

# The Production of an IQM Strategy and Three Year Action Plan for Wrexham County Borough

## Final Project Report

Peter Lane, Tourism Planning and Leisure Consultancy Services

in association with

The University of Wales Aberystwyth  
and  
The Tourism and Planning Practice

November 2005

## Contents

<b>THIS DOCUMENT</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Part 1</b>	
<b>Project Overview</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Introduction	2
2. Project Tasks and Outputs	2
3. Project Delivery	3
4. Suggested Next Steps	8
<b>Part 2</b>	
<b>The IQM Strategy for Wrexham Borough Council</b>	<b>9</b>
1. Methodology and Processes	10
2. Developing a Monitoring Process	29
<b>Part 3</b>	
<b>The Three Year Action Plan</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Part 4</b>	
<b>Rolling out the IQM Process</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>SEPARATE DOCUMENT</b>
<b>Appendix 1 – Strategies that impact on the delivery of Tourism within Wrexham</b>	
<b>Appendix 2 – Marketing Report</b>	
<b>Appendix 3 – Workshop Presentation</b>	
<b>Appendix 4 – Questionnaire</b>	
<b>Appendix 5 – PowerPoint Presentation</b>	

## **Executive Summary**

1. Wrexham County Borough is one of 16 Tourism Growth Areas (TGA) in Wales selected by the Wales Tourist Board in 2001 to receive funding towards the development of Tourism following a successful bid by Wrexham County Borough Council.
2. Each area was expected to produce an action plan that was based around the principles of integrated quality management (IQM).
3. Whilst the action plans have been produced there has been some uncertainty as to how the principles of IQM should be interpreted for those delivering tourism activities.
4. Therefore Wrexham County Borough Council, in partnership with the Tourism Partnership North Wales, decided to commission the production of an IQM strategy and three year action plan for Wrexham County Borough.
5. It was intended that the work would consist of:-
  - the preparation of a comprehensive and practical IQM Strategy for Wrexham in relation to tourism activities to include a three year IQM Action plan for the Wrexham TGA together with a monitoring methodology;
  - consultation with key stakeholders;
  - the provision of clear and objective advice including the preparation of main headings for the development of a toolkit for practitioners and service providers;
  - the identification of an innovative approach for tourism development and marketing and destination management in Wrexham; and
  - the development of a methodology and approach to spread IQM more fully throughout the Council and more broadly into North Wales/Wales.
6. The project outputs include this final report which incorporates the Strategy, Action Plan and a marketing report together with a separate PowerPoint presentation.
7. In developing the IQM process for Wrexham time was taken to try and identify an approach that those engaged in delivering tourism and tourism related services could understand and relate to. This required an evaluation of the IQM concept and an appraisal of its practical application.
8. As a result of discussion, consultation and analysis an innovative and practical framework for the delivery of IQM has been devised. The concept has been tested within Wrexham and with other tourism professionals and appears to be robust.

9. The IQM framework, based on the tourism value chain, can be tailored to suit the particular needs of a destination and can be readily applied across an authority in both the public and private sectors.
10. The key issues identified for the project included:-
- the existence of a well respected local authority tourism service;
  - marketing messages not clearly defined;
  - private sector not fully engaged in the destination management process;
  - lack of a clear vision and focus for tourism; and
  - a majority of the strategic actions already defined but not set out in a clear who, when, how and how much format.
11. In addition to the development of an IQM process a series of actions have been identified within this final report relating to the different activities. These are as follows:-

### **Actions in relation to overall Strategy**

- set out a clear policy statement for tourism specifying the actions required, the agency or agencies responsible for the actions, the indicative costs and the timescale for implementation;
- consider relating the actions to the IQM strategy;
- draw up the policy statement in close consultation with the Tourism Forum and other relevant departments and agencies;
- ensure that the document is concise and clearly set out;
- once completed make sure that it is widely circulated; and
- ensure that progress is monitored and that the timetable of actions and costs is regularly reviewed, updated and amended to suit changing circumstances.

### **Actions in relation to marketing**

- resolve the brand proposition – define the destination brand and let this inform the creative execution - involve focus groups to plot current mind maps and the near market stakeholders to facilitate “buy in” to the process and results (predicted costs around £14,000);
- initiate a segmentation programme to identify the audience (predicted costs £2,500 to £12,000). From this work will come media information on what the target audiences wish from a destination by their lifestyles and media information on what they read and watch and listen to; and
- continue to drive quality initiatives through the tourism value chain by adopting IQM recommendations.

- recognise the attributes demanded by visitors in the VisitBritain research and reflected in destination Wrexham; and
- continue to work with the private sector and to engage them in the process.

### **Actions in relation to Consultation**

- provide a clear strategic vision for the delivery of tourism in Wrexham County Borough;
- support the vision with a specific action plan as identified previously;
- review and refine the role and function of the Tourism Forum;
- consider giving the Forum powers to manage a budget and determine policies and actions;
- consider giving the Forum a political dimension by involving the Cabinet member with a responsibility for tourism; and
- provide an IQM process that is understandable, relevant and easy to engage with.

### **Actions in relation to implementing the IQM process and strategy developed**

- the framework needs to be tested with those involved in tourism activities and the actions reviewed and refined to ensure that as complete a range as possible is identified;
- develop the framework actions into a checklist for self assessment;
- develop the visitor journey approach as the public facing methodology for delivering IQM;
- develop a toolkit to identify how the various actions can be delivered within the different sectors; and
- develop a self assessment process for evaluating the level of engagement with IQM.

### **Actions in relation to rolling out the IQM process within the authority and across Wales**

- ensure that the PowerPoint presentation is delivered either collectively or department by department to all those within the authority whose actions have an impact or bearing on Tourism;
- get departments/sections to identify what impact they currently make on the town as a visitor destination;

- get them to identify how they could improve their contribution to the destination and to identify what they think others should do to assist;
- review the list of actions in relation to the 4 key issues and the visitor journey. Check for their relevance and for any additional suggestions;
- secure approval at all levels to the use of the IQM process for helping to deliver and monitor the effectiveness the delivery of tourism services, direct and indirect, within the council;
- as a first step share and discuss the process with the Wales Tourist Board using the PowerPoint presentation;
- if accepted as an idea worth pursuing draw together a range of other TGA destinations to share the principles with, with a view to developing a standardised generic approach again using the PowerPoint presentation;
- develop the toolkit as the mechanism for involving as many as possible in the Integrated Quality Management process;
- consider testing the approach further in one or two pilot destinations; and
- share the developed approach more widely and seek its adoption as the norm for all destinations within Wales.

### **Suggested next steps**

- establish a clearly articulated vision for Tourism within Wrexham that is developed in association and shared with the Tourism Forum and relevant council departments based around a refined, timetabled Tourism Action plan;
- re invigorate the Tourism Forum and consider giving it a budget to control and specific actions to deliver;
- deliver the prepared IQM presentation to relevant departments and organisations and secure approval to its adoption as the accepted comprehensive tool for delivering quality management within Wrexham CBC;
- develop the IQM delivery toolkit;
- develop a self evaluation checklist;
- promote the IQM methodology developed within the council;
- promote the IQM methodology for adoption by other destinations in Wales
- define the destination brand; and
- initiate a segmentation exercise to identify the market audience.

# PART ONE

## Project overview

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Wrexham County Borough is one of 16 Tourism Growth Areas (TGA) in Wales selected by the Wales Tourist Board in 2001, following a successful bid by Wrexham County Borough Council to receive £900,000 of capital funding towards the development of Tourism.
- 1.2 The prime purpose of the Growth Areas is to raise Wales' profile internationally as a tourist destination and to drive forward the development of tourism in each of them.
- 1.3 Each area was expected to produce an action plan that was based around the principles of integrated quality management (IQM). This concept had been developed as part of a European Commission study into the integration of quality as a key component of comprehensive destination management within coastal, urban and rural destinations.
- 1.4 The key themes included in the Wrexham TGA were based around the targeting of growth markets through selective product development. Integrated Quality Management was also to be introduced, as a management process, to improve the quality of the visitor experience whilst securing economic, social and environmental benefits for Wrexham.
- 1.5 Whilst the principle of integrating quality management within all the elements of destination management is quite clear, the mechanisms and processes for doing so are not as well defined.
- 1.6 In partnership with the Tourism Partnership North Wales, Wrexham County Borough Council decided to commission the production of an IQM strategy and three year action plan for Wrexham County Borough. The intention being to provide clear guidance to those involved in the management and delivery of the tourism processes within the area.

## **2. Project Tasks and Outputs.**

- 2.1 At the project inception meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2005 the tasks identified in the Tender brief, Tender submission and appointment letter were discussed and refined into the following actions:-
  1. the preparation of a comprehensive and practical IQM Strategy for Wrexham in relation to tourism activities. The Strategy should include a three year IQM Action Plan for the Wrexham TGA together with a monitoring methodology. A review of existing strategies would also be needed;
  2. consultation with key stakeholders;

3. provide clear and objective advice including the preparation of main headings for the development of a toolkit for practitioners and service providers;
4. identify an innovative approach for tourism development and marketing and destination management in Wrexham; and
5. develop a methodology and approach to spread IQM more fully throughout the Council, the County Borough and more broadly into North Wales/Wales.

2.2 It was anticipated that the project would generate the following outputs.

A final project report which would include:-

- the IQM Strategy and a three year Action Plan together with a system for monitoring its implementation;
- proposals for rolling the IQM methodology out across the council;
- proposals for rolling the methodology out to other areas in North Wales/Wales;
- an evaluation report of the Tourism product and opportunities for innovation; and
- a framework for an IQM toolkit.

A separate PowerPoint presentation to be used to present and promote the IQM process to a variety of organisations.

### **3. Project Delivery**

3.1 In delivering the project a number of distinct activities have been undertaken which relate to the final required project output.

These activities cover

- understanding the context;
- market/tourism product appraisal;
- consultation;
- preparation of an IQM Strategy and monitoring process and the provision of a framework within which to develop an IQM toolkit;
- looking at ways of rolling out the IQM strategy locally and more widely in Wales; and
- providing a PowerPoint presentation to use in promoting the concept of IQM

## **3.2 Understanding the context**

3.2.2 Appendix 1, titled ‘Strategies that Impact on the delivery of Tourism within Wrexham’, has been produced. This sets out and briefly summarises the various local, regional and broader strategies that need to be taken into account when considering the delivery of Tourism services within Wrexham County Borough.

3.2.3 From an appraisal of the documents it is apparent that because of the crossover of strategic documents no clear statement of intent exists.

3.2.4 Whilst out of date, the tourism specific strategy for the County Borough contains an extensive list of actions required some of which still require implementation. These have been compiled into a list representing some 125 policy actions.

3.2.5 It is recognised that current thinking does not favour the preparation of service specific policy documents (e.g. for Tourism) relying on more generic Economic Development Department policy statements to get the message across. These are then supported departmentally by service specific work programmes/action plans.

3.2.6 However, Tourism is an activity that embraces a wide range of different service providers, delivery mechanisms and agencies for which a clear vision and action plan would help to ensure greater understanding and engagement.

