



REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10.00 AM - FRIDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2017

COMMITTEE ROOMS A/B - NEATH CIVIC CENTRE

PART 1

1. To receive any declarations of interest from Members
2. To receive the Minutes of the Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd September 2017
(Pages 3 - 6)
3. To receive the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2017/18.
(Pages 7 - 8)
4. To scrutinise information and monitoring issues being reported by:

Report of the Chair of the Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

5. Task and Finish Review of Support for Tourism - Progress Report
(Pages 9 - 20)
6. To select appropriate items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members).
7. Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972
8. Access to Meetings to resolve to exclude the public for the following item(s) pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part

4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

PART 2

9. To select appropriate private items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board Reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members).

S.Phillips
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Friday, 20 October 2017

Committee Membership:

Chairman: Councillor S.K.Hunt

Vice Chairman: Councillor L.Jones

Members: Councillors J.Evans, D.Cawsey, C.J.Jones,
D.M.Peters, S.Purseley, S.Rahaman, A.J.Richards,
R.L.Taylor, O.S.Davies and R.W.Wood

REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

22 September 2017

Chairperson: Councillor S.K.Hunt

Vice Chairperson: Councillor L.Jones

Councillors: J.Evans, C.J.Jones, S.Jones, D.M.Peters,
S.Pursey, S.Rahaman, A.J.Richards and
R.L.Taylor

Officers In Attendance S.Brennan, N.Evans, Emma.John and
S.Burgess

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors E.V.Latham and A.Wingrave

Observers Councillor Carolyn Edwards
Councillor Arwyn N.Woolcock

1. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

The following Members made Declarations of Interest at the commencement of the meeting:

Cllr. S.K. Hunt – The urgent, private report of the Head of Property and Regeneration on land at Empire Avenue, Blaengwrach, Neath because he was part of the planning committee that passed the planning application on the use of the land.

Cllr. C.J.Jones – The urgent, private report of the Head of Property and Regeneration on land at Empire Avenue, Blaengwrach, Neath because he was part of the planning committee that passed the planning application on the use of the land.

Cllr. S.Pursey – The urgent, private report of the Head of Property and Regeneration on land at Empire Avenue, Blaengwrach, Neath

because he was part of the planning committee that passed the planning application on the use of the land.

2. **ANY URGENT ITEMS (WHETHER PUBLIC OR EXEMPT) AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN PURSUANT TO SECTION 100B (4) (B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

The Committee resolved to move into private session to consider the urgent private report of the Head of Property and Regeneration on land at Empire Avenue, Blaengwrach, Neath.

Members were advised that discussions should centre on the information contained within the report and not relate to any planning matters.

The Committee was asked to consider the history of the area when considering the recommendation.

A question was raised on whether the issue of the covenant should have been mentioned during the planning process. It was confirmed that following legal advice it was not necessary to raise this as it was not a planning issue.

It was suggested that the Committee be mindful to ask the Cabinet Board to defer the decision to allow for additional information to be brought forward and for consultation to be undertaken with the public. It was confirmed that there was no additional information to be brought forward and consultation had been undertaken as part of the planning process.

Following scrutiny the majority of the Committee was not supportive of the recommendation to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

3. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 JULY 2017**

The Committee noted the minutes.

4. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SUB COMMITTEE 27 JULY 2017**

It was noted that part of the minutes in relation to the item Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy were inaccurate.

It was stated that the following should be included – ‘It was suggested that the title of the strategy should not be altered as the Council should recognise that these issues disproportionately affect women and girls. Men can be victims, just as women can be perpetrators, but when consideration is given to domestic abuse cases prosecuted by the CPS during 2014/2015, 84% of the victims were female, its clear that this is a problem particularly for women and girls. It is for this reason that the Welsh Government specified violence against women in the name of the Act, and for that reason the title should remain the same.

Cllr Taylor restated that she was against the name change.

The Committee noted the amendment and agreed the minutes on the understanding the original minute was amended.

5. **TO RECEIVE THE SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18.**

The Committee noted the work programme.

6. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following items:

Cabinet Board Proposals

6.1 Performance Monitoring Report

Members considered the Quarter One Performance Monitoring Report.

A question was asked in relation to the percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales and the below par performance. It was agreed that this information would be circulated outside of the main meeting.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

CHAIRPERSON

**Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Committee Scrutiny Committee
Forward Work Programme 2017/18**

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Officer
23 June 2017		
21 July 2017		
22 September 2017		
27 October 2017	Tourism Task and Finish Group Update Report (Visit Wales to attend)	Scrutiny Officer/Andrew Collins

8 December 2017		
26 January 2018		
9 March 2018		
20 April 2018		

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee

27 October 2017

Report of the Chair of the Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected:

All

Update on the Task and Finish group recommendations in relation to Support for Tourism in the County Borough.

