

# **NEATH LUF DRAFT BID**

## **Part 1 – Gateway**

<b>Allowance checks in England, Scotland and Wales only</b>
Please confirm which bid allowance you are using:  - Constituency allowance
<b>For bids using the transport allowance</b> , is your bid at least 90% investment in the transport theme with the remaining investment related to the transport element of the bid? Y/N
<b>Bids from a single applicant, excluding large transport and large culture bids</b>
Please confirm that the bid does not exceed £20 million.  Yes - confirmed
<b>Package Bids</b>
Do you have more than three component projects?  No – the package bid does <u>not</u> have more than three component projects
<b>Joint Bids</b>
<b>For a joint bid in England, Scotland, and/or Wales</b> , please confirm the names of the other local authorities you are working jointly with and confirm which bid allowance they are using to support this bid
<b>All joint bids.</b> Do you have the support of the other organisations you are working with and have a signed pro forma to this effect from each organisation? Y/N
<b>For bids in England, Scotland, and/or Wales</b> , please complete pro forma 2.
<b>Joint bids with only one component project.</b> Please confirm that your bid does not exceed the maximum threshold allowable for joint bids with only one component project. I am submitting: - a joint bid that contains only one component project with one other applicant organisation and can confirm that the bid overall does not exceed £40 million grant value. Y/N - a joint bid that contains only one component project with two or more other applicant organisations and can confirm that the single component project within the bid (and therefore the bid overall) does not exceed £50 million grant value. Y/N
<b>Joint bids with multiple component projects.</b> Please confirm that your bid does not exceed the maximum threshold allowable for joint bids that contain multiple component projects. I am submitting: - a joint bid that contains multiple component projects with one other applicant organisation and can confirm that the bid overall does not exceed £40 million grant value. Y/N

- a joint bid that contains multiple component projects (maximum of three) with two or more other applicant organisations and can confirm that no single component project within the bid exceeds £50 million grant value. Y/N  
- a joint bid that contains multiple component projects (maximum of three) with two or more other applicant organisations and can confirm that the total for the overall bid does not exceed £60 million grant value. Y/N

**Large transport bids (from a single applicant) >£20 million**

Please confirm that the bid does not exceed £50 million. Y/N

Please confirm that at least 90% of the investment is in the transport theme. The remaining investment must be related to the transport element of the bid? Y/N

**Large cultural bids (from a single applicant) >£20 million**

Please confirm that the bid does not exceed £50 million.  
Y/N

Please confirm that at least 90% of the investment is in the cultural theme with the remaining investment related to the cultural element of the bid.  
Y/N

**Any bid with a transport element**

**For bids in England, Scotland, and/or Wales**, where you (the applicant) do not have statutory responsibility to deliver all of the transport elements of your bid, please confirm that you have the support of all the authorities with the relevant statutory responsibility before proceeding.

Y/N

Please note that this also a requirement for all bids using a transport allowance.

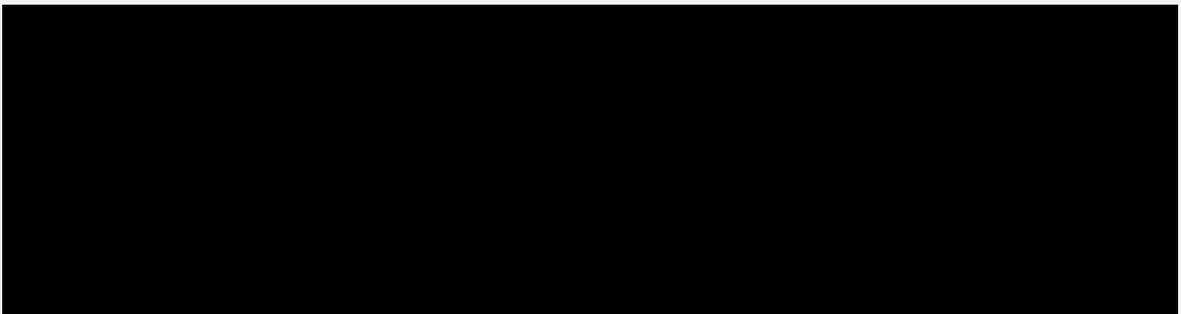
Please complete pro forma 1.

**1.1 Gateway Criteria for all bids.**

Please tick the box to confirm that some LUF grant funding will be defrayed in the 2022/23 financial year.

Eligible expenditure in 2022-23 could include capital development costs.

Yes – we confirm that [redacted] grant funding will be defrayed in the 2022/23 financial year



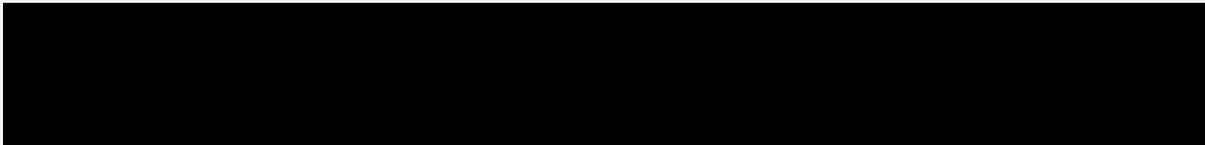
**Applicant Details**

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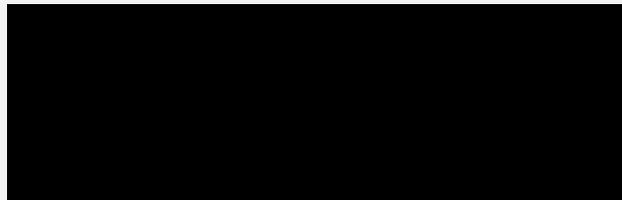
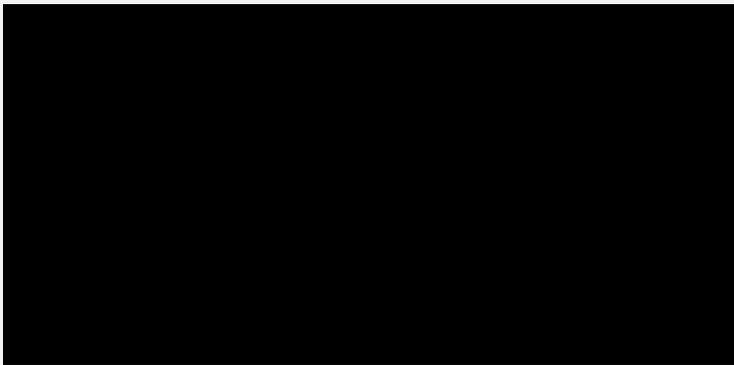
**Legal name of lead applicant organisation:** Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

**Bid Manager**

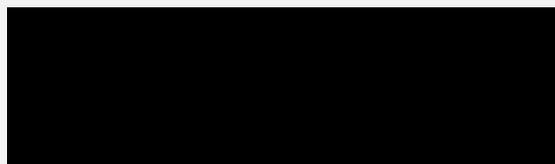
***Officer with day-to-day responsibility for delivering the proposed scheme and nominated contact for the bid.***



Postal address: Neath Port Talbot CBC, The Quays, Brunel Way, Baglan Energy Park, Briton Ferry, SA11 2GG



Please provide the name of any consultancy companies involved in the preparation of the bid:



Where is your bid being delivered?

Wales

**For all bids.** If VAT is applicable to your organisation please provide VAT number:

VAT registration number 666 4783 87

**Part 2 - Subsidy control and State aid analysis**

**2.1.** All applicants must establish if the direct of award of LUF funds from UK Government to you (as the applicant) could constitute a subsidy.

Applicants must consider whether any of the planned activities meet each of the four key characteristics which indicate if it would be considered a subsidy.

**If any of the four responses is a 'No' then the award is not considered to be a subsidy.**

**2.1.1** Is the support provided by a 'public authority' and does the support constitute a financial (or in kind) contribution such as a grant, loan or guarantee?

Yes – the support is in the form of a grant from UK government to Neath Port Talbot CBC

**2.1.2** Does the support measure confer an economic advantage on one or more economic actors?

Yes – some of the activities proposed involve goods or services on a market and there will be remuneration for the services provided I.e., Gnoll Estate Country Park accommodation and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan accommodation, therefore some elements of the package bid would be considered economic activities. However, these activities will be procured on the open market.

The Gnoll Visitor Centre and café will be delivered in house on a not-for-profit basis.

The public realm infrastructure at Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan (with no accommodation attached) will be a public access area which is open to all and will not be economic in nature.

**2.1.3** Is the support measure specific insofar as it benefits, as a matter of law or fact, certain economic actors over others in relation to the production of certain goods or services?

Yes - The Council will be using the grant to improve the Gnoll Estate Country Park visitor facilities, and Pontneddfechan visitor facilities, some of the activities which will generate income to ensure sustainability of the service on a not-for-profit basis e.g., café

All works contracts for any associated works related to the use of funds will be competitively procured in compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

No - All commercial operators of the facilities created from the funds will be procured in compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules e.g., the Council will procure an operator to deliver the accommodation element of the bid.

Therefore, there will not be a contribution to an economic actor which confers an economic advantage that is not available on market terms. Consequently, there will not an advantage to certain economic actors over others in relation to the specific works and services and the support does not confer a selective advantage to an undertaking.

**2.1.4** Does the support measure have the potential to cause a distortion in or harm to competition, trade or investment?

No - the planned activities are local tourism related activities, linked to the distinct local heritage and environment and are not of a scale or size to distort or have the potential to distort or harm trade, competition or investment.

**2.1.5** Did you respond 'Yes' to all the above? If so, the planned activities meet all four key characteristics which indicates it would be considered a subsidy.

No – not all four key characteristics are met by any of the projects/planned activities

**2.2** Please demonstrate how the direct award of LUF monies from UK Government to you (as the applicant) has been considered under each of the subsidy principles.

This will involve consideration of the how the subsidy can be provided in accordance with the following Subsidy Control principles listed in the Subsidy Control Bill.

If the proposed LUF activities do represent a subsidy and all principles have been met, the LUF application will be considered compliant.

Please separate your response where there are multiple awards of subsidy.

**2.2.1** Subsidies should pursue a specific public policy objective to remedy an identified market failure or to address an equity rationale such as social difficulties or distributional concerns (“the objective”)

Please demonstrate how your bid meets this principle.

**2.2.2** Subsidies should be proportionate and limited to what is necessary to achieve the objective.

Please demonstrate how your bid meets this principle.

**2.2.3** Subsidies should be designed to bring about a change of economic behaviour of the beneficiary that is conducive to achieving the objective and that would not be achieved in the absence of subsidies being provided.

Please demonstrate how your bid meets this principle.

**2.2.4** Subsidies should not normally compensate for the costs the beneficiary would have funded in the absence of any subsidy.

Please demonstrate how your bid meets this principle.

**2.2.5** Subsidies should be an appropriate policy instrument to achieve a public policy objective and that objective cannot be achieved through other less distortive means.

**2.2.6** Subsidies should be designed to achieve their specific policy objective while minimising any negative effects on competition or investment within the United Kingdom.

Please demonstrate how your bid meets this principle.

**2.2.7** Subsidies' positive contributions to achieving the objective should outweigh any negative effects, in particular the negative effects on trade or investment between the Parties.

Please demonstrate how your bid meets this principle.

**2.3 All non-public sector applicants delivering in Northern Ireland.** If the award of funds is or isn't considered to be a subsidy please set out in detail how you will deliver the funds compliantly under the subsidy regime.

If you are proposing to allocate some of the grant funds to third parties, such as project partners working with you to deliver the project, (e.g. sub-granting) please identify how you will ensure disbursement of the grant is done so in accordance with the UK subsidy control regime.

The department will need to assess how funds will be awarded and how risk is managed.

