

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

This Integrated Impact Assessment considers the duties and requirements of the following legislation in order to inform and ensure effective decision making and compliance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Version Control

Version	Author	Job title	Date
e.g. Version 1	Bethan Blackmore	Heritage Strategy Officer	07.08.2024

1. Details of the initiative

	Title of the Initiative: Commemorative Blue Plaque Scheme
1a	Service Area: Regeneration and Economic Development
1b	Directorate: Environment
1c	<p>Summary of the initiative: A Commemorative Blue Plaque Scheme in Neath Port Talbot is a key priority in the Action Plan of the recently adopted Heritage Strategy 2024- 2039 (<i>Restore, Regenerate, Repurpose</i>).</p> <p>The launch of a scheme is intended to celebrate notable people, places and events within the county borough. Blue plaques are one of the most effective and visible means of celebrating our history and the historic environment. Plaques connect the past and present, they can increase a sense of pride among local communities and can educate about history and heritage, making both more accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds. They can also play an important conservation role, helping to highlight buildings with cultural and historic associations and to preserve them for the future.</p> <p>The blue plaque scheme is part of the Council’s commitment and vision to ensure that ‘Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations’, and helps to fulfil its purpose, namely ‘<i>To help Neath Port Talbot residents</i></p>

	<p><i>to live good lives.</i>’ The Council aims to create a Neath Port Talbot where everyone has an equal chance to participate in the rich culture of the borough, be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous with a sense of belonging, citizenship and place.</p> <p>The scheme has been developed with the wider policy context in view, particularly the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and is designed to ensure that both the seven goals and five ways of working of the act are embedded throughout the actions of both the Council, partners and other stakeholders in facilitating and delivering the scheme.</p> <p>Raising awareness of the county’s exceptional culture, heritage, language and historic environment, whilst celebrating and promoting it through a blue plaque scheme is central to the success delivery of the strategy.</p> <p>The budget for the provision of new plaques will be covered by the Council and will be confirmed on an annual basis in anticipation of the following financial year. The Council can cover the cost of two new blue plaques a year, across the County Borough. If a business, group or individual can self-fund a blue plaque, they will still need to submit their nomination via the online application process. The Council will arrange the manufacture and installation of the blue Plaque and self-funding applicants will have to cover manufacture and installation costs upfront.</p>
1d	Is this a ‘strategic decision’? No
1e	Who will be directly affected by this initiative? The Council, key stakeholders, partners and everyone who lives, works and/or visits Neath Port Talbot
1f	<p>When and how were people consulted?</p> <p>People were consulted with through the following engagement activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February – March 2023 where Counterculture undertook the consultation for the Culture Strategy, which has also been used to guide the Heritage Strategy. • October to November 2023 an extensive consultation exercise for the Heritage Strategy <i>‘Restore, Regenerate, Repurpose’</i>. <p>Information from the Let’s Talk (2021) and Let’s Keep Talking (2023) engagement exercises was also considered and this highlighted that Cultural Heritage was important to people.</p>

1g What were the outcomes of the consultation?

Culture Strategy consultation:

Outcome: Identified the importance of Parks & Open Spaces and Heritage & Historic Environment to the people of Neath Port Talbot. This vision is enshrined in the Culture Strategy, which will celebrate and promote our heritage and ensure our culture and the Welsh language will thrive. Feedback recognised the value a scheme could bring to the borough in the context of the wider South Wales's cultural offer for residents and visitors, *"Why haven't we got a blue plaque scheme to commemorate significant individuals on a par with those in surrounding places like Swansea, Bridgend and Carmarthen."*

Heritage Strategy consultation:

Outcome: Identified the importance of Celebrating and Promoting our Heritage, namely, to identify, celebrate and commemorate the figures, culture and heritage assets of our shared history including the setting up of a Blue Plaque Scheme for Neath Port Talbot. Consultation workshops with stakeholders and community heritage groups highlighted the need to *'Ensure Welsh language usage is accessible in heritage activity, interpretation and project delivery.'*

Other consultation outcomes:

