only Spanish and Italian voices, but with people and languages from every corner of the globe, including an estimated 2,500 members of the media. A security operation befitting the size of the event will also be in place, aimed at ensuring a safe and successful event for visitors and locals alike.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

"These are two clubs and cities who already have a rich footballing affinity with Wales, sharing with us a love for footballing greats John Charles, Ian Rush, John Toshack and Gareth Bale, to name a few.

"But for many fans, this will be their first visit to Wales and they will find a country ready and determined to deliver a well-organised and well-resourced event – a real celebration of football both inside and outside our capital city. The excitement across Wales is palpable.

"For a city and country of our size to be chosen to host such a prestigious event is unprecedented and builds on our success in hosting the Ryder Cup, Ashes and NATO amongst many others, further cementing our standing as world class hosts.

"It's a fantastic opportunity for people across the world to see what Wales can deliver, whilst providing hundreds of thousands the opportunity to sample our excellent tourism, produce and business offering.

"Croeso. Welcome. Bienvenido. Benvenuto. We are ready and excited to host the biggest sporting event of the year and look forward to players and supporters of these two great clubs joining us for the sporting showpiece of 2017."