



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EISTEDDFOD CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE

29th APRIL 2024

UPDATE ON THE RCT NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD 2024 – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

REPORT OF DIRECTOR - PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH CLLR. RHYS LEWIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION & WELSH LANGUAGE

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on the work currently being undertaken in collaboration with National Eisteddfod officers in preparation for the 2024 Eisteddfod in Rhondda Cynon Taf, specifically in relation to community engagement and fundraising.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet Sub-Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the content of the report.
- 2.2 Considers whether further information is required.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The report is to update the Eisteddfod Cabinet Sub-Committee Members of the ongoing progress being made in engaging with communities to ensure that the National Eisteddfod 2024 in Rhondda Cynon Taf is a success, in both the lead up to and during the Eisteddfod week and that a significant positive legacy remains for the longer term.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The previous Eisteddfod Cabinet report, dated 11th March 2024, outlined the progress made over the previous twelve months with regards to the work carried out in preparation for the Eisteddfod event in relation to community engagement, events and fundraising activities.

- 4.2 The report also outlined the Eisteddfod's aims in relation to legacy for Rhondda Cynon Taf following the event and how they align with the Council's Welsh Language promotional strategy and associated action plan and gave an update on the work of the newly established community workstream group.
- 4.3 Updates will continue to be given as part of this report on the ongoing work of both the Council and Eisteddfod under the three themed areas: Community Engagement and events, Fundraising and Legacy.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EVENTS

- 5.1 The National Eisteddfod has organised and held a number of events recently, with support from Council Officers, Members and local community groups to launch and promote the Eisteddfod coming to Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2024, which included:
- Local Drop-in sessions held on 20th February in the Lido, Pontypridd, to discuss requests for stands at the event and pricing, with a launch date of 1st March for expressions of interest and resulted in an overwhelming response.
 - Business drop-in sessions arranged jointly with the Council have been run in Pontypridd to engage with local businesses in and around the town centre, the most recent session being held the evening of 18th April, with another session planned in June.
- 5.2 Other recent Eisteddfod activities and engagement opportunities have included:
- Battle of the Bands competition launched on 6th March for initial submissions of online applications. The top three bands selected will appear at the Eisteddfod event, with the winner to perform at Maes B.
 - Eisteddfod volunteering opportunities launched on 6th March. The invite for applications can be accessed via an online link: [Volunteering | Eisteddfod](#), with opportunities open to non-Welsh speakers as well as Welsh speakers, with support and training being provided from July onwards.
 - A Schools art project, aimed at Primary schools across the County Borough was launched on 6th March with the winners to be announced on the 14th June at a showcase event, which is being planned at Llys Cadwyn in Pontypridd.
- 5.3 In addition to the above, there is a planned programme for the Eisteddfod to go to all secondary schools which will be scheduled to run in line with school transition days. The programme will see consist of a themed performance, showcasing the Welsh Language and support promotion of the Eisteddfod.

- 5.4 The Council and the National Eisteddfod are committed to ensuring the Eisteddfod event is as accessible as possible to everyone in RCT. In partnership with the National Eisteddfod, a proposal was developed to fund subsidised access and a voucher towards purchases at the event, aimed at targeting vulnerable families and groups, and a business case submitted to Welsh Government.
- 5.5 Welsh Government's Minister for Education and Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles, announced on 13th March that a total of £350,000 would be awarded to support access to the event in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 5.6 Using the principles on which the funding was based, a process for this is now being worked on with the Eisteddfod to ensure eligible families have an opportunity to apply for the free tickets in coming weeks. Eisteddfod website link: [National Eisteddfod thanks Welsh Government for supporting 2024 festival | Eisteddfod](#)
- 5.7 In addition to the above, the Council is also currently working on a proposal to enable Veterans living in the County Borough to access the event. Further details on this will be provided to Members in coming weeks.
- 5.8 The Eisteddfod will also be launching the first opportunity to gain paid access to the event with the launch of its 'Early Bird' tickets, which will go on sale from Thursday 25th April.
- 5.9 The Eisteddfod Community Workstream group continues to meet on a monthly basis, with key officers from across Council services, with the support of the Council's Eisteddfod Officers, developing a number of initiatives to support the wider participation in both Welsh and bilingual events.
- 5.10 A business pamphlet 'Give Welsh a Go' with additional resources has been developed with the aim of encouraging business staff across the County Borough to learn or improve their Welsh language conversational skills.
- 5.11 This linked with the promotion of the Welsh Government's 'Helo Blod' online translation programme and supported with local drop-in sessions for Welsh Language learners run with Menter Iaith, the aim is for businesses to be able to give customers a 'Warm Welsh Welcome' in our town centres.
- 5.12 The pamphlet will be available from Thursday 25th April with the launch of "100 days to go" to the Eisteddfod event and is included as **Appendix 1**.
- 5.13 Council Officers in partnership with Eisteddfod Officers continue to develop new opportunities for engagement in event preparations and activities, which currently include:
- Information now regularly being shared with schools across the County Borough.

