



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
FOOD REGISTER WORKING GROUP

26th September 2019

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee with the findings of the Food Register Scrutiny Working Group, which was established to deal with a 'Food Register in RCT' following the Notice of Motion that was considered by full Council at its meeting held on the 24th October 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee acknowledge the following recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group:-

- 2.1 That a bespoke directory of food producers and suppliers is available online to be used by businesses and consumers to identify local food producers and source food products from within RCT;
- 2.2 That additional resources are provided within the Regeneration Service in respect of business engagement to ensure that the directory would meet and enhance business needs and to maintain the directory on an ongoing basis;
- 2.3 That the Web Development Team identify a suitable landing page for the directory and associated information and to develop an appropriate model;
- 2.4 That a specific marketing and publicity campaign is rolled out to support the directory in order to encourage participation; and,
- 2.5 That specific controls are incorporated into the directory to only allow participation by compliant businesses, such as businesses who have attained a minimum of a

three in respect of a food hygiene score, as referred to in paragraph 3.13 of the report.

2.6 The Working Group proposed for the above recommendations to be presented for consideration by the Cabinet. In doing so it acknowledged the possible revenue implications of the preferred option.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 On the 24th of October 2018, Full Council considered the following Notice of Motion to establish a Food Register in RCT and stood in the names of County Borough Councillors P. Jarman and E. Stephens:-

“We should all play our part in supporting our local economy and SME’s who make up the majority of it. In an effort to better support our local food production companies, this Council will create a food produce register. The register will list all local food and drink producers in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf with the aim of encouraging and promoting an increase in the marketing and consumption of local produce, thereby supporting the local economy”.

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Council/2018/10/24/Minutes/Minutes24.10.18.pdf>

3.2 Following discussion, it was resolved to refer the Notice of Motion to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee i.e. Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee. At the meeting of the Committee on the 11th of December 2018, it was resolved to establish a Working Group to consider the Notice of Motion further and identify any recommendations:-

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/FinanceandPerformanceScrutinyCommittee/2018/12/11/Minutes/M11.12.18.pdf>

3.3 In order to advance the matter, the inaugural meeting of the Working Group was subsequently arranged for the 3rd of April 2019 with an invitation to all Members of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee together with the proposer and seconder of the Notice of Motion, Councillors P Jarman and E. Stephens respectively.

3.4 The Working Group Members consisted of County Borough Councillors J. Williams (Chair), E. Stephens, A. Fox, J. Elliott, R. Yeo and Co-opted Member Mr J. Fish.

3.5 At its inaugural meeting, the Working Group was presented with a report by the Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services outlining the current arrangements for maintaining a register of food businesses in the County Borough and advised Members of the ways in which the information is currently being used by the Public Protection Service and Regeneration Service to promote local food businesses.

3.6 Following discussion, Members agreed that further clarification was needed from the proposer and seconder in respect of the aim and scope of the Notice of Motion.

- 3.7 Subsequently, a second meeting of the Working Group took place on the 24th of July 2019 and Members were presented with a second report from the Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services outlining potential options for the creation of an online database of food businesses in the County Borough, which could promote local food producers and retailers.
- 3.8 Members of the Working Group were presented with three options:-
- To enhance the use of the statutory food premises register; or,
 - The creation of an online directory of food producers and suppliers in RCT; or,
 - To improve signposting and use of existing online resources.
- 3.9 The Working Group considered the benefits of each option and agreed that the creation of an online directory of food producers and suppliers in RCT would capture the spirit of the Notice of Motion and could be used by businesses and consumers across RCT to identify local food producers and source food products.
- 3.10 The Working Group acknowledged the current arrangements in place and it was established that no such directory exists at present. It was agreed that the statutory food register does not contain the type of information required to compile an online directory, such as product specific details, range of products, costs, and opening hours.
- 3.11 Members considered that the creation of a directory would require detailed project specification and business engagement to ensure that it would meet and enhance business needs and acknowledged that participation in the directory would be on a voluntary basis due to GDPR constraints. Ultimately, the Working Group acknowledged that participation may be low unless a specific marketing and publicity campaign was put in place to support the directory and encourage participation.
- 3.12 The Working Group agreed that the directory should only allow participation by compliant businesses and controls would need to be incorporated into the model e.g businesses must have attained a minimum of a 3 food hygiene score to be included in the directory. It was agreed that the directory would become out of date without regular ongoing maintenance and that additional resources would be required to maintain the register and ensure data accuracy.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The proposal within the Notice of Motion is to consider producing and maintaining an online directory of food producers and suppliers and the Working Group resolved to determine the feasibility of the options for the production of an online resource.
- 4.2 The Working Group acknowledged that the Council already maintains a statutory food business register and Members considered how to improve the information already available.
- 4.3 Ultimately, the Working Group agreed on the creation of an online directory of food producers and suppliers in RCT with a view to promoting and improving the economic growth of local food companies.

4.4 Following the conclusion of the Working Group, Members agreed that the proposed recommendations, as referred to in sections 2.1 to 2.5 of the report, have fully addressed the aim and scope of the Notice of Motion.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Equality and diversity implications will be considered as part of the Working Group's recommendations and any subsequent implementation arrangements.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 There are no consultation implications arising, as yet, from this report.

7. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial and resource implications will be considered as part of the Working Group's recommendations and any subsequent implementation arrangements

8. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN AND FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

8.1 The proposals in this report are consistent with the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan, in particular "Place – creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work".

8.2 The outputs of the Strategy will also assist the Council contribute to the wellbeing goals that 'The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' has put in place:-

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
as amended by
LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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