- **Continue to provide opportunities for people of all ages to engage in community activities/volunteering.** One respondent stating, *"I think this could be positive for people my age who want more involvement in the community"*. Another respondent stating, *"The strong appreciation our culture and heritage needs to be more widely shared. Particular effort should be made with children, young people and those who have recently joined our communities"*.
- **Support the positive impacts on wellbeing for volunteers,** with one respondent stating, *"I am involved in the cause of heritage in the area, despite my age of 74, and I would be please if this could continue"*.
- **Promotion of the Welsh language and opportunities to use the language daily.** One respondent stating, *"Access to heritage sites and bilingual information will increase vocabulary and opportunities/topics for discussion in Welsh. Language learners can make valuable group visits to heritage sites or listen to speakers in Welsh."* These actions will have a positive impact on opportunities to use Welsh, ensuring that the Welsh language is on a par with English.

Let's Talk 2021 campaign:

Outcome: Findings feed into the 2022 Corporate Plan's wellbeing objectives that focused on what mattered across local communities, namely the priority Wellbeing Objective 3 for 'Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations'.

2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

Additionally, feedback from the Culture Strategy consultation in March 2023 identified the top the top two cultural priorities for the 288 respondents as Parks & Open Spaces and Heritage & Historic Environment. These two priorities including activities that celebrate and promote our heritage through improved bilingual interpretation and signage, such as the Commemorative Blue Plaque Scheme actioned in the Heritage Strategy.

Evidence from the Heritage Strategy consultation in November 2023 indicated that the majority of respondents strongly supported the strategy's 'Theme: Celebrating and Promoting our Heritage'. 52% of respondents ranked the need to identify, celebrate and commemorate the figures, culture and heritage assets of our shared history. This approach is important to community cohesiveness, by understanding the individual stories of why people came to Neath Port Talbot, achieved successes and contributed to not only the richness of Wales but also on the world stage.

A consultation workshop with community heritage groups identified the following actions needed to be delivered to support the Celebration and Promotion of Our Heritage:

1. Commence a Blue Plaque Scheme to raise awareness of, celebrate and promote notable events, individuals and places in our shared cultural heritage (linkage to Heritage Trails for residents and visitors).
2. Build networks & interpretation including bilingual signage so groups can work collaboratively to play their part in telling 'Our Story' to residents and visitors.

Through our Let's Talk engagement activity during Summer of 2021 Heritage and a strong sense of place ranked important to people in the area. Evidence from the Let's Talk feedback: 'What matters?' resounding supported the Heritage Strategy's vision of ensuring the conservation, protection and sustainability of Neath Port Talbot's heritage. A respondent endorsed this feedback, "Heritage and its preservation now matter to me. The past must be cared for."

3. Equalities

a) How does the initiative impact on people who share a **protected characteristic**?

Protected Characteristic	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Age	+			The scheme has the potential for a positive impact on these protected characteristics because historic people, places and events will reflect and promote the diversity of the area.
Disability	+			
Gender reassignment	+			
Marriage & civil partnership			+/-	Not foreseen for the scheme to have impact but will review going forward.
Pregnancy and maternity			+/-	Not foreseen for the scheme to have impact but will review going forward.
Race	+			The scheme has the potential for a positive impact on these protected characteristics because historic people, places and events will reflect and promote the diversity of the area.
Religion or belief	+			
Sex	+			
Sexual orientation	+			

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

The scheme will be promoted to the all the diverse groups within the County Borough enabling applications to be submitted that are inclusive and representative for everyone.

b) How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Public Sector Equality Duty**?

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation			+/-	The scheme will be open to everyone within the area and anyone applying will be treated fairly to ensure the scheme reflects the rich diversity of our communities, and the role these communities have played in the development of the County Borough.
To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	+			The initiative will advance equality of opportunity between diverse groups ensuring that anyone can apply and subsequently their application is fairly treated and on an equal basis.
To foster good relations between different groups	+			The promotion and publicity of scheme will generate enthusiasm amongst people to celebrate and learn more about the rich heritage and history of the area, thereby fostering good relations between diverse groups within our communities.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

The scheme has the potential for a positive impact on the PSED by being open to everyone, each application will be assessed to ensure that is it inclusive, fair and representative of our diverse communities.

