



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

20 September 2023

Report of the Head of Leisure, Tourism, Heritage & Culture – C.Saunders

Matter for Decision.

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Report Title:

Heritage Strategy

Purpose of the Report:

This report outlines the main principles of the Draft Heritage Strategy and seeks approval to undertake a public consultation of the Strategy and its Action Plan.

Executive Summary:

This report outlines the background behind the development of a Heritage Strategy and the impact this will have on conserving our heritage assets for generations to come.

The Strategy highlights programmes, training opportunities, partnership working, resourcing and investment requirements to deliver the actions to protect our built and natural environment.

The outputs of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, promoted as ***Heritage NPT***, is the development of the heritage strategy document setting out the historic/cultural features present within the borough; the creation of management plans for priority heritage sites; action plans for future capital projects; consultations and stakeholder events to promote our unique heritage, cultural history and historic environment; volunteer training opportunities; expand the membership of local heritage groups; make the heritage and cultural organisations sustainable and resilient; improve access to heritage and cultural activities.

The Strategy is currently in draft form, enabling amendments, additions and omissions to be made following the results of the consultation process.

Background:

The Let's Talk Campaign demonstrated a clear public will to invest in and develop our Culture and Heritage sector. As a result, one of the 4 wellbeing objectives was set to specifically deliver on this area; *Our local environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations.*

Consequently Culture, Destination and Heritage strategies have been commissioned to provide the strategic narrative for this objective. They aim is to provide a framework from which the Council, its partners and the wider community can be built upon to actively conserve, improve and enjoy our stunning natural environment, treasure the Welsh language and actively engage with the rich sporting, cultural and industrial heritage of the area.

All three strategies have been created with the wider policy context in view, particularly the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, and are designed to ensure that both the seven goals and five ways of working of the act are embedded throughout the actions of both the Council and other stakeholders.

The **Heritage Strategy** is a project fully funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), to develop:

1) A Heritage Strategy to ensure the protection and sustainability of our built and natural heritage.

A project that will generate strategic documents, including an audit of existing heritage assets, conservation management plans and action plans that will inform the Local Development Plan (LDP) and provide guidance and instruction for future heritage policy and development, as well as developing a priority package of future capital projects.

2) Support for local communities in promoting local culture and heritage and assist them to develop Heritage and Culture projects for delivery across NPT.

The project provides assistance to local heritage groups to recruit new members to promote their sustainability, co-ordinate local events, organise training events for volunteers, develop education and tourism related projects and assist in securing funding for future heritage and cultural capital projects

NPTCBC currently has limited resources and expertise to undertake this important exercise of compiling and documenting a data base of the built and natural heritage. This project has brought in expertise to undertake that exercise and will enable the authority to be pro-active in delivering sustainable projects. The Heritage Strategy will reinforce policy making to regulate future development through the planning system with a series of Action Plans and Conservation Management Plans, with onus on landowners to protect and preserve heritage features and local culture.

This Strategy will ensure the special qualities of our historic assets are protected, enhanced and enjoyed by our future generations.

The project has enabled the recruitment of a community heritage officer to assist the local heritage groups to be sustainable and autonomous and enable them to protect and promote their own local heritage and culture.

The project will teach communities how to take ownership and stewardship of their local heritage and improve access to their cultural heritage.

It will ensure our arts, culture and heritage organisations are independent and able to prosper.

The main principles of the Heritage Strategy are:

To develop a strategy that will inform Planning Policy for the future use of listed structures and heritage sites.

To develop Action Plans and Conservation Management Plans to protect and secure our heritage stock.

- To support local heritage groups to take ownership of their local heritage and promote access to culture and heritage within their local communities.
- To develop a list of capital projects for delivery
- To protect, enhance and promote NPT's heritage and cultural assets.
- Prepare a strategic document to inform and develop Planning Policy,
- Agree priorities for project investment.
- Secure external funding streams to assist community groups, the public and private sector to deliver aspirational projects
- Support partnership working that will achieve agreed priorities.
- Meet the aims and objectives of Cadw Conservation Principles:
 1. Historic assets should be managed to sustain their values
 2. Understanding the significance of historic assets
 3. The historic environment is a shared resource
 4. Everyone will be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment

Two posts were created with NLHF funding, a Heritage Strategy Officer (HSO) and a Community Heritage Officer (CHO). Both posts

have been working closely with external partners and internal officers from all departments of the authority, to create a sustainable strategy for our historic environment, identifying opportunities for conservation and enhancement of our built and natural environment; encourage investment whilst creating regeneration opportunities to boost the economy and tourism footfall and support community heritage groups to become sustainable and assist in the delivery of their local projects.

We work closely with the volunteer sector, government sectors, education and the private sector to prepare a sustainable and enduring project to protect the natural environment, cultural and heritage offer in NPT.

Financial Impacts:

No implications.

The costs associated with the production of the Heritage Strategy and the accompanying consultation process are 100% funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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.

The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:

The Strategy does not have any negative impacts upon individuals or groups with protected characteristics.

The strategy has a positive impact upon the achievement of Wellbeing Objective 3 and 4 of the NPT Corporate Plan.

Through the range of actions identified within the strategy there are further positive impacts on the use and promotion of the Welsh language.

By integrating sustainability into the design of projects which arise from the strategy there are opportunities presented to enhance biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems.

The strategy embraces all 5 sustainable development principles and in the long term will result in developing a sense of pride in Neath Port Talbot.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

The Heritage Strategy is designed to have a positive impact on our valleys communities by enhancing and enriching the Heritage in those communities.

The Strategy's action plan will provide the delivery tool to promote and celebrate local heritage, drive economic prosperity and facilitate improvements to historic buildings, parks and landscapes

Workforce Impacts:

This report will have no implications on the workforce.

Legal Impacts:

There are no legal impacts associated with this report

Risk Management Impacts:

The Heritage Strategy sets out a framework that will in time, help reduce the Council's risk in terms of historic building and conservation management in particular.

Consultation:

An extensive consultation exercise was undertaken for the Culture Strategy which has also been used to guide the Heritage Strategy. The methodology and results of the consultation are attached in the appendices to this report

Face to face Focus Groups have been held with volunteer heritage groups and online surveys, requesting feedback on how the public value their heritage and the positive impact it has on their wellbeing.

Due to the statutory nature and funding arrangements for the Heritage Strategy, this report is requesting approval to undertake a wider consultation with the public, private and third sectors along with other stakeholders and volunteers. The Consultation process will commence September 25th and end October 27th 2023.

The results of the consultation process will be collated and reported to cabinet later in the year when the Strategy and Action Plan will be finalised for approval.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet Formally approve that a Public Consultation exercise for the Heritage Strategy document is undertaken by the Regeneration and Heritage teams during September and October of this year, and a subsequent report be brought back to Cabinet, following consultation, for adoption.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The consultation process will inform the final Strategy document of our obligations and requirements to conserve our local heritage and enable us to deliver the Wellbeing Objective 3: Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations.

Implementation of Decision:

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

Appendices:

- Appendix A Draft Heritage Strategy – To Follow
- IIA First Stage Assessment

List of Background Papers:

- Counterculture – Neath Port Talbot Culture Strategy – Public Consultation Results and Analysis

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