### **3.2.7 Conclusions**

- a wealth of policy documents already exists but they need to be combined into a clear policy statement; and
- the actions required for tourism have already been defined but priorities, ownership and timing needs to be identified.

### **3.2.8 Suggested actions**

- set out a clear policy statement for tourism specifying the actions required, the agency or agencies responsible for the actions, the indicative costs and the timescale for implementation;
- consider relating the actions to the IQM strategy;
- draw up the policy statement in close consultation with the Tourism Forum and other relevant departments and agencies;
- ensure that the document is concise and clearly set out;

- once completed make sure that it is widely circulated; and
- ensure that progress is monitored and that the timetable of actions and costs is regularly reviewed, updated and amended to suit changing circumstances.

### **3.3 Market/tourism product appraisal**

3.3.1 Appendix 2 comprises a report dealing with the identification of an innovative approach towards tourism marketing in the Wrexham TGA. The report looks at the current marketing direction of the town and the development of a destination brand.

#### **3.3.2 Marketing report conclusions**

- Wrexham has the ability and support to seek out its own town specific marketing programme, providing it can lever the funds to do so;
- many private sector operators, whilst having sympathy with the Borderlands campaign and understanding the funding necessities of the project, still have a desire to see Wrexham “do its own thing”;
- the influence of Chester over visitor behaviour and spend in Wrexham cannot and should not be ignored;
- the evidence of the visitor leakage from Chester should be acted upon in the forward facing marketing work of the authority; and
- previously not delivering Wrexham specific marketing and instead being involved at a broader Borderlands level has possibly led to a partial disengagement of some of the private sector tourism businesses in Wrexham tourism initiatives. If Wrexham can deliver its own marketing work, this may be the catalyst for more business engagement in the local authority’s work.

#### **3.3.3 Marketing report actions**

- resolve the brand proposition – define the destination brand and let this inform the creative execution - involve focus groups to plot current mind maps and the near market stakeholders to facilitate “buy in” to the process and results (predicted costs around £14,000);
- initiate a segmentation programme to identify the audience (predicted costs £2,500 to £12,000). From this work will come media information on what the target audiences wish from a destination by their lifestyles and media information on what they read and watch and listen to;

- continue to drive quality initiatives through the tourism value chain by adopting IQM recommendations;
- recognise the attributes demanded by visitors in the VisitBritain research and reflected in destination Wrexham; and
- continue to work with the private sector and to engage them in the process.

### **3.4 Consultation**

- 3.4.1 It had been anticipated that a majority of the consultation would be carried out through the holding of a separate workshop/seminar for the public and private sector representatives.
- 3.4.2 Invitations were sent out to members of the Tourism Forum by Wrexham CBC who also issued invitations to relevant colleagues within the Council and Partner organisations.
- 3.4.3 Disappointingly the invitations to the private sector generated a poor response with only five of a potential 160+ audience turning up. Irrespective of the numbers it was decided to proceed with the workshop to secure some initial responses and test out ideas. The session proved to be very helpful with a great deal of discussion around the various issues.
- 3.4.4 The public sector session was better attended with 18 people present. Whilst numbers were greater the level of engagement was not as good as at the private sector workshop.
- 3.4.5 A copy of the presentation used is provided as Appendix 3.
- 3.4.6 As a follow up a questionnaire (see Appendix 4) was sent to all the Tourism Forum members and relevant officers within the Council. Unfortunately the response was minimal.
- 3.4.7 Consequently a limited number of discussions have been held, over the phone, with key individuals.
- 3.4.8 Key issues from the private sector perspective:
- too many strategies already in existence that the public sector is not acting upon. These need to be realistic rather than aspirational;
  - quality of the town infrastructure has improved significantly and this needs to be reinforced and emphasised to combat preconceived negative views about the town;
  - using the ‘visitor journey’ to provide a framework for thinking about service delivery;

- the status of the NW Borderlands TMA needs to be clarified;
- there is a need to work more closely with Chester;
- the need for the Forum to be more representative and to be involved in real issues, establishing priorities and decision making; the Forum needs to be able to hold people to account;
- there is currently no clear vision for tourism in Wrexham CBC. public sector attitude must change;
- the need to get Local Authority and Private sector visions for the future to coincide;
- the work of the Tourism team is held in high regard but it isn't clear whether the rest of the authority shares that commitment;
- staff and recruitment issues are an issue. There is an image problem with tourism as a career;
- processes identified through IQM approach seen as helpful and appropriate; and
- industry apathy will be overcome by results.

#### 3.4.9 Key issues from the public sector perspective:

- the current Tourism Forum is of a cyclical nature with only key, proactive figures attending;
- would stronger Forum be given any budgetary control?
- private sector must understand public sector support not limited to money;
- not clear even across those present what the overall vision for tourism is in Wrexham CB;
- private sector doesn't always seem to be engaged in the process e.g. offers for free advertisements not taken up;
- cabinet member for Economic Development unlikely to be invited to sit on the Forum;
- the private sector is seen as letting the public sector down;
- private sector needs to be more proactively involved in order for IQM to work;
- seemed unclear as to whether 'visitor journey' idea would work but a view that it could usefully be developed to demonstrate the process needed to all those who have an influence on the tourism product or services;
- stated tourism vision is to increase tourism value for Wrexham by 8% p.a; and
- encourage more short break and conference tourism.

#### 3.4.10 Conclusions

- the Tourism service is held in high regard, the leadership given to the marketing campaigns is thought to be excellent as is the

research work done on behalf of other authorities in Wales (via STEAM) and the dissemination of performance information to local businesses;

- whilst a Tourism Forum exists there is uncertainty from both sides about its effectiveness;
- both the public and private sectors can see the benefits of an active and engaged Tourism Forum and that a framework for working together is required;
- the lack of a clear vision and the need for a well targeted action plan for tourism was reinforced;
- a simple straightforward strategic IQM framework to help people understand how they can contribute to the delivery of quality tourism in Wrexham is required; and
- a realistic and well supported marketing focus is needed.

#### **3.4.11 Suggested Actions**

- provide a clear strategic vision for the delivery of tourism in Wrexham County Borough;
- support the vision with a specific action plan as identified previously.
- review and refine the role and function of the Tourism Forum;
- consider giving the Forum powers to manage a budget and determine policies and actions;
- consider giving the Forum a political dimension by involving the Cabinet member with a responsibility for tourism; and
- provide an IQM process that is understandable, relevant and easy to engage with.

#### **4. Suggested next steps**

- establish a clearly articulated vision for Tourism within Wrexham that is developed in association and shared with the Tourism Forum and relevant council departments based around a refined, timetabled Tourism Action Plan;
- re invigorate the Tourism Forum and consider giving it a budget to control and specific actions to deliver;
- deliver the prepared IQM presentation to relevant departments and organisations and secure approval to its adoption as the accepted comprehensive tool for delivering quality management within Wrexham CBC;
- develop the IQM delivery toolkit;
- develop a self evaluation checklist;
- promote the IQM methodology developed within the Council;
- promote the IQM methodology for adoption by other destinations in Wales;
- define the destination brand; and
- initiate a segmentation exercise to identify the market audience.

## Part 2

# The IQM Strategy for Wrexham County Borough

## 1. Methodology and Processes

### 1.1 Context for IQM

“Improving quality in tourist destinations is essential in satisfying tourists’ needs, in making the tourist industry more competitive and in ensuring that tourism develops in a balanced and sustainable way.

Quality exists only to the extent that a product or service meets customer requirements and expectations. Accordingly the individual elements making up a strategy based on quality standards have to be based on a thorough understanding of the customer.

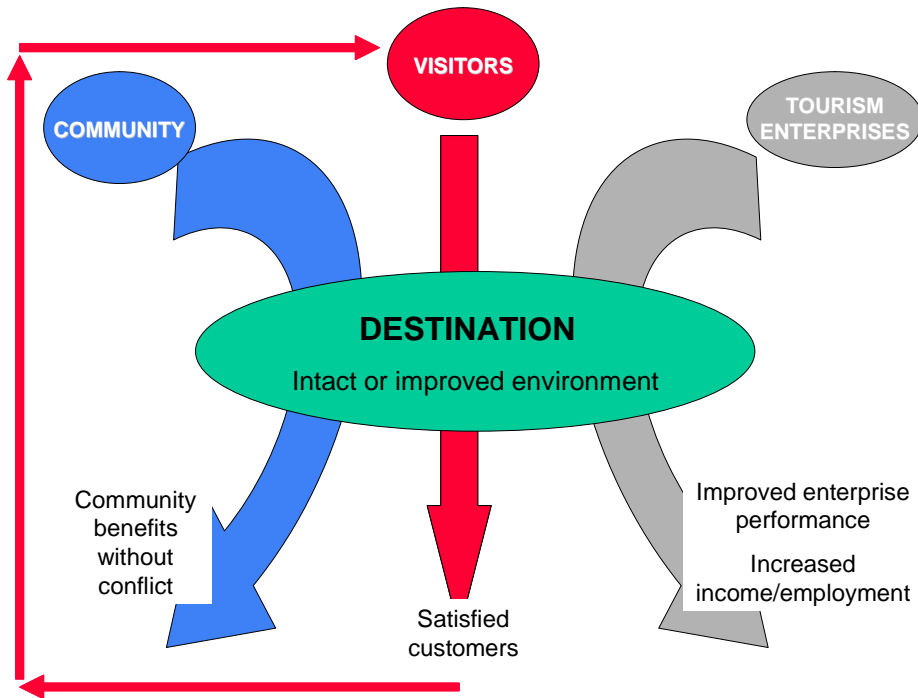
Total quality management systems are already part of the approach that tourist service providers are developing. As far as tourists are concerned, however, the satisfaction derived from staying at a destination does not depend solely on their experience of tourist services but also on more general factors such as hospitality, safety, security and traffic and visitor management.

A large number of factors have an impact on tourists’ perceptions of a destination, on their level of satisfaction and, as a consequence, on their willingness to return or to recommend the destination to others.

The success of a destination is shaped by a number of interdependent components. This highlights the need for the strategic and integrated planning of destinations to develop, provide and deliver a quality experience.”

The Integrated Quality Management approach was developed in response to the need to improve overall quality within destinations and in recognition of the fact that planning for visitors ought to be carried out in a comprehensive way. It has been described as “...an approach to managing a tourism destination which focuses on a continuous process of improving visitor satisfaction, while seeking to improve the local economy, the environment and the quality of life of the local community.” (Towards quality Coastal Tourism, IQM of coastal destinations European Commission 2000)

It is an approach that enables tourism destinations to focus on meeting and exceeding visitor expectations whilst improving the quality of life for local residents, culturally, socially, economically and environmentally. An IQM approach to tourism development can be illustrated thus:



**Figure 1: The IQM process**

In effect then, the principles of IQM take into account the whole of a destination's tourism system. It is a process that relies heavily on community involvement and participation, which allows a form of integrated dialogue to develop between visitors and tourism stakeholders and interest groups, which in turn drives sustainable development initiatives. The key elements of IQM focus on:

- Improving the quality of provision for visitors, thereby satisfying their needs and exceeding expectations, encouraging maximum spend, repeat visits and recommendations.
- The involvement of local communities and tourism enterprises in the planning, development and management of the destination in order to increase economic benefit from tourism and maintain and enhance local heritage, culture, society and environment.