**2.3.1 All non-public sector applicants delivering in Northern Ireland.**

Confirm that you have obtained and uploaded independent legal advice that is aligned to your response in this section and verifies that the award of funds is considered to be UK subsidy control regime and/or State aid compliant. Y/N

**2.4 Public authorities only.**

Please confirm if you will be disbursing the funds as a potential subsidy to third parties.

No.

**2.5 Public authorities only.** Confirm that you have completed pro forma 5 statement of compliance signed by your Chief Finance Officer.

Y/N

**2.6. Public and private sector applicants for delivery in Northern Ireland only.**

Is the direct award of funds from UK Government to you (as the applicant) considered to be as State aid under the four EU State aid rule tests?

**2.6.1** Is the support granted by the state or through state resources?

**2.6.2** Does the support confer a selective advantage to an undertaking?

**2.6.3** Does the support distort or have the potential to distort competition?

**2.6.4** Does the support affect trade between EU member states?

**2.6.5** Do the planned activities meet all four key State aid tests?

If all four tests are met then the award constitutes State aid and must comply with the State aid law.

**2.7** For **private sector applicants**, what is the size of the enterprise applying for funding? Refer to the official SME definition.

**2.8** Please list all the organisations (if known) which may benefit from the funding of the project and any economic benefit they may receive as a result of the funding.

**2.9** Applicants must consider whether the award meets all the tests for each beneficiary. If beneficiaries are considered to be in receipt of State aid then you must consider how this is compliant under the State aid rules. Applicants may wish to refer to the European Commission’s “Notion of State aid” guidance.

Beneficiary name	Is the support granted by	Does the support confer a	Does the support distort or	Does the support affect trade	Is the award considered State aid?
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	the state or through state resources?	selective advantage to an undertaking?	have the potential to distort competition?	between member states?	
					Y/N

**2.9.1** Where a project is funded under an exemption based on the General Block Exemption Regulations (651/2014), the Applicant is required to either

a) confirm that the project falls within the scope of Regulation 6(5) or  
b) submit a separate document to demonstrate incentive effect in line with Regulation 6(2) containing the following information:

I. the applicant undertaking's name and size  
II. a brief description of the project, including start and end dates  
III. the location of the project  
IV. a full list of the project costs used to determine the allowable level of funding  
V. the form of the aid  
VI. the amount of public money needed for the project.

**2.9.2** Do you confirm that the project falls within the scope of Regulation 6(5) under the General Block Exemption Regulations (651/2014). Y/N

**2.9.3** If no, confirm that you have attached document containing the required information.

**2.9.4** If you intend to use an exemption(s) under GBER to deliver the project, please confirm you have read the terms of the scheme and meet all the relevant terms.

**2.9.5** Identify the GBER provision, the title of the scheme and the amount of LUF award to be delivered under the provision.

Describe how you meet all the relevant terms of the exemption.

**2.10** As the bidding organisation are you subject to an outstanding recovery order in respect of State Aid? If 'Yes', provide brief details.

**2.11** Describe the system in place for collecting and recording the required information for State aid audits and returns.

**2.12 All non-public sector applicants delivering in Northern Ireland.** Confirm that you have obtained and uploaded independent legal advice that is aligned to your response in this section and verifies that the award of funds considered to be State aid compliant.

## Part 3 - Bid summary

In this section applicants should provide the core details of their bids; clarifying what, where, how and how much. If your bid is a package bid you should also complete Application Form Annexes A–C.

To note, word counts are included for several questions throughout the application form, these are provided as a guide only. The level of detail you provide should be proportionate to the amount of funding that you are requesting.

**3.1 Bid Name:**

**Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attractor**



**3.2 Please provide a short description of your bid, including the visible infrastructure that will be delivered/upgraded and the benefits that will be felt in the area.**

The **Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attractor** is a package bid in the Vale of Neath, south west Wales which will deliver two transformational projects

The **Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan visitor infrastructure scheme** will deliver strategic visitor infrastructure including accommodation and improved parking.

The **Gnoll Estate Country Park Heritage and Visitor Infrastructure** will invest in the historic estate, visitor offer and establish visitor accommodation in the park.

The outcomes will create and improve cultural space, renovate and restore heritage buildings leading to a change in the number of visitors to cultural venues and change in consumer spending at cultural venues.

**3.3 Please provide a more detailed overview of the bid proposal. Where bids have multiple components (package bids) you should clearly explain how the component projects are aligned with each other and represent a coherent set of interventions.**

(500 words)

*This overview should be more detailed than that provided in 3.2.*

*Provide full details of what activity will take place where*

*Clearly setting out the planned interventions, outputs and benefits.*

*If the activities are being undertaken across multiple locations, the applicant should clearly explain how the activities align with each other and represent a coherent set of interventions.*

*If a package bid applicants should also clearly explain here how the component projects are aligned with each other and represent a coherent set of interventions*

The **Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attractor** is a package bid based in the Vale of Neath in south west Wales which will deliver two transformational projects which form part of the 'Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Masterplan'. The masterplan outlines key investment opportunities to establish the Vale of Neath as a heritage and natural environment led visitor

destination. The LUF funding will be the catalyst for the delivery of the masterplan leading to the growth of the visitor economy in the Vale of Neath. The two interlinked projects are:

The **Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan visitor infrastructure scheme** located to the north of the valley will address significant pressures being experienced by the host community by creating improved access to services in addition to supporting the visitor economy through the delivery of strategic visitor infrastructure, including:

- A visitor hub gateway building incorporating; public toilets, a farm / village shop for the benefit of local community and visitors
- [REDACTED] visitor accommodation,
- a permanent parking solution to include formal and overflow parking, coach and minibus parking and EV charging facilities
- public realm/ visitor gateway improvements to enhance the sense of arrival in the village to include; a village square offering opportunities for small events such as pop-up markets, outdoor seating and safe pedestrian routes with a viewing platform.
- interpretation and signage.

The project will provide the necessary capacity to accommodate existing visitors during peak times in addition to attracting additional visitors during off peak times throughout the year, this will result in extending the visitor season and easing pressures during peak times of year.

The proposed [REDACTED] accommodation development will capture additional visitor spending within the local area and will create employment.

The **Gnoll Estate Country Park Heritage and Visitor Infrastructure** located to the south of the valley close to Neath town centre will improve and restore the heritage features as a key aspect of the visitor experience and will develop on site visitor accommodation.

The project will support the growth of the visitor economy, enhance the appeal of the park to attract additional visitors and will bring the heritage of the park to the forefront of the visitor experience. This project forms part of a phased approach to develop the Gnoll Estate Master Plan, LUF will invest in the following:

- Conserving and opening up access to important heritage features including Gnoll House cellars and cascades
- Diversifying the play offer
- Modernisation of the exiting visitor centre and café,
- Improved interpretation of the country park
- Enhanced biodiversity and nature conservation
- Enhanced physical linkages with the neighbouring Woodland Trust site to double the available land for outdoor leisure at this location
- Enhanced car parking provision (incorporating EV charging facilities)

Both investments will create and improve cultural space and renovate and restore heritage buildings leading to a change in the number of visitors to cultural venues and change in consumer spending at cultural venues.

The package bid is a key element in developing a 'string of pearls' of key destinations in the Vale of Neath which focus on heritage and the great outdoors linked by sustainability supported by a collaborative / partnership approach with the public, private and third sectors creating pride in place and increasing life chances. The two projects are aligned in terms of delivering the vision *'to create a market-led sustainable destination that builds on the key strengths and qualities of the Vale of Neath: the built heritage, natural environment and accessibility. The Vale of Neath will be known as a heritage and outdoor destination, where visitors will be able to engage in multiple experiences from visits to heritage sites of national*

*importance through to exploring Waterfall Country with strong connectivity through an exemplar trails network and the Tennant and Neath Canals.’ and are component parts which deliver greater benefits as a package bid than in isolation by creating a coherent set of interventions as outlined in the masterplan*

**3.4** Please provide a short description of the area where the investment will take place. If complex (i.e. containing multiple locations/references) please include a map defining the area with references to any areas where the LUF investment will take place.

**For transport projects** include the route of the proposed scheme, the existing transport infrastructure and other points of particular interest to the bid e.g. development sites, areas of existing employment, constraints etc.

(500 words)

*The response should provide a broad description of the area - with further detail given in question 3.5 below.*

*If complex (i.e. containing multiple locations/references) please include a map defining the area with references to any areas where the LUF investment will take place.*

The county borough of Neath Port Talbot is located at the centre of the south Wales economy between the cities of Cardiff and Swansea. It benefits from direct access via the M4 motorway corridor and is on the mainline London to Swansea train route. Neath train station provides main line railway services to London and the Midlands. The local bus network services the surrounding urban and valleys areas and bus and train services provide convenient travel options to both Cardiff (45 mins) and Swansea (15 mins).

Neath Port Talbot is a diverse area with industry, three principal town centres of Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe, mountains, valleys, rivers and coastline and a rich industrial, cultural and sporting heritage.

There are 5 valley communities in Neath Port Talbot – Afan Valley, Dulais Valley, Upper Amman Valley, Swansea Valleys and the Vale of Neath. The town of Neath which is the location of the Gnoll Estate Country Park project is located to the south section of the A465 and is located 5 minutes from M4 Junction 43.

The Vale of Neath is one of the most historically important localities in Wales. It has for the past three hundred years been closely associated with intense industrialisation and urbanisation. However, its history stretches back many thousands of years and throughout the intervening centuries to the present day that history has been influenced by the geology and topography of the area. Completion of the Neath and Tennant Canals led to the expansion of coal mining in the Vale; by the mid-19th century, the canals carried an average of 200,000 tons of coal annually.

The valley runs north easterly in a straight line from Neath town centre following the famous ‘Neath Fault’ that can be detected from Swansea Bay into England. The Vale of Neath stretches along the A465 for approximately 13 miles, from Neath Abbey to the valley town of Glynneath and the village of Pontneddfechan, where the ‘Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan’ project is located on the border of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

As with many valley communities, the Vale of Neath suffered significant industrial decline in

the late 20th century. However, the area has a number of visitor assets which provide a focus for destination development. There is an abundance of waterfalls within the Vale of Neath, which together with its close proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park and Fforest Fawr Geopark, has been a key driver in terms of developing the visitor economy to date. Estimates suggest that more than 300,000 people visit the Waterfalls area each year, which has led to pressure at particular sites.



**3.5** Please confirm where the investment is taking place (where the funding is being spent, **not** the applicant location or where the bid beneficiaries are located).

If the bid is at a single location please confirm the postcode and grid reference for the location of the investment.

If the bid covers multiple locations please provide a GIS file. If this is unavailable please list all the postcodes / coordinates that are relevant to the investment.

**For all bids**, please confirm in which constituencies and local authorities the bid is located. Please confirm the % investment in each location.

