

## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes** of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale on Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2018 at 5 p.m.

#### **PRESENT**

County Borough Councillor L.M.Adams – Chair

#### **County Borough Councillors**

H.Boggis	E.George	D.Macey
J.Bonetto	J.Harries	E.Stephens
J.Brencher	P.Jarman	G.Thomas

#### **Non Committee Members in Attendance County Borough Councillors**

R.Bevan – Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Housing  
G.R.Davies – Chair of Democratic Services Committee  
S.Rees-Owen – Chair of Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee  
R.Yeo – Chair of Health & Well-Being Scrutiny Committee  
C.J.Willis – Scrutiny Performance Management Co-ordinator  
L.Jones  
M.Weaver  
J.Williams

Mr.R.Hull – Chair and Lay Member of the Audit Committee

#### **Officers in Attendance**

Mr.C.B.Jones – Director, Legal & Democratic Services  
Mr.C.Hanagan – Director, Cabinet & Public Relations  
Mr.D.James – Head of Regeneration & Prosperity  
Ms.K.May – Head of Democratic Services

#### **42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**RESOLVED** – to note that in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, County Borough Councillor D.Macey declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 2 – Notice of Motion – Council Meeting – 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 – “I am involved with Rhondda Heritage Park”.

#### **43 CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that prior to today's meeting a request had been made by a member of the public who wished to speak at this meeting. The request had been granted for the individual to speak at the commencement of the meeting but he had not turned up.

The Director, Legal & Democratic Services reported that currently there is no protocol in place for a member of the public to speak at meetings of the Scrutiny Committees and therefore the Council Procedure Rules as contained in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution were used in this case. A protocol for use in the future would be reported to the Council's Annual Meeting in May for adoption.

#### **44 NOTICE OF MOTION – COUNCIL MEETING – 17<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2018**

In accordance with the decision made by this Committee at its meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2018 (Minute No. 37 refers) in respect of the following Notice of Motion that was considered at the Council Meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2018, Members received the Director of Cabinet & Public Relations:-

“Whilst this Council has recently acknowledged the Southern approaches to the Rhondda along the A4119 should be a Gateway to the Rhondda no such status has been afforded to the Northern approaches.

This motion calls on the Council to also adopt and suitable signpost the Northern approaches to Cwm Rhondda via Cwm Cynon. If both valleys are to benefit in the delivery of economic growth, job creation and prosperity it is important that prominent directional signs are immediately placed along the highways in the northern approaches as well as the A4119 in the South.

This Council will take immediate steps to provide such signage as they have responsibility for in the wider interest of those who wish to visit and invest in both Cwm Rhondda and Cwm Cynon along the northern approaches to both valleys”.

With the aid of PowerPoint slides, the Director of Cabinet & Public Relations extended his presentation to include Tourism to complement the main essence of the contents of the Notice of Motion i.e. key destination signage.

The Director, Cabinet & Public Relations reported that as part of the Service changes in 2014, Tourism was one of the areas that were reviewed, resulting in a smaller dedicated team that is delivering more which in the main is through taking advantage of Social Media, Instagram and working with the Tourism Sector/Consumer Marketing.

He reported that the Council's Tourism website had been re-launched ([WWW.VISITRCT.WALES](http://WWW.VISITRCT.WALES)) and a Visitor Guide had also been published which promotes many locations within RCT such as - “The Welsh Mining

Experience, Rhondda Heritage Park”, many walks such as the Taff Trail, Penderyn Whisky Distillery (which is also popular on TripAdvisor), the “Royal Mint Experience” where people can see how coins and medals are made and explore currencies of the World and the National Lido of Wales in Pontypridd to name but a few.

The Director, Cabinet & Public Relations reported on **Key Visitor Destination Signage** whereby the Council supports business on the Brown Signage e.g. Rhondda Heritage Park. However due to Welsh Government legislation, the Council needs to demonstrate that key locations such as the Lido gets over 75,000 visits, whereas the threshold in England and Scotland is 25,000 – 50,000. He also reported on the costs for Brown Signage i.e. £275,000 and the investment that was needed to improve the walking routes which was another strong product within RCT.

Following the observations made by the Director, Cabinet & Public Relations, Members received Mr.D.James, Head of Regeneration & Prosperity who reported on the key strategic opportunities and working with the private sector to invest in regional projects such as the Taff Vale Development and the links associated with the City Deal and the future Metro development. He also reported on the grants that are administered by his team that support SMEs.

With the permission of the Chair, County Borough Councillor G.R.Davies, the proposer of the Notice of Motion spoke on this item and stated that the main reasons for submitting this Motion to Council was to promote Cwm Rhondda and Cwm Cynon by the erection of proper signage as there are many areas of beauty which would be a memorable experience for many visitors e.g. when travelling over the Rhigos Mountain there are the views of the Brecon Beacons. He indicated that just recently he found a sign for the Rhondda Fawr but that it is situated in the wrong place.

A general discussion ensued when one Member stated that as well as the attractions that had been reported upon there were other brandings as well as Penderyn Whisky there was also Cwm Rhondda Ale. There was also the famous Welsh Language Author, Kate Roberts who was known as the Queen of Welsh Literature who had once lived in Tonypany and taught in a Welsh School together with many famous Sports people who were born and bred in the Cwm Rhondda and Cwm Cynon areas.

Members also referred to the earlier comments made by the Director, Cabinet & Public Relations in respect of the costs and footfall associated with Brown Signs and therefore felt that this matter should be brought to the attention of the Cabinet in that a case should be made to Welsh Government that the threshold should be reduced as there were many visitor attractions within Rhondda Cynon Taf that are seen as national attractions not just regional.

On hearing the comments made by Members, County Borough Councillor D.R.Bevan, Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Housing reported that there are many facets to tourism including history, culture and education.

He referred to the two theatres within Rhondda Cynon Taf namely, the Park and Dare, Treorchy and the Coliseum, Aberdare.

Councillor Bevan indicated that a meeting is to be held at the end of March with Cardiff Wales Airport as Qatar flights are coming back into Cardiff and there will be further opportunities to promote RCT as a Visitor Destination with the distribution of leaflets and brochures.

Councillor Bevan also reported on the investment that had been put into the Council's leisure facilities.

In conclusion, Councillor Bevan stated that there are strong links with the new Chief Executive of `Visit Wales` and that should Members wish to put forward any ideas on promoting RCT as a Visitor Destination then they be directed to the Director, Cabinet & Public Relations, Head of Regeneration & Prosperity or to himself as the Portfolio Holder.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** –

1. That a recommendation be made to Cabinet that representations be made to Welsh Government regarding reducing the threshold of footfall to visitor attractions likened to England and Scotland in order that Brown Signage can be placed in suitable locations throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf.
2. That pre scrutiny be undertaken of the Destination Management Plans when produced in the next few months.

#### **45 WELSH STEEL INDUSTRY**

Pursuant to Minute No.11 of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2018, the Chair read out the statement that was announced by the Finance Secretary, Mark Drakeford on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2018 in respect of the publication of a new Procurement Advice Note (PAN). The PAN builds on the recommendations in the Steel Report by the Tata Steel Task Force in January, 2016, which indentified public procurement as an area of support for the steel industry in Wales and the UK. The PAN would also provide clarity to the Welsh Public Sector on approaches which should be adopted to open up sub-contract opportunities for Welsh and UK Steel suppliers.

**RESOLVED** – to accept the information.

**L.M.ADAMS  
CHAIR**

**The meeting closed at 6.30 p.m.**