## 1.2 The IQM Approach.

IQM is an adaptation of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Business Excellence model for use in destinations. The EFQM model is based on three self evaluation stages, Strategy, Practical measures for delivery and Results. Nine key factors are identified as part of the process including Leadership, People Management, Policy and Strategy, Resources, Processes, People Satisfaction, Customer Satisfaction, Impact on Society and Business Results.

EFQM as adapted for IQM in destinations is considered to consist of five key stages:-

1. Identify the partners
2. Decide on the Actions
3. Implement the Actions
4. Measure the affects
5. Evaluate the results

### **1.3 Applying the Principles of IQM to Different Destinations.**

When the European Commission set out to look at how IQM could be applied to destinations it commissioned three separate studies to cover rural, coastal and urban situations. The inference being that separate approaches would need to be adopted for each type of destination. In practice the process framework should be exactly the same for each to ensure a consistency of approach across all destination types, to allow for comparison and benchmarking and the sharing of best practice.

Unfortunately the three IQM reports produced for the Commission lack consistency and there is scope for them to be further refined to provide greater clarification.

However, whilst the overall process adopted ought to have consistency variations in interpretation and delivery will occur to reflect the particular destination type.

For rural destinations organisational structures are not likely to be as developed as more urban or coastal resort areas, and greater emphasis will need to be placed on issues such as product identification, partnership working and training.

The IQM report for rural areas sets out 15 principles to follow

1. Integration – putting quality at the heart of all the tourism functions.
2. Authenticity – presenting the rural heritage in a real way so as not to devalue its quality.
3. Distinctiveness – bringing out the special, distinctive features and flavours of the destination.
4. Market Realism – making a realistic assessment of the area's potential in the market place.
5. Sustainability – managing the impact of tourism on fragile sites and small communities.
6. Consumer orientation – understanding the visitors needs.
7. Inclusiveness – making the area accessible for all visitors.

8. Attention to detail – taking care of all the issues.
9. Rationalisation – supporting those initiatives and products that can deliver.
10. Partnership – working together and involving all organisations and community groups in delivering quality.
11. Interdependence - attending to the role of tourism in the destination as a whole.
12. Time – setting realistic targets for year on year achievable progress.
13. Commitment - promoting and spreading enthusiasm.
14. Accurate communication – providing visitors with accurate information to help match expectations to reality.
15. Monitoring – monitoring and evaluating impacts on the visitor, enterprises, the environment and the local community.

The IQM reports for Urban and Coastal areas were prepared by a different consultant and the approach adopted for each is virtually identical. It is based on five key components.

1. Having a clear vision in place, backed by a leader capable of rallying and influencing all the partners.
2. Developing a strategy and appropriate policies agreed by the partners.
3. Implementation of the measures proposed by all the relevant agencies.
4. Regularly monitoring the results using appropriate indicators.
5. Analysing the results and modifying actions if required.

What appears to be missing from the published advice at present is a clear statement and framework for all destination types to enable them to pursue IQM. Within such a framework it should be possible to identify how the different components might need to be interpreted by different types of destination.

It should be remembered that IQM is a process that can and should be developed as a philosophy or way of working. The critical components for all destinations are; the need for a vision, for a strategy, for leadership, for partnership, for effective delivery and for review and monitoring. It also requires enthusiasm and commitment from those engaged in the process and a fully inclusive approach to service planning and delivery.

#### **1.4 Developing an IQM approach for Wrexham County Borough**

Recognising that no specific approach exists for applying IQM to individual destinations time was spent in trying to establish a methodology or

framework that respected all the IQM principles but was easy to understand and articulate into actions.

It is considered that there are two main components for the management and development of a destination on the basis of integrated quality management.

**A) The availability of an overall vision and strategy for the area.**

This should:

- be developed through a partnership approach involving all sectors, both public and private, of the area's tourism industry;
- relate to other key policies, strategies and action plans and provide a clear framework for action;
- be organised and managed by the lead body for tourism; and
- follow the development process identified below
  - create a clear vision for the future;
  - agree the philosophy to follow;
  - secure political ownership and commitment to the process;
  - identify problems and issues;
  - generate objectives and ideas;
  - formulate policies and targets;
  - create an action plan;
  - establish a monitoring process;
  - secure feedback on the plan implementation; and
  - review and revise the action plan on a continuous basis.

**B) The process of service delivery in both the public and private sector.**

- each organisation responsible for any component of the tourism industry needs to pursue a quality management approach in accordance with the 9 key factors of EFQM i.e. Leadership, People Management, Policy and Strategy, Resources, People Satisfaction, Customer Satisfaction, Impact on the Community and Business results.

However this is a difficult concept to follow in a people based industry that is dominated by small to medium sized businesses.

It is suggested that the approach could be more readily understood and embraced if it was more practically based and supported by clear actions to follow.

Four general 'action headings' have, therefore, been developed together with an outline of the components to be covered under each of them.

## **1. Work and Plan Together**

- provide leadership;
- establish an effective partnership organisation;
- create and agree a vision;
- produce a strategy and action plans;
- agree Targets;
- manage budgets; and
- establish monitoring and evaluation processes.

The action plan needs to include details of the action, who is responsible for it, how it should be done. How much it will cost, when it should be carried out and what are the expected results.

## **2. Know your area**

- geographically and physically;
- culturally;
- economically;
- politically,
- administratively;
- socially; and
- comparative performance.

The information should be used to identify gaps and market opportunities, the area's strengths and weaknesses and special and unique qualities i.e. distinctiveness.

It should also be used as the basis for planning, staff training, monitoring and an overview of customer information.

It will result in establishing the market context and give added market realism by providing

- a tourism inventory for the town;
- a distillation of the primary/headline economic factors;
- an understanding of where individual businesses/activities fit into the tourism picture; and
- a qualitative analysis through destination benchmarking, visitor satisfaction and industry satisfaction surveys.

### 3. Know your business

- resources;
- processes (relate it to the visitor journey);
- people/staff;
- customers; and
- results

### 4. Act on results

- establish a clear monitoring process;
- reviewing the information regularly; and
- modifying plans accordingly.

There was still considered to be a need to make the process easier for all tourism interests in the County Borough to comprehend and work with. The Tourism Value Chain has been in use for a number of years and is a way of helping both businesses and organisations to visualise the complete visitor ‘journey’ and to identify where on that chain they have an involvement and/or an impact.

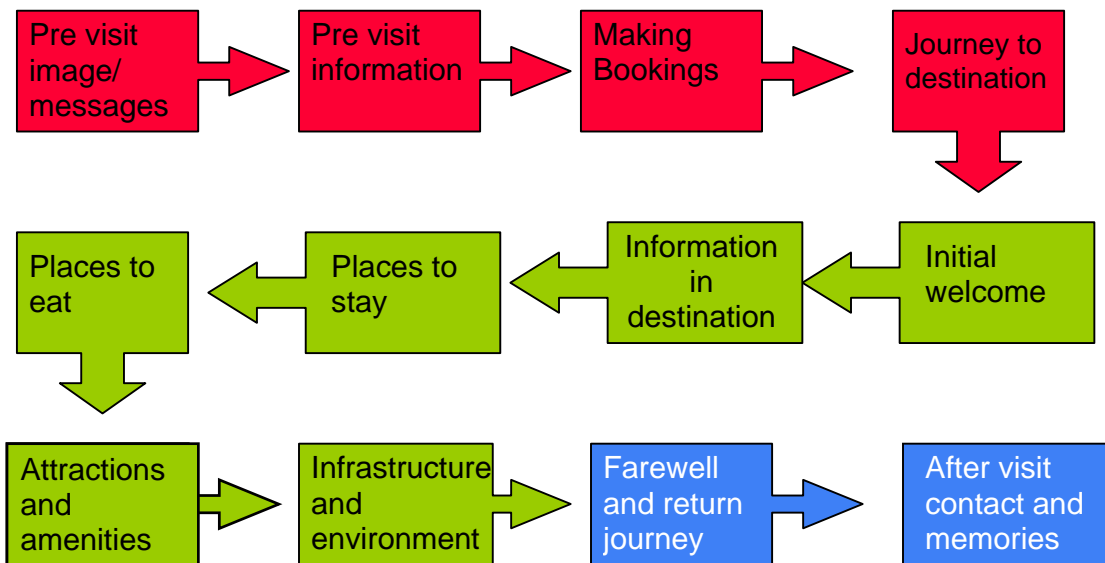


Figure 2: The Tourism Value Chain

By relating the actions required under each of the main four headings to the Tourism Value Chain responsibilities for action could be more clearly identified and understood.

The approach outlined was tested at the workshops held on the 4<sup>th</sup> May and was considered to be one that merited further development.

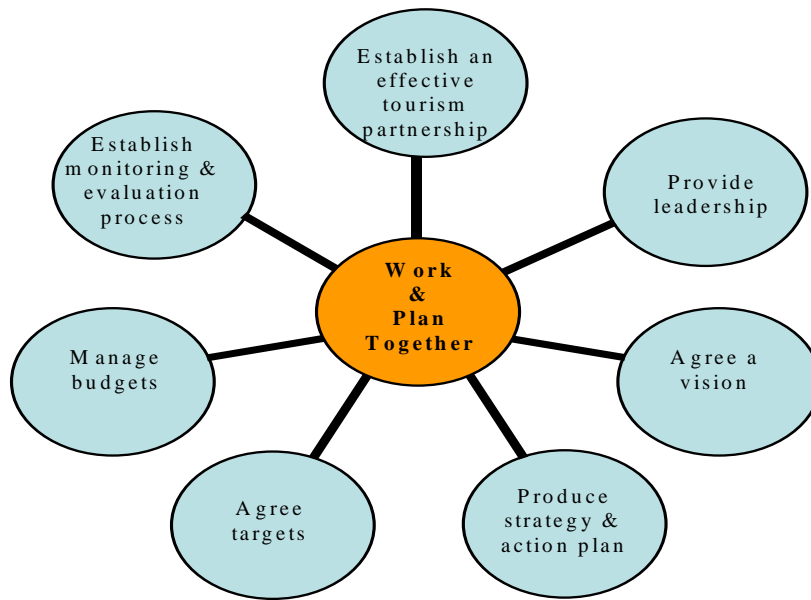
The following diagrams illustrate how the components of Integrated Quality Management have been incorporated into the four main activity headings identified. They also demonstrate the generic actions that need to be carried out by all of those involved in delivering tourism services whether they be in the public, private or voluntary sector. Further actions will need to be developed and refined through discussion and consultation with relevant businesses and organisations.

## 1. Work and Plan Together

Concern for quality, and the management techniques aimed at achieving it, should be integrated into all the tourism functions of the destination.

