

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

17 NOVEMBER 2020

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

DEVELOPMENT OF A TOURIST FOCUSED LAND TRAIN OR SIMILAR PASSENGER CARRYING VEHICLE OPERATION IN PORTHCAWL

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to a proposal to support the establishment of a tourist focussed land train or similar passenger carrying vehicle operation in Porthcawl. The proposal will aim to add value to on-going work to develop a range of sustainable transport methods that better connect the attractions, facilities and services that exist across the seafront with the town centre.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-
1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
 2. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 2.1 In 2014, Visit Wales (VW) stated that as part of their European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Infrastructure Development Programme, they were looking to prioritise a small number of regional tourist 'Attractor Destinations' within Wales and anticipated that 2-3 priority schemes may be taken forward in the parts of South East Wales eligible for ERDF funding.
- 2.2 Following a regional prioritisation exercise involving all 10 Local Authorities in the South East Wales area, Porthcawl was scored as a priority for support. This highlights the importance of the resort in tourism terms, both locally, and for the wider Welsh economy.
- 2.3 In April 2015 Cabinet authorised the Corporate Director - Communities to develop the detail of the priority scheme for Porthcawl in partnership with local, regional and national stakeholders and, in consultation with the s151 Officer, to put in place the

necessary match-funding arrangements for the delivery of the Scheme in line with the VW funding timetable.

- 2.4 VW submitted an Operation Logic Table (OLT) for proposed EU operations to the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) and subsequently received approval on 16 July 2015. The business plan for the programme was submitted on 27 November 2015 with information from each of the schemes involved in the programme.

3. Current situation/proposal

- 3.1 To date Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) has delivered the following through the TAD programme:

- a. **Watersports Centre at Rest Bay.** The creation of a £1.5m watersports centre over two floors that appeals to a wide range of watersports enthusiasts whilst providing enhanced facilities for visitors to Rest Bay.
- b. **Porthcawl Harbour enhancement facility.** The refurbishment of the existing kiosk building at Porthcawl Harbour has created an adaptable space which currently supports the operation of the harbour by providing a small office space and accessible facilities for berth holders along with one commercial unit.
- c. **Your Porthcawl Marketing Campaign.** The Your Porthcawl marketing campaign is unique to Porthcawl that is building a recognisable brand identity that will evoke positive feelings about Porthcawl.
- d. **Visit Bridgend Website.** In 2020 BCBC launched the new VisitBridgend website that superseded BridgendBites showcasing all that Bridgend borough has to offer to both residents and visitors to the area. The Porthcawl Resort Investment Fund (PRIF) project funded the creation and content of the Porthcawl section on the Visit Bridgend Website.

- 3.2 As a result of re-profiling the funding package that has already been secured by BCBC through the TAD programme an opportunity now exists to allocate funds to support the establishment of a tourist focussed land train or similar passenger carrying vehicle operation in Porthcawl.

- 3.3 The intention would be to seek to link the town centre, beaches and other attractions along the seafront from Sandy Bay/Coney Beach to Rest Bay. An initial route has been agreed internally between BCBC officers. This group included Highways Network Manager, Town Centre Manager, Destination Management Officer and Traffic Management Officers. The proposed operational season would be expected to cover, as a minimum, the main holiday periods and therefore generally commence at the end of March or beginning of Easter through to the end of September. The operator would be responsible for providing the vehicle and meeting all maintenance, repair, insurance and all other operating costs and be responsible for obtaining all approvals necessary to operate the vehicle.

- 3.4 This proposal has been discussed in principle with VW and subject to BCBC following appropriate financial processes and procedures is considered to be in line with the overall aspiration of the TAD programme and to add value to work undertaken to date.

- 3.5 It is proposed that the opportunity to operate a tourist focussed land train or similar passenger carrying vehicle on the roads across Porthcawl Seafront be openly advertised and expressions of interest sought from potential operators. Interested operators would be invited to submit their proposals for the consideration of BCBC officers. Proposals will be evaluated against prescribed criteria including vehicle type, potential passenger numbers, proposed ticketing costs and the previous experience of the operator.
- 3.6 Once an operator has the appropriate consents required to operate the vehicle, route signage, line painting and amendments to the Bridgend County Borough Council (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places)(Civil Enforcement) Order 2013 (TRO) will be required to assist in the safe delivery of the local transport link. It is proposed that eligible costs to facilitate these works be funded through the resources already secured by BCBC as part of the TAD programme.
- 4.7.** It is proposed that an experimental traffic order (ETO) is made which would Amend the TRO to enable the vehicle to stop and pick up passengers. During the initial 6 month period that the ETO is in force, members of the public will be able object to the experimental amendment of the TRO. During the period the ETO is in force, the operation of the route will be monitored and evaluated. Within 18 months of the ETO being made, a decision will need to be made on whether to make the experimental changes to the TRO permanent.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no direct impact on the Council's policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 An initial assessment has identified that there are no equality issues related to this report.
- 6.2 It is to be noted that within the expression of interest BCBC will make clear the need for consideration and compliance with relevant accessibility standards.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment Template has been completed and a summary of the implications from the assessment relating to the five ways of working is below:
- Long-term: The activities that form part of the scheme have been identified internal and external stakeholders that will take part in and are closely aligned to Destination Management Plan of the area.
 - Prevention: Support to develop a range of sustainable transportation methods aim to reduce the reliance on cars and the number of vehicles on the road. The proposal will build on success to date in this area of work.
 - Integration: The scheme will achieve this way of working by recognising the approaches that are proposed for support are those that have been identified by

internal and external stakeholders and the proposal itself will integrate with other existing means of transportation.

- Collaboration: The proposals have been developed and will be delivered through a strong partnership between BCBC and those partners that will form part of the delivery through the Coastal Partnership.
- Involvement: The proposal will be delivered in close partnership with a range of local stakeholders. Discussions and development with key BCBC officers will be undertaken.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The funding for the proposed development of a land train or similar passenger carrying vehicle operation is available as a result of a re-profile exercise undertaken by BCBC and utilises funds already secured as part of the TAD programme. A total of £11,453 is to be allocated through existing TAD resources. In addition, an amount of £844 will be provided by the Council's tourism budget to support the proposed development in the financial year 2020/2021. These resources will cover such costs as design and legal fees
- 8.2 All costs associated with the tourist focused transport link are revenue costs and funded via the amount detailed in 8.1. This includes route design, route signage, line painting, advertisement costs, translation fees and legal fees. There are no on-going maintenance costs associated with the actions proposed.
- 8.3 The funding BCBC has secured through the TAD programme currently has an agreed end date of the 31st May 2021 and therefore all costs must be incurred before that date. Should it be considered that a longer time period be required then an extension would need to be requested and approved by VW.

9. Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is recommended to

- 9.1 Note progress of work to date in delivering the aspirations of the TAD programme in Porthcawl
- 9.2 Approve the proposal to support the establishment of a tourist focused land train or similar passenger carrying vehicle operator in for Porthcawl.
- 9.3 Authorise officers to undertake the processes and procedures outlined in section 4 of this report and in doing, and in agreement with the Section 151 Officer and Head of Legal and Regulatory Services, grant any necessary consents and enter into any required agreements with the preferred operator.

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3rd November 2020**

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Background documents:

Cabinet Report on Tourism Investment Opportunities and Prioritisation dated 28th April 2015