

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board

22 June 2018

Report of the Head of Property and Regeneration

- S Brennan

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: ALL

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

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to approve the remit of, and the resources required, to establish a new tourism unit within Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

A separate report will be submitted to Personnel Committee on 25th June 2018 seeking approval for the staffing structure required to deliver the proposals set out in this report.

2. Executive Summary

This report provides insight into the current tourism industry trends within Neath Port Talbot and, in response to these trends, sets out how the authority can work in partnership with the tourism industry to encourage the growth of tourism as an important sector of the local economy.

3. Background

In December 2017 an update report on the former Economic and Community Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's review of support for the tourism sector was scrutinised by the new Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee.

At their December 2017 meeting the new committee subsequently endorsed the recommendations within the review, in particular the recommendation to reinstate a tourism provision in order to encourage

the growth of the sector within the local economy and, importantly, to be able to access tourism-related grant funding.

On 16th May 2018 a workshop was held with members of the tourism industry in Neath Port Talbot to seek their views on future tourism provision and the remit of the proposed Tourism Unit. The feedback received has been factored into this report and will be used to update the Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan. A summary of the feedback from this event can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Current Position

The Volume and Value of Tourism

In 2016 tourism contributed £110.28* million to the Neath Port Talbot (NPT) economy, however this represents a 1.2% decrease on 2015, which equates to a decrease of £1.31million in revenue. Only two other local authorities in Wales (Cardiff and Swansea) saw a decrease in the economic value of tourism in 2016, all other local authorities experienced some growth.

In 2016, 1.47* million visitors came to NPT, this represents a decrease of 3.9% (61,000 visitors) on 2015. In 2016 NPT saw the largest decrease in visitor numbers of all local authorities in Wales.

Afan Forest Park, a key driver for mountain biking visits to Neath Port Talbot and a destination which bolsters overnight stays in accommodation across the county, is seeing a significant decline in visits. In 2017 82,056 mountain bikers rode the trails in Afan Forest Park compared to 101,262 in 2015, this represents a decrease of 19% in just two years.

Recent visitor research shows that the vast majority of visitors to NPT (89%) are day visitors, however 2016 saw a significant decrease in the number of day visits taken in the area with 5.3% fewer day visits which represents 63,000* fewer day visits.

(*Source: Neath Port Talbot STEAM Report 2016)

Visitor research was undertaken across the County in the summer of 2017, this research evidenced that;

- 11% of visitors currently stay in NPT overnight and spend an average of £275 per trip. Key drivers for overnight stays are Waterfall Country in the Vale of Neath and Afan Forest Park. This

11% of visitors are currently sustaining our accommodation sector and offer the highest potential economic impact for the area.

- 26% of visitors are day visitors who are on holiday and staying in neighbouring areas. Average spend per day visitor per trip stands at £23.46. There is significant potential to convert these to staying visitors as they will already be familiar with the area. This is an important market for our attractions and activity providers in particular.
- 63% are day visitors travelling from home (outside of NPT). This type of visitor represents a high volume but low economic impact for NPT.

How can we act on these findings to increase tourism?

Tourism Development

In order to encourage economic growth, our tourism development activities need to be focused on the priorities that the industry has identified within the NPT Destination Management Plan (DMP). The current NPT DMP can be accessed at www.npt-business.co.uk/tourism. (Note: The NPT DMP will be updated in line with the industry feedback received on 16th May 2018 which is summarised in Appendix 1).

DMP's are a requirement put in place by Welsh Government (WG) to ensure that destinations are being developed and managed effectively and that resources are not being duplicated unnecessarily. DMP's also ensure that tourism stakeholders from the public, private and third sector work collaboratively to enhance the visitor experience and encourage the growth of the tourism sector.

The NPT DMP was launched in 2015 after consultation with the tourism industry and came as a result of the acknowledgement that without this plan the Council would be ineligible to apply for funding such as Coastal Communities Fund, Rural Development Plan Funds, Arts Council funds and Visit Wales funds in order to deliver wider regeneration schemes.

