



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board  
Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**Public Report of the Head of Property and Regeneration  
- S Brennan**

### **Matter for Decision**

**Wards Affected:** ALL

### **Neath Port Talbot Discovery Clusters Marketing Campaign**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To make Members aware of the successful application for funding to deliver the Neath Port Talbot Discovery Clusters destination marketing campaign which will significantly raise the profile of Neath Port Talbot as a visitor destination.
2. To seek authority for the Head of Property and Regeneration to undertake and approve the necessary procurement exercises to deliver the project.

#### **Background**

3. In January 2019 the Tourism Team submitted a funding application to the Visit Wales Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (RTEF) to deliver the 'Neath Port Talbot Discovery Clusters'

destination marketing campaign. Officers have recently been informed by Visit Wales that the application was successful.

4. RTEF is supported through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and Welsh Government.
5. The Neath Port Talbot Discovery Clusters marketing campaign will help us to work towards our objective to increase overnight stays within the area, which in turn increases the revenue generated by visitors within the local economy.
6. The aims and objectives of the project are as follows;

### **Project Aim**

- To raise the profile of Neath Port Talbot as a visitor destination by showcasing product which plays to our strengths and aligns with the Wales brand.

### **Objectives:**

- To deliver a ‘perception changing’ marketing campaign to attract key visitor markets to Neath Port Talbot.
- To mobilise tourism sector partners to work in partnership to deliver bookable product.
- To deliver a more direct route to market for Neath Port Talbot tourism product which complies with the requirements of the Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements 2018.

### **Project Delivery**

7. The purpose of this project is to work in partnership with tourism operators within Neath Port Talbot to raise the profile of the area

as a visitor destination, challenge negative perceptions of the area and increase overnight stays.

8. Visit Wales' key objective, when awarding funds, is to create 'bookable product' across Wales which makes it easier for visitors, particularly those from overseas, to purchase a 'tangible' holiday.
9. Key to achieving the above will be establishing a series of private and voluntary sector led product clusters to deliver a minimum of six experiences within Neath Port Talbot.
10. Each cluster will focus on a specific product or area of the county and will represent the strongest product within the area. Within each cluster there will be a variety of activity, attraction and accommodation providers which will allow for specific experiences to be tailored to each booking and meet the needs of consumer, corporate or group travel markets.
11. Six core experiences have been identified which align with the Wales brand, the Visit Wales Year of Discovery 2019 and Year of the Great Outdoors 2020. The experiences are also designed to offer profile across both the valleys and urban areas of Neath Port Talbot.
12. The exact experiences to be developed will be refined further through an open call, however the following experiences have been identified for delivery within the project application and interest has already been expressed by a range of operators in delivering these experiences.
13. **Valleys Outdoor Adventure Experience:** The cluster will create an outdoor activity experience throughout the Valleys areas of the county which feature the iconic Waterfall Country product and introduce previously undiscovered experiences in our beautiful valleys. For example rock climbing, canyoning, orienteering etc may form activities within this experience. Accommodation will also be offered as part of this cluster.

14. **Afan Forest Park – Room To Ride Experience:** This experience will target those who already take part in mountain biking and will offer them bike hire, guided rides of the local trails or tuition to fine tune their mountain biking skills to get the most out of their ride in Afan Forest Park. Accommodation will also be offered as part of this cluster.
15. **Afan Forest Park – Family (Beginner) Mountain Bike Adventure Tour:** This tour will target absolute beginners to mountain biking and offer an experience for the whole family. Providers in this cluster should have the capacity to offer group tuition and guided rides and could include specialist female only tuition and guiding. This experience will also include accommodation options.
16. **Port Talbot – Tough as Steel Experience:** This experience is centred upon using the iconic steelworks as backdrop to experiencing invigorating outdoor activities, whilst also challenging perceptions of Port Talbot as a place to visit. The experience is likely to consist of surfing on Aberavon Beach, outdoor adventure at Margam Park such as stand up paddle boarding, go carting and cycling and also a high wire adventure ropes and zip wire course. This experience could also include the emerging markets from the Aberavon Aquathon and Steelman multisport events in the area. This experience will be clustered with appropriate accommodation which suits the nature of the booking, i.e. group accommodation or B&B accommodation is available in this area.
17. **In Their Footsteps Experience:** This experience will promote some of the best self-led or guided walks/ trails within the Valleys, Vales and coastal areas of Neath Port Talbot and will include accommodation and high quality eating out options as part of the stay. The focus of this product is towards those interested in the heritage and landscape of the area and would appeal to those who are seeking to walk/ cycle the paths and tracks which were once

trodden by their ancestors or the famous faces of Neath Port Talbot such as Richard Burton.

