

**REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

7 June, 2019

Chairperson: Councillor S.K.Hunt

Vice Chairperson: Councillor R.L.Taylor

Councillors: D.Cawsey, N.T.Hunt, H.N.James, C.J.Jones,
A.McGrath, S.M.Penry and S.Pursey

Officers In Attendance: N.Pearce, S.Brennan, N.Headon and N. Jones

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors L.Jones and A.Wingrave

1. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Decision:

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 3 December, 2018 and 12 April, 2019, be approved.

2. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20**

Decision:

It was noted that a Forward Work Programme workshop would be arranged for July, 2019. Members would be informed of the date.

It was agreed that the Forward Work Programme be noted.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND TRADING STANDARDS CHARGE FOR BUSINESS ADVICE UPDATE

The Committee received an update from April 2018 (first review) for the Business Advice Service operated by Environmental Health and Trading Standards Department. It was highlighted that the operation of the charging system for this service was a means of cost recovery for the Directorate.

Officers informed Committee that the charges had resulted in £864.00 income for the Directorate, even though this was not a significant amount of income, this had freed up a full time post which had been redeployed to carry out statutory activities. It was noted that the chargeable service had been used by six local businesses which have sought advice on a range of Food Safety and Trading Standards topics.

Officers explained that improvements have been made on the level of information available on the Neath Port Talbot website where information is readily available, this would encourage people to self-serve.

Members questioned whether the introduction of charges had resulted in a negative impact upon new businesses and how this was being measured. Officers confirmed that since the introduction of the charges there had been no evident decline in the number of broadly compliant premises within the county borough. Broadly compliant premises are those with a food hygiene rating of 3 or above. It was also confirmed that the chargeable service related only to food hygiene advice to businesses and advice continued to be provided free of charge as a matter of course when premises were inspected.

Clarification was also provided that general business advice to businesses both new and existing continues to be provided free of charge by officers within the Economic Development team. Members queried other income generation initiatives being delivered within Environmental Health and Trading Standards services, it was explained that a briefing note was in the process of being prepared regarding the Japanese knotweed treatment service although this was under the remit of the Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee. Confirmation was given regarding the range of other income generating services including environmental monitoring and private water supply risk assessments all of which were helping to generate income.

Members stated they would like a further update in twelve months and the update should fully explain whether there had been an impact in terms of compliance with food hygiene requirements and whether this impact related to new or existing businesses.

Following scrutiny, the Committee noted the report.

4. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following Cabinet Board Item:-

Cabinet Board Proposal

Neath Port Talbot Discovery Clusters Marketing Campaign

The Committee received information in relation to Neath Port Talbot Discovery Clusters Marketing Campaign, which would raise the profile of Neath Port Talbot as a visitor destination.

Members questioned if tourism in Neath Port Talbot was focused on specific areas, and whether there were any plans for signage or maps for locations such as Aberavon. Officers explained that whilst the campaign focused on the 6 themes it would impact on many areas throughout the County Borough, including Aberavon Seafront. It was highlighted that signage was planned for areas such as Glynneath and Pontardawe, as for additional signage in other areas there were budget restrictions and difficulty in getting investment in some areas.

It was noted that there was a working group set up in relation to improving Aberavon Seafront, this is led by the Destination Management and Marketing Manager.

Officers explained there would be further information for Members on how Neath Port Talbot would be further marketed. This would will be presented to Cabinet at the end of June, 2019.

A discussion took place in relation to accommodation, it was highlighted by officers that there was not a huge amount of existing accommodation in Neath Port Talbot.

It was noted that the offer letter for funding from Visit Wales Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (RTEF) to deliver the Neath Port Talbot

Discovery Clusters destination marketing campaign, had not yet been received from Welsh Government, officers explained that this was imminent.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by Cabinet Board.

CHAIRPERSON