

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

28 APRIL 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITIES

TOURISM INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITISATION

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Cabinet on work to identify priority schemes suitable for attracting tourism investment, through the next round of EU funding, and to seek Cabinet authorisation to develop Porthcawl and the Coast as a priority scheme.

2 Connection to Corporate improvement Plan

- 2.1 This proposal will contribute to the Single Integrated Plan (SIP) priorities of People in Bridgend County benefiting from a stronger and more prosperous economy and Bridgend County is a great place to live, work and visit. This proposal will also contribute to the Corporate Improvement Plan priority of developing the local economy.

3. Background

- 3.1 Tourism is one of the Welsh Government key sectors. The National Tourism Strategy, Partnership for Growth – The Welsh Government Strategy for Tourism 2013 – 2020, sets a vision that Wales will provide the warmest of welcomes, outstanding quality, excellent value for money, and memorable, authentic experiences to every visitor. The strategy sets a goal for tourism to grow in a sustainable way and to make an increasing contribution to the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales.
- 3.3 The Bridgend County Destination Management Plan sets a vision to develop a thriving visitor economy in Bridgend County Borough which celebrates the unique strengths of the place, supports jobs, generates business opportunities and improves the range of amenities available for visitors and local people.
- 3.4 The Bridgend County Destination Action Plan prioritises support for the development of the tourism product, tourism infrastructure and raising the profile and attracting more visitors to Bridgend County Borough.
- 3.5 Tourism currently contributes to local prosperity and quality of life in Bridgend County Borough. Tourism injects £288m into the local economy and supports over 4,225 jobs in the County.
- 3.5 Most importantly, the tourism economy in the County has proven to be very resilient to the global economic downturn, and both jobs and the value of the sector have grown each year for the past 5 years. This is particularly important for an economy

like Bridgend, which historically has been deeply influenced by national political choices, and the investment decisions of global companies. The indications are that the tourism economy is resilient, has the potential for growth, and can be influenced locally. This makes it important to us as a local authority.

4. Current Situation/Proposal

- 4.1 The 10 Local Authorities in South East Wales work towards delivering both the National Tourism Strategy through a Destination Management Group. This group reports to the South East Wales Directors of Environment and Regeneration (SEWDER), and liaises directly with the Welsh Government, through Visit Wales.
- 4.2 The Destination Management Group has been reviewing all destination management plans within the region to produce a long list of priority schemes to take forward through the next round of Convergence Funding. It is important to note that this was not a one-off process and as priorities within each County evolve, so may potential priorities at a regional level. During this process, Visit Wales have stated that as part of their ERDF infrastructure development programme, they are looking to prioritise a small number of regional 'Attractor Destinations' within Wales and anticipate that 2-3 priority schemes may be taken forward in the parts of South East Wales eligible for ERDF funding.
- 4.3 In response to this, the Destination Management Group has undertaken an assessment of potential priority schemes against the following criteria to suggest to Visit Wales those schemes which at this time are considered appropriate for 'Attractor Destination' investment:
- Project Status
 - Partnership Involvement
 - Value for Money
 - Compatibility with other Programmes
 - Job Creation
 - Outputs & Outcomes
 - Relevant Regional Significance
- 4.4 It is important to note that this process assessed the priority schemes based on the level of detail currently available. As schemes develop, the level of detail will be enhanced with some schemes increasing in importance, the viability of others may be reduced and new schemes may be added.
- 4.5 Three schemes from Bridgend County were put forward for assessment at this time:
1. Porthcawl and the coast:
 2. Kenfig National Nature Reserve;
 3. Strategic Events Development.

Of these, SEWDER, through the assessment process, has prioritised Porthcawl for going forward for funding under the VW 'Attractor Destination' programme.

4.6 Across the region the other two schemes holding priority status at present are Brecon-Monmouth Canal, and Rock UK. 22 proposals were put forward to Visit Wales, from the 10 local authorities in south-east Wales, from which investment in Porthcawl has emerged as one of the 3 regional priority projects. This highlights the importance of the resort in tourism terms, both locally, and for the wider Welsh economy. This current round of EU Convergence funding is likely to be last opportunity on this scale, to secure investment in developing the local economy and infrastructure in the County. It is important, therefore, that this opportunity is seized to achieve the maximum benefit.

