

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

9TH MARCH 2017

EVALUATION OF THE LIDO PONTY RESTORATION PROJECT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLANNING AND THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROTECTION IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS COUNCILLOR R BEVAN AND COUNCILLOR A CRIMMINGS

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide information on the key findings and conclusions of the external evaluation report which has been carried out on the delivery of the Lido Ponty restoration project, and to use these to contribute to the Lido's continuing success.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Endorses the analysis, key findings and conclusions of the evaluation of the Lido Ponty Restoration Project carried out by Wavehill Limited.
- 2.2 Instructs relevant officers to consider how the key findings and conclusions of the report can support the future successful operation of Lido Ponty.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Wavehill evaluation report provides a useful independent evaluation evidenced by survey and interviews with a range of stakeholders, users and local people and businesses. The key findings and conclusions will be helpful to inform the future successful operation of Lido Ponty.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Wavehill Limited a Welsh based social and economic research company were appointed to carry out an independent evaluation of the development, delivery and initial operation of Lido Ponty. This is good practise in terms of supporting good project management and delivery of significant economic regeneration projects, and is also a requirement of the external funders of the project – Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Wales European Funding Office (WEFO).
- 4.2 Wavehill's appointment was made in June 2014 and continued until the end of the first full season of the Lido's operation which was 2016. Following this Wavehill carried out an analysis of their findings and prepared their final report.
- 4.3 The evaluation has considered the project by focussing on the following aspects of the Lido's development, delivery and operation:
- Project delivery, construction and sustainability;
 - Lido usage following opening including usage levels and usage recording for the Lido and Lido Play facility;
 - Impact and future sustainability including the economic impact of construction and operation.
- 4.4 The methodology of the evaluation included the following approaches:
- A review of all relevant project documentation;
 - Interviews with members of the management and delivery team at various stages of the project;
 - Interviews with a range of key stakeholders including funders at various stages of the project;
 - Surveys of Lido users and non users in Ynysangharad Park and Pontypridd town centre;
 - Survey and interviews with local town centre businesses at various stages of the project;
 - Validation of monitoring and usage data.
- 4.5 The evaluation's key findings and conclusions have now been presented as a comprehensive final report document. An executive summary of the report is attached at Appendix 1.

5. THE REPORT AND ITS FINDINGS

- 5.1 The independent evaluation report is very positive in its analysis, key findings and conclusions, and also includes some suggestions for the future operation of the Lido. This is an endorsement of the Council's approach and commitment to successfully deliver Lido Ponty as a facility that local people can be proud of, and as a key regional visitor attraction in South East Wales. It is also very pleasing that there is

consistent overall positive support and response in the report analysis across all of the targeted interview and survey groups including Lido and Park users, town centre visitors and businesses and key stakeholders including funders.

- 5.2 The following is a summary of the key findings of the main areas of the report's analysis as set out by Wavehill in the report.

Project Delivery

- 5.3 This part of the evaluation focuses on the delivery of the construction phase of the project and the initial operational phase which was taken by Wavehill to be at the end of the first full season of operation in September 2016. Wavehill's main findings are:

- Meeting the requirements for conservation and heritage within the limited budget proved both complex and challenging.
- Despite these challenges the Lido was completed with minimal delay and is widely viewed as a huge success that has exceeded expectations
- There has been a sea change in public opinion from scepticism to a strong sense of pride in the facility
- The facility has far exceeded usage targets (of 30,000 per annum) with 98,981 people using the Lido since it opened. 73,892 of these have been in 2016 alone.
- The facility's popularity has necessitated an online booking system; although some individuals turning up on the day have been turned away
- Many stakeholders mentioned the potential of introducing a fee for using the facilities; some felt that a staggered introduction of fees would be sensible
- All stakeholders referred to the need to maintain the quality of the facilities and periodically freshen the offer in order to sustain its popularity

