



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**24 MARCH 2020**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF (RCT) DRAFT TOURISM STRATEGY**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN  
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENTERPRISE,  
DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING, COUNCILLOR R BEVAN**

**Author(s):** Simon Gale- Director of Prosperity and Development

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The report seeks Cabinet endorsement of the draft Tourism Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) and recommends that the Strategy be approved for consultation with relevant stakeholders.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Considers the RCT Tourism Strategy (attached at Appendix 1) as the overarching plan to enhance, increase and sustain the visitor economy, establishing Rhondda Cynon Taf as a premier destination in the UK for “experience” based visits and vacations replacing the previous Destination Plan 2014-2020.
- 2.2 Approves the Strategy for consultation, and;
- 2.3 Agrees to the establishment of a RCT Strategic Tourism Board.

**3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council’s 2016–2020 Corporate Plan *“The Way Ahead”* has “building a strong economy” as one of its main priorities. To date, significant work has been undertaken by the Council with the support of relevant partners. The main objective of the Tourism Strategy is to contribute to increasing and sustaining economic growth within RCT.

- 3.2 To deliver upon this priority, an integrated, co-ordinated approach to tourism development is required which harnesses the many exciting opportunities and maximises the benefits presented through the Valleys Regional Park, Visit Wales initiatives and the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal.
- 3.3 In the context of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and the Valleys Taskforce, it is critical that the Council has a fit for purpose Tourism Strategy which identifies key themes and projects for development. This in turn has the potential to create jobs and enhance prosperity across RCT.
- 3.4 To provide a basis upon which funding applications may be developed that will deliver upon the economic objectives of the RCT Tourism Strategy
- 3.5 To ensure that partners are fully engaged in the process of tourism development and expansion in RCT.

#### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 As the previous Tourism Strategy – “*Destination Rhondda Cynon Taf 2014-2020*” comes to an end, a new strategy needs to be developed which will position RCT more favourably in terms of the outdoor activity tourism/adrenalin market whilst building upon the strengths of our wider tourism offer including cultural heritage.
- 4.2 Over the last five years Wales has welcomed record numbers of visitors. This is reflected in RCT’s visitor numbers, with a record 1.6 million days visitors in 2018 and more than 500,000 overnight stays. Over 9% of the workforce in Wales is now employed in Tourism. It is one of the country’s fastest growing sectors and it is estimated that Tourism was worth £172 million to the RCT economy in 2018 and employed more 1400 people. It is clear that Tourism has the potential to be the main driver of the local economy and source of employment in large parts of the County Borough.
- 4.3 The Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's 2016–2020 Corporate Plan “*The Way Ahead*” is clear about the importance of skills, job creation and economic vibrancy for communities in RCT. The development of the RCT Tourism Strategy will be the framework for maximising the benefits that can be gained from an enhanced tourism offer in RCT.

## **5.0 PROPOSED RCT TOURISM STRATEGY**

- 5.1 It is clear that the tourism industry is changing. People are moving away from traditional package holidays and instead are increasingly piecing together their own getaways, predominantly through the internet, seeking an 'experience' based break or holiday.
- 5.2 Through showcasing our first class landscape, culture and heritage there is an opportunity to position RCT as *a premier destination in the UK for "experience" based visits and vacations.*
- 5.3 To maximise the opportunities that marrying our fantastic landscape and heritage with the changing face of Tourism presents, this strategy recommends that we target our efforts in the following areas (the detail of which is set out in the strategy):
- Product & Attractions
  - Accommodation
  - Accessibility, Infrastructure & Connectivity
  - Skills & Employment
  - Experience
- 5.4 Achieving the vision and objectives for tourism in RCT cannot be achieved in isolation. The implementation of a wide range of co-ordinated and integrated "key" projects are set out within the strategy. The draft RCT Tourism Strategy takes each of these strategic objectives and sets out a range of projects and investment opportunities in more detail.
- 5.5 It is also proposed to establish a Strategic Tourism Board for the County Borough to oversee the implementation of the Tourism Strategy. The Terms of Reference will be developed for the governance of the group and monitoring and evaluation of the strategy shall be the responsibility of the Council's Tourism Department. The group will be made up of representatives of Rhondda Cynon Taf's primary visitor attractions and hospitality sectors as well as appropriate representation from public, private and third sector partners.
- 5.6 Additional reports will need to be presented to Scrutiny and Cabinet, as appropriate, for strategy updates and for decisions to be made in relation to the key schemes.