4. Socio Economic Duty

Impact	Details of the impact/advantage/disadvantage
Positive/Advantage	The scheme will have a positive effect on the achievement of our Wellbeing objectives helping build confidence and pride both in individuals and communities as well as opportunities to engage and participate in cultural heritage activities to improve wellbeing and health, it is

	envisaged there will be greater access to heritage sites, learning and wellbeing activities at little or no cost. Additional visitors attracted by the scheme will increase the spend within the County Borough.
Negative/Disadvantage	
Neutral	

What action will be taken to reduce inequality of outcome

Focusing on Place, the scheme will support heritage led regeneration opportunities to support investment prospects across the valleys, coastal and rural areas of the county where there is greatest need of investment to support diversification of the local economy. Working closely with the Council's Regeneration, Business and Visitor Economy teams to support small businesses and investors, identifying and working to design projects that align to the ethos of the blue plaque scheme and potential heritage trails, which will bring socio- economic and wellbeing benefits to communities across the County Borough.

Monitoring of the scheme will consider intersectionality and evaluate how measures such as offering free training opportunities, enhancing volunteering openings, running free activities in local communities will go some way in reducing inequality of outcome for those living in less favourable social and economic circumstances within our communities.

5. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	+			The initiative will facilitate greater cohesion by enabling communities and groups to work with the Council, stakeholders and one another to develop community capacity, resilience and work on the siting of plaques in localities that benefits and unities communities. Promoting and celebrating diversity in our communities.

Social Exclusion	+			Opportunities to increase social and cultural interaction will be created by the scheme, where accompanying inclusive celebratory and well-being activities will have a positive impact for individuals and communities.
Poverty	+			It is anticipated that the scheme will have a positive impact on the poverty of opportunity as everyone will be able to access and learn about the blue plaques regardless of their financial status. Plaques will be sited in communities as opposed to be centrally located in our town centres, enabling people to visit sites for free or at little cost.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

The initiative will support Community Cohesion, Social Exclusion and Poverty alleviation, by enabling communities, individuals and groups to collectively come together and voluntarily work on the siting of blue plaques and/or the creation of heritage trails that benefit and unite communities and has a positive impact for everyone.

6. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: - people's opportunities to use the Welsh language	+			The initiative with its bilingual plaques, interpretation and signage will widen people's opportunities to use the Welsh language. It is envisaged that a borough wide blue plaque heritage trail will be created, where working collaboratively with partners such as Menter Iaith and Ty Gwyrhyd more opportunities will be developed for both learners and speakers to use Welsh at activities connected to the people and places of the blue plaques within the borough.

- treating the Welsh and English languages equally	+			All plaques and supporting interpretation and signage at designated sites will be bilingual, ensuring that the Welsh language is treated equally as the English language.
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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

Promotion information about the plaques and subsequent heritage trails bilingually via social media platforms.
 Work with partners to provide activities and opportunities connected to the people and places commemorated by the blue plaques, for example a Welsh language learner walks, having a Welsh speaker talking about the history of the blue plaque nomination (person or place).

7. Biodiversity

How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Biodiversity Duty**?

Biodiversity Duty	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity	+			The Blue Plaque scheme will not have a negative impact on maintaining and enhancing biodiversity as specific locations of blue plaques will be checked with the Countryside and Wildlife Team to ensure that there are no biodiversity implications e.g. bat roost entrances. Additionally, alongside the Blue Plaque scheme, the intention is to apply for funding to run a concurrent Green Plaque scheme to highlight notable nature in NPT. This would achieve an enhancement under the Biodiversity Duty by raising awareness of nature in NPT.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider			+/-	The Blue Plaque scheme will not affect the resilience of ecosystems.

environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.				
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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
Funding will be pursued for habitat management and species recording alongside the Green Plaque scheme.

8. Well-being of Future Generations

How have the five ways of working been applied in the development of the initiative?