Lido Ponty Usage

- 5.4 Wavehill's early evaluation work advised the Council on the measurement of usage numbers particularly for the Lido Play facility. This section of the report provides an analysis of the very positive usage numbers to date:

- 73,892 people used the Lido in 2016; this equates to an average of over 4,000 for every week it was open
- The Lido was most popular in the middle of the day. It also gained considerable usage in the evenings and the early morning
- Three-quarters of users are from RCT, with a further 14% from the wider sub-region. The remainder are from the rest of Wales and the UK

- The usage of the play area is heavily influenced by season, the weather on the day and whether it is a holiday period. It is estimated that the play area benefits from over 200,000 user visits per year

Survey Perspectives on Lido Ponty

- 5.5 This section of the evaluation reviews the public perspectives on Lido Ponty from surveys and interviews. These are a combination of Lido and Park users, visitors to the town centre and town centre businesses.
- The Lido attracts people to Pontypridd with over a third of those responding to the survey who lived over 10 miles away citing the Lido as the sole or main reason for travelling to the area that day
 - Ninety-two per cent of respondents described the Lido as very or fairly important to the local area
 - The Lido is perceived as a facility for visitors and locals by almost two thirds of respondents; further, over one-quarter described it as mainly for local residents
 - Perceptions of the overall look and feel of the park continue to improve with 69% of respondents giving it a score of 5 out of 5, compared to 41% when the baseline survey was undertaken in 2014
 - Eighty-eight per cent of respondents agreed with the statement that ‘the redeveloped lido site is putting Pontypridd on the map’ whilst 90% of respondents agreed that ‘the Lido gives a good impression of Pontypridd’
 - Over half (53%) of traders in the town centre described a positive impact on trade since the Lido’s opening, with a similar proportion expecting it will continue to have a positive effect in the future. Only 4% of traders felt its opening had had a negative impact on trade
 - Over two-thirds (69%) of traders felt that that has been a positive impact on trade for businesses generally

Impact and Sustainability

- 5.6 In this section of the evaluation Wavehill have carried out an analysis of the economic impact of the construction phase and initial operation of the Lido.
- Over three-quarters (76%) of construction spend for the Lido went to suppliers based within South East Wales
 - Collectively, construction-related activity provided 38 jobs during the build programme
 - It is estimated that the Lido has generated an additional £820,000 additional expenditure for the local area in 2016, which equates to the support of approximately 21 staff in the local economy

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The evaluation report provides an analysis of how the project approached issues of equality and diversity from the development of the initial Business Case preparation through to design, consultation and initial operation of the Lido. The report finds that issues of equal opportunities and accessibility were addressed throughout the project development and delivery. All relevant equality and diversity legislation has been complied with.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 All relevant service areas have been consulted including Leisure, Parks and Countryside, Finance, Legal and Procurement.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 The evaluation report considers the financial implications of the delivery and operation of Lido Ponty. It considers the capital cost element of the project relating to development and construction costs and validates the financial package and costs here. It also considers operational costs to date and future financial arrangements. This includes a suggestion that the Council should consider introducing a nominal charge for entry for some users of the Lido. Respondents to survey and interviews as part of the evaluation also highlighted this possibility.
- 8.2 This issue has been considered as part of the report to Cabinet on 9th February 2017 in a report on Council Fees and Charges Policy 2017/18.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 There are no legal implications or legislation to be considered.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP / FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

- 10.1 The operation of Lido Ponty contributes to the Building a Strong Economy priority within the Corporate Plan and the goal of A Prosperous Wales within the Well Being of Future Generations Act.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The independent Wavehill Limited report – The Evaluation of the Lido Ponty Restoration Project, provides a detailed analysis of the development, delivery and initial operation of the Lido Ponty project. It provides a positive endorsement of the Council's work to date on Lido Ponty and offers useful key findings and conclusions which can now be considered to support the Council's work to continue to make Lido Ponty successful.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Item:

Background Papers

Officer to contact: Peter Mortimer, Funding and Implementation Manager