*We need to clearly understand where the funding is being spent.*

*This information will be used to determine the “Characteristics of Place” score and will be used for reporting purposes.*

*If the bid is at a single location please confirm the postcode and grid reference for the location of the investment.*

*If the bid covers multiple locations please provide a GIS file. If this unavailable please list all the postcodes/coordinates that are relevant to the investment.*

*For all bids, please confirm in which constituencies and local authorities the project is located. Please confirm the % investment in each location.*

The package bid is located in the Neath constituency - 100%, in the unitary authority of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

The package bid comprises two projects in two locations:  
Gnoll Estate Country Park: SA113BS (Longitude: -3.796867, Latitude: 51.660558)  
Pontneddfechan: SA115NR (Longitude: -3.596333, Latitude: 51.755632)



**3.6** Please confirm the total grant requested from LUF

*This should be the total LUF grant value (excluding match funding) requested from round 2 of LUF.*

*This total LUF grant value should align with that presented in the relevant Costings and Planning Workbook – Table B – Funding Profile*

Total LUF grant request is £19,728,177

**3.7** Please specify the proportion of funding requested for each of the Fund's three investment themes:

*This should be the % of LUF grant to be spent in each investment theme.*

*Please ensure the total adds up to 100%.*

*When identifying the percentage of theme/s within a bid applicants should define this according to costs associated with activity in support of each theme. For example, if 75% of a bid's total value contained costs associated with activity in support of a regeneration output or outcome, with 25% costs associated with activity in support of a cultural output or outcome, it would be defined as being a 75% regeneration and 25% cultural bid.*

- a) Regeneration and town centre (%)
- b) Cultural (100%)**
- c) Transport (%)

**3.8** Please tick one or more subcategories that are relevant to your investment:

*Please tick one or more sub-categories that best match your bid.*

**Regeneration**

Commercial  
Civic  
Residential  
Other

**Cultural**

Arts & Culture  
Creative Industries

**Visitor Economy**

Sports and athletics facilities

**Heritage buildings and sites**

Other

**Transport**

Active Travel  
Buses  
Strategic Road  
Rail  
Aviation  
Maritime  
Light Rail  
EV Infrastructure  
Local Road  
Other

**3.9** Please provide details of any applications made to other funding schemes for this same bid that are currently pending an outcome. Where a successful outcome might lead to you no longer requiring the LUF grant please provide details and confirm when might you expect the outcome to be known.

(150 words)

*Applicants should list any other funding applications they have made for this scheme or variants thereof that may impact the requirement for LUF funding if successful.*

*If applicable, anticipated timeframes should be provided for receiving the outcomes of these applications.*

*Applicants should also specify the amount of funding being applied for from other funds and, if successful, how this will affect the LUF grant sought.*

N/A

## **Part 4 Strategic Fit**

### **4.1 Member of Parliament Endorsement (England, Scotland and Wales ONLY)**

**4.1.1** Has an MP given formal priority support for this bid?

Yes

**4.1.2** Please confirm which MP has provided formal priority support:

Christina Rees, MP

**4.1.3** Which constituency does this MP represent?

Neath



*This section should be completed for bids in England, Scotland, and/or Wales, and should only be used to record MP formal priority support.*

*General MP support, including MSP, MLA and Members of the Senedd support should be recorded in question 4.2.1 below.*

### **4.2 Stakeholder Engagement and Support**

Applicants are encouraged to engage with a wide range of local stakeholders and the local community to inform proposals in the bid and to secure buy in.

**4.2.1** Describe what engagement you have undertaken with local relevant stakeholders, including the community (the public, civic society, private sector and local businesses). How has this informed your bid and what support do you have from them?

*Applicants will be given the opportunity to upload evidence of stakeholder engagement at the time of submission. This should include, if applicable, MLAs in Northern Ireland, MSPs in Scotland and Members of the Senedd in Wales.*

*Applicants should use this section to articulate the methods and strategies used (including innovative virtual methods in light of COVID-19) to engage with stakeholders, as well as detailing how this interaction has influenced the proposal, and how any potentially controversial aspects of the bid will be resolved.*

*Applicants should detail how stakeholders were identified, and what efforts were made to reach those more isolated members of the community, including rural communities, who might not normally engage.*

*Evidence of stakeholder engagement can be provided in various forms including letters of support or minutes of meetings and attached as an annex.*

*Applicants should explain how the engagement activities have informed the development and design of the bid. The range of engagement feedback should be clearly explained and evidenced including reference to any current/ongoing consultations, community forums, etc.*

*Where success of the bid is reliant on the cooperation and support of stakeholders or the local community, the application should clearly explain and evidence this.*

*Whilst there is no pre-defined list, potential relevant local stakeholders and partners may include:*

- *Elected representatives of Local Government (i.e. Democratic decision-making process of the Local Authority, Cabinet Decisions etc.)*
- *Local businesses*
- *Local Enterprise Partnerships*
- *Public transport providers*
- *Police and emergency services*
- *Community representatives / groups*
- *Government bodies / organisations e.g. Historic England, Arts Council*
- *Environmental representatives*
- *Public health representatives*
- *Universities, and further education colleges*
- *Audience, visitors, spectators and participants*

Neath Port Talbot Council has consulted with strategic partners, stakeholders and the community of the important natural and built heritage assets within the Vale of Neath to devise the LUF 'Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attractor' package bid.

The two projects in the package bid have been subject to extensive internal and external consultation including:

**Local Authority Members** – the package bid was formally approved for submission to UK government at the Neath Port Talbot Council Cabinet meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022. Prior to this a series of Members engagement virtual workshops were held during January 2022.

**Local businesses** – via the Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan Steering Group and Activity Providers Group

**Community** – Let's Talk Campaign generated over 1,700 responses

**Welsh Government** – via monthly Neath Port Talbot Council / Welsh Government regeneration meetings

**Member of the Senedd** – Jeremy Miles, MS

**Neath Port Talbot Council Planning Authority**

**Neath Port Talbot Roads and Highways Department**

**Neath Port Talbot Biodiversity and Wildlife Team**

**CADW**

**Swansea University**

**Gnoll Country Park Working Group**

**Friends of Gnoll Park** – letter of support

**Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Steering Group** – who formally provided support for the package bid at the June 2022 meeting. The DMP Steering Group is facilitated by Neath Port Talbot Council with representation from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Visit Wales and private sector tourism operators. - minutes of meeting

**The Woodland Trust** – letter of support

**Brecon Beacons National Park** – letter of support

**Waterfall Country Partnership** – minutes of meeting. This group represents public bodies and communities which form part of Waterfall Country. The group unanimously support the project.

**Powys County Council** – letter of support

#### **Key consultation activity includes:**

Project specific working groups

Public surveys

In 2021 a county wide public consultation took place with nearly 1,700 responses – the package bid has been informed by the feedback requesting improved green spaces and investing in / providing more outdoor facilities

A public 'Snap Survey' focusing on proposed LUF interventions was carried out in June 2022. The Snap Survey highlighted the need to increase investment in Neath's cultural attractions. The survey told us that only 23% of respondents visited one of the cultural locations in Neath regularly (once a month), evidencing the need to invest to attract additional visitors. 84% of people would like to see more family friendly events within the town centre (Gnoll Country Park is a five-minute walk from Neath town centre) and this has been considered within the design of the project, with proposed improvements including:

- A refurbished visitor centre with café, public toilets and meeting facilities
- A nine-hole golf course, with a foot golf offer.
- Impressive water cascades
- Two children's playgrounds, which are fenced (a traditional playground with accessible play and adventure playground)
- A network of walking trails with variety of surface material
- Restoration of the ruins of the former Gnoll House, Icehouse and Cellars. The Cellars are not currently accessible to the general public
- A number of events to be staged throughout the year, to be run by an external partner

The survey indicates that this improved offer would encourage an increase of 84% of visitors to visit more often.

### **Gnoll Estate Country Park**

In 2019/2020, a study was commissioned to examine the potential to invest in visitor accommodation at Gnoll Country Park. As part of this study, detailed consultation was undertaken with elected Members, The Friends of Gnoll Park, Woodland Trust and staff at the country park. Further to this, an online survey was undertaken to obtain the views of visitors on investments needed to enhance the visitor experience, the online survey generated 822 responses which demonstrated how well loved the country park is by local people. These findings were collated into a masterplan document alongside the accommodation proposal. A visitor experience action plan was developed and the plan was adopted by Neath Port Talbot Council in January 2021. The proposals for Gnoll Estate Country Park have been built around the visitor feedback and views which were highlighted during this consultation including;

- A high priority should be placed on conserving, enhancing and interpreting key heritage features
- More investment is required in the onsite café and visitor centre
- The natural environment (and its protection) is of significant importance to visitors.

As part of the process of bringing this LUF project together, a Gnoll Working Group has been established to guide the project development process, this group has provided direct feedback on the proposals which have been revised in line with group discussion.

Membership of this group includes;

- Gnoll Country Park Management Team
- Friends of Gnoll Park (volunteer group)
- The Woodland Trust
- Neath Port Talbot Council regeneration, tourism, strategic funding, biodiversity and wildlife officers.

### **Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan**

Neath Port Talbot Council has worked in partnership with Brecon Beacons National Park to develop this project.

A range of pre-existing studies have been undertaken in consultation with the local community and with members of the Waterfall Country Partnership which consists of Brecon Beacons National Park, Neath Port Talbot Council, Powys County Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, Natural Resources Wales and the Waterfall Country Cymru CIO which represents the communities across Waterfall Country. The outcome of these studies has led to the project proposal to create a permanent solution to visitor pressures at this location and to enhance the visitor experience.

At their June 2022 meeting, the Waterfall Country Partnership indicated their support for the submission of the project for LUF funding.

An online survey was undertaken with the South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group (the representative organisation for all Providers of Outdoor Adventurous Activities in the South Wales and Brecon Beacons area) in order to obtain their views on what enhancements would

be needed in general across Waterfall Country, this highlighted that there is demand for increased parking and accommodation to support the visitor economy.

The results of the 2021 Brecon Beacons Visitor Survey have also been fed into the proposals.

The feedback received from this collective consultation has shaped and defined the scope of the project proposals and we will continue to consult as detailed design work continues.



**4.2.2** Has your proposal faced any opposition? Please provide a brief summary, including any campaigns or particular groups in support or opposition, and if applicable, how will you work with them to resolve any issues.

*Applicants should summarise any opposition to the bid, its relevance (i.e. impact), and what has/will be done to resolve this and any other concerns raised during stakeholder engagement activities.*

*Applicants should explain if there is any sensitivity in their stakeholder engagement, for example if part of the bid process has not been made public or if the bid requires compulsory purchase of buildings.*

*Please provide reasoning if certain stakeholders could not be engaged with and how any impacts of this have been mitigated.*

N/A

**4.2.3** Do you have statutory responsibility for the delivery of all aspects of the bid?

If **no**:

- Please confirm those parts of the project for which you do not have statutory responsibility
- Please confirm who is the relevant responsible authority
- Please confirm that you have the support/consent of the relevant responsible authority

*Applicants that do not have statutory responsibility for the delivery of all aspects of their bid, must secure the support/consent of the relevant responsible authority prior to proceeding.*

*All bids with a transport element must supply a pro forma of support from the relevant authority with statutory responsibility for transport unless the applicant has statutory responsibility, in which case the applicant should state N/A.*

***For any bids in England, Scotland, and/or Wales*** where the applicant does not have statutory responsibility to deliver all of the transport elements of their bid, they are required to demonstrate that they have the support of all the authorities with the relevant statutory responsibility before proceeding with their application. Please complete pro forma 1 [\[link\]](#).

*Rail-related applications would need the support of Network Rail and applications for infrastructure on the Strategic Road Network would need the support of National Highways, for example.*

***For any bids in Northern Ireland with transport elements, support from the relevant local council and the Northern Ireland Executive (if non-public sector led bid) is an eligibility requirement. Please complete pro forma 4 [link].***

**Gnoll Estate Country Park**

Neath Port Talbot Council own and manage the land

**Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan**

Neath Port Talbot own some of the land including the toilets

## 4.3 The Case for Investment

Applicants should use this section to detail a compelling case for why the proposed investment supports the economic, community and cultural priorities of their local area.

Applicants should upload their completed Theory of Change model that supports this section at the time of submission.

For package bids, an explanation should be provided as to how the component projects are aligned with each other and represent a coherent set of interventions.

**4.3.1** Please provide evidence of the local challenges / barriers to growth and context that the bid is seeking to respond to.