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update on the progress made in implementing the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group that was set up to look at the support for Tourism in the County Borough

Executive Summary

2. The attached Appendix One will provide information on the progress made or otherwise in taking forward the recommendations made at the original review.

Background

3. Members of the previous administrations Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Committee undertook a review of the support for tourism in Neath Port Talbot because they held the view that tourism is an extremely important sector for the County Borough and attracts nearly 1.5m visitors per annum and contributes £110 million each year to the local economy.
4. The Scrutiny Committee regularly received update reports on the Tourism sector from the Regeneration and Economic Development Department of the Council.
5. In 2016 the Committee resolved to undertake a review of tourism support to identify whether there had been any adverse effects on the level and type of support that was provided.
6. The review took place towards the end of 2016 and considered evidence from a number of key stakeholders including Visit Wales, Neath Inspired, Swansea Valley Holiday Cottages, Neath and Tennant Canal Trust and Tourism Swansea Bay.
7. To ensure consistency across the review all stakeholders were asked similar questions to ensure the evidence was balanced to allow the group to make tangible recommendations.
8. An online survey was also utilised that gained a wide range of responses from businesses to elected politicians and the responses identified issues that were subsequently captured within the final recommendations.
9. Four recommendations were made by the group in total and progress on their implementation can be found at Appendix One.
10. One of the recommendations contained within the report was in relation writing a letter to St Modwens. This has been done (copy at Appendix Two and a copy of the response from St Modwens is attached at Appendix Three.

Financial Impact

11. There may be financial impacts associated with this report depending on the outcome of Recommendation 1.

Equality Impact Assessment

12. There are no equality impacts associated with this report

Workforce Impacts

13. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

14. There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

Risk Management

15. There are no risk management impacts associated with this report.

Consultation

16. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

17. That the Committee notes the progress made in implementing the recommendations made by the task and finish group.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

18. To allow the committee to discharge its monitoring functions.

Appendices

19. Appendix One - Task and Finish Group Recommendations - Progress Document
20. Appendix Two - Letter from the Task and Finish group to St Modwens
21. Appendix Three - Letter from St Modwens

List of Background Papers

22. [Final Report of Task and Finish Group on Tourism Support](#)

Officer Contact

23. Neil Evans, Senior Scrutiny and Member Development Officer

Email: g.n.evans@npt.gov.uk Tel: 01639 763747

Recommendation	Reason	Progress	Comment
<p>A dedicated resource is identified to drive forward tourism support which the members felt should sit within the Regeneration and Economic Development Department.</p>	<p>The evidence presented to the review was quite clear that the County was lacking support for tourism development and that this was having a negative knock on effect in securing much needed funding.</p>	<p>As yet there has been no progress in the identification of resources to deliver tourism support.</p> <p>A European funded tourism project is currently being delivered by NPTCBC, however due to the nature of the funding this project is unable to offer the level or type of support that the tourism sector requires to thrive.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>The Destination Management Plan is considered by the Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis to ensure the actions are implemented.</p>	<p>We need to ensure that there is sufficient progress in the implementation of the DMP in order to secure the same levels of investment as our neighbouring Local Authorities. Given the evidence received during</p>	<p>The Destination Management Plan will now form part of the Scrutiny forward work programme for the Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee and is scheduled to be</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

	<p>this review, on the importance of the sector to our economy, it is now even more important that the action plan is monitored regularly. In line with this,</p> <p>Recommendation one (a dedicated resource) would ensure that the DMP is fully implemented and reported</p>	<p>considered on 9th March 2018 along with a progress report on the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>Without a dedicated tourism resource it will be very difficult to match the levels of investment as seen in neighbouring authorities or maintain progress against the Destination Management Plan.</p>	
<p>An All Member Seminar is organised to highlight the findings of the review that demonstrates how important the tourism sector is to the County Borough.</p>	<p>The initial thoughts on the review of tourism was that it would be a specific item on a formal scrutiny agenda however, during the scoping it became apparent that a wider review would be required and due to the amount and level of evidence that was considered it was</p>	<p>Following the Local Government elections in May 2017 and the subsequent in-depth targeted Member induction programme this has been delayed until the early 2018.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

	agreed that this information needs to be shared with all Members		
A letter is written and sent To St Modwens to establish what they understand their responsibilities are in relation to Neath Canal and stress the importance of the maintenance that is required.	It was clear from the submission from a representative of Neath Canal Navigation Ltd that there is a clear lack of maintenance of the canal and this is jeopardising the future attraction of this site.	<p>A letter has been sent and a response is currently being chased up.</p> <p>A telephone conversation has been held with a representative from Neath Canal that highlighted a lack of resources to undertake maintenance work. However, there seemed to be a contradiction in the evidence received as part of the telephone conversation and that heard during the review.</p>	Ongoing

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Date Dyddiad 30 August 2017
Direct line Rhif ffôn 01639 763747
Email Epost g.n.evans@npt.gov.uk
Contact Cyswllt Neil Evans
Your ref Eich cyf
Our ref Ein cyf NE.BLA

Mr R Joseland
 South West Regional Director
 St Modwens

To Mr Joseland,

Prior to the Local Government Elections the Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council undertook a review of the support the Council provides to the Tourism sector in the County Borough.