4.7 The scope of the Porthcawl scheme is to create a high quality, 21st Century signature destination within Wales, offering selling points to a range of global markets, potentially involving:

- A bustling waterside: A place that delivers high quality waterside leisure and sporting facilities and attractions.
- A world class golf offer: A place that delivers an accessible, year-round waterside golf experience, unrivalled in Wales.
- High quality accommodation development: A place that delivers unique waterside accommodation from which to explore inland.

4.8 The aims and deliverables of each component as currently considered are:

Aspirations	Aims	Deliverables
A bustling waterside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A place that delivers high quality coastal leisure, sporting facilities and attractions. -Porthcawl is the first surfing destination for those travelling from the M4 corridor. -Porthcawl is naturally the first place for beginners to learn surfing and other maritime adventure skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Surf-inspired destination café and Watersports hub serving visitors and local businesses -Maritime Centre providing important specialist services for the community and visitor celebrating the coast and maritime heritage -Beach Sports facilities -Innovative connections between Rest Bay and the Marina -A Coastal Traineeship scheme
A world class golf offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -First choice destination in Wales to host major national and international championships -A 'must play' venue for golf enthusiasts the world over. A place that delivers an accessible, year-round coastal golf experience, unrivalled in Wales -First on any discerning list for a weekend of links golf combining Royal Porthcawl with nearby Pyle and Kenfig and Southerndown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Infrastructure and facility improvements to help secure future major national and international events -On and off course improvements for golf visitors -Stronger joint product development linking courses together and with hospitality sector -'Academy' consortium approach to target beginners and family golf
High quality	-A base which supports the activities	-Iconic Boutique/ Sea Spa

accommodation	offer and from which to explore the coast, countryside and culture of the region. -First choice for those visiting the Capital City Region and Swansea Bay -Encouragement to new development and help to make existing accommodation businesses the best they can be	development -Activity-friendly accommodation for individuals, groups and families -Strategic approach to use of further funds for wider up-grading
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- 4.9 These have been developed based on an assessment of market and visitor trends and in consultation with Bridgend County's Coastal Partnership and other key stakeholders.
- 4.10 The detail in 4.8 will evolve as further development takes place in line with the timetable as set by Visit Wales, the level of resources available, the emerging criteria of the National Destination Attractor Programme and further engagement with the Coastal Partnership and other key stakeholders.
- 4.11 However, if successful in obtaining funds it is considered that the impact of the scheme will:
- Create jobs and enhance the resilience and size of the local economy
 - Position Porthcawl as recognised as an exemplar of innovation and sustainability
 - Increase in both day visitors and overnight stays in the area
 - Reduce seasonal flow of visitor patterns
- 4.12 Porthcawl has emerged as one of 3 regional priority projects from a long list of 22 projects from 10 local authorities. This current round of EU Convergence funding is likely to be the last opportunity on this scale, to secure capital investment in tourism. Porthcawl already makes a very significant contribution to the local economy, and investment in the tourism infrastructure of Porthcawl will enable the tourism economy to grow still further.

5. Effect Upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

5.1 None

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 Further development of the detail of priority schemes for attracting investment will be carried out using existing budgets.

7.2 It is currently considered that the overall value of the scheme is £9.5m. This is considered to be made up of £5.7m ERDF grant and £3.8m match funding requirement.

- 7.3 Match funding has currently either been secured or will be sought through the Council's Strategic Regeneration Fund, The Coastal Communities Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund, the Big Lottery Community Asset Transfer Programme and private sector investment opportunities.
- 7.4 Until such a time as these match funding and investment options are confirmed, the Council will need to underwrite the match funding, to enable the bid for EU funding to be made. If any of these sources, or other eligible alternatives, are not confirmed to the satisfaction of the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) and the Section 151 Officer, then officers will reduce or de-commit the associated ERDF finding.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- 8.1.1 Note the progress to date of work within the South East Region to identify tourism investment priority schemes.
- 8.1.2 Delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Communities, to further develop the detail of the priority scheme for Porthcawl outlined in 4.8 in partnership with local, regional and national stakeholders.
- 8.1.3 Delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Communities, in consultation with the s151 Officer to put in place the necessary match-funding arrangements for the delivery of the scheme as outlined in Section 7 and to submit a bid for EU funding in line with Visit Wales's funding timetable.

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