The current NPT DMP runs until 2020, however in the absence of a dedicated tourism function to lead on the delivery of the DMP the plan is currently under resourced.

The evidence submitted to Scrutiny Committee by Visit Wales showed a significant disparity between the funds which had been awarded to Neath Port Talbot (in both the public and private sectors) since the

tourism team was disbanded and the higher sums awarded to other local authorities in South West Wales.

During the NPTCBC scrutiny process Visit Wales made it clear that the funding they have available for tourism development and marketing activities will be directed towards those local authorities that demonstrate a clear commitment to developing tourism.

To demonstrate this commitment we need to ensure that we are getting things right in key visitor locations such as Afan Forest Park, Waterfall Country, Aberavon Seafront and Margam Park etc. by managing the visitor experience and continuing to invest in tourism development.

We need to play to our destination's strengths by investing in our highest profile locations/ attractions, such as Waterfall Country in the Vale of Neath and Afan Forest Park, which currently drive demand for overnight stays in our area. This strategy is essential in helping us to increase the number of these higher spending visitors who are looking for new and varied experiences.

In addition to this we need to ensure that we also attract and invest in new high profile product development in particular in our valleys areas in order to future proof our tourism economy and attract new visitor markets. This can be achieved by prioritising strategic locations for development and identifying specific opportunities on Council owned land and buildings which can be put out to tender with the private sector.

Smaller scale developments also have the potential to widen our product offering. For example; attracting new and quirky accommodation providers, activity providers, attractions and places to eat, in addition to offering new experiences at our existing attractions, will assist in securing additional overnight stays. This can be achieved by attracting external funding and delivering specialist business support to the tourism sector in order to bring proposals from new and existing businesses to fruition.

Events also play a role in generating overnight stays and raising the profile of an area for both tourism and inward investment purposes. In order to secure economic benefits from events we need to achieve a balance in the types of events which are held in the county.

Attracting large scale 'one off' events such as high profile sporting events or national cycle races would raise our profile, but would only

deliver a one-off benefit as the events are usually only held in an area once. However, attracting and nurturing events which occur annually and have a clear fit with our product offering such as mountain biking, triathlons, Neath Food Festival etc. we can deliver economic benefit over a number of years.

Organising events can take a significant amount of staff time and financial outlay but the most successful events are often organised by enthusiasts who have a passion for their specific event and want more people to get involved.

As the resources required to successfully manage a programme of events are no longer available within the council it is proposed that we instead take an enabling approach to attracting events to the county.

For example, in the past neighbouring local authorities have supported event organisers by offering modest financial incentives, such as sponsorship or grant funding where the event organisers can demonstrate a clear economic benefit to the local area. This approach would deliver support to nurture new events and potentially attract large scale events to the area. We would also need to strengthen relationships with the Welsh Government Major Events Unit to encourage more event organisers to come to Neath Port Talbot.

Nationally important events such as the Champions League Final held in Cardiff in 2017 had the potential to generate additional overnight stays for accommodation providers in Neath Port Talbot, however a lot of those who were most likely to benefit were already fully booked with bookings taken twelve months in advance for the annual Wiggle Dragon Ride at Margam Park. This is an example of how annual events can potentially provide a steady stream of income and a more long term financial benefit than higher profile, but one-off, events.

In order to achieve the tourism development proposals set out in this section of the paper, the status of tourism development within the Council needs to be elevated and all departments need to become enablers which help us to attract additional visitors.

This can be achieved by engaging all departments in the destination management process and setting up a 'Destination Managers Group' within Neath Port Talbot CBC to report on key issues which impact on visitors. The Destination Managers Group would directly report to the Destination Management Steering Group which is chaired by the

Director of Environment and consists of representatives from NPTCBC, Natural Resources Wales, Tourism Swansea Bay, National Trust, Visit Wales and private sector tourism operators.

