

From the Office of the Minister



Department of
**Enterprise, Trade
and Investment**

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Mike Nesbitt MLA
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17 October 2011

Dear Mr Nesbitt

Thank you for your supplementary question on Monday 3 October 2011 during DETI oral question time. In relation to question 6 AQO 431/11-15 you commented:

“The Tourist Board has two key targets – more overnight stays and an increase in daily spend. Does the Minister have any idea of where Gaelic Games might sit on the list of sports likely to achieve those two objectives? “

To date spectator sports have not been identified as a key priority for Northern Ireland Tourist Board and as a result no resources have been allocated against developing this area. The focus is on participative sports. However, the GAA, IRFU and IFA all have the potential to contribute to overnight stays and daily spend by attracting visiting spectators to home fixtures. NITB has no direct influence over this sector but there is the potential to work closer with these organisations to ensure that visiting fans are fully aware of the range of things to see and do when they get here with the aim of encouraging them to extend their stay.

NITB has met with the GAA's Ulster branch officials to look at areas for future collaboration and a number of opportunities were identified.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) currently focuses on participative sports where visitors can indulge their interests and experience Northern Ireland's great outdoors. Research has been used to identify key products and experiences which match consumer demands. Golf is the key sport and the international attention that the three Northern Ireland champion golfers have brought to the region has accelerated the demand for Northern Ireland as a golf destination. NITB is focusing resources against golf to ensure that Northern Ireland benefits from the unprecedented situation it finds itself in terms of international profile.

I will arrange for a copy of the letter to be sent to the Speaker's Office and that a copy will be placed in the Assembly Library.

Yours sincerely

ARLENE FOSTER MLA
Minister of Enterprise, Trade & Investment