(500 words)

*Applicants should provide quantifiable evidence of the local challenges and barriers to growth, and detail how the planned intervention/s will address these.*

*Evidence could include (but is not limited to) data regarding:*

- *Employment details, income levels, deprivation, skills and educational attainment*
- *Vacancy rates and footfall*
- *Land and development challenges*
- *Transport challenges including poor connectivity to existing assets, congestion and air quality issues*
- *Crime and anti-social behaviour*

*Transport applications should consider evidence within the local context with clear identification of sources.*

*This may include:*

- *Reliability of the network (e.g. cancellation rates, congestion, capacity levels, variability in journey times)*

- *Safety data including accident rates.*
- *Environmental data including Air quality and carbon emissions.*
- *Journey satisfaction*
- *Time taken to reach specified number of jobs or services*
- *Data on mode of travel.*
- *Data on number of services, spending and maps showing existing transport network*

**Heritage/Cultural applications** should also consider providing some of the following evidence. These should be contextualised within the local context:

- *Cultural/creative/community/sports vision.*
- *Creative/curated/community sports programme.*
- *Range of programmes (e.g. public libraries programmes going beyond culture, such as business support, health and well-being, literacy).*
- *Practitioners track record.*
- *Level of demand.*
- *For heritage/museum collections, how the assets will be maintained/conserved in line with statutory and best practice.*
- *Improvements to provision of public spaces and community facilities.*
- *Audience/participant/user engagement benefit – reach/diversity/depth of engagement.*
- *Audience/participant/user development – including segmentations.*
- *Current cultural heritage sports offer and provision of community facilities, how they are perceived, how well they already inspire community cohesion/pride in and attractiveness of place*
- *Local levels of engagement/ demand*
- *Added value that this project would bring (particularly for upgrades).*

This package bid responds to the local challenges and barriers to growth as set out in the Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan and Well-being Assessments with a focus on ensuring 'all communities are thriving and sustainable' and 'our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations'

### **Wellbeing challenges**

The package bid will address a number of wellbeing challenges through providing improved access to green spaces, heritage and cultural facilities which will encourage exercise and improved mental wellbeing.

Statistics from the Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing Assessments show in Neath Port Talbot:

Average life expectancy in Neath Port Talbot is 77.0 years for men and 81.2 years for women, which is low compared to the Wales average of 78.3 for men and 82.3 years for women.

Healthy life expectancies in Neath Port Talbot is 61.9 for men and 62.4 for women, which is low compared to the Wales average of 65.3 for men and 66.7 for women

Mental health disorders affect 1 in 4 adults in Wales

### **Existing tourism assets**

The Vale of Neath is one of the most historically important localities in Wales and its history spans many thousands of years. However, the area suffered significant industrial decline in the late 20th century. The area has a number of visitor assets which provide a focus for destination development. There is an abundance of waterfalls within the Vale of Neath, which together with its close proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park and Fforest Fawr Geopark, has been a key driver in terms of developing the visitor economy. Estimates suggest that more than 300,000 people visit the Waterfalls Area each year, which has led to pressure at particular sites. Alongside this, Natural Resources Wales manages a number of forest blocks within the area.

The existing Vale of Neath visitor assets are set out in a map (Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Annex 3.3) highlighting the key sites which include:

- Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan Visitor Infrastructure
- Rheola Estate – proposed accommodation development
- Resolven Canal visitor experience
- Ty Banc cottage (water sports)
- Resolven Miner's Welfare Hall community proposals
- Melincwrt Waterfalls
- Ynysbwlllog Aqueduct
- Craig Gwladys Country Park
- National Trust Aberdulais Tin Works and Waterfall
- Aberdulais aqueduct
- Gnoll Estate Country Park
- Neath Castle (Neath town centre)
- Victoria Gardens (Neath town centre)
- Gwyn Hall (cultural hub Neath town centre)
- Neath library
- Neath Abbey Ironworks
- Neath Abbey Monastery Ruins
- Clydach Valley
- Neath, and Tennant and Swansea Canals

**Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan** is a key gateway hub in to 'Waterfall Country', the Brecon Beacons National Park and Fforest Fawr Geopark however, the increasing visitor numbers are placing a significant burden on the host community, particularly in terms of roadside car parking, which also has health and safety implications. This is alongside impacts on the biodiversity and visitor infrastructure itself.

It is estimated that use of the trail leading into Waterfall Country and Sgwd Gwladys Waterfall, from the public toilets, generates at least 50,000 visits per annum. At least a further 56,000 visits are generated at the Dinas Rock car park (at the northern end of the village). The Brecon Beacons National Park also report increases in visitor numbers, in part due to COVID where people are exploring and taking part in more recreational activities.

Currently, an area of farmland is used under permitted development (the '28-day rule') to provide a temporary car parking solution. During 2021, Neath Port Talbot Council piloted a shuttlebus / park and ride service, which had a low level of uptake, this pilot will be continued during 2022 and 2023.

**The key challenges at Pontneddfechan are:**

Lack of visitor infrastructure to cope with increasing current and future visitor numbers  
Current impact of visitors on host communities  
Insufficient access to services for the host communities  
Under supply of accommodation at this hub site

**Gnoll Estate Country Park** is a Green Flag accredited country park and is located on the urban fringe of Neath providing an important recreational resource for members of the local community. The country park covers approximately 219 acres and is part of a former country estate. There are distinct zones of landscape character including woodland, an 18th century parkland and attractive lake areas.

The country park incorporates a range of key built facilities: a café with a new external covered area, two children's play areas (including accessible play), impressive water cascades and ponds, a range of heritage assets including the ruins of Gnoll House and cellars, an established network of trails and a nine-hole golf course. It is estimated that there are approximately 420,000 visits per annum.

The Woodland Trust has acquired an adjacent farm which will be replanted to create a new woodland, along with pastures alongside the existing ancient woodland, which will complement Gnoll Estate Country Park.

There are strong links to the local community as evidenced in the Gnoll Visitor Surveys and Let's Talk Campaign and the more recent LUF Snap Survey.

There is an established Friends of Gnoll Park volunteer group who

**The key challenges at Gnoll Estate Country Park are:**

The heritage remains hidden, visitors have no awareness of the park's history and importance of the estate to the wider history of Neath town

Some assets are in a poor state of repair or not fully accessible

Car parking provision is insufficient at peak times and for events

Friends of Gnoll requires support and improvements to the park to increase membership

The LUF investment will inspire community cohesion and improved the attractiveness of the Vale of Neath leading to increased pride in place.

**Visitor numbers**

There are a limited number of developed tourism assets and accommodation provision in the Vale of Neath leading to pressure points at key tourism assets. There is a need to disperse visitors across a wider geographical area of assets (across The Vale of Neath) and into the off-peak season in order to manage impacts on local communities and the natural environment, extend the visitor season and secure a positive economic impact across the communities within the Neath constituency.

There is currently no 'cohesive' destination in the Vale of Neath with little investment and lack of a formalised visitor experience.

The Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attractor package bid will create a more 'cohesive' destination, investments at Gnoll Estate Country Park and Pontneddfechan are of strategic importance in widening the scope of the visitor experience and enhancing quality.

**Economic growth of the visitor economy**

The Vale of Neath has an exceptional industrial heritage, a wealth of natural assets and a distinctive environment. This combination results in a high potential for tourism development, which is largely untapped, except for Waterfall Country which is located at Pontneddfechan, to the south westerly edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

There is a lack of an overarching visitor experience within the Vale of Neath to ensure that visitor spending is captured locally to build and maximise the visitor economy to diversify the economy and address socio-economic deprivation. The Vale of Neath assets are not realising their full potential as a visitor destination.

There are a number of economic challenges:

Resident pay is below the Wales and UK averages

Just 28% of the 16-64 population are qualified to NVQ4+ (compared with 43% in the UK overall)

There is a 5pp gap between local and UK economic activity rates

The enterprise density rate (the number of businesses per 10,000 working age residents) is less than half that of the UK.

Parts of the Vale of Neath experience significant deprivation: the LSOA containing most of Gnoll Estate (Neath North 3) is in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in Wales, and concentrations of disadvantage are especially high in parts of the Upper Valleys, including much of Waterfall Country.

In that context, the growth of the visitor economy is an important opportunity for diversification.

Due to the above local challenges, there is limited economic growth of the tourism sector / visitor economy in the area. Currently the county borough attracts a high number of day visitors and one of the key drivers in developing the visitor economy is identifying opportunities to convert day visitors to overnight tourists. For example, during 2019 (pre covid) the total visitor numbers to Neath Port Talbot reached 1.506 million and a significant proportion - 1.146 million were day visitors.

A Neath Port Talbot visitor survey in 2017 'spend during visit by day visitors to Neath Port Talbot Vs Staying Visitors' provides evidence on the disparity in spending between visitors who stay overnight in accommodation within Neath Port Talbot and those who stay / travel from outside the county borough as part of a day trip. Staying visitors spend over 10 times more than day visitors within Neath Port Talbot, highlighting the need to put in place interventions which can convert day visitors into staying visitors. A summary is below:

Staying in Neath Port Talbot total spend = £275.37

Day visitors / staying outside of Neath Port Talbot spend = £23.46

The provision of accommodation development at both sites in this package bid will encourage additional overnight stays to facilitate the growth of the visitor economy. The visitor modelling detailed in the Vale of Neath indicates a general uplift in visitor numbers to the Gnoll Estate Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan.

#### 4.3.2 Explain why Government investment is needed (what is the market failure).

*Applicants should explain what market failure(s) are present and why Government intervention is needed. Market failure occurs where a market is unable to function according to the economic ideas of efficient markets. From a Green Book perspective, which looks beyond simply economic efficiency, this means the market is unable to provide satisfactory levels of welfare efficiency.*

*Examples of market failures include, but are not limited to:*

- *Public goods – goods which are not provided by the private sector because they would be unable to supply them for a profit – for example, road infrastructure or place-making activities. A public good is often under-provided in a free market because its*

*characteristics of non-rivalry and non-excludability mean there is an incentive not to pay.*

- *Imperfect information – for some goods or services the availability of information or information processing difficulties may prevent people from making rational decisions. This can be a barrier to economic activity as potential gains from trade could be realised if better information allowed people to provide or consume additional goods and services.*
- *Negative externalities – these occur when an activity imposes costs or produces benefits for economic agents not directly involved in the deal. For example, pollution not covered by regulation may be profitable for a perpetrator but impose real costs on others who are not directly involved in the market.*

*Where applications involve non-public sector partners, for example through the delivery of commercial property development, the applicant should ensure they clearly justify the need for government intervention and the assumptions underpinning this.*

The Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attractor package bid requires public funding as it is a 'public good' in terms of place-making activities and developing appropriate visitor and heritage infrastructure. There is no source of private funding to support the visitor and heritage infrastructure activities required, nor will the activities generate sufficient income stream to fund private borrowing.

The LUF funding will provide the catalyst to develop the Vale of Neath masterplan which will create the right environment for the private sector to invest in future phases leading to improved socio - economic benefits for the area and region. The social and welfare values included in this package bid would not be fully captured by the economic markets and this is the reason for the market failure for the activities proposed in the package bid (as outlined in the HM Treasury Green Book)

Without public grant support, the package bid would not proceed as the level of public investment is necessary to realise the return of benefit for the community, including wellbeing benefits.

The visitor and heritage infrastructure activities would not be developed without public intervention – without public investment in this package bid there would be a negative impact on the environment, negative perception of the Vale of Neath visitor offer, and loss of community pride in place.

The LUF public funding would create the right environment in the form of a linked-up package bid investment to encourage private sector investment and would therefore have a wider impact on the economic vibrancy of the valley community and support pride in place in the villages and communities

Any aspect of the investment that creates an economic opportunity, for example the development of the accommodation provision, will be advertised as an economic opportunity through an open and fair procurement exercise.

**4.3.3** Please set out a clear explanation on what you are proposing to invest in and why the proposed interventions in the bid will address those challenges and barriers with evidence to support that explanation. As part of this, we would expect to understand the rationale for the location.