In addition to this we need to support our partners (including the tourism industry themselves) to be fully involved in working with us to develop new visitor product. This can be achieved by building upon the capabilities of the Destination Management Task and Finish Groups set up for specific rural areas (via the Tourism Development in Neath Port Talbot Project) and Aberavon Seafront.

The Task and Finish groups are attended by private sector tourism operators who work in partnership with the council to identify priorities and deliver projects which meet the aims of the Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan. Currently these groups are under-resourced and need additional support to deliver more impactful projects.

In summary tourism development is about getting things right on the ground and is the precursor to undertaking successful marketing activities, if we can't deliver on what we promise in our marketing then visitors will not return.

Destination Marketing

When we present our area to potential visitors we need to use our best quality and highest profile tourism assets as a hook to raising familiarisation of our area. There are a lot of misconceptions about Neath Port Talbot, especially among those who aren't familiar with the area, and many find it difficult see past the steelworks. However, we need to challenge this perception as part of our destination marketing efforts.

The concept of the area of 'Neath Port Talbot' can be hard for visitors to understand, as the name of our area isn't an accurate reflection of a particular pin point on a map in the way that destinations such as Gower, Brecon Beacons, Swansea or Pembrokeshire are easier for visitors to visualise. For this reason targeted marketing activities which identify specific product or higher profile locations within Neath Port Talbot will be much more effective at attracting visitor's attention than a generic campaign based on the tagline 'Visit Neath Port Talbot'.

In the past we have put the majority of our destination marketing efforts into a partnership with the City and County of Swansea (The Swansea

Bay Tourism Marketing Area), we shouldn't discount working with Swansea in some way again in the future but we also need to cast our net wider to reach potential visitors. In future we need to be more strategic in how we target the specific visitor markets identified in the NPT visitor research and make best use of digital marketing methods and social media.

We need to position Neath Port Talbot as a place to base a stay to the whole of South West Wales, this will encourage longer overnight stays than if we were to promote ourselves as a stand-alone destination. In order to achieve this we need to invest in partnerships with other organisations which best suit the nature of our visitor products and offer the greatest potential marketing reach. In addition to this we should be more explicit in our marketing activities about our convenient location as the gateway to South West Wales.

Specific destination marketing activities which can help us to achieve the above could include, for example;

- Producing additional high quality videos and photography to present a different perspective of our area through digital marketing channels and social media
- Complete redesign of the Visit Neath Port Talbot websites to make them fit for purpose and more functional for use alongside digital marketing activities and social media
- Delivering integrated social media activities and writing blogs and features to highlight new and interesting product in our area
- Undertaking public relations activities such as targeting specific media outlets, magazines and travel bloggers to highlight our 'undiscovered' product and challenge negative perceptions. Subject to available funds this would include working with a specialist PR agency to reach key media influencers and may also include facilitating media visits to the area.
- Having a presence at key exhibitions (either as a delegate or with a marketing stand) such as the Outdoor Show, Best of Britain and Ireland or the South West Group Travel Show. This may be more effective as a regional effort as it would widen the appeal of the area to major operators.
- Developing packages or partnerships with private sector operators which make it clear what the area offers to specific markets, for example (this is not an exhaustive list);
 - Mountain biking tuition breaks, cross country running breaks or Strava Busting breaks in Afan Forest Park

- Waterfall wonders breaks in the Vale of Neath including suggestions of high quality places to eat and drink
- Richard Burton Tours including the Richard Burton Trail
- Swansea Valley fishing Breaks, cycling Breaks or walking breaks
- Creative weekends which highlight the growing arts and culture scene in the area
- Coach operator itineraries targeting coach tours to visit Neath Town Centre, Aberavon Seafront or Margam Park.
- Accessible holidays including accessible accommodation and attractions such as Aberavon Seafront, Aberdulais Falls, Margam Park and Gnoll Country Park.

