

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CABINET BOARD

Friday 1st March 2019

Public Report of the Head of Property and Regeneration
S Brennan

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: ALL

Tourism Update

Purpose of Report

- 1) To provide an update on the activities of the recently reinstated Tourism Team and to summarise progress against the Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan 2015-2020.

Background

- 2) The Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan (DMP) was published in 2015 after consultation with tourism stakeholders within the county. At this time there was no dedicated tourism function within the Council.
- 3) The purpose of a DMP is to encourage collaboration and avoid duplication of effort across all sectors of the tourism industry. In addition to this the DMP focuses the efforts of all stakeholders to encourage the growth of the tourism economy.
- 4) Destination Management Plans are a requirement set by Welsh Government for all local authorities within Wales. In order to obtain funding from a range of sources relevant to tourism development (not just Welsh Government), tourism related projects must show clear links to the priorities set within the DMP.

- 5) In July 2016, The Economic Development Team secured funding to deliver the Tourism Development in Neath Port Talbot Project which employs a Business Development Officer (Tourism) to work with tourism operators within the rural wards. This project has now been extended and is due to end in October 2019.
- 6) To date the above project, in addition to work undertaken by wider partners and other departments in the Council, has enabled us to show good progress against the actions within the DMP.
- 7) In June 2018 the reinstatement of the Tourism Team was approved by the Council and the format and remit of the team has been agreed.

Tourism Sector Performance 2017

- 8) NPTCBC uses a model called STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Activity Monitor) to measure the annual performance of the tourism sector within the county.
- 9) The STEAM figures for 2017, which were released towards the end of 2018, show a good improvement in performance against 2016, the key indicators are summarised below.
- 10) In 2017;
 - Tourism contributed **£119 million to the Neath Port Talbot (NPT) economy**, this represents a 5.3% increase on 2016, which equates to an increase of approximately £5.97 million in revenue to the local economy
 - **1.59 million Visitors came to NPT**, this represents an increase of 8.4% (approximately 124,000 visitors) on 2016.
 - **The tourism sector supported 1,624 jobs** within NPT, this is an increase of 3% on 2016, representing an increase of approximately 46 jobs.
- 11) It should be noted that during 2017 the county was promoted as part of the South West Wales Year of Legends marketing

campaign and the Business Development Officer (Tourism) post was in place which allowed us to take advantage of opportunities to raise the area's profile through partnership working. In addition to this tourism across the whole of Wales also experienced growth in 2017 which impacted positively on NPT, a summary of the STEAM statistics across the whole of Wales can be found in **Appendix One**.

12) Subject to all data being available on visitor figures, accommodation occupancy and event attendance, the STEAM statistics for 2018 should be available by April 2019.

Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan Update

13) The DMP is monitored by the Neath Port Talbot DMP Steering Group, which is chaired by the Director of Environment and attended by relevant Heads of Service, Officers from within the Environment and Education Directorates, Tourism Businesses, Tourism Swansea Bay, Visit Wales and Natural Resources Wales.

14) Working alongside the Steering Group are a series of Task and Finish Groups which comprise of private and voluntary sector tourism operators who are 'tasked' with delivering the priority actions agreed with the Steering Group.

15) Task and Finish groups are currently in place for Afan Forest Park, Aberavon Seafront, Margam Park and a joint group covers the Swansea and Amman Valleys. Actions for the Vale of Neath are currently delivered in partnership with Brecon Beacons National Park.

16) The priority actions that are currently being delivered by the Task and Finish Groups are as follows;

Swansea and Amman Valley	Development and promotion of Cycle Route 43 and Route 347 Fishing opportunities along the River
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	Tawe Brown Signage Cwmdu Glen maintenance
Afan Forest Park	Delivery of the Afan Forest Park Destination Management Issues Document. This includes actions on maintaining cycle ways, mountain bike trails, delivery of the visitor giving scheme etc. This document has been devised in partnership with Natural Resources Wales.
Margam Country Park	To assist in the delivery of the Margam Country Park Business Plan.
Vale of Neath	Delivery of the Waterfall Country Destination Management Issues Document which includes additional car parking, lease of the waterfalls centre, enhanced signage, resolving litter issues etc.
Aberavon Seafront	To encourage collaboration among operators on the seafront and identify further development opportunities.

17) Please refer to **Appendix Two** for a full update against individual actions within the Neath Port Talbot DMP.

Review of the DMP

18) As part of the reinstatement of the Tourism Team within the Council the remit for the new team was agreed with both Councillors and local tourism operators. The Destination Management Plan should now be reviewed to reflect the agreed remit of the team and the refreshed efforts of our partners in delivering tourism development within the County.

19) During the 2019/2020 financial year, a number of projects, as summarised in the following section, are due to come to fruition. The outcome of these projects will further inform where we are heading as a visitor destination and the actions which arise should be reflected in the new DMP.