**For large transport bids £20M - £50M** applicants should submit an Option Assessment Report (OAR).

(750 words)

*All applicants should clearly explain what they are proposing to invest in and evidence how the planned interventions will address the identified challenges and barriers.*

*All applicants should set out the different options considered as part of the process of deciding on the intervention chosen and justify why the proposed solution is the preferred option above others. As part of this, applicants should justify why the proposed location of the investment is the preferred option above others.*

*Applicants submitting large transport bids £20 million - £50 million are encouraged to submit an Option Assessment Report (OAR) with reference to page 4 of DfT's Transport Analysis Guidance.*

The Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Destination Development Framework sets out the actions which need to be undertaken to enable the Vale of Neath to fully realise its potential as a visitor destination. The aim is to increase the value of tourism through developing new experiences and supporting visitor accommodation to encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more whilst at the same time dispersing pressures on the existing infrastructure at hotspot sites.

The development framework sets out a long list of projects, the two projects included in this LUF package bid will act as a catalyst for the development of the other projects within the framework – the two projects have been chosen as they to meet the LUF criteria in terms of strategic fit, deliverability and evidenced need and consultation.

A number of options have been considered for each of the projects chosen for the LUF bid and the long list of options have been subject to on-going review and consultation.

The Vale of Neath location was chosen due to the existing assets and the fact that LUF can address the local challenges and build on the opportunities of the area.

The Vale of Neath will position itself as a safe, accessible destination with a strong focus on distinctiveness, through two key areas: heritage and the great outdoors, with an underlying thread linked to sustainability. Research shows that some visitors are making holiday choices and other spending decisions based on the environmental credentials of 'destinations'. There is a careful balance to be achieved between developing the visitor offer and minimising the environmental impact.

Section 4.3.1 set out the local challenges and barriers to growth and this section will explain how the package bid will address these challenges and barriers.

### **Wellbeing challenges**

The improved visitor offer will encourage social and cultural enrichment leading to health benefits and improved wellbeing.

### **Existing tourism assets**

There is a need to invest in developing the visitor experience at existing sites to add value to investment proposed by national stakeholders such as Cadw and National Trust.

The A465 acts as a spine through the Vale of Neath from the M4 which enables visitors to access a number of the heritage sites, however it does not necessarily encourage people to stop and explore the sites.

Currently the visitor offer is somewhat disjointed and lacks collaboration and partnership working – the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor strategy has developed a strong sense of partnership working, and this will continue to take forward the vision – the LUF investment will develop confidence in the Vale of Neath to develop pride in place and encourage multi sectoral working.

The Gnoll Estate Country Park project will transform the visitor offer through creating a family-based attraction and new accommodation provision. Investment priorities to address the challenges and barriers to growth detailed in 4.3.1 include:

- Improving the visitor centre offer, including the family attractions and enhanced catering offer
- Consolidating and restoring key heritage features, including the cascades and opening up the cellars in Gnoll House
- Developing the play offer and activity offer
- Improving the network of paths and trails
- Developing the interpretation within the country park
- Extending car parking provision
- Undertaking biodiversity improvements
- Introducing tourist accommodation, including: 12 x wooden pods; regenerating the Potting Shed and associated structures to develop 3 x self-catering units; refurbishing the Ranger's Cottage to create a 5-star self-catering holiday cottage

The Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan project will enhanced the visitor infrastructure to ensure a quality experience and relieve pressure in a sensitive environment. Investment priorities to address the challenges and barriers to growth detailed in 4.3.1 include:

- Provide an enhanced visitor gateway to improve the sense of arrival and welcome to this important natural resource and entry point into Waterfall Country, the Brecon Beacons National Park and Geopark
- Provision of a new dedicated car park and toilet facilities in Pontneddfechan to accommodate visitors' cars and relieve pressures in the village
- Increase accommodation provision at this hub site to encourage greater economic impact
- Extend the pilot park and ride scheme, making Waterfall Country more accessible for visitors and potentially helping to lower CO2 emission

The proposed activities will:

- Increase visitor numbers and dwell time at key sites
- Increase the number of overnight stays in the Vale of Neath
- Encourage year-round visits (accommodation)
- Relieve visitor pressure at key gateway site to Waterfall Country and address pressures experienced by the host communities
- Regenerating key heritage sites and securing their future
- Making the built heritage and natural environment more accessible to existing and new audiences
- Lifting the quality of the visitor offer

- Change the destination profile of the Vale of Neath as a quality place to visit and stay
- Provide new employment opportunities
- Making the Vale of Neath a more attractive place to live and invest in
- Changing the perception of the area and creating pride in place

### **Visitor numbers**

To encourage visitors to come to the area, stay longer and spend more in the locality the visitor offer needs to be improved – the LUF investment at Gnoll Estate Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan will provide opportunities to encourage people to stay longer and attract new audiences with the enhanced visitor offer and accommodation.

The improved offer at the Gnoll Estate Country Park will provide an opportunity for the Friends of Gnoll to develop a programme of events for the community, and the Council will work with volunteer groups to explore the UKSPF to fund community capacity building and events around heritage, nature etc.

### **Economic growth of the visitor economy**

With the increased demand for staycations there is a need to develop appropriate visitor accommodation to encourage a greater proportion of overnight domestic trips. Investment at Gnoll Estate Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan will provide opportunities to encourage people to stay longer and attract new audiences if the right type of accommodation is available.

The LUF package bid will act as a catalyst for further private and public sector investment in the Vale of Neath leading to improved economic growth for the area.

**4.3.4** Please explain how you will deliver the outputs and confirm how results are likely to flow from the interventions.

This should be demonstrated through a well-evidenced *Theory of Change*. Further guidance on producing a Theory of Change can be found within **HM Treasury's Magenta Book** (page 24, section 2.2.1) and **DLUHC appraisal guidance**.

(500 words)

*Applicants should use this section to explain simply and clearly how they will deliver the outputs and confirm how results are likely to flow from the interventions.*

*Applicants may wish to refer to the Technical Note **Annex B Intervention Framework** [[Insert Link Here](#)], which provides an illustrative summary of the outputs and outcomes that may fall within the scope of this fund. Applicants are strongly encouraged to design their bids so that the outputs delivered align with this list where possible – although it is recognised that some novel projects will require their own custom indicators.*

*Applicants are encouraged to submit Theory of Change. Developing a Theory of Change typically involves considering the proposed inputs (what investment/actions will take place) and the causal chain that leads from these inputs through to the expected outputs and outcomes. It considers the causal mechanisms by which an intervention is expected to achieve its outcomes, basing this theory on the gathering and synthesis of evidence.*

*There are many mapping tools that can be used to help explore the intervention and how it is expected to work, often described as the 'programme theory'. These include Theory of Change mapping, logic mapping, log frames, benefits mapping, and system mapping. The*

*most appropriate tool to use will depend on the characteristics of the intervention, the complexity of the system it is applied to, and the type of evaluation that is being planned.*

*Theories of Change can range from simple descriptions to more complex analyses and the level of detail would be proportionate to the size and scope of your bid. More sophisticated exercises produce a more detailed and rigorous assessment of the intervention and its underlying assumptions.*

Our **Theory of Change** identifies how the package bid will deliver the outputs, outcomes and impacts.

**Context:**

Structural change in the economy and need for diversification  
Rising demand for outdoor leisure presenting growth opportunities for visitor economy  
Strong portfolio of natural and heritage assets, with potential to develop visitor offer and quality  
Pressures on key sites that need to be resolved to improve sustainability  
Opportunities to improve population health through access to green space

**Vision:**

*A network of superb assets, benefiting the whole community and supporting a heritage and nature-based visitor economy across the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor*

**Objectives:**

Objective 1: Developing the quality and value of the visitor economy  
Objective 2: Supporting wellbeing through access to and participation in heritage, nature and outdoor activity  
Objective 3: Enhancing the natural environment  
Objective 4: Increasing 'pride of place' within the context of the Vale of Neath's wider offer

**Inputs:**

Project feasibility - including Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor: Destination Development Framework (funded by Neath Port Talbot CBC)  
£17.755m Levelling Up Fund  
£1.973m Neath Port Talbot CBC  
Neath Port Talbot CBC project management resources

**Outputs:**

**Culture – LUF Standard outputs:**

Gnoll Estate Country Park

1991m<sup>2</sup> made up of:

- **1722m<sup>2</sup> cultural space created or improved.**
- **269m<sup>2</sup> heritage buildings renovated / restored**
- **Volunteering opportunities supported**

Pontneddfechan

- **696m<sup>2</sup> cultural space created or improved**
- **Volunteering opportunities supported**

**Vale of Neath custom outputs:**

- Improved access to and interpretation of heritage

- Improved access to natural environment
- Increased walking and active leisure opportunities
- New accommodation at Gnoll Estate Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan  
New and improved visitor facilities at Gnoll Estate Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan
- Parking solution at Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan

#### **Outcomes:**

##### **Culture – LUF standard outcomes:**

The early to medium term results will be:

- Change in the number of visitors to cultural venues
- Change in the number of cultural events
- Change in consumer spending at cultural events

Vale of Neath custom outcomes:

- Increased visitor numbers
- Increased overnight stays and associated visitor spend
- Increased take-up of/ participation in active leisure
- Increased public participation in interaction with heritage and natural environment
- Reduced pressure on key gateway site at Pontneddfechan
- Increased sustainability of asset at Gnoll Estate, through efficiency improvements at visitor centre and reductions in future maintenance risks

#### **Impact:**

The long-term results include:

- Quantifiable impacts: £45.6m in total quantifiable benefits over 30 years
- Improved wellbeing outcomes through better access to green and open space and active leisure
- Cumulative improvement to Vale of Neath visitor offer, 'de-risking' future public and private investment and raising the quality bar
- Strengthened 'pride in place' through improvements to key natural assets
- Environmental improvements through net positive gain to natural environment (via woodland and water management) and through reductions in congestion and pollution at Pontneddfechan

#### **Assumptions**

- Both projects proceed at the same time
- Continued growth in demand for active leisure and 'outdoors' visitor economy offer
- Growth in visitor economy is not contingent on any revenue subsidy (i.e., increased use generates sustainable income to support demand, and Gnoll accommodation is commercially viable)
- Benefits are not dependent on any other current/ planned investments, although will add value to and may be accelerated by further public or private investment

**4.3.5 For package bids** you should clearly explain how the component projects are aligned with each other and represent a coherent set of interventions.

*Where applicants are submitting a package bid they should explain how all the component projects work together. For example, a transport intervention and associated place-making intervention may together support greater footfall and access to a local high street. Package bids **should not** include multiple unrelated investments.*

The Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attractor package bid is a key element in developing a 'string of pearls' of key destinations in the Vale of Neath which focus on heritage and the great outdoors linked by sustainability supported by a collaborative / partnership approach with the public, private and third sectors creating pride in place and increasing life chances.

The two projects are aligned in terms of delivering the vision *'to create a market-led sustainable destination that builds on the key strengths and qualities of the Vale of Neath: the built heritage, natural environment and accessibility. The Vale of Neath will be known as a heritage and outdoor destination, where visitors will be able to engage in multiple experiences from visits to heritage sites of national importance through to exploring Waterfall Country with strong connectivity through an exemplar trails network and the Tennant and Neath Canals.'* The two projects are component parts which deliver greater benefits as a package bid than in isolation by creating a coherent set of interventions as outlined in the masterplan [REDACTED]

The package bid is set within the context of an overarching *framework which sets out the actions which need to be undertaken to enable the Vale of Neath to fully realise its potential as a visitor destination.*

Both investments will create and improve cultural space and renovate and restore heritage buildings leading to a change in the number of visitors to cultural venues and change in consumer spending at cultural venues.