That entails involving people. Working together is right in principle and also essential for success. Special attention should be paid to reflecting the role of tourism in the destination as a whole. Quality tourism depends on, and in turn supports, many other activities such as agriculture, craft industries, transport and local services. The many small tourism enterprises, related organisations and community groups should all be involved together in delivering quality in the destination. Their well-being should be regularly checked via the monitoring and review process.

**Figure 3: Generic actions for working and planning together**



Each of the ‘action spokes’ on the visitor wheel should be further broken down. Issues pertinent to working and planning together include:

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A tourism development forum should be established, involving stakeholders from a range of levels, from national to local, and across the range of individuals and residents within the community, giving equal voice to all. Stakeholders should include residents, visitors, businesses, public bodies/groups, and voluntary sector organisations. The <i>thirds principle</i> promoted by the Welsh Assembly Government, involving a balanced representation on both a gender and sectoral basis (public / private / voluntary) is a useful model that Wrexham CBC might wish to consider.</li> </ul>                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate fundamental principles and values for working with partners in order to ensure a transparent and solid foundation for ongoing relationships. For instance agree a written constitution, assign responsibilities, establish channels and methods of communication. With other project partners, determine principles and a process to ensure equality of participation, discussion and consensus. Use participatory methods to seek the views of a range of stakeholders to gather relevant information. Involve a range of stakeholders in implementation to strengthen ownership and thus improve sustainability.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and work with European, State, National, Regional and Local policy in order to maximise benefits (for the most relevant to IQM in the Wrexham context see the Strategy review included as part of the Final project report). Develop individual and group skills to ensure the effective sharing of responsibilities and actions. Effectively manage the implementation process. Do not impose unrealistic burdens on groups or individual who may not have the skills or resources to deliver.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look beyond single sector projects/programmes. Make linkages between different project/programme plans: tourism depends on and supports many other activities.</li> </ul>   |

## 2. Know your destination

Delivering Integrated Quality Management involves obtaining an informed and realistic assessment of the area’s position in the market place in order to assess its future potential. The former involves getting close to actual visitors, understanding their needs and finding out whether they are being met. The latter involves identifying the destination’s competitive strengths and ensuring they are not eroded.

Sometimes quality can be about not doing things. Actually delivering a small number of good initiatives and products are better than attempting to deliver many poor programmes. It can be about halting under-resourced programmes that are simply not delivering quality, or realigning them into something more effective.

Many destinations encompass rural areas harbouring fragile sites and small communities sensitive to intrusion and congestion. At the same time, visitors are increasingly looking for unspoiled environments. There should be no incompatibility where Integrated Quality Management techniques have been employed in destination management to ensure inclusive prior consideration has been given to managing the impact of tourism in such a way as ensure sustainable benefits.

**Figure 4: Generic actions for knowing your destination**



Each of the ‘action spokes’ on the visitor wheel should be further broken down. It is fundamental that a good and up to date understanding of the destination is established because:

- captured information identifies gaps and weaknesses;
- it provides a competitive context;
- it provides market realism; and
- it provides understanding of the destinations distinctiveness.

Issues pertinent to knowing your area together include:

**2a. Assess what you have:**

• Undertake an inventory of tourism product in the area
▪ Distil the headline economic factors
▪ Understand how and where your business/organisation activities fit into the overall picture
▪ Think about your business/organisation and destination in relation to the geographical/physical reality; the economic reality; the social and cultural reality; the political reality and the environmental reality
• Take concerns of disadvantaged groups into account, especially the disabled, minorities and children.
• Involve stakeholders from different organisations, communities and sectors to ensure that residents’ livelihood perspectives are represented.
• Understand who your existing visitors are – they may include your friends and relatives; suppliers to and clients of local businesses; shoppers and day trippers; student groups on educational visits; visiting sports teams and individuals; people passing through – as well as guests staying at established accommodation bases.
• Obtain the opinions of existing visitors through focus groups, surveys and monitoring – on both a formal and informal basis – in order to establish visitor needs and satisfaction levels and whether these are currently being met.
• Avoid duplication of existing facilities, resources and networks. Do not re-invent the wheel. It is better to modify or influence existing groups or structures, particularly in small communities or areas, where demands on individuals are finite.
• Monitor visitor numbers and impacts (economic, environmental social and cultural) and refine activities, if necessary, to prevent damage to the local economy, environment, society and culture.

**2b. Assess what can sustainably be developed to profitably cater for identified market demand**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take concerns of disadvantaged groups into account, especially the disabled, minorities and children.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept, from the outset, that there may not be a demand in the marketplace for those key features that you have identified. The skill is to find innovative ways to make the key features attractive and competitive in the marketplace i.e. a viable proposition.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To assist in this process, ensure you have the support of existing recognised sources of specialist knowledge and expertise to obtain relevant market research information, to participate in testing your ideas and to offer guidance/advice.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the needs and priorities of individuals, communities and visitors are central and primary in all activities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always aim to identify gaps in quality provision, plan and effectively implement ways and means of filling these gaps.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop skills, facilities and services aimed at exceeding visitors' expectations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure everyone provides unambiguous information on the availability of services or facilities. Misinformation means missed opportunities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to be realistic in defining what you can do using your own resources and skills. Focus on the possible not the improbable.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to ensure activities and experiences are sustainable in the long term - include economic, environmental social and cultural aspects.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate action to prevent damage could include better interpretation and communication to improve understanding amongst visitors and local residents alike, placing physical limitation on access, changing promotional emphasis.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep exit strategies in mind. Plan the transfer of appropriate skills and responsibilities from external sources to the locality.</li> </ul>

**2c. Assess distinctive elements, authenticity & inclusiveness**

Leisure visitors travel in order to experience something genuinely different - otherwise they may as well stay at home. Delivering quality should involve drawing out the special, distinctive features and flavours of the destination. Heritage, culture and language should be honoured and celebrated. It should be presented in a real way, which neither fabricates nor devalues its quality.

Destinations should not be content with delivering quality to a few whilst offering mediocrity to others. A good experience should be provided for all including those having special needs.

**Identify the area’s key assets and features:**

- Environmental Assets and Features
- Cultural Assets and Features
- Heritage Assets and Features
- Social Assets and Features

Identify those assets and features that are seen as being truly distinctive - as perceived by residents and visitors. Analysis of the area’s authenticity should inform the process of identifying those features that are truly distinctive. Utilise focus groups to identify and test one or more key features perceived as being those that may make the area truly distinctive i.e. set it apart from other similar areas. Focus groups should not only involve residents from the locality but also from neighbouring areas, it being important to bring into focus the perception of the destination by potential visitors. That perception may differ significantly from that held by residents.

**Develop appropriate methods to:**

- protect;
- interpret;
- enhance;
- manage;
- promote

these features identified as being truly distinctive, ensuring that you:

- consider special needs; and
- consider overseas visitors and ethnic groups from other parts of the UK.

Consider the quality of experience for all members of visiting groups. Avoid over-concentration on providing a quality experience for one specific visitor type to the detriment of accompanying individuals or other types of visitor. For instance, providing a quality experience for skiers’ partners

**2d. Act on delivery / marketing**

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once you are sure that you have a marketable proposition, identify existing marketing opportunities across all media i.e. promotional campaigns using new media, traditional media advertising etc.</li> </ul>                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use existing visitor research and ongoing monitoring research to understand visitor trends in order to develop appropriate marketing methods (this will inevitably mean learning to work with others to avoid duplication of effort)</li> </ul> |

**2e. Monitor, review and redevelop/re-orientate**

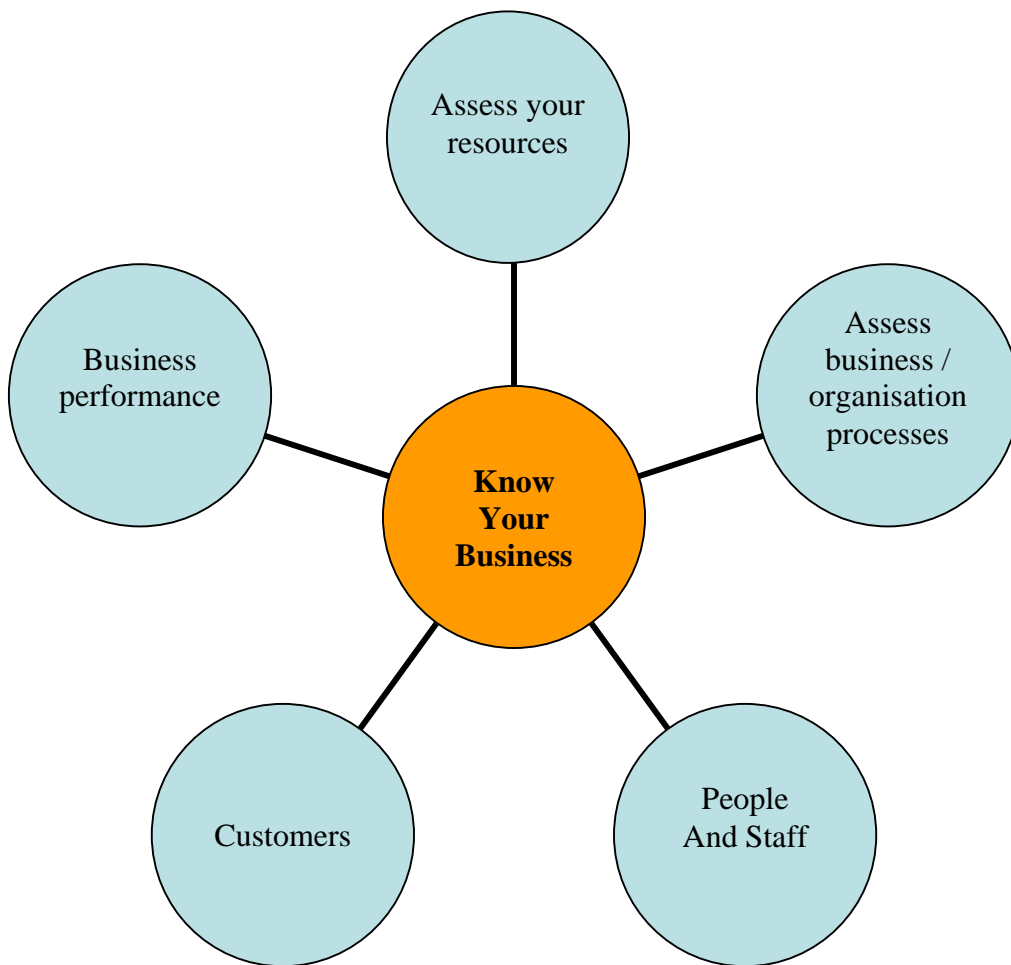
- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept that any destination is likely to change over time. Establish a process for regularly reviewing and re-negotiating objectives.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor visitor numbers and impacts (economic, environmental social and cultural) and refine activities, if necessary, to prevent damage to the local economy, environment, society and culture.</li> </ul> |

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appropriate action to prevent damage could include better interpretation and communication to improve understanding amongst visitors and local residents alike, placing physical limitation on access, changing promotional emphasis.</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep exit strategies in mind. Plan the transfer of appropriate skills and responsibilities from external sources to the locality.</li></ul>   |

### 3. Know your business/organisation

Having a full understanding of all aspects of your business or organisation is fundamental to that business operating in a proactive and integrated way with others in the destination. It is also fundamental to the economic viability of the business or organisation.

