



SERVICE PLAN 2024 / 2025

Directorate: Education

Service Area: Visitor Economy Team (Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events)

Accountable Manager: Karleigh Davies

Service overview

The Neath Port Talbot Council Visitor Economy Team is responsible for encouraging the growth of the visitor economy through the delivery of compelling destination marketing campaigns, securing external funding to deliver improvements to visitor infrastructure across the County and delivering advice and guidance to the tourism sector and local stakeholders to encourage investment and participation.

As a result of SPF funding the team also has responsibility for the delivery of the Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund up until March 2025. The HCTE Fund seeks to deliver priority heritage, culture and tourism projects and initiatives across Neath Port Talbot as identified in the Neath Port Talbot Council Corporate Plan. This consists of two revenue and capital project interventions open to public and third sector organisations and an events intervention open to public, private and third sector organisations

The activity of the Visitor Economy Team is guided by the NPT Destination Management Plan, a partnership document which contains a comprehensive set of the agreed actions required to deliver the sustainable growth of the sector between 2023 and 2028.

The team consists of:

Visitor Economy Manager (Full Time, Permanent)



Visitor Economy Officer (Full Time, Permanent)

HCTE Fund Project Manager (Full Time, Fixed Term until 31st March 2025)

HCTE Fund Project Development Officer (Full Time, Fixed Term until 31st March 2025)

The Visitor Economy Manager administers an operational budget for the delivery of destination marketing and destination management actions. In addition to this the HCTE Fund has a total of £2.5 million to allocate to eligible projects up until March 2025.

The Visitor Economy Manager is also responsible (as part of a wider project delivery team) for the delivery of the UK LUF funded Waterfall Country Visitor Infrastructure Scheme (£7.7m) and the Gnoll Country Park Heritage and Visitor Infrastructure Project (£12m) in addition to a range of other visitor infrastructure projects as detailed in the tables below.

Pending a review of the wider service structure it is intended that Commercial Marketing and Festivals and Events will also come into the service.

Review of 23/24

- Continued delivery of the SPF funded Destination Marketing and Pride of Place campaigns and exceeded targets for cumulative campaign reach (number of people reached through campaign activity).
- Secured £350,000 to deliver the Neath Abbey Car Parking project and undertake a wider masterplan of the site.
- Commenced implementation of the Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund and allocated £2.2m (up to Dec 23) to eligible projects
- Devised and adopted the new Destination Management Plan 2023-2028.
- Provided advice and assistance to 22 (up to Dec 2023) new, existing and proposed businesses in the tourism sector within the county.

Collaboration:



The Visitor Economy Team works with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to deliver the Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan and the wider work of the team. This includes; Natural Resources Wales, Visit Wales, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, town councils, community councils, National Trust, Cadw, Wildlife Trust South and West Wales etc.

Key risks:

- Potential loss of skilled and experienced staff in March 2024 as a result of SPF funding coming to an end.
- Risk of maintaining marketing campaigns to existing level once SPF funding comes to an end. Currently external funding for marketing campaigns amounts to £250k over 2 financial years. Current internal budget for destination marketing activity stands at approx. £25k per year.
- Cost of living crisis is continuing to have a significant impact on the profitability and viability of many businesses in the tourism sector, this could result in limiting the potential for growth and demand for advice and assistance in the sector increasing.
- Welsh Government’s forthcoming plans to introduce Statutory Registration for accommodation providers, a Visitor Levy to raise revenue from overnight stays, the proposed Reform of the School Year, and the regulations around second home and the 180 days rule, will have an impact on the workload of the team and potentially the way that the team operates in future.

Key Actions		Responsible Officer	Start Date	End Date	Well-Being Objective / Governance & Resource <i>(contributes to)</i>	Performance Measures
1	<p>Deliver the NPT Destination Management Plan</p> <p>1. Establish new DMP Steering Group, terms of reference and agree DMP priorities for delivery.</p>	Karleigh Davies/ Gareth Bowden	Apr 24	Mar 25	<p>WB03 WB04 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	Number of destination Management Plan actions delivered. (existing SRP output)



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Implement year 1 priorities identified within the DMP. 3. Strengthen the partnership approach with NRW in Afan Forest Park and formalise Afan Forest Park Masterplan. 4. Continue to work in partnership with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and other partners as part of the Waterfall Country Partnership in order to manage visitor pressures. 5. Continue with the co-ordination of the Aberavon Seafront Management Group and delivery of the seafront management plan. 6. Deliver the visitor economy actions identified within the Aberavon Seafront Masterplan 7. Continue to attend regional fora relevant to the visitor economy. 					
2	<p>Encourage private sector investment in the visitor economy within NPT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver advice and assistance to new and existing businesses within the tourism sector. 2. Continue to support developers of major tourism proposals including Wildfox, Rheola etc. 	Karleigh Davies	Apr 24	Mar 25	<p>WB03 WB04 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	Number of tourism operators supported by the Visitor Economy Team (existing SRP output)