**4.3.6** Applicants should also briefly set out how other public and private funding will be leveraged as part of the intervention.

*Please set out how other public and private funding will be leveraged as part of the intervention*

**Public sector funding**

The package bid will be supported by direct public sector funding in the form of £1,972,818 (10%) match funding from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Capital Programme.

**Private sector funding**

The package bid will be the catalyst for levering in private sector funding through a procurement exercise to appoint accommodation providers.

The package bid will act as a catalyst for further private and public sector investment in the Vale of Neath and wider area.

## 4.4. Alignment with the local and national context

In this section, applicants should clearly articulate their alignment with any relevant local and national strategies and objectives concerning investment, infrastructure and levelling up. Applicants should explicitly state how the bid will substantially support the delivery of local and national policy objectives.

**4.4.1** Explain how your bid aligns to and supports relevant local strategies (such as Local Plans, Local Economic Strategies, Local Cultural Strategies or Local Transport Plans) and local objectives for investment, improving infrastructure and levelling up.

**For Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales bids:** In addition, explain how your bid aligns to the strategic plans and objectives of devolved administrations.

*All bids including those with a regeneration element should explain how the bid aligns to and supports the delivery of relevant local strategies (such as local plans, local economic strategies, local cultural strategies or local transport plans) and local objectives for investment, improving infrastructure, local economic development and levelling up.*

*Bids with any transport element should, in addition, outline the specific local transport context and clearly explain how they support existing transport strategies and commitments in their area and nationally.*

*Similarly, bids with a culture and heritage element should align and support local (cultural, heritage, sports, community hub) strategies. This should include a rationale for the strategies it supports, explaining the current cultural/ heritage/ sports/ community facility offer and engagement, and how the strategies link into the place's broader growth and development strategies.*

*For bids within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, applicants should additionally make clear links to the relevant strategies from the Devolved Administrations.*

**Alignment to Wales' strategies and policies is detailed in section 4.4.2 and includes alignment to:**

Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan;  
Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020 – 2025;  
Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015;  
Our Valleys, Our Future – Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys.

### **Regional (South West Wales) strategies and policies**

#### **Regional Economic Framework for South West Wales**

The Regional Economic Framework for south west Wales has been developed by Welsh Government through collaboration and co-production with stakeholders from across the region and supports a more regionally focused model of economic development.

The LUF Vale of Neath package bid directly delivers against Mission 3 of the REF 'grow and sustain the south west Wales 'experience' offer' by maximising the '*Outstanding natural environment and attractive tourism and heritage offer*' as identified in the strengths / opportunities section of the Framework.

#### **South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan**

The South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan sets out the region's ambitions for a resilient, broad-based and sustainable economy – and outlines where the region will focus its efforts in the new few years to realise them.

The LUF Vale of Neath package bid directly delivers against Mission 3 'growing and sustaining the 'experience' offer'.

### **Local strategies and policies**

#### **Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027 'Recover, Reset, Renew'**

The Council's Corporate Plan 2022-2027 - 'Recover, Reset, Renew' has been informed by the views of people living and working in the county borough from the very earliest stages. The plan, approved in February 2022, is the result of six months of engagement and consultation to ensure that it is a collaboration between the council, partners, businesses, residents and visitors to the county borough.

It summarises the context in which it has been developed and sets out the council's strategic change programme for the next five years which has four well-being objectives:

- All children get the best start in life.
- All communities are thriving and sustainable.
- Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations.
- Local people are skilled and access high quality, green jobs.

The Vale of Neath LUF package bid will support the delivery of a number of the key actions:

- To 'work with the community, local partners, funders and other stakeholders to set a new strategic direction for heritage and culture and for tourism / destination management'
- To seek external funding opportunities to conserve and enhanced the local environment, culture and heritage
- Improving the visitor economy offer will support the development of the local economy and environment, will safeguard jobs and improve the well-being of local people, which in turn will lead to improved well-being in our children and young people.

The Corporate Plan continues "Heritage is integral to our culture, people's sense of identity and sense of belonging which in turn impacts on people's health, wellbeing and social inclusion. Heritage and culture also contributes to the economy, supporting paid employment, helping to attract inward investment and generating value through voluntary action – part of our wider place shaping agenda."

#### **Emerging Neath Port Talbot Culture Strategy**

Neath Port Talbot Council is developing a culture strategy that celebrates culture in all its forms and recognises the uniqueness of the area and its communities, its heritage, historic environment, the richness of the arts, sport and Welsh language.

The strategy will be a key document demonstrating a developed strategic commitment to culture and the role it can play for society, our citizens and visitors to the county. In summary, the strategy will create a vision: Creating a Neath Port Talbot where everyone has an equal chance to participate in the rich culture of the borough; be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous with a sense of belonging, citizenship and place.

The LUF Vale of Neath package bid is aligned to the emerging strategy.

#### **Neath Port Talbot Economic Recovery Plan**

The LUF Vale of Neath package is directly aligned to the key action area of '*Quality and connected places: Investing in our town centres and communities, making the most of our environmental assets and their potential in the development of the visitor economy, and improving connectivity to work and learning*'

#### **Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan 2015 – 2020**

The current Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan (DMP) was launched in 2015 and ran until 2020. A new DMP the county borough is being commissioned during 2022.

The DMP is a business plan for building and managing the visitor economy for the county borough - it captures and presents the evidence, information, learnings and priority actions to grow and develop the local visitor economy. The DMP will be up-dated in line with new priorities and the needs of the tourism industry in the county borough. Some of the key messages in the Plan and subsequent consultation with the tourism industry include:

- The need to increase the number of the higher spending visitors who are looking for new and varied experiences
- Converting day visitors to overnight staying tourists
- The need to strengthen the year-round appeal and accessibility of places to visit
- The need to ensure that the area attracts and invests in new high-profile product development in particular in the valleys areas in order to future-proof the tourism economy and attract new visitor markets, high quality accommodation and attractions are specifically highlighted in the DMP
- Improve the quality of existing visitor experiences through the development of a distinct sense of place

The LUF Vale of Neath package bid is aligned to the current and emerging DMP.

#### **Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011 – 2026 (Adopted January 2016)**

The LDP provides the local policy framework for the development and conservation needs of the area - Council has an important role in securing the conservation of the historic environment while ensuring that it accommodates and remains responsive to present day needs.

The LUF Vale of Neath package bid is aligned to delivering the policy framework of the LDP.

#### **Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy (DARE) Strategy**

The LUF Vale of Neath package bid is aligned to the Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy (DARE) strategy's vision to introduce a series of interventions and improvement measures across the County Borough to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits and opportunities that the decarbonisation agenda provides.

**4.4.2** Explain how the bid aligns to and supports the UK Government policy objectives.

**For Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:** In addition, explain how your bid aligns to any specific policy objectives, legal and statutory commitments relevant to the devolved administrations.

*Applicants should explain how the bid aligns with UK Government policy objectives, including the missions set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, and legal and statutory*

*commitments, such as the Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy and the target to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions for 2050.*

*Bids should be aligned to and support Net Zero goals: for instance, be based on low or zero carbon best practice; adopt and support innovative clean tech and/or support the growth of green skills and sustainable supply chains.*

*Bids should set out how they will minimise any negative environmental impact and where they are promoting positive environmental choices*

*Bids should consider how projects can work with the natural environment to achieve project objectives – considering at a minimum the project's impact on our country's natural assets and nature, as well as the resilience of any capital and infrastructure project to potential hazards such as flooding.*

*Transport applications in particular should clearly explain their carbon benefits. For bids involving regeneration and town centre investment, relevant strategies may include the UK Industrial Strategy, Local Industrial Strategies, National Infrastructure Strategy, Strategic Economic Plans, Local Plans, place-specific regeneration strategies or housing plans. Applicants may also reference alignment with Covid-19 recovery plans.*

*For bids within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, applicants should additionally make clear links to the relevant strategies from the Devolved Administrations*

## **UK Government strategies and policies**

### **Levelling Up White Paper**

The LUF Vale of Neath package bid is aligned to the UK Government Levelling Up White Paper (Feb 2022) and delivers directly against the aim 'restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging'

The projects within this package bid will address Mission 9: By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

The Levelling Up Technical Annex indicates that achieving this Mission is related to capital investment to restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they are slipping.

Local area satisfaction is connected to a number of variables including community engagement, local heritage, engagement in cultural life, access and quality of local amenities, and quality of town centres. The Vale of Neath interventions are essential component in the Council's overarching master plan to 'building stronger and more cohesive communities.' Mission 9 is about strengthening social and institutional capital in left-behind areas, both crucial elements in driving long-term levelling up outcomes which this Vale of Neath package bid will deliver by tackling disparities in access to culture and the Vale of Neath will form part of the national culture offer by improving the 'offer' in the area.

### **Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener**

The LUF Vale of Neath package bid will be designed, constructed and operated in line with net zero and wider environmental ambitions. The projects will demonstrate low or zero carbon best practice, adopt and support innovative clean tech and support the growth of green skills and sustainable supply chains. The projects will align to the principles of the Foundational and Circular economy.

The projects will work with the natural environment to achieve project objectives – both projects have biodiversity and nature experts as part of the project working groups.

### **UK Government Tourism Recovery Plan**

The LUF Vale of Neath package bid is aligned to the UK Government Tourism Recovery Plan as it will contribute to developing a 'growing, dynamic and sustainable tourism sector reaching its full potential and driving growth in every nation and region of the UK.

### **UK Government's Plan for Wales**

The LUF Vale of Neath package bid is aligned to the Plan for Wales as it delivers against the UK Government's key commitments to support and deliver new opportunities for jobs, growth and innovation.

As part of this commitment is the Levelling Up Fund which will invest in local infrastructure, local transport and investing in cultural and heritage assets.

### **Wales national strategies and policies**

#### **Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan**

The Welsh Government has committed to support the four 'foundation' sectors of the Wales economy – tourism, food, retail and care - acknowledging that for some parts of Wales the foundation sectors are the local economy. The Plan notes:

'Our foundation sectors will draw on opportunities that our unique historic and natural heritage provides and promote and protect these precious assets ... '

The plan also notes that the connections between the foundation sectors and quality of place have important economic impacts.

The LUF package bid will support this plan by developing the historic and natural heritage assets of the Vale of Neath which will develop the socio-economic benefits of the tourism / visitor economy for the area and Wales.

#### **Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020 – 2025**

The ambition in the Welcome to Wales Strategy is 'to grow tourism for the good of Wales'. In contrast to pure economic targets, the goals for WTW will be economic growth, environmental sustainability, social and cultural enrichment, health benefits, satisfaction of visitors and locals. The core Wales offer is defined as Outstanding Natural Landscapes, Creative Culture and Epic Adventure.

Visit Wales is encouraging the sector to combine a local-first focus in terms of 'sense of place', culture, community engagement and benefit, local supply chains, home-grown

skills and businesses with a 'world' perspective in terms of breadth of vision, quality comparisons, welcome, environmental awareness.

A central and strategic mission for the plan is to delight visitors and locals in equal measure, the plan highlights that to do this the sector needs to develop in a way which improves the quality of the visitor experience across Wales and also benefits local people.

The action plan outlines three key challenges to enable Wales to develop the visitor economy sustainably up to 2025:

Seasonality – evidence indicates that certain areas of Wales are busy in peak season and more needs to be done to grow off peak tourism;

Spend – the fundamental challenge is to encourage visitors to spend longer and spend more

Spread – more needs to be done to encourage visitors to discover new areas of Wales.

The LUF package bid will address all three key challenges by creating a year round visitor offer, developing infrastructure to encourage overnight stays to encourage visitors to spend more and for longer and developing an enhanced tourism offer to develop new areas to visit.