- A planned programme of activities e.g. in town centres organised in the run up and following the event, which will be free to access.
- On 13th June there will be an unveiling of the Eisteddfod Chair and Crown, 'Cadair a Coron', in the Llantrisant Guild Hall.

6. FUNDRAISING

- 6.1 As outlined in the Eisteddfod Cabinet Sub-Committee report dated 11th March the funding model of the Eisteddfod requires that a contribution to the operating costs of the festival is raised by community fundraising activities in the host local authority area.
- 6.2 It was recognised that there was already lots of effort being made by the National Eisteddfod, local communities supported by local members, voluntary groups, to fundraise across the County Borough and there has been a noticeable increase in the funds raised over the past couple of months, now totalling in excess of £185,000.
- 6.3 Merchandise for the Eisteddfod is being offered to purchase at local fund raising committee events and will contribute towards the total amount of funds raised for the event in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 6.4 The National Eisteddfod will continue to take donations up to the time of the actual event in August, however, sponsorship opportunities for the event brochure will understandably have an earlier close date which will be before the end of May.
- 6.5 The Council continues to support the Eisteddfod to promote fundraising and sponsorship opportunities to communities and businesses across the County Borough and are enabling use of its venues when possible, which are approved on case-by case basis.
- 6.6 One such opportunity is the pre-Eisteddfod celebration event, which will be presented by United Choirs of Treorchy in June with all proceeds being donated to the Eisteddfod in Rhondda Cynon Taf, link: [RCT | Pre Eisteddfod Celebration \(rct-theatres.co.uk\)](https://www.rct-theatres.co.uk)

7. LEGACY

- 7.1 As reported in the Committee report of 11th March 2024, the Community Workstream group are starting to capture information as activities are being developed and delivered in relation to each of the Legacy aims.
- 7.2 This information will contribute towards the baseline when developing measurable outcomes that can be reported against and ensure that networks, activities and opportunities to engage with the Welsh language and Welsh culture continue beyond the event next year.

7.3 Interest in learning to speak Welsh from residents, businesses, Council staff and Members continues to increase and specific activities, sessions and resources will be developed and made available in the run up to the event and continue to be maintained and built upon as part of RCT's legacy aims.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

8.1 This is an information report and therefore no equality and diversity screening is necessary.

9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This is an information report and therefore no Welsh Language assessment is necessary.

10. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

10.1 This is an information report therefore no consultation is required.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

11.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

12.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

13. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

13.1 The Welsh language is a cross-cutting theme in the Council's Corporate Plan and the Council has a Strategy for the Promotion of the Welsh Language and supporting Action Plan, which includes a focus on increasing the use of the Welsh Language within communities by working with partners to deliver and/or facilitate events and activities as well as improving the number of services the Council offer through the medium of Welsh. The work undertaken in partnership with the National Eisteddfod will support this as well as contributing to [Cymraeg 2050 : A Million Welsh speakers](#) – the Welsh Government's Strategy to achieve 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050.

13.2 The Corporate Plan recognises the important role that culture and heritage plays in supporting the wellbeing of residents enabling them to be independent or maintain their independence for longer. Supporting the development of events to engage with residents of all ages will contribute to the Council's aim of increasing participation in arts and culture.

- 13.3 The success of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Eisteddfod is dependent on a partnership between the National Eisteddfod, the Council and local communities. This report highlights how the National Eisteddfod and the Council are working together to ensure that communities across the County Borough are involved in the preparations for the festival, that no one feels excluded and that they have an opportunity to shape the events and activities that will be developed so that there is a longer-term legacy after 2024.
- 13.4 The main well-being goal being addressed is goal 6 – A Wales of Vibrant Culture and thriving Welsh Language. However, as recognised in the Corporate Plan, participation in arts and culture has a positive impact on promoting health and well-being and brings people together, thereby increasing community cohesion.

14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1 The Council's Eisteddfod Project Officer and other Council Officers will continue to work closely with the National Eisteddfod team especially in relation to their work of engaging with communities across the whole of the County Borough. Our common aim is to ensure maximum involvement by communities and to promote the message that the Eisteddfod is for everyone and you do not need to be able to speak Welsh to enjoy and participate in its activities and events.
- 14.2 Preparation work and good promotion and engagement is being achieved and gaining momentum. Ongoing efforts will continue to ensure Members, residents and businesses across the County Borough are involved and engaged and fundraising is maximised.
- 14.3 The importance of this work cannot be under-estimated as it will be central to the success of the festival and its legacy in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 14.4 Further reports will be prepared for Members in the period between now and the RCT Eisteddfod, updating Members on a range of issues associated with the event in addition to the ongoing community engagement work.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers:

None

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Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee