

**REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

22 June 2018

Vice Chairperson: Councillor L.Jones

Councillors: J.Evans, C.J.Jones, S.Rahaman, R.L.Taylor,
R.W.Wood, H.Jones, N.T.Hunt and S.M.Penry

Officers In Attendance S.Brennan, N.Pearce, G.Evans, J.Davies,
C.Jones, M.Shaw and R.Turner

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors D.W.Davies, A.Wingrave,
A.Llewelyn and S.H.Reynolds

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

Cllr. S. Rahaman Report of the Head of Property and
Regeneration re: Proposals for Future
Tourism Provision within Neath Port Talbot
County Borough Council because his family
owns and runs a business on the Aberavon
Seafront where he is also employed.

2. **MINUTES OF THE REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 18TH
MAY 2018.**

The Committee noted the minutes.

3. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19.**

Members were informed that the work programme had been updated
following suggestions made at the recent workshop, and following
consultation with officers.

The Committee noted the work programme.

4. PRE-SCRUTINY

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following items:

Cabinet Board Proposals

4.1 Quarterly Performance Management Data 2017-2018 – Quarter 4 Performance (1st April – 31st March 2018)

The Committee received information in relation to the Quarterly Performance Management Data 2017/2018 – Quarter 4 Performance (1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018) as contained within the circulated report.

Members referred to indicator 17 and 19 and queried why the number of calendar days taken to deliver Disabled Facilities Grant generally had increased by 10 days; and why the number of calendar days taken to deliver Disabled Facilities Grant for adults had increased 14 days. The Committee was informed that the relevant officers were not present at the meeting and that responses would be sought from officers and circulated to Members.

Members referred to indicator 22 and questioned why there had been a decrease of 21.2% in significant breaches that were rectified by intervention during the year by Trading Standards. Officers stated that the service was currently dealing with a large number of controversial and complex investigations and that individual cases were taking up a lot of officer time. Officers explained that the service was also undergoing a system review which was currently taking priority, and that three officers had been freed up to undertake this work. Officers assured Members that there would be an improvement during the current civic year.

Members raised a query in relation to indicator 27 and questioned what the Authority were doing to increase the number of new business start-up enquiries assisted through Business Services. Officers informed Members that a lot of work was ongoing to develop additional facilities throughout the county borough such as the Plaza Development and the entrepreneur hub in Neath; however progress was also dependent on businesses engaging with the Authority and bringing forward proposals. Officers added efforts were ongoing to attempt to engage with businesses and potential start up organisations.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

4.2 Proposals for Future Tourism Provision within Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

The Committee received information in relation to the Proposals for Future Tourism Provision within Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council as contained within the circulated report.

Members questioned the data used in the report, and queried whether it was robust. Officers stated that the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Model (STEAM) information was used by all local authorities. Officers explained that the information was good at quantifying value and volume of tourism in the area and was updated on a six monthly basis. Officers added that the information was updated by the tourism industry and was considered a key data source throughout Wales.

Members queried whether it would have been possible to have presented three different costing options for the proposed new Tourism Unit, and commented that £250k for the new unit appeared costly. Officers informed Members that Visit Wales would have preferred for the Authority to have had five or six members of staff in the team, and that some Authority areas already had this in place. Officers added that the proposal was the minimum that the Authority could implement in order demonstrate a commitment to tourism within the county borough and to be able to access funding from Welsh Government.

Members queried what work was being carried out with outside agencies. Officers explained that the priority was to increase overnight stays as this was worth more to the local economy, and that attempts were being made to work with coach operators to encourage them to stay during the food and drink festival and to visit Margam Park. Officers stated that the price and availability of overnight accommodation was currently an issue within the County Borough. Officers explained that overnight parking in Neath town centre was an area that that was currently being looked at.

Members commented that Gwynedd Council in North Wales had worked with Cadw to maintain and promote Caernarfon Castle, and queried whether the Council could do something similar with a number of sites. Officers stated that they had not been able to look at

this to date due to capacity issues; however officers noted the suggestion for future consideration. Members informed officers that Neath Town Council had met with Cadw regarding restoration work to Neath Castle, and that this was now being progressed.

The Chair of the former Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Llewelyn, welcomed the report. Councillor Llewelyn commented that it was good to see that Cabinet Board had progressed with the recommendations made in the task and finish report, and that a core budget had been allocated for the new team which demonstrated the Authority's commitment to tourism. Councillor Llewelyn stated that the team would need to work closely with other teams, such as the department currently responsible for marketing Margam Park and the Princess Royal Theatre. Councillor Llewelyn queried whether this information would be fed back to the Leisure and Culture Scrutiny Sub Committee. Officers confirmed that the information presented to the Committee would also be reported to the Leisure and Culture Scrutiny Sub Committee for information. Officers added that there would be synergy with between the Tourism Unit and the department responsible for marketing Margam Park and the Princess Royal Theatre.

Members commented that recently an event in Cardiff coincided with the Dragon Ride event in Neath Port Talbot which resulted in a reduction in availability of overnight accommodation within the County Borough. Members queried whether there was a way of looking at trends and patterns to avoid any future clashes. Officers stated that dealing with these peaks was difficult due to the limited overnight accommodation within the County Borough. Officers informed Members that capacity needs to be increased in this area, but it was proving difficult. Officers added that the Premier Inn had built an extension next to the Bagle Brook in Baglan which offered some further accommodation.

Members stated that the Afan Adventure Park was a good opportunity for the County Borough which could be explored and progressed. Officers informed Members that an application had been received and that the Authority was awaiting further information.

Members queried whether the Swansea Bay City Deal would look at restoring the canal for navigation from St. Thomas in Swansea to Resolven. Officers stated that this was still being investigated; however it was very expensive to make the canal navigable again. Officers explained that St. Modwens were responsible for the canals

and that the Council had a minority share. Officers added that the pedestrian path along the canal were being maintained and were in good condition.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet Board.

4.3 Energy/Carbon & Water Management Performance Report 2017/18

The Committee received information in relation to the Energy/Carbon & Water Management Performance Report 2017/18 as contained within the circulated report.

Members queried why the lights in Neath Multi Storey Car Park were always on even after the car park had closed. Officers explained that there was a fault with the system, but this was currently being addressed.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

5. ACCESS TO MEETINGS

RESOLVED

that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

6. PRE-SCRUTINY

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following items:

Cabinet Board papers

Port Talbot Peripheral Distributor Road Phase 2 – TATA and TATA Sports & Social Cub, Margam, Port Talbot

The Committee received information in relation to the Port Talbot Peripheral Distributor Road Phase 2 – TATA and TATA Sports &

Social Cub, Margam, Port Talbot as contained within the circulated report.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the recommendation to be considered by Cabinet Board.

CHAIRPERSON