### **Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act has a strategic objective of improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

The Vale of Neath LUF package bid aligns to the seven 'wellbeing goals' as it will deliver in a sustainable way socio-economic benefits for the area, the interventions will be designed and delivered to maintain and enhance biodiversity, the interventions will be inclusive and accessible to all, it will encourage physical and mental wellbeing, it will celebrate the Welsh language, culture and heritage,

**A Prosperous Wales:** An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work;

**A Resilient Wales:** A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change);

**A More Equal Wales:** A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances);

**A Healthier Wales:** A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood;

**A Wales of Cohesive Communities:** Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities;

**A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language:** A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation;

**A Globally Responsible Wales:** A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

### **Our Valleys, Our Future – Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys**

Our Valleys, Our Future Delivery Plan sets the programme and actions to contribute to the three over-arching priorities for the Valleys Regional Park:

1. Good quality jobs and skills to do them
2. Better public services

### 3. My local community – Valleys Regional Park

The Vale of Neath LUF package bid will deliver against the key element of the Valleys Regional Park in the provision of opportunities to improve health and wellbeing, social cohesion, increase people's knowledge and care of their environment and increase the economic value of recreation.

**4.4.3** Where applicable explain how the bid complements / or aligns to and supports existing and / or planned investments in the same locality.

*Applicants should explain how the LUF investment will complement/align to and support other investments from different funding streams.*

*Applicants should consider the alignment of their bid with other planned/committed investments in the same location, detailing how additionality will be granted through LUF investment and duplication avoided.*

*Where, for example, the LUF investment represents a first step in the implementation of a place's regeneration/town centre strategy the application should demonstrate how the bid fits into the overall vision and would be a catalyst for transformation.*

*Funding streams could include but are not limited to:*

- *LUF Round 1*
- *Towns Fund (including Future High Streets Competition)*
- *City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Fund*
- *Major Road Network*
- *Large Local Major Schemes*
- *City and Growth Deals*
- *Bus transformation funding*
- *Cycling and Walking funding*
- *Forthcoming UKSPF investment plans and any Community Renewal Fund investments*
- *Freeports*
- *High Streets Heritage Action Zones*
- *Heritage Action Zones*
- *Transforming Places Through Heritage*
- *Heritage Horizon Awards*
- *Cultural Development Fund*
- *Museums Estates and Development Fund (MEND)*
- *Libraries Improvement Fund*
- *Discover England Fund*
- *Great Places Scheme*
- *Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund*
- *UK City of Culture bids*
- *Create Growth Programme*
- *Creative People and Places*
- *Arts Council England capital investment programme*

*And any investment available by devolved administrations.*

The LUF Vale of Neath package bid is part of a **wider masterplan** as set out in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 'Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor' with a focus on two key areas: heritage and the great outdoors, with an underlying thread linked to sustainability. The Vale of Neath will be known as a heritage and outdoor destination, where visitors will be able to engage in multiple experiences from visits to heritage sites of national importance, explore Waterfall Country and a network of Canal trails. The LUF package will be the catalyst to unlock future developments and other funding streams including private sector.

The LUF Vale of Neath package bid aligns to a number of key investments, including:

The emerging Neath Port Talbot Culture Strategy

Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan mapping out investment activity against funding streams including Lottery, Arts Council for Wales, Visit Wales,

Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing Plan – Communities and Heritage priority

UK Shared Prosperity Fund – valley and rural communities and heritage and cultural improvements are priority areas for support for Neath Port Talbot

The Vale of Neath package bid will provide an improved visitor offer for the increased footfall to the areas as a result of the emerging Freeports proposal

The Vale of Neath package bid will add value to the City Region investment in the area, creating an improved visitor offer

The Vale of Neath package will complement and add value to a number of strategic developments including Wildfox resort in the Afan Valley, Global Centre of Rail Excellence (GCRE), canals development

The Vale of Neath package will align to Active Travel networks

Add value to the 'Green infrastructure' Community Renewal Fund project

Welsh Government Transforming Towns investment in Town Centres

CADW programme of events and interventions

**4.4.4** Please explain how the bid aligns to and supports the government's expectation that all local road projects will deliver or improve cycling and walking infrastructure and include bus priority measures (unless it can be shown that there is little or no need to do so). Cycling elements of proposals should follow the government's cycling design guidance which sets out the standards required.

*If the bid does not contain any transport related elements this question is not applicable.*

*Where bids include local road projects, the intervention should deliver or improve cycling and walking infrastructure and include bus priority measures or give a sufficient explanation as to why this is not necessary.*

*Applicants submitting bids with local road projects should familiarise themselves with DFT's 'Better Deal for Bus Users', 'Bus Back Better' and 'Gear Change' strategies.*

*If applicants are proposing any cycling infrastructure within their bid, it must adhere to the government's cycling design guidance:*

- For England and Northern Ireland
- For Scotland
- For Wales

N/A

**4.4.5** Please tick to confirm which of the following Levelling Up White Paper Missions (p.120-21) your project contributes to:

*Applicants should tick each of the Levelling Up White Paper Missions the project will contribute towards and then provide a short sentence to demonstrate how the bid contributes to the mission.*

*Multiple missions can be selected if applicable*

- Living Standards
- Research and Development (R&D)
- Transport Infrastructure - Digital Connectivity
- Education
- Skills
- Health
- Wellbeing
- Pride in Place
- Housing
- Crime
- Local Leadership

And write a short sentence to demonstrate how your bid contributes to the Mission(s).

The projects within this package bid will address Mission 9: By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

The Levelling Up Technical Annex indicates that achieving this Mission is related to capital investment to restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they are slipping.

Local area satisfaction is connected to a number of variables including community engagement, local heritage, engagement in cultural life, access and quality of local amenities, and quality of town centres. The Vale of Neath interventions are essential component in the Council's overarching master plan to 'building stronger and more cohesive communities.' Mission 9 is about strengthening social and institutional capital in left-behind areas, both crucial elements in driving long-term levelling up outcomes which this Vale of Neath package bid will deliver by tackling disparities in access to culture and the Vale of Neath will form part of the national culture offer by improving the 'offer' in the area.

## Part 5 Economic Case

All costs and benefits must be compliant or in line with **HMT's Green Book, DfT Transport Analysis Guidance** and **DLUHC Appraisal Guidance**. Please also see **Technical Note**.

### 5.1 Appropriateness of data sources and evidence

5.1.1 Please provide up to date evidence to demonstrate the scale and significance of local problems and issues.  
(500 words)

#### Supporting a more diverse economy

The Vale of Neath was one of the first parts of the UK to industrialise, and the legacy of this is an important part of its heritage offer. However in recent decades, deindustrialisation has seen rapid economic restructuring: between 1998 and 2010, the manufacturing share of output in Neath Port Talbot fell from 37% to 25%.

This presents a significant economic challenge. Resident pay is below the Wales and UK averages, just 28% of the 16-64 population are qualified to NVQ4+ (compared with 43% in the UK overall); there is a 5pp gap between local and UK economic activity rates; and the enterprise density rate (the number of businesses per 10,000 working age residents) is less than half that of the UK. Parts of the Vale of Neath experience significant deprivation: the LSOA containing most of Gnoll Estate (Neath North 3) is in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in Wales, and concentrations of disadvantage are especially high in parts of the Upper Valleys, including much of Waterfall Country.

In that context, the growth of the visitor economy is an important opportunity for diversification. Currently, the visitor economy supports around 1,600 FTE jobs in Neath Port Talbot and it is regarded as a 'developing tourist destination'. Between 2010 - 2019, the economic impact of tourism increased by 14.8% to £129m, with rising interest in the value of the Vale of Neath's natural environment. But only about 11% of all visitors stay overnight: there is an opportunity to increase local value through more overnight stays and by raising the quality of the offer.

The visitor economy has been resilient, despite losses in the short-term during the Covid pandemic. There is also evidence that the visitor economy is an important source of jobs at all levels, including at 'entry level', and with opportunities for supported employment in the hospitality sector.

#### Sustainably managing the impacts

Around 300,000 people visit Waterfall Country every year. However, this places pressure on particular sites, creating an environmental challenge and risking undermining the quality of the visitor experience. This problem is especially pronounced at Pontneddfechan, where about 10,000 cars a year use an informal parking area, with negative impacts on roadside parking and village amenity.

#### Supporting health and wellbeing

Healthy life expectancy in Neath Port Talbot is in the worst quintile of local authorities in the UK (for comparison, there is a 10-year gap in female healthy life expectancy between NPT (59.4) and Surrey (69.4)). 'Healthy lifestyle behaviours' are also less prevalent in Neath Port Talbot than in other parts of South West Wales. But there is widespread evidence on the effects that access to nature can have on health, through improved mental wellbeing and in reducing obesity and cardiovascular disease. As well as benefits to the visitor economy, our natural assets can contribute to improving the wellbeing of local people.

5.1.2 Please demonstrate the quality assurance of data analysis and evidence for explaining the scale and significance of local problems and issues. Please demonstrate how any data, surveys and evidence is robust, up to date and unbiased.  
(500 words)

#### General data sources

Data on Neath Port Talbot's general economy relating to pay, productivity and economic activity is taken from ONS (via NOMIS and StatsWales). Deprivation data is contained within the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019), published by the Welsh Government. A detailed analysis of the economic health of the county borough is contained in the evidence annex to the Neath Port Talbot *Economic Recovery Plan* (2022); a more extensive regional economic overview is set out in the Economic Landscape Review prepared as part of the *South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan* (2022).

Tourism employment and visitor numbers for Neath Port Talbot is derived from STEAM tourism modelling data and is reported in the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor *Destination Development Framework*. As part of the development of this proposal, additional analysis of the STEAM data was prepared specifically for Waterfall Country. Tourism value data is also drawn from Welsh Government tourism performance reports (2020) and an industry study on the economic impact of self-catering accommodation (Frontline, 2021)

Health data is sourced from Welsh Government (*Summary Statistics for South West Wales Region*, 2020) and the Health Foundation Evidence Hub (*Healthy Life Expectancy*, 2022). We supplemented this with a review of the evidence on the relationship between green spaces and health (see *Urban Green Spaces and Health: A Review of the Evidence* (World Health Organisation, 2016) and *Green Space for Health: Evaluation Report* (Centre for Sustainable Healthcare/ NHS Forest/ University of Suffolk, 2021)). Specifically to Wales, the wider health and environmental benefits of investment in green spaces are set out in *Local Green Spaces* (Natural Resources Wales, 2021).

In considering the health impacts of the proposed investments, we drew on the Green Infrastructure Valuation toolkit (Natural Economy Northwest/ CABE/ Natural England), which draws on a range of datasets and evaluation evidence to underpin its calculations.

#### Bespoke data sources

In addition, the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor *Destination Development Framework* and *Gnoll Estate Accommodation Study*, both commissioned from Planning Solutions Consulting in 2022, analysed local data (e.g., on visitors to Pontneddfechan and Gnoll Estate) and triangulated this with the published sources cited above to estimate demand. As part of this, the Council also commissioned a survey of active leisure operators in Waterfall Country to understand the potential scale and nature of demand for overnight accommodation: this informed the *Destination Development Framework* and underpinned the proposals for Pontneddfechan.

#### Quality assurance

All published materials consulted are from Government sources or other reputable consultancies and industry bodies. Data used in the *Destination Development Framework* is triangulated with multiple sources and is caveated in the report appropriately.

5.1.3 Please demonstrate that the data and evidence supplied is appropriate to the area of influence of the interventions.

The specific investment from the Levelling Up Fund is focused on Gnoll Estate Country Park, Neath and Pontneddfechan at the northern end of the Vale of Neath. However, the two projects are contributors to a wider network of assets that form part of the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor. We anticipate that these assets will add value to each other and will offer cumulative benefits. The 'area of influence' should therefore be seen as larger than the immediate vicinity of the two projects.