The review made a number of recommendations including one for a letter to be sent to St Modwens in relation to an issue that had been highlighted as part of the review. The recommendation and reason behind it are included below:

Recommendation	Reason
A letter is written to St Modwens to establish what they understand their responsibilities are in relation	It was clear from the submission of evidence from a representative of Neath Canal Navigation Ltd. That

to Neath Canal and stress the importance of the maintenance that is required.

there is a clear lack of maintenance of the canal and this is jeopardizing the future attraction of the site.

The review had heard that it was Neath Canal Navigation Ltd that had been established by St Modwens as part of the deal for land at Llandarcy but the group had no funding available to undertake key maintenance of the canal and this was having a detrimental effect on the areas as a tourist destination.

The Committee responsible for monitoring the recommendations of the task and finish group has changed to the newly formed Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee and it is their wish to have a response on the above recommendation if at all possible. This will allow it to understand any issues that may not have been brought to its attention.

A Copy of the final report is also attached for your information also.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Evans
Senior Scrutiny and Member Development Officer

The Company of Proprietors of the Neath Canal Navigation (NCN)

Coed Darcy Suite 26

Llan Coed House,

Llandarcy,

Neath,

SA10 6FG

18th September 2017

Subject : Response to reference to Neath Canal in the Review of Tourism Support in NPT.

To : Mr Neil Evans Senior Scrutiny and Member Development Officer NPT.

Dear Neil,

Further to your recent exchange of emails with Mr Rupert Joseland, Chairman of Neath Canal and our telephone discussion; Rupert asked me to respond to you.

Firstly for correctness I hope you don't mind me pointing out some factual errors in the review document. The Neath Canal Company was established a long time ago and was not as a result of St Modwen acquiring the canal as part of a much larger asset transfer from BP in 2009. Also under recommendation 4 of the review please note that the representative providing feedback on Neath Canal is not a representative of NCN but rather a member of Neath & Tennant Canal Trust.

The present major shareholder of the canal is St Modwen and through a long standing management arrangement with NPT CBC, which was pre transfer to St Modwen, the northern section of the canal from Resolven to the south of Glynneath is managed and supported by NPTCBC and the southern section from Resolven to Briton Ferry is managed and supported by St Modwen. Overall the canal company makes an operating loss year on year, in particular since the loss of revenue from water sales arose when BP closed its local facilities but even so both organisations endeavour to maintain the canal infrastructure in working order but most importantly structurally safe. A recent Atkins structural survey, commissioned by St Modwen, over the whole of the canal has confirmed this although things such as lock gates and mechanisms are deteriorating over time and through lack of use and these facilities will require significant investment in the future if the canal is to remain navigable. Unfortunately there is no demand for boating on the canal and hence justifying such expenditure will be difficult against a back drop of annual losses and no boating demand.

The part of the canal infrastructure that is widely used is the towpath. This provides a safe access to the public to their place of work, for walking in general, for joggers and particularly cyclists and the section of towpath from Briton Ferry to Tonna is part of the designated Sustrans cycle route.

For the southern section of the canal the maintenance is carried out, under our instruction, by a small company Groundtech Wales employing 4 men each week, 52 weeks per year. The main concentration of the maintenance team is to keep the towpaths safe for use and involves such things as surface repairs, hedge and tree cutting, grass cutting, removal of fallen trees, knotweed spraying,

towpath stabilisation, litter picking etc. In terms of the waterway, control of water levels, waterway clearance of obstructions and weed cutting are the main activities in addition to basic maintenance repairs to the waterway structures.

The maintenance costs for the southern section alone exceed £100k per year.

In terms of the N&TC Trust using their trip boat on the canal each summer, from Neath town centre to Tonna, then we ensure this section of waterway as a priority is in good order for their use. Unfortunately their boat is in need of repair and as a result they decided not to run it this summer.

So in summary, I hope the content of this letter provides some context to the efforts both St Modwen and NPTCBC provide on a daily basis, in difficult financial circumstances.

Both Rupert and myself are happy to discuss further if you so wish.

Yours sincerely

John Smith

Manager Neath Canal.