

Appendix 2

8 Wind St, Neath

Communications Strategy



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Introduction

The aim of the project is to bring back into economic use, a listed building in Neath Town Centre (designated as a Valleys Taskforce Strategic Hub), to provide essential office accommodation that will house both new and existing SMEs, create local employment and business support opportunities, as well as attracting further economic investment to the local area.

The project will support the regeneration of Neath town centre and its surrounding areas in line with the aims and objectives of the Building for the Future operation. It is aligned to the Neath Integrated Territorial Strategy and the regional Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy. In addition, it delivers against a number of Welsh Government initiatives including the Valleys Taskforce, Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan, Vibrant and Viable Places Programme, the Tackling Poverty Agenda and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Background

Neath is an old Market town situated on the River Neath and has existed as a settlement since the Romans established a fort here in the AD 70s.

8 Wind Street is a vacant listed building, occupying a prominent location within the main pedestrian retail area of Neath town centre. The building is also situated within the Neath Town Centre Conservation Area on Wind Street, just opposite Church Place and the historic St. Thomas' Church square.

The current building was constructed in 1868 by Lloyds Bank, to replace a previous building thought to be a bank or Registry office with C18 origins. The three storey building has a strong connection with the Registrar's Office in Neath and accommodated this service from the mid 1900's until 1970. It saw a change of use in 1970 when the Registrar's Office relocated.

The building has three storeys and a basement. The building is attractive having been built of dressed stone and has Victorian sash windows and a panelled double door entrance at each end of the building fronting Wind Street. There is a small forecourt enclosed with plain iron railings at the front.

Its central location makes it very accessible and convenient and is within short walking distance of both Neath Railway Station and Neath Bus Station.

The refurbished building would provide a key employment site within the town centre, complementing other facilities and services in the area.

Project Aims

The aims of the project are:

- To bring a historically important building back into economic use.
- Aesthetically improve a building that comes to view as soon as you enter Neath Town Centre, thus improving the perception of the town, increasing footfall, attracting visitors and encouraging investment.
- Provide office accommodation for new and existing SMEs.
- Provide business accommodation that will promote and attract entrepreneurship and enterprise by providing onsite business support through Enterprise Clubs and Networking Events, as well as creating jobs and training opportunities, attracting further investment, all the while boosting the self-image of the town.

Strategy and Approach

The overall strategy and approach will be to devise a joined up communications plan that supports the delivery of the operation throughout its lifetime.

Effective communication will be important in supporting the project's success, which will be delivered by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Communication team.

This strategy defines the scope and responsibilities of the communications team and the protocols the team will work to, particularly with regards to funding partner branding, media and public enquiries. In particular we will:

- Identify perceptions and potential issues around the project
- Identify and define audiences and stakeholders
- Develop tailored messages for audiences and stakeholders
- Raise awareness of project plans and milestones
- Communicate consistently and regularly
- Generate positive PR

Communication Objectives

Develop project-related communications that will satisfy all stakeholders, including our funders, contractors, NPT residents, businesses and visitors to:

- Raise awareness of the project and gain local and national press coverage via tactical press announcements and media activity

- Ensure all stakeholders are aware of the aims and objectives and benefits of the project
- Engage with relevant stakeholders throughout the life of the project
- Reassure stakeholders that potential and unlikely disruptions will be kept to a minimum
- Celebrate project successes where possible
- Work together to keep all stakeholders informed
- Ensure local people, businesses and media are aware of the benefits of the project through employment and supply opportunities
- Promote the commitment of the Council to the local area's regeneration
- Promote the commitment of the Welsh Government and the Welsh European Funding Office to improving Welsh towns and cities through their respective funding programmes

Tactics

Communications tools and tactics have to be relevant to each specific target audience identified in the stakeholder analysis. Different tools will work for more than one target group; however, the following will form the broad basis for the communications action plan. Specific target groups will be addressed in more detail in the action plan:

The Community:

- **Exhibitions** – exhibitions at local events will offer a comprehensive range of information relating to regeneration projects across Neath Port Talbot, encompassing the redevelopment of the building..
- **Website** – The Council's main website (www.npt.gov.uk) and business website (www.npt-business.co.uk) will feature all related press releases and associated newsletters
- **Corporate social media sites** will be used to share project updates, press releases and relevant media stories. Platforms used will be Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
- **Site notices and guardrail banners** will be erected in public areas with scheme information, including funder logos

Business Engagement:

- Articles in **NPTCBC e-business newsletter/business bulletins** are targeted at the local business community and will promote all stakeholders involved, including the Welsh Government and the Welsh European Funding Office. It will also promote the Council's wider regeneration objectives
- **Events** specifically targeting the business community, such as NPT business club and 'meet the buyer' events will be held to promote business specific issues including local sourcing of materials and services and local labour.

The Media:

- Proactively target media with **regular press** in accordance with project milestones and progress updates
- Plan regular **human interest stories** such as local sourcing of materials/labour, apprenticeships, progress updates, etc.
- **Features** (Construction industry, careers, environmental issues etc.).
- **Media communications plan** to be established with responsibilities/lead identified for each story/issue

Responsibilities and Protocol

NPT's Corporate Communication Business Partner in liaison with the Contractor (once appointed) will be responsible for the implementation of this Communications Strategy. Progress will be reviewed at regular meetings and reported to Welsh Government on a quarterly basis.

Promoting the support from the EU's Structural Funds Programmes, provided through the Welsh Assembly Government, is a condition of grant. This support will be properly acknowledged throughout all project documentation and other publicity and information material, including electronic material. All communications relating to the redevelopment of the building will follow Welsh Government and WEFO's branding guidelines.

All press releases and any branding (e.g. signs, banners) will be sent to Welsh Government's Homes & Places Dept for sign-off prior to release and/or publication.

Action Plan

A media communications plan/forward planner will be created by the Corporate Communication Business Partner and circulated when it becomes available. The plan is organic and will evolve as milestones and news occurs.