18. **Margam Park Heritage Tour:** This cluster will create a high quality guided heritage tour of Margam Country Park, Margam Abbey Church and Margam Stones Museum. The cluster will deliver an immersive guided-interpretive experience suitable for consumer and group travel markets. The experience would also include the provision of afternoon tea or lunch within the park itself. There is also an emerging Wellness/ Wellbeing product at Margam Country Park which could tap into the growing 'mindfulness' market whereby yoga/ meditation/ health and wellbeing experiences could be developed.
19. It is important to note that any Neath Port Talbot attractions or experiences that ultimately do not form part of the Discovery Clusters campaign will still be advertised via the new Neath Port Talbot destination website which is currently in the process of being procured. The website will showcase all attractions, activities and experiences that appeal to our visitors.
20. The project can be broken down into two phases.

**Phase 1: Scoping (April 2019 to September 2019)**

21. As part of this phase an open call will be carried out to identify the six clusters that will deliver the agreed experiences.
22. Although a range of operators have already expressed an interest in delivering the above experiences, in order to satisfy State Aid requirements; and before the final clusters are selected, we will undertake an open and transparent call for clusters of private/ voluntary sector operators to submit proposals to deliver the experiences agreed.

23. The final experiences will be selected against set criteria which are in line with quality requirements, the Wales brand and which appeal to the target markets identified.
24. Once the clusters have been identified, specialist legal advice will be commissioned to work with the selected clusters to ensure compliance with the Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018.
25. The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018 set out more stringent requirements on the 'packaging' of holiday elements such as accommodation, travel and activities. Where two or more holiday elements are booked together, or as a closely linked transaction, the regulations will require the tourism operators concerned to hold appropriate insurance cover.
26. As this legislation is new to the tourism industry it is envisaged that the findings of this exercise will be of use to the wider industry in Wales, therefore a key output of this phase of the project will be the sharing of a case study on delivering compliance within the project.

## **Phase 2: Delivery (October 2019 to December 2020)**

27. The following activities will be delivered as part of Phase 2 of the project;
  - Product Development for the six bookable products in partnership with industry clusters (to include non-accredited training, design of promotional materials etc.).
  - Public relations campaign - including securing travel blogger/ press visits
  - Campaign website
  - Online/ digital campaign targeting key markets
  - Group/ corporate travel campaign targeting travel organisers such as tour operators.
  - Six promotional videos (one for each experience)

- Photography for use in delivering the campaign
- Project management/ project facilitation.

## Project Costs and Outputs

28. The total cost for the campaign is £93,000, the project funding can be broken down as follows;

Source	2019/2020	2020/2021	TOTAL
Visit Wales – Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (87%)	£42,456	£38,454	<b>£80,910</b>
NPTCBC - Destination Marketing Budget (13%)	£6,344	£5,746	<b>£12,090</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£48,800</b>	<b>£44,200</b>	<b>£93,000</b>

29. The following outputs were identified within the funding application, however these are subject to ongoing discussions with Visit Wales and may be amended;

- 6 tourism products established – this will be achieved and evidenced via the open call for product clusters to be formed to deliver the 6 experiences identified.
- 15 stakeholders engaged – to be measured through the open call for clusters to be formed. Only the partners which make up the successful clusters will be counted against this output and will be evidenced via the expression of interest paperwork.
- 250,000 marketing reach – to be measured through social media reach, via the digital campaign, and video reach. The PR campaign will also contribute towards meeting this output.
- 1,500 engagements with content – to be measured via social media engagement, comments, likes etc.
- 5 blogger/ press visits – to be measured via actual visits secured through the PR campaign.

## **Financial Impact**

30. The match funding requirement of £12,090 over 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 financial years has been absorbed within the existing destination marketing budget held by the Tourism Team.
31. NPTCBC will receive £80,910 from Visit Wales' Regional Tourism Engagement which is part funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

## **Integrated Impact Assessment**

32. A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
33. The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below.
34. The campaign will not have an impact on people with any of the protected characteristics. The overall project has a positive impact on the wellbeing objectives.

## **Valleys Communities Impact**

35. This project will have a positive impact on Valleys Communities by supporting the growth of the visitor economy and the potential to create employment opportunities in these areas.

## **Workforce Impact**

36. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

## **Legal Impact**

37. There are no legal impacts associated with this report as NPTCBC will not be affected by the Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018.

### **Risk Management**

38. Officers involved in the delivery of this project have in-depth experience of delivering projects of this nature and in adherence to the funding criteria and conditions. There are therefore no known risk management issues associated with this report.

### **Consultation**

39. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item. However, in the interest of successfully delivering the project an event will be held to inform tourism operators about the project.
40. An open and transparent call will also be undertaken, alongside a robust assessment process, to identify the successful product clusters which will be promoted through the campaign.

### **Recommendations**

41. It is recommended that Members note the successful funding application for the Neath Port Talbot Discovery Clusters project and the resulting destination marketing campaign which will significantly raise the profile of Neath Port Talbot as a visitor destination.
42. It is recommended that Members delegate authority to the Head of Property and Regeneration to undertake and approve the necessary procurement exercises to deliver the project.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

43. In order to ensure that the project can commence promptly and be delivered to agreed timescales.

## **Implementation of Proposed Decision**

44. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

## **List of Background Papers**

45. Neath Port Talbot Discovery Clusters Project – First Stage Impact Assessment

## **Officer Contact**

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