## **6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required at this time.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 7.1 A consultation was undertaken from 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018 – 12<sup>th</sup> April 2019 to seek views from tourism businesses, stakeholders and partners about the development of a new Tourism Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf. The consultation responses have informed the development of the draft RCT Tourism Strategy.
- 7.2 The draft RCT Tourism Strategy has not been consulted upon to date. It is the recommendation of this report that Cabinet approve the report to be subject to wider consultation with appropriate groups, partners and organisations.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications in delivering the RCT Tourism Strategy, but as the opportunities are developed, the financial implications will be fully assessed and necessary approvals sought.

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 There are no current legal implications, but as the opportunities are developed, the legal implications will be fully assessed

## **10.0 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.**

- 10.1 The delivery of the RCT Tourism Strategy will contribute to the Council's corporate priorities:
- Economy
  - People
  - Place
- 10.2 The RCT Tourism Strategy's primary objective is to increase and sustain the economic growth of tourism in RCT, encouraging skills development and providing well paid secure employment for the local workforce. Tourism product development, especially in the outdoors (trails development, for example) will have an associated outcome of providing wellbeing opportunities for residents, enabling greater access to their outdoors and green leisure corridors.
- 10.3 The Sustainable Development Principle and five ways of working have been incorporated into the RCT Tourism Strategy in the following ways:

- i. Long term - Immediate short term tourism developments shall take into account long term requirements. For example, well paid, sustainable job creation and the consideration of biodiversity and eco systems management within tourism product planning
- ii. Integration - Integration of wellbeing plans and goals from different organisations will be taken into account by undertaking partnership working. Wellbeing Tourism has been identified as a theme to explore further within the strategy
- iii. Collaboration & Involvement - The Tourism Strategy will involve a number of relevant partners and organisations in its delivery and collaborate with them to ensure strategic objectives are met.
- iv. Prevention - By working with the right people at the right time, as identified in the “Next Steps” section of the Tourism Strategy, we will seek to mitigate against any risks and problems presenting themselves to achieve the best possible wellbeing outcomes for our communities by implementing actions to deliver against the strategic tourism objectives

10.4 This approach makes a direct contribution to the seven national well-being goals, in particular:

- i. A Healthier Wales (allowing greater access to the outdoors through trails and product development)
- ii. A Prosperous Wales (providing an environment within which home grown tourism businesses can flourish)
- iii. Resilient and cohesive communities (the unique selling point of our Destination is our communities and the warm welcome they provide to visitors. The Tourism Strategy will support the vibrancy of such communities through localised infrastructure, connectivity and product development)
- iv. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language (our culture will be celebrated as a reason to visit RCT and opportunities have been identified for bespoke Welsh Language tourism packages to be developed).

10.5 The Tourism Strategy will also seek to address priorities within:

- i. Prosperity For All: The National Strategy 2017
- ii. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016

- iii. Cardiff Capital Region City Deal & Valleys Task Force Delivery Plans
- iv. Our Cwm Taf – Public Service Board (PSB) Well-Being Plan 2018-2023
- v. Rural Development Programme (RDP) – Cwm Taf Local Development Plan

## **11 CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 The draft RCT Tourism Strategy includes a wide range of opportunities which are both short and long term in scope, involving a range of partners. It is both ambitious and realistic, acknowledging that achieving the vision and objectives for tourism in RCT requires an integrated, co-ordinated approach to tourism development.

### **Other Information:-**

#### ***Relevant Scrutiny Committee***

Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee

#### ***Contact Officer***

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Ian Christopher (Strategic Manager for Prosperity and Development) 01443 424017

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

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**Item:**

Background Papers

None

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