- 20) As the current DMP is due to conclude in 2020, it is proposed that a new DMP is developed which reflects some of the actions that remain relevant within the current DMP but extends to focus on the new Tourism remit. In addition to this, the new action plan will need to reflect the aspirations of our partners locally and will therefore be subject to a consultation exercise with the tourism industry.
- 21) If the above is agreed a new DMP will be prepared and a consultation exercise will be undertaken towards the end of 2019/2020 in readiness for launching a new DMP in April 2020.

Update On New Tourism Team Activities

- 22) The Council approved the reinstatement of its Tourism function at the Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board on 22nd June 2018.
- 23) In August 2018 the Destination Management and Marketing Manager, was recruited into post. This officer will lead on the delivery of the county's Destination Management Plan and destination marketing activities to promote the area to potential visitors.
- 24) The second permanent post within the team entitled 'Destination Management Officer', has been advertised externally and should be occupied by February/ March 2019. This post will continue with the delivery of the RDP funded Tourism Development in Neath Port Talbot Project until October 2019, at which point the duties will be expanded to also cover non rural wards.
- 25) Key achievements of the new Tourism Team to date include;
 - Successfully submitted an application to Visit Wales' Tourism Amenity Infrastructure Scheme (TAIS) for funding to deliver a Vale of Neath Visitor Hub at Resolven Canal Car Park with a total cost £160,000.

- Successfully submitted an application to Visit Wales' TAIS to deliver all weather car parking provision at Margam Country Park.
- Submitted an Expression of Interest to Visit Wales' Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (RTEF) for a large scale marketing project to promote Neath Port Talbot during Visit Wales' Year of Discovery, total project cost is circa £90,000. This project has made it through to the second stage of the application process and a full application will be submitted by February 1st 2019.
- Gained approval to extend the RDP funded Tourism Development in Neath Port Talbot Project to October 2019.
- Commissioned a Destination 'Place' Branding exercise, this is a key step in establishing how we will promote ourselves as a destination going forwards.
- As a result of feedback received from the tourism industry when agreeing the remit for the new Tourism Team, a Visitor Information Network Feasibility Study (rural wards) has been commissioned through the RDP funded Tourism Development in Neath Port Talbot Project.
- Devised proposals for the future development of Cefn Coed Colliery site and commissioned a 'master-planning' exercise for the site.
- Delivered a social media marketing campaign for Aberavon Seafront which comprised of a video which reached over 150,000 individuals. The campaign was delivered in partnership with Wales Online and gained excellent coverage on Visit Wales' social media channels.
- Delivered an autumn social media marketing campaign to test responses to a series of videos of the Neath, Dulais, Swansea, Amman and Afan Valleys and Margam Park which were produced via the RDP Tourism Development in Neath Port Talbot Project. Overall the campaign resulted in 13,038 views and reached 38,495 people.
- Delivered advice and assistance to 21 tourism businesses.

26) Priorities for the Tourism Team for the next six months include the following;

- 1) Recruitment and induction of the second post within the team.
- 2) Devising a marketing plan for the destination which will be informed by the aforementioned branding exercise.
- 3) Delivering a new destination website for Neath Port Talbot (also to be informed by the branding exercise).
- 4) Completing the delivery of the Tourism Development in Neath Port Talbot Project and meeting all associated outputs in addition to submitting financial claims.
- 5) Planning the procurement and delivery of all of the successful funding applications listed in the section above.
- 6) Writing criteria for, and launching, the Neath Port Talbot Event Organisers Fund, which aims to nurture successful events to encourage overnight stays within the county.
- 7) Continue to manage the Destination Management Plan process and collaborate with key partners.
- 8) Continue to deliver advice and assistance to all tourism businesses and stakeholders within Neath Port Talbot.

Financial Impact

- 27) There are no additional financial impacts associated with this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

- 28) There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

Workforce Impact

- 29) There is no workforce impact associated with this report.

Legal Impact

- 30) There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

Risk Management

- 31) There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

Consultation

- 32) The Destination Management Plan was subject to external consultation with the Neath Port Talbot Tourism Industry prior to publication.

Recommendations

- 33) It is recommended that;
1. The progress to date against the delivery of the Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan is noted
 2. The achievements of the new tourism team to date and priorities for the next six months are noted.
 3. That approval is given to prepare a new Destination Management Plan and undertake consultation during 2019/2020 in readiness for launch in April 2020.

Reason for Proposed Decision

- 33) To deliver a cohesive DMP from which to develop Neath Port Talbot as a visitor destination and ensure that the area continues to secure investment in the tourism economy via both public and private sector sources.

Implementation of Decision

- 34) The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

Officer Contact

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1: All Wales STEAM Summary 2016/2017

Appendix 2: Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan –
Action Plan Update