There is much debate within the tourism industry throughout Wales about whether it is realistic for all destination marketing activities to be moved completely towards online methods. There are some markets, such as day visitors staying in neighbouring areas, which might benefit from having a leaflet of some description in their hand in order to inspire them to look for more information online.

At the tourism industry workshop held on 16th May 2018, there was a lot of discussion on paper based promotional materials and many felt that this is an essential element of a destination marketing strategy for NPT in particular in attracting day visitors who are staying in neighbouring areas. However others also highlighted that digital methods are more in tune with the ways that people now seek information about a destination.

Subject to the views of Members, it may be possible to adopt similar model to that used by Pembrokeshire which has outsourced the production of the area's holiday guide. All costs could be covered by generating revenue through advertising and the time commitment in producing the guide would be met externally, as a result the council would have input into the content of the publication but there would be no cost to the public sector in producing it.

When evaluating the reach of print based marketing materials versus online/ digital marketing the potential reach and costs of these methods should be clearly understood. For example a recent video was released online via Visit Neath Port Talbot social media channels to test the market response to the NPT Valleys areas. The film entitled 'Our Valleys' had significant impact and generated over 111,000 views on social media (both Visit NPT and Wales Online). The cost of this video was circa £600 (a standard video would normally cost circa £2,500) but

to reach a similar audience (111,000) using print based methods such as leaflets or guides would be significantly more expensive and could cost in the region of £20,000 (if production was kept in-house), depending on the nature of the publication and how widely it is distributed.

The significant response to the 'Our Valleys' video and further videos released through the Tourism Development in Neath Port Talbot project highlights how visitors are thirsty for new and undiscovered experiences. In addition to this the overwhelming positive response from local people towards these videos shows how destination marketing activities can also inspire positive local attitudes.

Neath Port Talbot has significant potential to satisfy visitor demand but as we are no longer actively delivering co-ordinated destination marketing activities our area is becoming invisible to potential visitors.

The Proposed Remit of a Tourism Unit

In light of the findings of the recent visitor research and lessons learned from past and current tourism provision within the Council, the remit for the new NPTCBC Tourism Unit can be summarised as follows;

1. Co-ordinate the ongoing production and delivery of the revised Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan in order to encourage collaboration with the sector and remain eligible to apply for funding via Visit Wales for tourism development and marketing schemes.
2. Strengthen relationships with key partners such as Visit Wales, Welsh Government Major Events Unit, Tourism Swansea Bay, Brecon Beacons National Park, Natural Resources Wales and neighbouring local authorities to secure investment and raise the profile of NPT as a visitor destination.
3. Attract investment in new tourism product development (including new developments linked to Regeneration schemes) and existing infrastructure (i.e. mountain bike trails, country parks) in order to remain competitive and enhance the visitor experience. This can be achieved by building relationships with key funders.

4. Deliver specialist advice and assistance to businesses (SME's) in the Tourism sector in order to maximise job creation opportunities and encourage good quality developments.
5. Act as a facilitator (or single point of contact) for key tourism developments to maximise opportunities to secure private sector investment and major tourism developments in the area.
6. Identify opportunities for Council buildings/ land to be tendered for use as tourism assets, for example, the former Waterfalls Centre in Pontneddfechan which now operates as holiday accommodation/ bistro (known as Sgwd Gwladys). Developments such as this support the tourism economy and raise revenue for the council through its lease with the proprietors.
7. Secure benefits from major events by delivering a modest support package to attract and nurture annual and/ or high profile events where there is a demonstrable economic benefit.
8. Undertake specific and targeted destination marketing and PR activities which act on the visitor research findings to achieve the following;
 - Increasing the number and length of overnight stays
 - Present our tourism product as a more packaged offering making it obvious that you can stay in NPT for longer than two days.
 - Redesign the www.visitnpt.co.uk and www.afanforestpark.co.uk websites and concentrate our marketing efforts on mainly digital methods.
 - Undertake targeted marketing activities for our key markets (outdoor activities/ peace and quiet seekers/ landscape lovers).
 - Establish NPT as a place to base a stay ('a gateway') to South West Wales

Resources Required

The evidence presented to the scrutiny review and the testimony of officers both from within NPTCBC and partner organisations made it clear that a permanent solution was the only sustainable way forward to deal with the issues that have resulted in a reduction in tourism-related income and to ensure the future development of tourism in the County Borough.