Ways of Working	Details
i. Long term – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	The scheme is the Council’s long-term commitment to sustaining our heritage for future generations. The initiative has been developed to engage all our diverse communities and groups within Neath Port Talbot encouraging individuals of all ages to come together to celebrate, promote and commemorate a person or place that has significant importance to them and the borough. By engendering this sense of ‘Belonging’ and ‘Identity’ our communities can collectively plan future celebrations that remember aspirational local people and places. Long term the scheme will support the preservation of heritage for our future generations.

<p>ii. Prevention – preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The initiative will raise awareness of the unique cultural heritage of Neath Port Talbot. The Blue Plaque Scheme will raise awareness and educate our communities and groups about the inspirational people and places that are located within the borough and connect us. The scheme will enable like-minded individuals and groups to join to protect our historic assets, landscapes and ensure that the people and places who have played a significant role in the development of cultural heritage and life of Neath Port Talbot are not forgotten.</p>
<p>iii. Collaboration – working with other services internal or external</p>	<p>The scheme involves working collaboratively both internally cross-departmentally and with external partners especially those from the voluntary sector to ensure that notable people and places are recognised, celebrated and promoted for the wellbeing of everyone. Through heritage-led regeneration, the significant people and places in our shared story can ensure that economic, social and wellbeing benefits and objectives are maximised for everyone.</p>
<p>iv. Involvement – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population</p>	<p>The initiative has been developed to enable individuals and groups from our varied communities to become involved and participate in the celebration and promotion of our cultural heritage in the area. Everyone has an equal chance to take part in the scheme and our varied groups will be supported to tell the story of the people and places that are significant to their community. This approach will ensure that the installation of blue plaques values everybody’s differences and reflects the diversity of the population of Neath Port Talbot.</p>
<p>v. Integration – making connections to maximise contribution to:</p>	<p>The scheme adopts an integrated approach to making connections to maximise its contribution to well-being goals and other public bodies’ objectives.</p>
<p>Council’s well-being objectives</p>	<p>Well-being Objective 3: Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations. People actively conserve, improve and enjoy our stunning natural environment, treasure the Welsh language and are actively engaged with the rich sporting, cultural and industrial heritage of the area.</p>
<p>Other public bodies objectives</p>	<p>Public Service Board priorities Well-being Objective 3: Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations. Encourage engagement and participation in cultural activities and the celebration and preservation of our cultural assets.</p>

9. Monitoring Arrangements

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:

Monitor the impact of the initiative on Equalities, Community Cohesion, the Welsh Measure, Biodiversity Duty and the Wellbeing Objectives.

The Scheme will be evaluated and monitored as part of the HeritageNPT Project Phase 2 which focuses on the delivery of the Action Plan, and feeds into the Corporate Plan's Wellbeing Objective 3 and other Strategic Objectives.

10. Assessment Conclusions

Please provide details of the conclusions reached in relation to each element of the assessment:

	Conclusion
Equalities	The Commemorative Blue Plaque Scheme has the potential to have a positive impact on each of the elements of the assessment.
Socio Economic Disadvantage	
Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty	
Welsh	
Biodiversity	
Well-being of Future Generations	

Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

- **Continue** - as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised X
- **Make adjustments** - as potential problems/missed opportunities/negative impacts have been identified along with mitigating actions
- **Justification** - for continuing with the initiative even though there is a potential for negative impacts or missed opportunities
- **STOP** - redraft the initiative as actual or potential unlawful discrimination has been identified

Please provide details of the overall conclusion reached in relation to the initiative.

Continue as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised.

- The Blue Plaque Scheme seeks to promote and celebrate Neath Port Talbot's rich and diverse cultural heritage.
- Preserving our heritage for our future generations to learn about the development and the story of the area.
- Inclusive for everyone.
- Ensures that Welsh is treated no less favourably than English.

11. Actions

What actions are required in relation to obtaining further data/information, to reduce or remove negative impacts or improve positive impacts?

Action	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	How will we know we have achieved our objective?
Review and evaluate the scheme (Annually)	Bethan Blackmore	At the end of the first year of the scheme.	We will monitor the number of applications received, the numbers and diversity of groups applying.

12. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Bethan Blackmore	Heritage Strategy Officer	B. Blackmore	19.08.2024
Signed off by	Simon Brennan	Head of Service/Director	S. Brennan	27.09.2024