Written evidence submitted by the Wheely Wonderful Cycling (RUT0210)

We have been in business for 25 years selling Cycling holidays in Shropshire Herefordshire & Wales

My comments are

- marketing/PR/Awareness is the key to improvements. Most rural businesses are very small and do not have big marketing budgets, or the resources - often visit Britain programmes have to centre on big budget businesses

- rural businesses are incredibly diverse and often don't fit into categories marketed by Visit Britain/Visit England - however from my experience visit Wales - being a smaller entity, is more accessible to small businesses

- the product is already there - ready to be marketed - but of course the attraction to visitors is that it is rural and unspoilt, with no crowds & quiet lanes (for cyclists & walkers)

This season - the added trends that need addressing are

- local budget cuts are meaning that maintenance of walking routes have been drastically reduced - and this year this is really hitting home - we have had numerous reports of seriously bad walking route ie where walkers cannot force their way through overgrowth - and this is on routes which the council are supposed to prioritise eg Shropshire Way, Mortimer Trail. Which suggests that three (or more) years of cutbacks, have resulted in Nature completely taking over.

- mismatch between urban dwellers expectation of broadband and phone reception and the reality in rural areas. Once again this has been an issue for a number of years - but the scale of the difference is now a real annoyance for visitors from urban communities...we just have to put up with it & get on with it in rural areas.

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