In 2016 the Business Development Team secured funding through the Rural Development Plan (RDP) funded LEADER programme to deliver a project tailored towards supporting the tourism sector. This included employing a Business Development Officer who works with the tourism sector in the rural wards only.

However the activities of this role are severely constrained by the activities deemed eligible under the LEADER programme. The existing Business Development Officer (Tourism) role which will end in May 2019 and is permitted to deliver the following activities only;

- Mapping the business development needs of the tourism sector (providing business advice is not an eligible activity)
- Undertake visitor research to ensure the tourism sector is better informed on the needs and wants of visitors (this research is complete and referenced in this report)
- Deliver networking events for the tourism sector which encourage sense of place and raise the familiarisation of tourism operators on what the area has to offer.
- Deliver videography and photography of the rural wards
- Establish 3 networks which encourage the involvement of stakeholders in the delivering specific and prioritised destination management plan projects
- Undertake a feasibility study which tests the viability of a tourism proposal (this is yet to be identified).

Whilst the Tourism Development in Neath Port Talbot Project offers some capacity towards meeting the proposed remit set out in this report it is impossible to deliver what is needed using this resource alone.

It should also be noted that there is no other funding available which will cover staff costs to deliver the activities which would be required of a Tourism Unit. This was examined extensively when the tourism team was disbanded as a means of retaining some of the staff within the team, however obtaining external revenue funding to cover staff costs is neither viable nor sustainable in the longer term.

In line with the feedback received on the proposed remit of a Neath Port Talbot Tourism Unit with the tourism industry in Neath Port Talbot and in the interest of finding a permanent solution, the following Council funded staffing structure will be submitted to Personnel Committee for approval on 25th June 2018. The staffing levels and operational budget identified

are based on the minimum required to deliver on the proposals set out above.

- Destination Management and Marketing Manager: To lead on the development and promotion of Neath Port Talbot as a visitor destination and maximise the contribution that the tourism sector makes towards the economic prosperity of the County Borough. Responsible for supervision of the Destination Management Officer post and securing additional external project funding. This post is likely to sit at Grade 9 (subject to Job Evaluation).
- Destination Management Officer: To assist with the delivery of the destination management process and the delivery of key tourism development and marketing projects. This post would be subject to Job Evaluation but the calculations below are based on grade 6/7.

It is proposed that the Destination Management and Marketing Manager post commences as soon as possible and that the Destination Management Officer post commences in May 2019 after the Business Development Officer (Tourism) post funded via the RDP LEADER programme ceases.

In line with the recommendations made within the Scrutiny Review the proposed Tourism Unit will sit within the Regeneration and Economic Development Team within the Environment Directorate.

The table below outlines the estimated minimum costs associated with the proposed remit and staffing structure.

Proposed Annual Staff Costs	
1 x Destination Management and Marketing Manager post and 1 x Destination Management Officer (subject to Job Evaluation)	
Total estimated staff costs Year 1 (2018/2019) (without Destination Management Officer post)	£46,750
Total estimated staff costs Year 2 onwards (1 x grade 9 post and 1 x grade 6/7 post)	£89,500
Proposed Destination Marketing and Development Operational Budget	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital allocation to deliver and match fund prioritised tourism developments/ destination management activities. 	£20,000 min
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Events Fund to attract events which generate economic impact. 	£10,000 min
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of targeted destination marketing activities including online and PR. 	£20,000 min
TOTAL YEAR 1	£96,750
TOTAL YEAR 2	£139,500
<p>Please note that the above figures include employers NI and Pension costs together with a provision for additional budgetary costs such as travel, IT, telephones, legal, training, etc.</p> <p>Please also refer to Appendix 2 for a breakdown of financial implications for the above posts.</p>	