**Figure 5: Generic actions for knowing your business / organisation**



Again, the visitor wheel spokes can be further broken down:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess your resources by looking at statutory responsibilities; emerging initiatives; the physical aspects such as buildings, fixtures and fittings.</li> <li>• Do you have the best resources to make your business or organisation a viable, sustainable option?</li> <li>• How can available resources be sustainably developed?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your customer facing business or organisational processes should be examined and assessed utilising the tourism value chain. Look at each step along the chain in detail. How can you improve performance?</li> <li>• Your back facing business or organisational processes should also be examined. Look at your supply chains. How can you improve performance?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The people that make up your business or organisation are a vital element. Assess discrete areas of responsibility. Can these be improved?</li> <li>• Assess training and development needs</li> <li>• Establish methods by which these needs can be met</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers are also vital to a viable and sustainable business or organisation. Establish methods to understand your customers needs and expectations.</li> <li>• Monitor satisfaction levels on a regular basis</li> <li>• Identify gaps in quality provision</li> <li>• Establish methods by which these gaps can be closed</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business performance should be monitored on a regular basis:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree performance criteria</li> <li>• Collate trend information</li> <li>• Use economic intelligence to draw conclusions and to stimulate actions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

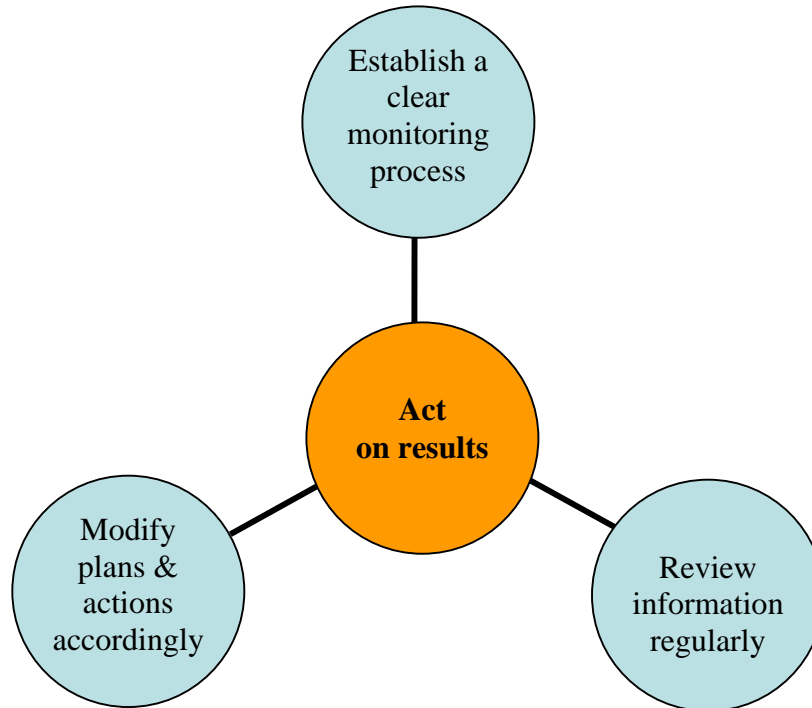
#### 4. Act on results

An ongoing monitoring and evaluation process is vital in order to effectively establish:

- Business or organisation performance
- Destination performance
- Customer satisfaction

A detailed account of monitoring processes required is given in part 2 of this section of the report (2. Developing a Monitoring Process).

**Figure 6: Generic action for acting on results**



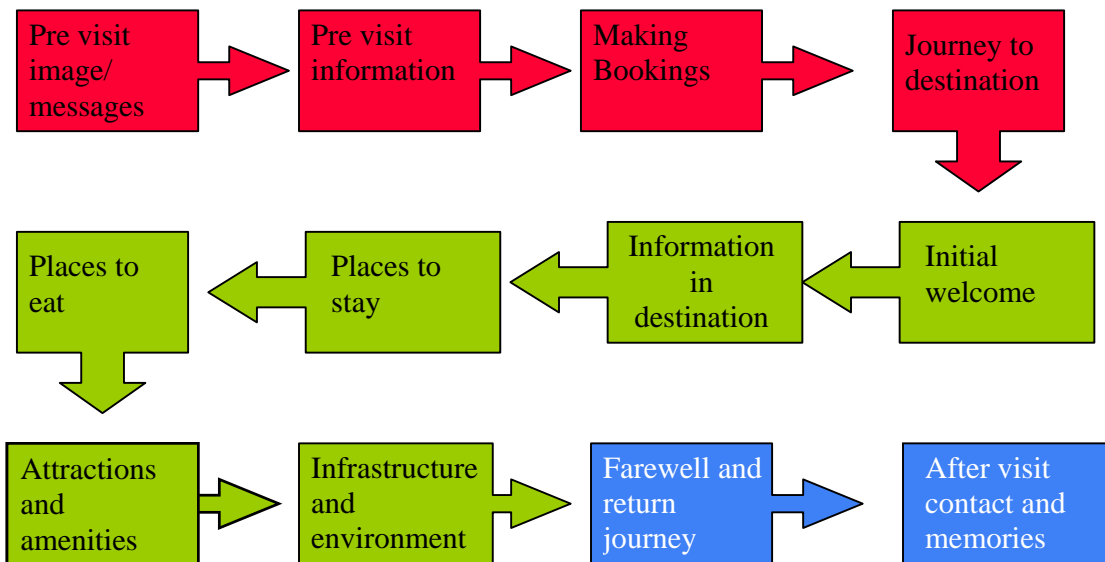
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accept that any business/organisation and destination is likely to change over time. Establish a process for regularly reviewing and re-negotiating objectives.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitor visitor numbers and impacts (economic, environmental social and cultural) and refine activities, if necessary, to prevent damage to the local economy, environment, society and culture.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appropriate action to prevent damage could include better interpretation and communication to improve understanding amongst visitors and local residents alike, placing physical limitation on access, changing promotional emphasis.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep exit strategies in mind. Plan the transfer of appropriate skills and responsibilities from external sources to the locality.</li></ul>

## 5. The Tourism Value Chain

As mentioned earlier people at the workshops considered that there was some merit in relating the process more to a concept that could readily be assimilated by people working at various levels and in the range of different organisations delivering tourism services.


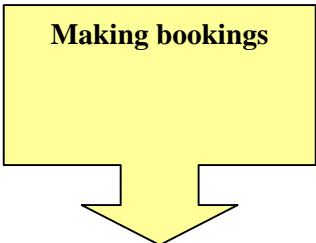

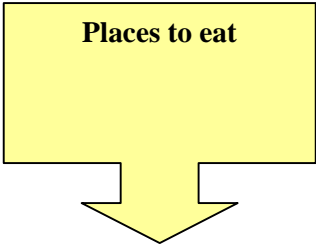
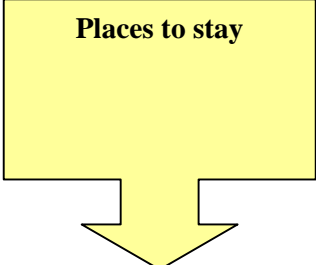
In order to improve the understanding of the IQM process and secure its wider acceptance, understanding and use it is suggested that the various actions that need to be taken under the four key headings, in the public and private sectors, should also be related to the Tourism Value chain/Visitor Journey, as demonstrated below.

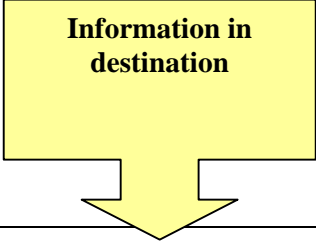
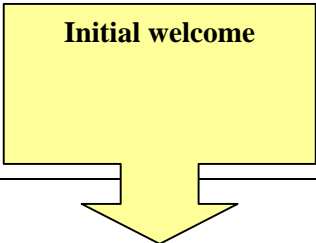
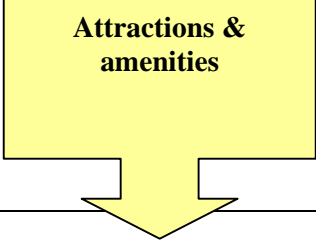
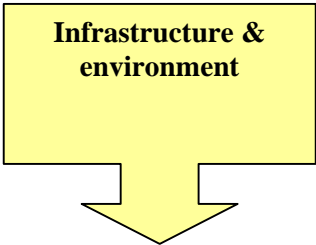

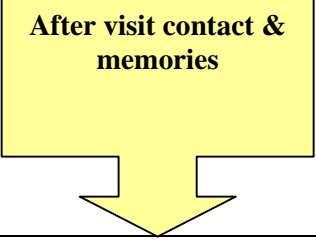
**Figure 7: Diagram of the Tourism Value Chain/Visitor Journey**



The various 'tourism' responsibilities for the public and private sector can be broken down as shown in the following diagram:

The actions are indicative of the basic responsibilities of business operators and public sector bodies and should be built upon at a local level to take account of local political, social, economic and geographical situations.

Private Sector responsibilities		Public Sector responsibilities
Advertising, brochures, direct mail, websites etc. to give information on individual tourism businesses and to persuade tourists to visit. These should complement researched destination target markets		'Destination sell' activities (advertising, brochure production, direct mail, website development etc) to promote the area and feature specific tourism businesses. Market research activity to establish target markets and segments. Communication of research to industry
Provision of processes and procedures to facilitate bookings at individual tourism business level. For example by post, telephone, email, real time on-line etc		Supply or funding of training to support tourism businesses in developing the full range of booking processes and procedures, involvement with regional and national booking systems e.g. VisitWales.com, facilitation of bookings via TIC network as a revenue earner. Market research to establish preferred visitor booking methodology and subsequent facilitation of methods. Communication of research to industry
Supply of detailed information on reaching tourism premises, including information on public transport and cycle/walking		Supply of detailed information on reaching the destination via a range of transport modes. Liaison with passenger transport operators in integrated route development and transport provision
Ownership and management of a range of eating places e.g. pubs, restaurants, take-aways, cafes, hotels etc that match proven community and visitor need		Regulation of eating premises (health & safety etc) plus promotion of establishments via promotional literature. Training to support and encourage effective eating establishments. Market research to establish community and visitor needs and satisfaction with eating establishments, communication of results to industry
Ownership and management of a range of places to stay, e.g. hotels, guesthouses, B&B, Self catering, bunkhouses, that match researched visitor need and level of quality required		Regulation of accommodation, facilitation of uptake of grading schemes, plus promotion of establishments via published literature and websites. Training & support to encourage effective accommodation businesses. Research to establish visitor needs and satisfaction levels with accommodation & communication of results to industry

