



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EISTEDDFOD CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE

10th June 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, INCLUSION & WELSH LANGUAGE

Author(s):

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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 29th April 2024, outlined the progress made during that month 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 gave a brief update on the work of the community workstream group with regards to planning and developing an Eisteddfod Legacy plan.
- 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 continue to organise events and activities with support from Council Officers, Members and local community groups to promote engagement opportunities to residents and businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2024, which include:
- A business breakfast session organised for Thursday 13th June in the Lido, Pontypridd, with businesses able to book online to attend the event and where they will be able to meet officers in person to discuss engagement and sponsorship opportunities.
 - Business sponsorship opportunities have been launched and are being actively promoted.
 - Volunteering opportunities continue to be promoted through the Eisteddfod website with an online link for applications remaining open until 30th June. To date 330 applications have been received from people with a range of skills, including those wanting to learn Welsh through to fluent Welsh speakers.
 - An unveiling of the Eisteddfod Chair and Crown, 'Cadair a Coron', in the Llantrisant Guild Hall is still planned to take place on 13th June, after which time it will be moved to be on display to the public in the Library at Llys Cadwyn.
 - Eisteddfod presence at the Aberdare Festival on 25th April to promote the event in August and to engage people in an art project on the day.
 - The schools art project launched in March has received over one hundred applications and the showcase event being held on 14th June at Llys Cadwyn in Pontypridd, will announce and celebrate the selected winning entries.
 - In addition to the planned programme of themed performances going to all secondary schools during transition days in June, the Eisteddfod are touring their Maes B festival through Secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf. They have already visited Cwm Rhondda, Garth Olwg and Coleg y Cymoedd and are due to visit Mountain Ash in July with Ponty High, Aberdare and Treorchy secondary pupils invited to attend.

- 5.2 As a result of the Welsh Government awarding funding towards subsidised entry to the Eisteddfod event in RCT, the Council and the National Eisteddfod worked on developing a process through schools and various organisations to target vulnerable families across the County Borough.
- 5.3 Communications promoting the opportunity to apply for a free Eisteddfod family ticket were sent out and to date over 1,300 applications have been received, which will mean that over 5,200 individuals in total will potentially benefit.
- 5.4 The initial deadline for applications was set as 24th May, however, the opportunity will remain open for the foreseeable future to ensure the event is as accessible to as many people as possible across RCT and until the funding is fully committed.
- 5.5 In addition to the above, the Council has agreed a proposal to enable Veterans, their partners and families living in the County Borough to access the event. Working with the Council's Veterans Officer and surveying RCT veterans' groups, 27 responses were received, which will result in 75 individuals in total being able to access support to attend the event.
- 5.6 The Eisteddfod have now launched the first opportunity to gain paid access to the event with its 'Early Bird' tickets going on sale online from 20 May until 14 June. After this period a full price ticket will be available to purchase online or on the doors during the week of the Eisteddfod.
- 5.7 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. Updates on some of these initiatives include:
- 700 'Give Welsh a Go' business packs were handed out between 15th to 20th May by Council Officers to businesses in town centres across Rhondda Cynon Taf who wanted to participate in improving Welsh language conversational skills. Packs will be distributed wider over the coming months and further information is available on the Council's Welsh Services web page: [Welsh Services | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](http://Welsh_Services_|_Rhondda_Cynon_Taf_County_Borough_Council_(rctcbc.gov.uk).).
 - The annual Adult Community Learning festival to be held on 6th July in Garth Olwg Life Long Learning centre will help to promote Welsh Language Learning opportunities on offer and will be supported by the Eisteddfod's local fundraising committee to promote and fundraise for the event in August.
 - The Library service is drafting a final copy of a book 'O Aberdâr i Ystrad / From Aberdare to Ystrad' which will include history, heritage and places to

go in Rhondda Cynon Taf and will be published and go on sale prior to the Eisteddfod with proceeds going towards fundraising for the event.

- Staff continue to work in partnership with the Eisteddfod, schools and local artists to pull together a program of events that will be scheduled on the bandstand in Ynysangharad Parc throughout the week of the Eisteddfod.
- Officers continue to plan a programme of activities e.g. in town centres organised in the run up and following the event, which will be free to access.

6. FUNDRAISING

- 6.1 As outlined in previous Eisteddfod Cabinet Sub-Committee reports, 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 The fundraising has increased since last reported on 29th April and totalled £215,000 on 17th May. This figure does not yet include funds raised from the Mayor's Charity or business sponsorship opportunities.
- 6.3 16 people from the local fundraising committees, along with the Council's Eisteddfod Officer, will be taking part in the 'Three Peaks challenge' in June, with sponsorship monies raised contributing towards funds raised for the Eisteddfod.
- 6.4 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 a case-by case basis.

7. LEGACY

- 7.1 The Community Workstream group continue to capture information as activities are being developed and delivered in relation to each of the Legacy aims.
- 7.2 The planning, developing and scheduling of the Council's offer for our Host stand at the Eisteddfod event is underway and will be based on the previously reported Legacy themes, and include the key topics of :
- Tourism – Attractions, Heritage and What's on the Menu
 - RCT – a great place to live and work
 - Biodiversity – A Greener RCT
 - Culture and Arts – Putting RCT on the Stage
 - Welsh language – Developing RCT into a bilingual county

- 7.3 An example is given below of the ‘Altered Images’ project that has been developed over recent years and which will celebrate the arrival and legacy of the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol.
- 7.3.1 As a National Lottery Heritage Fund Priority Area, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council received a solicited invitation to apply to the NLHF for grant funding towards a project of our selection, that would look to rebuild capacity within Rhondda Cynon Taf and the community in relation to heritage.
- 7.3.2 The ‘Altered Images’ project was developed as a result of this approach and was awarded a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £250,000 for a three-year project in August 2021. The project commenced in February 2022 and is managed by RCT’s Library Service.
- 7.3.3 To mark the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2024, Altered Images will be publishing a creative writing Anthology which will include short stories and poetry written by members of the general public on the Themes of culture, heritage and history of Rhondda Cynon Taf. Copies of the anthology will be available to collect from Pontypridd Library during the Eisteddfod, free of charge.
- 7.3.4 Altered Images is also facilitating an art project which is exploring the life of the cultural Welsh icon, Morfydd Llwyn Owen, the singer and composer from Treforest who was admitted to the Gorsedd at the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol of 1912. This project is being developed with the Council’s Arts Service and the community arts sector.
- 7.3.5 Altered Images will also be exhibiting the work of young photographers at Pentref RhCT during the Eisteddfod. The exhibition, entitled ‘Our Heritage, Pontypridd in Print’, will include contemporary and archive photographs of Pontypridd – its streets, landscapes and people – which document the story and evolution of the town.
- 7.4 Rhondda Cynon Taf’s Heritage Service are also developing a Heritage Strategy, which will define a shared vision of Rhondda Cynon Taf’s heritage and set out practical, long-term objectives. The draft Heritage Strategy will be consulted upon during the Summer of 2024, taking advantage of visitors to RCT during the week of the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol.
- 7.5 All of this work will be available to the general public via a new website which will preserve and promote the heritage of Rhondda Cynon Taf (rctourheritage.com / eintreftadaethrhct.com).

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 Good promotion and engagement is being achieved and preparation work for the event is 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