4. Financial Impact

Please refer to the Financial Implications set out in Appendix 2. Funding for this investment will come from General Reserves in 2018-19 with future year funding requirements to be built into the Council's base budget from 2019-20. Whilst the analysis shows the cost of the first full year will total £96,000 it is projected that the requirement for 2018-19 will £82,000 with recruitment into post with effect from 1st August 2018.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

6. Workforce Impact

Please see above

7. Legal Impact

There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

8. Risk Management

There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

9. Consultation

This item has been subject to external consultation with the Neath Port Talbot Tourism Industry.

10. Recommendation

It is recommended that members approve the remit of, and resources required, to establish a new Tourism Unit, as set out in this report, in order to encourage the future growth of the tourism sector within the local economy.

11. Reason for Proposed Decision

To deliver the resources required to ensure the growth of tourism as an important sector of the local economy.

12. Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

13. Officer Contact

Mr Simon Brennan – Head of Property and Regeneration
Tel No: 01639 766370
E-mail: s.brennan@npt.gov.uk

14. List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Neath Port Talbot Tourism Industry Event Feedback
Appendix 2: Financial Implications for reinstatement of Tourism Unit

**Neath Port Talbot Tourism Industry Event
Wednesday 16th May 2018**

Workshops Feedback

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

BRIEF: What are our strengths as a visitor destination and what are the opportunities to attract more overnight stays?

1. What attracts people to visit Neath Port Talbot at the moment?
2. What opportunities are we missing?
3. What investment is needed on the ground to take full advantage of these opportunities?
4. Which specific tourism products/ areas should we concentrate our efforts on in order to generate more overnight stays?
5. How can we work in partnership to pool our resources in order to make these opportunities happen?

Summary of responses

Lack of quality retail outlets in certain areas, for example buckets and spades on Aberavon Seafront. In summary we need more opportunities for visitors to part with their cash while they are in NPT, this ranges from pubs, pop up restaurants and cafes of suitable quality and opportunities to buy quality products which originate from the local area.

It was felt that the key to future development of the destination is to start from the bottom (looking at basic facilities such as toilets, car parking, infrastructure etc.) and getting this right before developing further.

Brown signage is seen by all of the groups as key to establishing a better quality experience for visitors. It was felt that signage not only makes the opportunities to stop in the county more obvious (and could retain visitor spend) but also signage on pathways, canals and walking trails to make taking a walk and a cycle ride so much easier for people who aren't familiar with the area.

We need to make our visitors more aware of the history and heritage of the area and integrate this with outdoor activities such as walking and cycling – creating a sense of place.

A Blue Plaque scheme was also supported to enhance awareness of the heritage of our area in addition to suggestions to create iconic sculptures to promote heritage.

Promote the health and wellbeing benefits to visiting Neath Port Talbot. Walking, road cycling and cross country running water sports and triathlon training are hugely untapped markets with significant potential for the future development of NPT as a destination.

TATA Steel should have a Visitor Centre, there is demand for this and it could help us to change perceptions.

We need to find a solution to the future management and development of the Neath Canal if we are to develop as a destination.

Families and disabled visitors were seen as key markets that we could be doing more to tap into.

There was mention across all groups of re-establishing tourist information services, in particular in town centres in order to make visitors more aware of what's on offer. This went hand in hand with arguments for and against the production of leaflets to promote the area, there was a balance between those who feel leaflets are essential and those who felt they are outdated and that there should be a focus on digital methods.

There were a few Valleys Tourism Ambassadors present at the meeting, Valleys Tourism Ambassadors are community volunteers trained through Valleys Regional Park to converse with visitors and give informal advice on their local area. There was a consensus that this should be developed further and that a meet and greet scheme is possibly developed linking these volunteers directly with visitors. There was a call to work closely with the Valleys Taskforce.