<b>Private Sector responsibilities</b>		<b>Public Sector responsibilities</b>
Provision of destination tourist information in individual business premises to encourage visitors to explore once in the destination. Staff should have awareness of local visitor information		'Provision of a range of tourist information services via TICs and other community based outlets to encourage tourist spend in the destination area.
Provision of a warm welcome by operators and staff in tourism businesses. This should include the initial impression of the physical aspects of the tourism business		Provision and/or facilitation of customer care development skills within the tourism industry and for public facing public sector staff (in conjunction with other public sector bodies).
Ownership and management of a range of tourist attractions and amenities that match researched visitor and community requirements and expectation		Regulation, development and management of a variety of attractions and amenities suitable for both community and visitors. Research into visitor and community needs, expectations and satisfaction levels with provision and subsequent communication of such to industry.
Provision of a pleasant environment at individual tourism business level including maintenance of infrastructure to a high standard. Completion of an environmental accreditation programme such as Green Dragon		Provision of appropriate infrastructure for tourism development (roads, signage, cycleways, footpaths, street furniture etc). Support for and facilitation of environmental accreditation schemes.
Provision of a fond farewell to visitors. Ability to provide alternative journey routes home for the visitor if requested with information of points of interest		Provision, in conjunction with other agencies, of a variety of integrated public transport services in addition to infrastructure to support car borne visitors.
Post visit marketing activity including monitoring activities at individual tourism business level. Encouragement for further repeat visits at key points in the business year.		Visitor satisfaction monitoring to gain feedback on experiences at destination and individual business level. Destination marketing and CRM activities to encourage 'word of mouth' recommendation and repeat visits

## 2. Developing a monitoring process

### 2.1 IQM and destination monitoring

In order to effectively implement an IQM approach to tourism development, it is important that both visitor and community research become integral elements of that approach. Currently in the UK relatively little continuous, systematic research seems to be conducted to measure satisfaction with particular destinations. Indeed, much of the research that *is* carried out can be criticised on a number of levels:

- Owing in general to budgetary constraints, research tends to take place irregularly, on an ad-hoc basis, for example when data is needed for a new strategy, or when one off funding becomes available. As a result these surveys are a snapshot at a point in time and do not help to see if the destination is satisfying its visitors and residents more or less than previously.
- Often, when research is conducted a new methodology is used each time, covering such basic aspects as to what questions should be asked, who should be asked and when they will be asked. This approach makes it impossible to easily compare data from previous research exercises.
- Few surveys take the opportunity of asking visitors whether or not they are more or less satisfied with a destination than they are with its competitors. Although this aspect is often difficult as competitor destinations are hard to define and may change over time, it is an aspect that is becoming increasingly important as more and more destinations enter the tourism market.
- The majority of destination research concentrates solely upon the visitor and their attitudes and expectations, thereby leaving the residents, those people who occupy that destination year round and for whom facilities and services are vitally important, without a voice in the development process.


The implementation of an IQM approach requires that destination satisfaction monitoring is done on a regular, extensive and coherent basis. As a result, those destinations utilising IQM will be able to collate evidence on a regular basis and more importantly will be able to use that evidence to illustrate the effectiveness, or otherwise, of current strategies and policies impacting upon tourism and community development within the destination.

The destination itself, whether considered to be a small village, a large town, an area of countryside or indeed a geographical area enclosed by a Unitary Authority boundary, is essentially made up of three co-existing and interrelated elements of population:



**Figure 8: The three basic population elements of a destination**

Impacting upon all three of these elements there are the physical, or tangible, and the non-physical, or intangible aspects of the destination, all of which contribute towards the satisfaction levels with the destination experienced by each individual, whether resident, business operator or visitor. Examples of both tangible and intangible assets of a destination are illustrated below:

Tangible	Intangible
	
Accommodation	Safety & Security
Attractions	Mobility & Access
Activities	Hospitality
Services	'Sense of place'
Amenities	Quality & value received

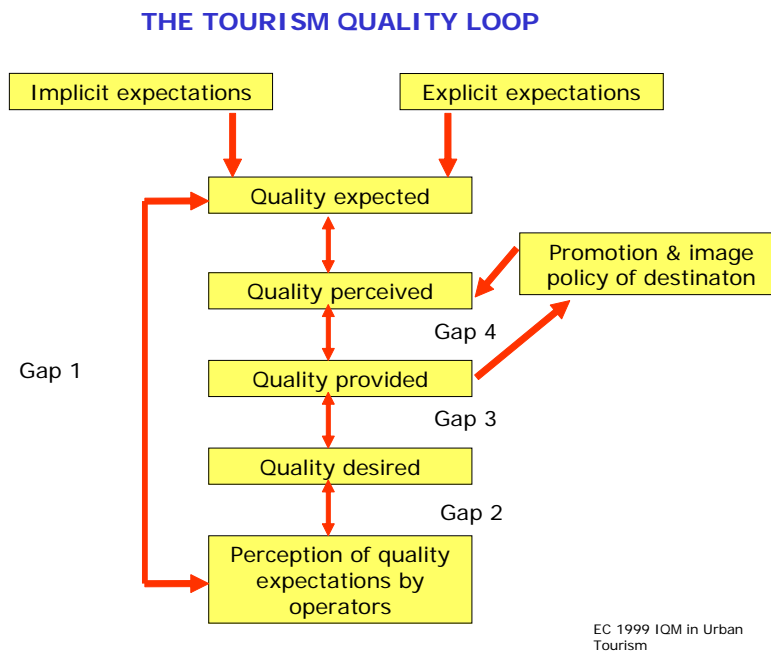
**Table 2.1: tangible and intangible destination assets**

It is equally important to measure the satisfaction levels with both the tangible and intangible. It is considerably harder however, to use the data collected to directly influence the intangible elements of a destination and to bring them in

line with community and visitor levels of expectation. Nonetheless, it can be achieved through utilising the data as an evidence based resource in order to lobby the pertinent authorities. Likewise, the tourism decision and policy makers probably have no direct control over the accommodation, attraction or activity sectors and yet such localised, relevant and regular data as is collated as part of an IQM approach can have a strong influencing factor in business development on an individual business level if communicated effectively and regularly.

## 2.2 The purpose of monitoring

An IQM approach to tourism development requires the destination to strive to exceed both visitor and community expectations. In order to achieve this, both policy makers and other tourism stakeholders (from individual businesses through to public sector bodies) have to have a clear understanding of what those expectations are and a measure of how the destination is performing with regard to those expectations. In effect, research such as an IQM approach requires can be used to identify, in the first instance, what are known as ‘quality gaps’, and in the second instance can be used as a tool to measure the closure, or otherwise, of those gaps.



**Figure 9: the tourism quality loop**

The quality loop is dynamic and highlights the points of view of both the consumer and the provider, and the perceived, and often very real gaps between implicit and explicit expectations of quality provision in a destination.

The objective of IQM is to close the gaps illustrated through:

1. Monitoring of customer satisfaction
2. Involvement of operators and community
3. Monitoring of business and community satisfaction and needs

Resulting in:

1. Improved marketing and branding opportunities
2. Accurate communication both internally and externally
3. Inclusiveness
4. Attention to detail
5. Consumer orientation
6. Market realism
7. Improved business and resident satisfaction
8. Improved facilities, services and amenities
9. An integrated approach

## **2.3 Types of research required in an IQM approach**

### **2.3i Visitor research**

Visitor research in an IQM approach has many purposes. It should not be looked upon as *only* a tool for establishing and monitoring visitor satisfaction levels. A carefully constructed visitor survey should be a multi faceted tool, supplying policy makers, stakeholders, businesses and communities with vital information on a range of issues concerning tourism trends, development and sustainability. The first year of any survey should be seen as a means of establishing baseline data and a tool for identifying and understanding quality gaps. In subsequent years the survey becomes the accepted tool for monitoring change and closure of those gaps, whilst acting as an evidence base for encouraging business and community development.

In order to be an effective tool a visitor survey should:

- relate directly to other aspects of marketing research including:
  - ◆ the analysis of market trends;
  - ◆ the generation of customer profiles;
  - ◆ the identification of market segments;
  - ◆ competitor analysis research; and
  - ◆ measuring the effectiveness of the organisation's, or destination's, own marketing activities.
- help develop databases and provide data that can aid in the development of relationship marketing strategies, by identifying satisfied customers who may become loyal, more frequent purchasers;
- inform the way in which new products are developed or modified and help establish levels of service;

- advise businesses/organisations of whether their current distribution channels are the most effective ones;
- make businesses/organisations aware of potential, or actual, gaps in the minds of customers between the promotional messages given and the product or service they feel they actually receive;
- inform destination managers of levels of satisfaction with services, facilities and amenities available;
- inform businesses and destination managers of visitor activity and spend whilst in the destination; and
- inform businesses and managers of what is important to visitors and the relative performance of the destination against these criteria.

Within Wales, as across the rest of the UK, there is a template visitor satisfaction survey as agreed by the national tourist boards. Currently the Wales Tourist Board are in the process of agreeing a new definitive version of this with particular relevance to the Welsh tourism context. Templates such as these should be utilised where available as, being a national tool, they will allow comparison across destinations within Wales. The core questions of such a survey, used as they are as a template across the UK, will allow comparison with other UK competitor destinations. Ultimately, this type of template can be enhanced by destination managers to ensure that issues relevant at the local level are monitored as rigorously as possible.

In addition, a destination utilising IQM as a development and management tool should consider supplementing visitor surveys with focus groups. Although this type of research is highly subjective and can of necessity only provide a quick snapshot of views and opinions, focus groups can be highly effective if managed correctly:

- Focus group research involves organised discussion with a selected group of individuals to gain information about their views and experiences of a topic.
- Focus group interviewing is particularly suited for obtaining several perspectives about the same topic.
- The benefits of focus group research include gaining insights into people's shared understandings of everyday life and the ways in which individuals are influenced by others in a group situation.
- Problems arise when attempting to identify the individual view from the group view, as well as in the practical arrangements for conducting focus groups.

The role of the moderator is very significant. Good levels of group leadership and interpersonal skill are required to moderate a group successfully.

Although time consuming, they can be a useful tool in gathering information on particular market segments – perhaps ones within which significant gaps in the perception of the provision of quality have been identified using the visitor survey. Focus groups can also be used to gather in depth information on a particular aspect of the wider survey that perhaps requires further investigation. For example, the survey may reveal a high level of dissatisfaction with access to the countryside. A focus group can help establish the exact cause of dissatisfaction: a lack of signage; a fear of the unknown; a lack of accessible paths for less able people and so on.

### **2.3ii Business research**

In a similar way to visitor research, monitoring business performance and satisfaction with facilities and services within a destination is integral to an IQM approach to destination management. A regular survey such as this can also be used as a tool to monitor the training and development needs of businesses, thereby allowing training to become demand led at the very local level. In this context however, there is currently no nationally agreed guidelines with which a destination can build and develop a locally relevant survey format.

Nonetheless, it is important that business attitudes and perceptions are given equal priority within the monitoring processes adopted by destinations utilising IQM. Again, the first year of any such survey will act as a mechanism for collating baseline data and identifying quality gaps, whilst subsequent surveys will act as a tool for monitoring change and development within the business community.

