



3

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-24

**CLIMATE CHANGE FRONTLINE
SERVICES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

DATE: 4th MARCH 2024

**The Climate Change Frontline Services &
Prosperity Scrutiny Committee**

Agenda Item No 7

AN OVERVIEW OF HERITAGE
SERVICES WITHIN RHONDDA
CYNON TAF

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide the opportunity for Members to scrutinise the Heritage Services in RCT including:

- An overview of the progress on the War Memorials project,
- Blue Plaques
- Digitisation at The Rhondda Heritage Park Museum,
- Current community regeneration projects
- Creation of a new heritage strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members

- 2.1 Scrutinise the progress made in safeguarding, preserving and making accessible heritage attractions, collections, artefacts, War Memorials and monuments as a direct result of the investment programme throughout the County Borough as noted in this discussion paper.

3. **BACKGROUND**

This year has seen the Heritage and Outreach Services continue to support the delivery of significant external funding in RCT. In doing so the Service has provided technical and tactical advice to numerous community groups across the authority seeking to commemorate and regenerate their own built environment. In addition, the Service has been successful in obtaining substantial grant funding both for The Rhondda Heritage Park Museum, and for RCTCBC's own public history projects.

Broadly speaking the Heritage Service operates with two guiding principles uppermost in our minds.

- **Heritage should be a tool for both Income and 'interest' generation.**
- **Heritage should be relevant, relatable, and progressive.**

Well-being of Future Generations Act

This Welsh Government Act offers RCTCBC heritage services several development opportunities:

- Alignment of goals: The Act's seven well-being goals (prosperity, resilience, improved health, greater equality, cohesive communities, vibrant culture and Welsh language, and global responsibility) can all inspire innovative heritage programming and activity.
- Legitimacy in local planning: RCTCBC, like all Welsh councils, must work towards these goals. Heritage cannot be dismissed when there is a direct goal to promote cultural vibrancy and cohesive communities.
- Collaboration potential: The act encourages significant opportunities for partnerships inside and outside of the council.
- Long-term survival: The Act requires considering the long-term impact of all its goals. RCTCBC's heritage services are ideally positioned to showcase positive, multi-generational benefits. This can strengthen budget justifications by reframing expenditure as long-term investment in RCTCBC's social and cultural wealth.
- Funding streams: Showcasing how heritage activity aligns with the Act increases access to funding opportunities against those that offer vague notions of community benefit. The Heritage Service has seven broad aims.

- 3.1 To increase Civic Pride by making Heritage accessible and relevant to the borough's residents and visitors through a range of exciting community focused projects and community partnerships. Providing a sustainable, innovative and cost-effective heritage output, by working with Partner organisations and a diverse combination of funders across the heritage sector and beyond. Examples of this can be seen in (**Appendix: Heritage Overview - 3.1**).
- 3.2 To manage the boroughs significant artefact collection in line with National Museums Accreditation Standards. Examples of this can be seen in (**Appendix: Heritage Overview - 3.2**).
- 3.3 To contribute to the success of the borough's heritage tourism offer by working closely with Visitors Attractions Managers and Economic Development colleagues in developing the quality of heritage interpretation. Examples of this can be seen in (**Appendix: Heritage Overview - 3.3**).
- 3.4 To manage the boroughs War Memorials, Monuments and Blue Plaque scheme, ensuring that they are recorded, accessible and safeguarded for future generation and through working with national bodies such as the National War Graves Commission and the boroughs Armed forces Officer. Examples of this can be seen in (**Appendix: Heritage Overview - 3.4**).
- 3.5 To develop the boroughs heritage educational offer through close partnerships with educational bodies and to meet with the opportunities presented within the Curriculum for Wales. Examples of this can be seen in (**Appendix: Heritage Overview - 3.5**).
- 3.6.1 Engaging with residents across RCT to inform RCT's approach to heritage delivery. With reference to the creation of a new Heritage Strategy. Examples of this can be seen in (**Appendix: Heritage Overview – 3.6**).
- 3.7 To engage with, and provide context for, RCT's Heritage in terms of previously underrepresented groups. (**Appendix: Heritage Overview - 3.7**).

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 There is no requirement for consultation in respect of this report as the contents of the report are for information purposes only at this stage.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 5.1 There are no financial implications as the contents of this report are for information purposes only at this stage.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Members scrutinise the content of the report and the work being undertaken by the Heritage Service team in safeguarding, preserving, and making heritage accessible to the residents and visitors of the County Borough.