There is a clear call to invest in our existing attractions to ensure that they continue to attract new visitors. Neath Abbey (CADW) was mentioned, more could be done at this location.

Investment in festivals and events were also widely discussed, in particular nurturing home grown events so that they grow and become sustainable, i.e. Neath Food and Drink Festival. Large scale events were seen as beneficial however more accommodation stock is needed to retain all of these visitors in the Neath Port Talbot area.

In terms of how we could work together to pool our resources, the key suggestions centred on establishing a tourism trade forum, continuing with the Destination Management Stakeholder groups in each area and holding an annual meeting with tourism operators.

There was very limited discussion on how financial resources could be pooled, however a lot of suggestions on working in partnership mainly on promotional activities.

There was discussion that we should ensure that actions within the Destination Management Plan are realistic and achievable and focused on fewer issues to ensure resources aren't too diluted.

More indoor provision would be welcomed to assist accommodation providers with enhancing occupancy during winter/ off peak periods. It was stated that it is crucial that Natural Resources Wales and NPTCBC need to work more closely to deal with the management of Afan Forest Park as a destination.

Feedback received via email stated that some investment is needed in the Vale of Neath as there is a drop in the overall quality of the local area. It was reported that the valley has lost the Waterfalls Information Centre, Aberdulais TIC, The Thomas Dadford Trip Boat, the canal is lacking maintenance and there are fly tipping issues on the A465. In addition to this broken signage on local rights of way had not been repaired.

There is a need to create a role for an Aberavon Beach Manager in order to safely manage the destination, co-ordinating events and bring people together.

There was mention of the negative perception of Hollywood Park on signage leading to and upon the seafront. This is seen as a dated concept and would give a better perception if a new name could be given and signage amended.

Transport, in particular public transport, was seen as key for encouraging visitors to explore the wider county. Could there be a transport scheme to cross the valleys and take visitors between attractions? Feedback from Brecon Beacons National Park via email indicates a willingness to build upon the partnership working to date in order to further develop and enhance Waterfall Country in particular.

DESTINATION MARKETING

Brief: What destination marketing activities should we allocate our resources to in order to attract visitors to Neath Port Talbot?

What are your opinions on the following activities?

1. Packaging of existing products into 'experiences'
2. Public relations activities such as journalist visits, public relations campaigns on specific product, attending exhibitions and events.
3. Online/ Digital – destination website, social media, video, photography etc.
4. Traditional marketing methods – leaflets, brochures and guides.
5. Marketing Partnerships – Swansea Bay, The Valleys, alignment with relevant brands etc.
6. How can we work together to make best use of our joint resources?

Summary of Responses

Packaging of existing products into 'experiences'

This was welcomed widely as long as there is a good geographical spread. Packages such as mountain biking tuition breaks, waterfall wonders breaks, Strava busting breaks, accessible holidays and creative weekends which were suggested by KD appear to be supported. Some additional ideas included establishing packages for Waterways/Canals/Fishing, Walking/Photography/ bird watching breaks, Beach/Coastline/Sea activities breaks, County of Fame utilising a blue plaque scheme, Valleys to Coast tours, filming location trails and packaging of events etc.

There was also mention of tapping into the thousands of students attending Swansea University.

Better promotion of key attractions such as Margam Park is needed.

Public relations activities such as journalist visits, public relations campaigns on specific product, attending exhibitions and events.

This varied across the groups, however the private sector showed a clear interest in this and feedback suggested that this is a key way to challenge perceptions of our area. There were offers from accommodation providers to work in partnership in hosting these visits. The key here is working with a well-placed PR agency and speaking one to one with businesses to identify the right bloggers and journalists. A local rather than regional approach was preferred for public relations activities as it was felt that a regional approach could result in Neath Port

Talbot being becoming lost amongst more high profile areas such as Gower or Pembrokeshire.