In order to be an effective tool, the business survey should:

- establish business trends such as employment, seasonality and turnover. This type of knowledge should be used as a ‘business health check’ of the destination whilst simultaneously allowing comparison across competitor destinations;
- establish the particular development needs of individual businesses which should thereafter encourage a demand led approach to training and business development provision;
- establish an understanding of the current marketing channels of businesses within the destination;
- establish the knowledge levels of businesses about their markets;
- establish the knowledge level of businesses concerning visitor activity;
- act as a tool for establishing the satisfaction levels with facilities, services and amenities available to both communities and visitors within the destination; and
- be adaptable over time as circumstances within the business community and destination as a whole change and develop.

Within an IQM approach to monitoring, aspects of the business survey should be cross referenced with the visitor survey and *vice versa*. For example, establishing the route by which the majority of visitors find out about accommodation within a destination is useful. It is far *more* useful to both businesses themselves and to destination managers if this information can be compared with the methods by which accommodation operators market themselves to potential visitors, as this will allow gaps in marketing activity to be exposed, monitored and closed over time, thereby increasing both visitor and business satisfaction.

Again, consideration should be given within destinations using IQM to supplementing business surveys with focus groups within the business community. In a similar way to focus groups carried out with visitors, these can be tailored to enable a deeper understanding of particular issues arising from the overall business survey, and can be based on business sectors, or on communities of interest.

### **2.3iii Community research**

Although, it may be rightly argued, businesses within a destination are an integral part of the community of that destination, for the purposes of monitoring performance and development they have been separated to become distinct entities. The fundamental core of an IQM methodology is its 'bottom up' approach to destination development and its concentration on the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of the local communities that make up that destination. Therefore, again in a similar way to both visitor and business research, information on the availability and satisfaction with facilities, services and amenities at community level should be gathered and monitored thereby enabling gaps in service provision to be identified.

An accepted, and indeed widely used methodology for establishing the level of facilities, services and amenities within communities (the tangible assets) is a 'community audit'. Ideally undertaken by individuals unfamiliar with a village/town or community, community audits involve quite literally an audit of available services and amenities alongside a measurement of the levels of certain of the intangible assets such as safety and security, mobility and access and so on.

Community audits should be used to establish, as a minimum:

- Was the settlement easy to find?
- Did the settlement have a welcoming 'gateway'?
- Did this create a good first impression?
- Were the car park(s) easy to find?
- Was it obvious where to go from the car park?
- Was there information provided within the car park about what there is to do in the settlement and its surrounds?
- If information was provided was it easy to understand?

- Did you feel safe to leave your car in the car park?
- What was the general 'feel' of the settlement?
- Did you feel 'welcome' whilst visiting the settlement?
- Was the settlement litter free and with no signs of vandalism?
- Did you find it easy to find your way around the settlement?
- Was the signposting clear and easy to use?
- Did the signposts contain enough information?
- Were there signs linking the settlement to tourist attractions and walks and rides?
- Were there any town trails?
- What public transport is available to and from the settlement?
- How easy is it to find out information about public transport provision?
- Are there any events running within the settlement and how are these communicated?
- Are there any venues within the settlement for entertainment?
- What shops are available?
- What accommodation is available and what is its quality?
- What refreshments are available and at what quality?
- Are there any heritage / cultural attractions within the settlement?
- Are there any conservation interests associated with the settlement?
- What interpretation is provided within the settlement?
- Is this interpretation bilingual (Welsh / English)?
- Is it multilingual (Welsh / English and other EU languages)?
- Is there a Tourism Information point within the settlement?
- Is there seating available within the settlement?
- Are bicycle racks provided within the settlement?
- What provision is made for visitors with disabilities?
- What is provided within the settlement by way of green space and parks?
- What facilities are provided for children?
- Are there any public conveniences in the settlement?
- Were these easy to find?
- Were these clean to an acceptable standard?
- Were there facilities for disabled users?

Again, analysis of many of these can be cross compared with both the visitor and business surveys, allowing a further set of quality gaps to be identified and monitored.

Community audits are an extremely useful tool, the analysis of which should feed into the policy and strategies of the destination, on a level wider perhaps than that covered by the remit of the tourism managers of that destination. Nonetheless, community audits have their limitations inasmuch as the voice of individual community members are not heard within them. Focus groups, therefore become an important aspect of community monitoring, perhaps more so than in the visitor or business monitoring discussed above.

Focus groups held within communities should cover such aspects as:

- satisfaction with the provision and maintenance of services, facilities and amenities;
- satisfaction with the way in which tourism has been developed and managed within the destination; and
- community ‘visioning’ – that is, establishing an ideal for the future of the community.

In addition, community focus groups can be used as a means by which business and visitor research can be communicated back to the communities within which tourism occurs thereby broadening understanding of the economic benefits of tourism to the wider community and lessening the perception of the social and cultural erosion caused by tourism.

## **2.4 Benchmarking**

Whilst the collection of trend and performance information within a destination is important to help understand how business is doing and whether or not customer expectations are being realised it only provides a part of the picture.

By collecting key performance data, including satisfaction surveys, in a standardised format agreed with other destinations it is possible to measure performance against other similar areas. This allows relative performance to be assessed and enables a broader view of performance to be achieved.

Comparison though is far more than numeric values. The real value in benchmarking and comparison is in exploring the reasons for varying performance with like or even dissimilar destinations.

Wrexham already subscribes to the Destination Performance UK process which provides an opportunity to benchmark performance and share experiences with other similar destinations in Wales and England. The process is based around the annual completion of a baseline questionnaire which sets out a range of performance characteristics. Of critical importance are the Customer/Visitor and Local Industry satisfaction survey results. These surveys are based around core questions that enable a direct comparison of performance to be made on an annual basis.

Destination benchmarking itself is a process that was developed by the Regional Tourist Boards in England. It required an extensive visitor survey to be carried out on a regular basis to enable trends to be assessed and any improvements to be measured. The process relied on a number of destinations carrying out the survey on the same basis to allow for comparison. By extracting the core questions in relation to perceptions of the destination it is possible for a more

limited form of destination benchmarking to be carried out on a regular basis. This component is included in the DP:UK process.

Good regular visitor surveys are, as has been identified earlier, essential in establishing a clear understanding of the profile and satisfaction of visitors. If such surveys can be carried out using established and accepted formats realistic benchmarking is possible.

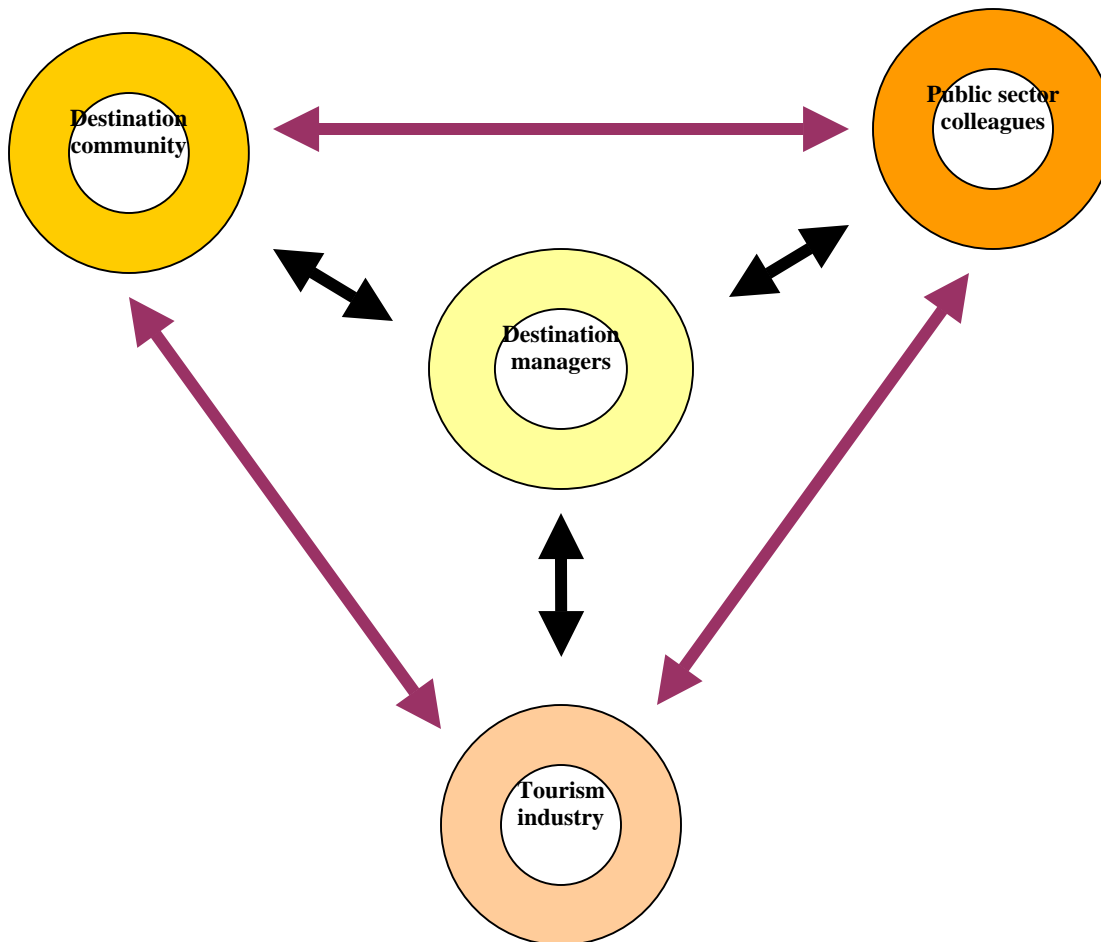
The emergence and development of the Best Value process did give some impetus to the need for the collection of performance data and for comparison. In moving towards Comprehensive Performance Assessment the need for robust performance data and effective self assessment has been reinforced. Performance indicators for the Tourism sector are likely now to appear as part of National Cultural and/or Economic datasets. It is important that steps are taken to ensure that the performance data collected relates to emerging indicator data sets and is compatible with the accepted criteria for core data and core questions.

## **2.5 Communicating the message**

Monitoring within the IQM approach is not a one off event, it is a continuous thread that takes time and commitment. All aspects of destination monitoring should be undertaken, at the least, on an annual basis. Visitor research for instance can be undertaken throughout the year, both by businesses and destination managers. Business and community research on the other hand is more likely to be acceptable to both parties if undertaken at a particular time of year on an annual basis, given its time consuming nature for those being asked to contribute.

Communication is fundamental to an IQM approach, and never more so than within the monitoring process. Results of the research need to be communicated on various levels and can be used as an evidence based tool for influencing both the private and public sector stakeholders within the destination.

There are various methods for communication between destination managers, their public sector colleagues at a local, regional and national level, the destination tourism industry and the destination communities.



