

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 September 2016

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PROPERTY AND REGENERATION – SIMON BRENNAN

MATTER FOR MONITORING

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE – PROSPERITY FOR ALL - REGENERATION - HIGHLIGHT REPORT – QUARTER 1 (1ST APRIL – 30TH JUNE) 2016/17

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Members with the Priority for All Highlight Report – Quarter 1 2016-17 for **Regeneration** which provides a progress update for the first three months of 2016-17 for one of the Corporate Improvement Plan objectives which fall within the remit of the Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. This will enable the Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Members to discharge their functions in relation to performance management.
- 2 The Prosperity for All improvement Objective covers three areas, Regeneration, Anti-poverty and Housing. Anti-poverty and Housing progress will be reported to their relevant scrutiny committees.

Executive Summary

- 3 Overall we are on track to deliver all activities planned for 2016-17 despite on-going challenging circumstances surrounding the economy.

- 4 The Regeneration and Economic Development Team have been at the forefront of attracting new private investment to Aberavon Seafront. For example, the redevelopment and expansion of a number of food outlets is helping to attract more visitors to the Seafront. The Team are also continuing to work with both existing businesses and potential new investors to further develop leisure and commercial opportunities. The recent completion and opening of the new adventure golf course complements these improvements and will help attract additional visitors to the area.
- 5 A Planning application has been submitted for the next phase of the redevelopment of Neath Town Centre. Plans include a parade of smaller retail units and apartments, part of which will front the pedestrian thoroughfare between Water Street and Orchard Street. The aim is to improve linkages between the new development and the existing town and key facilities such as the Gwyn Hall and the bus station, and improve the attractiveness of Neath as a place to visit and as a shopping destination. Residential apartments will provide additional living space within the town centre itself which should help to further improve the vibrancy of the area.
- 6 Plans for caravan and camping facilities at Margam Park are finally progressing after plans to fund essential infrastructure improvements have now been resolved. When the works are completed it will bring much needed spending power into the area as it is expected to attract thousands of visitors per year.
- 7 The Regeneration Team are continuing to actively source funding and identify potential partners to deliver refurbished historic buildings with potential commercial, retail, residential or leisure end use. To date this year, applications have been made to WEFO under the Building for the Future programme for funding to support The Plaza, Port Talbot Magistrates Court and 8 Wind Street projects. In addition, a number of the Vibrant & Viable Places projects have already been completed, with several more coming on-line shortly.
- 8 Driving forward regeneration projects in the Valleys to encourage tourism and improve employment opportunities is also progressing

well. In particular, RDP funding is already supporting 10 projects and 25 community groups/organisations including the Cognation project, which supports Mountain Biking in the Afan Valley and the appointment of a Business Development Officer within the Economic Development Team that will be tasked with encouraging and promoting activities within rural wards that will increase the contribution that the tourism industry makes to the local economy.

- 9 The Economic Development Team is also now responsible for managing the Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan (DMP). Work is progressing well and action plans are being drawn up for Margam Park, Aberavon Seafront and the Afan, Swansea, Dulais and Neath valleys.
- 10 Delivering community benefits to increase supply chain opportunities for local businesses and identify local jobs for local people is another priority area of work for the Economic Development Team. To date this year, two projects have been completed, i.e. the £40m Bae Baglan School (Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and NPT Council funded) and the Employability Centre (former Fire Station) funded through Welsh Government's Vibrant & Viable Places Programme.
- 11 In total, these two projects have helped to support 41 local people back into work, provided over 3800 training weeks via apprenticeships, trainees, graduates placements and work experience opportunities, provided over £8.5m worth of contracts to local businesses and achieved more than 97% of spend with contractors in Wales.
- 12 Another function of the team is to help people into work where possible and having secured European funding, the Workways + project has completed its recruitment and is now up and running. In addition, Council Officers are working closely with the Department of Works and Pensions to deliver the Communities For Work project throughout the borough and the Communities First project continues to support people looking to return to work - 37 people have entered employment during this quarter.

Community groups are still being supported with core funding - 4 organisations have received funds to date this year.

- 13 The Economic Development Team continues to receive requests from local businesses for funding to support their expansion and growth plans. To date, these requests have been of a more positive nature as businesses are looking to improve their marketing, invest in new assets or train staff. These investments once completed will attract new private sector investment and support the creation of new jobs within Neath Port Talbot.
- 14 In addition, the Economic Development Team played a major role in ensuring Enterprise Zone status for Port Talbot Waterfront which will be of huge benefit to businesses and will further help promote economic growth and job creation in the area.
- 15 As a direct result of the announcement of significant job losses at Tata, and the continued uncertainties about the future of the site, the Economic Development Team have been working closely with Careers Wales, Department of Works and Pensions and Welsh Government to help those facing redundancy and provide support to the many local businesses within the Tata supply chain that have to deal with staff losses or look to new markets. This has led to an increase in the number of people attending the Council's Enterprise Club seeking advice and guidance on self-employment.
- 16 Finally, the Council continue to lead on the Distinctive Places and Competitive Infrastructure strategic aim of the Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy. In particular, it has co-ordinated regional prioritisation of schemes under the Visit Wales Destination Attractor project and identified developments for funding under the Building for the Future programme.
- 17 It is also developing a package of Strategic Employment Site projects, including Harbourside, to submit to Wales European Funding Office and coordinating the £500m City Deal bid for the region to Welsh and UK Governments.
- 18 Funding has also been secured for the establishment of a Regional Marketing Suite at the Bay Campus which involves the

development of Regional 3D Map, a new 'invest' website and the setting up of a regional inward investment team, endorsed by the Swansea Bay City Region Board to attract new investment to the region.

Financial Impact

19 The performance described in the attached highlight report is being delivered against a challenging financial situation.

Equality Impact Assessment

20 Implementing the Prosperity for All priorities will assist the Council in delivering part of its Strategic Equality Plan. By working in partnership with appointed contractors and their supply chain in delivering community benefits on major developments within the County Borough such as the new Bae Baglan School, we can help disadvantaged individuals overcome barriers to employment by utilising the services provided through initiatives such as Workways+, LIFT, Communities First, etc.

Workforce Impacts

21 There are no workforce impacts.

Legal Impacts

22 To support the discharge of duty placed on the Council, as contained within:

- The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, to 'make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions'.
- The Well-being of Future Generations Act in terms of "improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales".

Risk Management

23 Failure to have robust performance monitoring arrangements could result in poor performance going undetected

Consultation

24 No requirement to on this item consult.

Recommendation

25 For Members to note the progress report for the Prosperity for All corporate improvement objective for Regeneration as contained within the attached highlight report.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

26 Matter for monitoring. No decision required.

Implementation of Decision

27 Matter for monitoring. No decision required.

APPENDICES

28 Appendix 1 - Prosperity for All Highlight Report for Regeneration– Quarter 1 2016-17

List of Background Papers

29 The Neath Port Talbot Corporate Improvement Plan – 2016/2019 “Rising to the Challenge”.

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