We could also make more of the famous faces from Neath Port Talbot. Better promotion of events, a more joined up approach to promoting events is needed.

Online/ Digital – destination website, social media, video, photography etc.

There was a consensus that a central destination website for Neath Port Talbot was of use. That this should be made more interactive and up to date/ modern. The vast majority of participants were very active on social media.

We should develop more marketing activities linked to experiences. As mentioned previously there was some debate in each group about the benefits of online/ digital marketing versus traditional paper based marketing.

It was stated that there would be an advantage to expanding the social media channels that we use to promote the destination as the demographic that use Facebook is maturing and the platform doesn't necessarily appeal to a younger audience.

We need a social media plan and a strong hashtag to carry our message wider and encourage joint campaigns with tourism operators in the area.

Traditional marketing methods – leaflets, brochures and guides.

There were some comments that not all visitors will be online or able to obtain a phone signal and we should also invest in other traditional marketing methods such as radio where relevant.

It was stated that a single image driven brochure is all that is needed so that the area can be promoted by individual businesses more effectively, rather than lots of individual brochures for specific areas of the county.

Leaflets/ guides were also supported by some groups in order to tap into the pool of visitors who are staying in neighbouring areas and looking for inspiration on where to visit.

There was also suggestions that NPT attractions should be promoted better at train stations.

Merchandise specific to the area could generate revenue.

Marketing Partnerships – Swansea Bay, The Valleys, alignment with relevant brands etc.

It was agreed that in the past marketing partnerships with the City and County of Swansea as part of the 'Swansea Bay' Marketing area were not as beneficial as they could have been as NPT was not given

proportionate representation in the campaign. However the benefits of partnership working to attract people to NPT was recognised.

One group suggested that an NPT Marketing Partnership could be developed between the local authority and tourism operators.

There is a need for Tourism Swansea Bay's membership in the NPT area to be increased.

Tap into existing campaigns such as 'Dragons of Wales'.

How can we work together to make best use of our joint resources?

There was much consensus that a brand needs to be developed which better represents the area as a tourism destination as 'Neath Port Talbot' isn't a destination, or an easy to understand geographical area. It was felt that a brand can also help us to challenge negative perceptions. Create a business directory of NPT tourism operators so that businesses can create packages more easily.

Working together on joint social media campaigns

Appendix 2

Tourism Unit Financial Implications

SET UP COSTS:

<u>Costs</u>	<u>First Year</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
	£	£
Recruitment Costs	250	
Accommodation Costs		
Office Costs	250	
IT	250	
Other (Training)		
Total Set Up Costs	750	0
<u>Funding of Set Up Costs</u>		
Revenue Budget		
Reserves	750	
Special Grant		
Other		
Total Funding of Set Up Costs	750	0

RECURRING COSTS

<u>Costs</u>	<u>First Year</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
	£	£
Employee Costs		
- Starting salary (Grade 9 post)	43,000	43,000
- Additional cost at maximum salary (Grade 9 post)		5,500
- Starting salary (Grade 6/7 post) from year 2 onwards		30,500
- Additional cost at maximum salary (Grade 6/7) post		7,500
Employee Training and Seminars	500	500
Accommodation Running Costs		
Travel and Subsistence	1,000	1,000
Other running costs – office supplies	500	500
Other running costs – printing and literature	500	500
Other running costs - IT	500	500
Marketing & Development Operational Budget	50,000	50,000
Total Recurring Costs	96,000	139,500
<u>Funding of Recurring Costs</u>		
<u>External Sources</u>		
Specific Grant		
Funding from External Agencies		
Service Level Agreement		
Other		
<u>Internal Sources</u>		
HRA		
Existing Budget Allocation		
Additional Guideline Allocation for 2019-20		139,500
Other (specify) Reserves	96,000	
Total Funds Available	96,000	139,500