**Figure 10: Communication cycle**

A true IQM approach to sustainable tourism management and development requires that communication be an ongoing, dynamic process between all parties involved directly or indirectly in tourism. This in itself can be a time consuming process, but one that, as it becomes habit and adopted and adhered to by all, becomes easier over time. It should be the responsibility of tourism destination managers to initiate and, in the first instance, maintain communication channels.

## Communication Channels

<b>Destination Managers</b>		
<b>Destination Communities</b>	<b>Tourism Industry</b>	<b>Public Sector colleagues (local, regional and national level)</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Forum representatives</li> <li>2. Newsletter</li> <li>3. Website</li> <li>4. Community Council meetings</li> <li>5. Public meetings on an annual basis</li> <li>6. Feedback of research results</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Forum representatives</li> <li>2. Newsletter</li> <li>3. Website</li> <li>4. Annual open meetings: feedback of research results</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Forum representatives</li> <li>2. Newsletter</li> <li>3. Website</li> <li>4. Inter departmental officer group</li> <li>5. Intranet/extranet</li> <li>6. Research exchange to influence strategy development</li> </ol>

The Forum should be constituted on the WAG recommended ‘thirds principle’, with representation from the public, private and voluntary sectors. It should be made explicit that representatives accepting a place on the Forum are expected to act as intermediaries between those they represent and the Forum itself.

### 2.6 Suggested IQM monitoring plan: Wrexham County Borough Council

	<b>Research type</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Priority</b>
<b>Visitor</b>	Self completion survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Within TIC</li> <li>▪ Within businesses</li> <li>▪ Within libraries</li> </ul>	} all year	HIGH
	Face to face survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pre-defined points within destination</li> </ul>	Once or twice at pre-defined times within the year, for a pre-defined period. This should be replicated on an annual basis.	HIGH

	Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carried out with pre defined groupings: used to supplement findings from surveys.</li> </ul>	Undertaken annually with two or three separate groups	MEDIUM
<b>Business</b>	Self completion survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mail shot to all known businesses in destination</li> </ul>	Annually	HIGH
	Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carried out with pre defined groupings: used to supplement findings from surveys</li> </ul>	Undertaken annually with two or three separate groups	MEDIUM
<b>Community</b>	Community Audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertaken within towns, villages and other community areas throughout the destination</li> </ul>	Annually or biannually	HIGH
	Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carried out with pre defined groupings: used to supplement findings from surveys</li> </ul>	Undertaken annually with two or three separate groups	MEDIUM
<b>Benchmarking</b>	Performance comparison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with other like destinations in a benchmarking club e.g. Destination Performance:UK</li> </ul>	An annual process supported by continuous dialogue between destinations	HIGH
	Destination benchmarking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfaction type visitor survey based on core questions agreed with other destinations</li> </ul>	Annually	MEDIUM

### **3. Conclusions to Part 2**

- Through discussion and research it has been possible to develop a process that, it is thought, represents a breakthrough in the deliverability of the concept and philosophy of IQM.
- The process as developed and refined into the 'visitor journey' provides the headings for the development of an IQM toolkit.

### **4. Actions**

- the framework needs to be tested with those involved in tourism activities and the actions reviewed and refined to ensure that as complete a range as possible is identified;
- develop the framework actions into a checklist for self assessment;
- develop the visitor journey approach as the public facing methodology for delivering IQM;
- develop a toolkit to identify how the various actions can be delivered within the different sectors; and
- develop a self assessment process for evaluating the level of engagement with IQM.

## Part 3

### The Three Year Action Plan

<b>Theme 1 Work and Plan Together</b>					
Ref	ACTION	Lead	Priority	Timescale	Cost
	Establish a tourism development forum.	WBC	1	Immediate	
	Agree a written constitution and objectives of the forum, assign responsibilities, establish channels and methods of communication, determine principles and a process to ensure equality of participation, discussion and consensus.	Forum	1		
	Develop individual and group skills to ensure the effective sharing of responsibilities and actions.	WBC	2		
	Make linkages between different project/programme plans impacting upon tourism and establish effective channels of communication and integration.	WBC	1		
	Establish a process for regularly reviewing forum's objectives.	Forum	1		
<b>Theme 2 Know Your Area</b>					
ACTION					
	In consultation with stakeholders, conduct a desktop audit to identify the area's key assets and features.	WBC	1		
	Conduct focus group research to identify those assets and features that are seen as being truly distinctive - as perceived by residents, businesses and visitors	WBC	2		
<b>Theme 3 Know your Business</b>					
ACTION					
	In consultation with stakeholders, conduct a desktop audit of existing tourism facilities, services, amenities, products and networks.	WBC	1		

<b>Theme 4 Act on Results</b>					
Ref	ACTION	Lead	Priority	Timescale	Cost
	In partnership with stakeholders, develop appropriate methods to protect, interpret, enhance, manage and better promote those features identified as being truly distinctive.	WBC	2		
	In partnership with stakeholders, collate all available research on the existing customer base.	WBC	1		
	Conduct new research where gaps exist, especially involving the identification of visitor needs and satisfaction levels together with whether these are currently being met (see Monitoring section).	Forum	1		
	Establish a clear understanding amongst stakeholders of ongoing market needs, especially as these change with time.	WBC	2		
	Assess what can be sustainably developed to profitably cater for identified market demand.	Forum	2		
	Identify gaps in quality provision, plan and effectively implement ways and means of filling these gaps via the development of the appropriate skills, facilities and/or services in order to exceed visitors' expectations.	Forum	2		
	Establish stakeholder "task and finish" groups to carry through identified programmes to agreed timescales meeting fixed pre-defined objectives.	Forum	2		
	Wherever appropriate, plan the transfer of appropriate skills and responsibilities from external sources to the locality itself.	Forum	3		
	Once you are sure that you have a marketable proposition, identify existing marketing opportunities across all appropriate media e.g. via promotional campaigns using new media, traditional media advertising etc. and involving existing partnerships or frameworks wherever possible or appropriate.	Forum	2		

Ref	ACTION	Lead	Priority	Timescale	Cost
	Use existing visitor research and ongoing monitoring to understand visitor trends in order to monitor changing market requirements and need to realign or refine products, services or their presentation within marketing activity. This research should also monitor tourism impacts. Supplement existing research wherever the methodology does not provide the necessary information.	Forum	2		
	Ensure that full consideration – across all stakeholders and sectors - is consistently given to the quality of the experience for all members of groups visiting the destination.	Forum	1		

Amended 5 Dec 05

## Part 4

# Rolling out the IQM Process

## **1. PowerPoint presentation**

A PowerPoint presentation has been prepared, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 5.

The presentation provides background material about the development of Integrated Quality Management for destinations. It shows how IQM developed as a concept from increasing concerns about the need to improve quality and the emergence of other management concepts such as the leadership model developed by the European Foundation for Quality Management.

The concept of four key concepts of Quality Management, developed to improve the accessibility and understanding of the IQM approach, is introduced together with examples of the actions that could then be pursued.

It is intended that the presentation should be used for private sector groups and partners and for departments within the council to facilitate an understanding of the process of Integrated Quality Management and to secure commitment to delivering the actions identified.

It is considered that the presentation can be tailored to meet the specific needs of the audience by identifying the actions that relate to them. The audience can then be asked to identify where they relate to the visitor journey, what impact they can have on it and what actions should be included and developed.

The presentation is likely to be a significant component of the process to be developed to roll out the use of IQM within the Council and amongst partner organisations.

## **2. Rolling out the IQM process throughout Wrexham County Borough Council**

It is becoming an increasingly recognised fact that the success of tourism activity within a destination has much to do with a collective recognition of the affect that individual service areas can have on peoples' perceptions.

A superbly organised and well marketed visitor attraction, for example, can be let down by poor signposting and a badly maintained setting.

Similarly it is pointless marketing the area as being attractive for walkers if the footpaths aren't clearly marked, are poorly maintained or strewn with rubbish.

The overall environmental quality of the area, its street lighting, standard of open spaces, street design and landscape features, levels of maintenance, its cleanliness and feeling of personal safety, the availability of car parking, public

toilets, signposting, and local transport arrangements all contribute significantly to the level of visitor satisfaction and the likelihood of a repeat visit.

It is important for departments and service providers to know how they can impact both positively and negatively on the visitor's perception of an area and the quality of the visitor experience.

It should be remembered that in making an area attractive to visitors the Council will be dealing with issues that are of prime importance to local residents. An attractive well managed destination for visitors is also an attractive place to live and work in.

The IQM process can be used in the campaign to improve awareness of the interrelationship between all of those whose activities have an impact on tourism.

As a first step the profile of tourism activity needs to be raised. People and organisations need to be aware of the economic impact that tourism makes and to be made aware that how they approach their role can impact positively or negatively on people's perceptions of the area. The presentation can be used to help this process and time would need to be taken to help an audience work through the visitor journey to see where they are involved and how significantly they impact upon it.

Some good local illustrations to highlight the impact different services and organisations can have would help in getting the message across.

## **1. Actions**

- ensure that the PowerPoint presentation is delivered either collectively or department by department to all those within the authority whose actions have an impact or bearing on Tourism;
- get departments/sections to identify what impact they currently make on the town as a visitor destination;
- get them to identify how they could improve their contribution to the destination and to identify what they think others should do to assist;
- review the list of actions in relation to the 4 key issues and the visitor journey. Check for their relevance and for any additional suggestions; and
- secure approval at all levels to the use of the IQM process for helping to deliver and monitor the effectiveness of the delivery of tourism services, direct and indirect, within the Council.

### **3. Rolling out the IQM process across Wales**

Each of the TGA destinations in Wales is expected to deliver its activities based on the Integrated Quality Management approach. As has been indicated a clearly defined IQM process backed up by an accepted methodology doesn't exist at present.

Whilst recognising that different types of destination will have a slightly different an approach to management and marketing, it is felt that the core activities and processes required are in fact very similar.

The development of an acceptable, standardised methodology would allow for individual approaches to be customised to meet the specific needs of a particular destination.

By accepting the core principles and processes it would also be easier for destinations to demonstrate that they were pursuing an Integrated Quality Management approach and for them to be able to compare their activities and results with other similar areas.

An outline of the process developed as a key part of this study needs to be shared with the Wales Tourist Board. If the process is considered to have some merit it could then be shared with a selection of destination types using the PowerPoint presentation prepared as part of this project.

A key part of the process will be the development of the IQM delivery toolkit for which a framework has already been prepared. The toolkit could be generic or it could be tailored to suit a particular destination or destination type.

Sharing the ideas with others would help to refine the process further and could lead to its further development.

Testing them in one or two further pilot areas would also help to confirm and develop the process.

#### **2. Actions.**

- as a first step share and discuss the process with the Wales Tourist Board using the PowerPoint presentation;
- if accepted as an idea worth pursuing draw together a range of other TGA destinations to share the principles with, with a view to developing a standardised generic approach again using the PowerPoint presentation;
- develop the toolkit as the mechanism for involving as many as possible in the Integrated Quality Management process;

- WAG/WTB could consider testing the approach further in one or two pilot destinations; and
- share the developed approach more widely and seek its adoption as the norm for all destinations within Wales.

# Appendices