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Issue regular communications to the tourism sector via the Visitor Economy trade newsletter. 4. Increase sign ups to visitor economy newsletter through engagement with new and existing businesses and stakeholders. 5. Organise first NPT Tourism Industry Summit 6. Organise a series of familiarisation visits and experiences to encourage product knowledge with partners and businesses within the visitor economy. 					
3	<p>Deliver the SPF Funded Heritage Culture Tourism and Events Fund</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to attract a range of projects from the public, private and voluntary sectors to invest in heritage, tourism and culture within NPT. 2. Support project applicants to deliver against agreed outputs and profiled spend in order to ensure that all agreed outputs and expenditure can be evidenced by 31st December 2024. 3. Submit all financial claims as required, ensuring that all claims are appropriately evidenced. 4. Continue to manage the SPF Funding Panel (in partnership with the Valleys 	<p>Karleigh Davies/ Bethan Dennedy</p>	<p>Apr 24</p>	<p>Mar 25</p>	<p>WB03 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	<p>Number of projects supported/delivered.</p> <p>Total value of grant aid awarded to local projects via the Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund (existing WB03 performance measure)</p>



	<p>and Villages Fund) to ensure a regular stream of projects are assessed and that funding decisions are made in accordance with Terms of Reference and fund guidelines.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Monitor delivery of the 'Attitude Research' commission to evidence the agreed outputs relating to attitude shift against SPF schemes. 6. Start to prepare a bid for second round SPF funding 					
4	<p>Deliver effective destination marketing activity.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver SPF funded Destination Marketing and Pride of Place campaigns through a range of digital and CRM actions aimed at key target markets 2. Continue to deliver destination marketing activity aside from the SPF funded activities which reinforces the Dramatic Heart of Wales place brand. 3. Maintain the Dramatic Heart of Wales, We Are NPT and Afan Forest Park websites ensuring content is up to date and relevant to the audience. 4. Build upon our accommodation database to increase representation of accommodation providers from across the county on our websites. 	<p>Karleigh Davies/ Gareth Bowden</p>	<p>Apr 24</p>	<p>Mar 25</p>	<p>WB03 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	<p>Total cumulative reach of destination marketing and pride of place campaigns. (existing WB03 performance measure)</p> <p>Increase in social media engagement</p> <p>Unique visits to website</p> <p>Blogger/ journalists visits undertaken</p> <p>15% positive shift in attitudes of residents within the region</p>



5	<p>Deliver the Neath Constituency Levelling Up Projects at Gnoll Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to work as part of the project team to inform decision making and deliver the Gnoll Country Park Heritage and Visitor Infrastructure project. 2. Continue to work as part of the team to inform decision making and deliver the solutions required to manage visitor impacts at Pontneddfechan and the wider project. 	Karleigh Davies	Apr 24	Mar 25	<p>WB03 WB04 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	Total value of funding secured to enhance the quality of the visitor experience (existing WB03 performance measure)
6	<p>Invest visitor infrastructure at Neath Abbey Ruins</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver the Brilliant Basics funded Neath Abbey Visitor Car Parking Scheme 2. Work in partnership with Cadw to develop the wider Neath Abbey/ Neath Abbey Ironworks Masterplan 	Karleigh Davies	Apr 24	Mar 25	<p>WB03 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	Total value of funding secured to enhance the quality of the visitor experience (existing WB03 performance measure)
7	<p>Deliver improvements to the Richard Burton Trails and prepare for the 2025 Richard Burton Centenary</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procure and deliver the Pontrhydyfen and Port Talbot Richard Burton Trails 2. Prepare a programme of activities in readiness for the 2025 Richard Burton centenary. 	Karleigh Davies/ Esta Lewis	Apr 24	Mar 25	<p>WB03 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	Number of projects supported/ delivered linked to the Richard Burton Centenary.
8	<p>Secure external funding to deliver visitor infrastructure investment and enhance quality within Neath Port Talbot</p>	Karleigh Davies/ Bethan	Apr 24	Mar 25	<p>WB03 WB04</p>	Total value of funding secured to enhance the quality of the visitor



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek out external funding to deliver priorities which meet the aims of the visitor economy projects identified within the Destination Management Plan and Culture Strategy. 2. Ensure representation of the visitor economy team at meetings with key funders such as Welsh Government (including Visit Wales), NLHF, Arts Council etc. 3. Ensure that visitor economy project priorities are represented when calls for projects are received for specific funding opportunities. 	Dennedy/ Esta Lewis			<p>Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	experience (existing WB03 performance measure)
9	<p>Collate and analyse consumer research to assist in decision making within the Council and within the tourism sector.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collate and monitor accommodation occupancy data from external sources to inform analysis of sector performance and to monitor the impact of the TATA transition on accommodation occupancy. 2. Continue to collect data on visitor numbers to input into the STEAM model to establish the volume and value of the visitor economy within NPT. 3. Undertake research as required (and depending upon budget) to understand visitor motivations to travel. 	Karleigh Davies	Apr 24	Mar 25	<p>WB03 WB04 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy</p>	Number of research activities undertaken to inform decision making in the visitor economy.



	<p>4. Utilise research collected externally from the council (such as the Wales Tourism Barometer etc.) to inform the Council's understanding of visitor motivations and trading conditions within the sector.</p>					
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement the recommendations from the events and festivals report.• Set up a film office and recruit to roles	Karleigh Davies	June 2024	March 2025	WB03 WB04 Destination Management Plan Culture Strategy Heritage Strategy	Implement the recommendations in the Events and Festivals Cabinet report ready for the policy change on 1st April 2024.