For the purposes of the economic appraisal, we assume that the 'area of impact' is Neath Port Talbot. This is reflected in the assumptions that we make regarding leakage of benefit to other areas. We think this is realistic, given that: i) both projects offer benefits to residents that live outside of the immediate vicinity of each site (e.g., Gnoll Estate is a 'strategic' asset used by residents across Neath, rather than just by the local community in which it is located); and ii) the package overall aims to increase visitor spend and employment within the county borough (and there is a range of hospitality opportunities to absorb spend).

The data on which we have drawn therefore mainly relates either to Neath Port Talbot overall, or to more local/ site specific level (e.g., in relation to visitor numbers). National data and research are used for comparative purposes, or to assess benefits that are hard to quantify using local sources (e.g., in relation to health outcomes).

## 5.2 Effectiveness of proposal in addressing problems

In this section applicants should clearly set out how the activity described in the bid will address the challenges identified.

**5.2.1** Please provide analysis and evidence to demonstrate how the proposal will address existing or anticipated future problems. Quantifiable impacts should be forecasted using a suitable model. Theory of Change evidence should be identified and referenced.  
(750 words)

Links between the problems and opportunities identified, the proposal and the expected impacts

*Objective 1: Developing the quality and value of the visitor economy*

**The challenge:** Loss of employment over several decades has had a negative economic impact. While manufacturing remains important, there is a continued need to diversify the employment base. The visitor economy provides a major opportunity, especially in the Vale of Neath and Waterfall Country. There has been recent success, with rising visitor numbers

(11% increase in 2010-19), and the growth of several successful businesses (e.g., the active leisure and leadership training company Call of the Wild, near Seven Sisters).

However, there is a shortage of quality accommodation in the Vale of Neath, impacting on our ability to attract overnight guests. Key 'gateway' sites lack the infrastructure to manage visitor volumes at key times. Some of our heritage is 'hidden', due to poor access and interpretation.

**How the package addresses the challenge:**

We will invest in additional visitor accommodation at Gnoll Estate and Pontneddfechan; heritage assets at the Gnoll and sustainable access to Waterfall Country; better visitor facilities; and at Pontneddfechan, new parking infrastructure.

**Expected impacts:** This will result in additional visitor numbers, including overnight stays. The visitor experience will be enhanced through easier access to nature, heritage and better infrastructure.

Additional visitor numbers will result in increased visitor spend locally, greater propensity for return trips and greater awareness of the quality of the offer. This will stimulate demand for commercial investment in active leisure, accommodation and the food and drink offer.

*Objective 2: Supporting wellbeing through access to and participation in heritage, nature and outdoor activity*

**The challenge:** There is a wealth of evidence on the positive relationship between outdoor activity, access to nature and green space and mental and physical health. This is recognised by Public Health Wales (*Making Space for Nature*, 2019). However, Neath Port Talbot performs poorly on many measures of population health, reflecting wider socio-economic characteristics. Encouraging access to open space is a priority, especially given the quality of the nearby offer.

**How the package addresses the challenge:** We seek to encourage greater awareness by local people of the assets that are 'on the doorstep', through better information, easier access and more opportunities for schools, community groups, etc. to get involved. This will include volunteering, which also offers positive health benefits.

**Expected impacts:** This should lead to better health outcomes, including 'measurable' improvements in cardiovascular conditions and mental health, and subjective wellbeing. These impacts will probably be greater as other assets in the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor come forward. It will be important in realising them that capital investment is accompanied by community outreach and marketing to ensure take-up.

*Objective 3: Enhancing the natural environment*

**The challenge:** The Vale of Neath has an outstanding natural environment. Quality has improved over time. But some key assets are in need of major reinvestment. Others (e.g., Rheola Estate) suffer from contamination from previous industry. We need to invest in the quality of the environment for its intrinsic value, as well as its economic potential.

**How the package addresses the challenge:** We will make positive environmental improvements. This includes improved management of woodland and water and better links

with land owned by the Woodland Trust at the Gnoll; high environmental standards in the visitor centre and accommodation; and measures to reduce the impacts of visitor numbers.

**Expected impacts:** This will result in 'natural capital' benefits. It will set a standard for future development, ensuring that as other assets in the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor come forward, they will also contribute to the quality of the environment. Environmental enhancement has a feedback loop into the visitor economy, since the natural environment is a key attractor.

*Objective 4: Increasing 'pride of place' within the context of the Vale of Neath's wider offer*

**The challenge:** The Gnoll Estate and Waterfall Country are a source of pride and identity: the history and quality of the Gnoll makes it more than '87 hectares of green space'. Local people value these assets: the challenges are sustaining quality, making them accessible to everyone; and responding to the changing ways people want to enjoy them.

**How the package addresses the challenge:** We will invest in better interpretation, access and community involvement, demonstrating commitment to the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor's future evolution.

**Expected impacts:** This will result in greater local engagement and participation, potentially leading to more diverse 'audiences'. It will add to greater pride in the wider area, and greater interest in wider regeneration.

#### Modelling forecasts

We explain our methodology in the next section (5.2.2).

**5.2.2** Please describe the robustness of the analysis and evidence supplied such as the forecasting assumptions, methodology and model outputs. Key factors to be covered include the quality of the analysis, the quality of the evidence and the accuracy and functionality of the models used.

#### Approach

In considering potential benefits, we started with a series of 'routes to impact' models, through which we worked through the links in the logic chain. We then considered evaluation evidence and research (as well as our own evidence) to examine different ways of measurement.

The Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor package bid seeks to increase the quality, scale and sustainability of the area's visitor economy. But it also has wider objectives, in promoting access to the natural environment and the health benefits that this brings, as well as the 'intrinsic' value of heritage and green space.

#### *Gnoll Estate Country Park*

There have been recent advances in considering natural capital in economic appraisal (see Natural Capital Committee, November 2020). The Government has also adopted guidance on *Valuing Heritage and Cultural Capital* (January 2021). Following this, we based our

approach to the Gnoll Estate Country Park on the *Green Infrastructure Valuation Toolkit* (GI-Val), recommended as an approach in the Natural Capital Committee report. This enables consideration of health and wellbeing impacts derived from improvements to green infrastructure, as well as benefits yielding a more conventional economic return.

In applying this methodology, we only monetised those benefits that are identified in the toolkit. For this reason, we did not assume (for example) monetised land value uplift to residents or employment benefits from tourism over and above the tourism impact calculation.

For visitor economy benefits, we based our assumptions on the recent *Gnoll Estate Country Park Accommodation Study* (May 2022) and *Destination Development Framework* (June 2022), both of which based projections on recent analysis of the visitor economy and bespoke survey work with local industry operators. Estimates of average visitor spend and economic contribution per stay were drawn from the *Wales Tourism Performance* study for 2019 (Welsh Government, 2020) and the *Economic Impact of the Self-Catering Sector to the Welsh Economy* (Frontline, 2021).

For health and community impacts, we used the values reported within the GI-Val toolkit, inflated where appropriate to 2022, and based on inputs to the model of the infrastructure to be provided at the Gnoll and the socio-economic characteristics of the surrounding area.

#### *Waterfall Country, Pontneddfechan*

The GI-Val toolkit cannot be applied at Pontneddfechan, since the project does not provide new green infrastructure. We based our assumptions of visitor numbers on the *Destination Development Framework*, plus direct employment numbers at the proposed retail offer and a recalculation of health benefits applying a partial use of the methodology within the GI-Val model. Given the early stages of plans for accommodation at Pontneddfechan, all estimates are subject to cautious optimism bias assumptions.

#### Robustness and limitations

We consider the visitor economy estimates and visitor economic contribution assumptions to be robust. They are based on detailed analysis of local demand and supply, include survey work carried out in spring 2022, and are linked with current Welsh Government impact estimates.

Other benefits calculated at the Gnoll use a recognised methodology. Appraisal of the impacts at Pontneddfechan are less robust, although we account for this through optimism bias in the appraisal.

### **5.3 Analysis of costs and benefits**

In this section applicants should describe and explain the costs and benefits in the relevant **Costings and Planning Workbook – Tables A – Economic Benefits and Table A - Economic Costs**. They should provide an explanation of how benefits and costs are analysed and estimated, and how this approach is proportionate for the proposal being submitted.

All costs and benefits must be compliant or in line with **HMT's Green Book** (including supplementary guidance), **DLUHC Appraisal Guidance**, and if appropriate **Transport Analysis Guidance**.

Package bids need to demonstrate both the overall package costs and benefits, and the disaggregated costs and benefits for each component project. Supplementary tables for component projects should be completed in full.

**5.3.1** Please explain how the economic costs of the bid have been calculated, including the whole life costs.

#### Capital costs

Costs have been drawn up by MJB Cost Consultants (appointed via Hiraeth Architects for Gnoll Estate and Pontneddfechan). The economic costs were subsequently developed in accordance with Treasury Green Book guidance. The key assumptions are:

- All costs and benefits are presented in 2022 constant prices
- Appraisal period: We anticipate that the projects will have an economic life of several decades, and contribute to a long-term strategy for the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor. We have therefore adopted a 30 year appraisal period, assuming that significant reinvestment may be needed after this point.
- Contingency and risk allowance; Contingency is included within the cost consultants' estimates at 10% of costs.
- Discount rate: This has been applied following HM Treasury's standard guidance at 3.5% of costs (and 1.5% on health benefits)
- Evaluation: We assume evaluation costs of £60,000. These are incorporated into the whole life costs of each project.
- Optimism bias of 15% is applied to the capital costs following Supplementary Green Book Guidance. The Supplementary Guidance does not give a benchmark optimism bias figure for open space projects, but for standard buildings, the upper bound capital expenditure optimism bias value is 24%. After mitigating factors were applied (e.g., previous experience and designated project management resource), optimism bias was reduced to 15%.

#### Revenue costs

The accommodation offer at Gnoll Estate Country Park is projected to make a modest surplus (inclusive of maintenance).

The capital improvements to Gnoll Estate are assumed to revenue-neutral: maintenance costs are already funded by Neath Port Talbot Council and ongoing revenue-neutrality is

included within the design brief. However, surplus from the accommodation offer and opportunities to gain increased revenue from the visitor centre, parking, EV charging, and potentially events and outdoor activities should provide an income stream to support ongoing reinvestment.



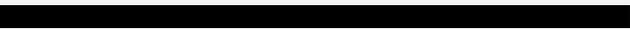
### Cost risks

Key cost risks are:

- Increased costs due to inflation and materials or labour shortage
- Costs associated with ground conditions, and other physical factors
- Delays: an important risk given the environmentally sensitive nature of the project
- Changes to specification to meet planning and user requirements. These will be addressed at later stages of the design process, in conjunction with further consultation.

**5.3.2** Please describe how the economic benefits have been estimated, including a discussion and evidence to support assumptions.

(750 words)

Economic benefits are estimated as follows. 



### Gnoll Estate Country Park

#### *Visitor economy impacts*

Proposals for the Gnoll Estate Country Park include a new visitor accommodation offer, consisting of 12 wooden accommodation pods, three high-quality self-catering units in the former potting sheds and larger self-catering accommodation in the Ranger's Cottage.

The Gnoll Estate *Visitor Accommodation Report (2022)* anticipates that these could 5,668 'bed nights' per year. We assume an economic impact of £191 per visitor per night, as per the *Economic Impact of the Self-Catering Sector to the Welsh Economy* study (2021), using the impact estimate for West Glamorgan. We assume net additionality of 0.675, based on 10% leakage (to account for spend taking place in Swansea and other neighbouring areas) and 25% displacement (to account for people who might otherwise have used existing accommodation elsewhere).

The *Destination Development Framework* also anticipates some 3,400 net additional visitors to Gnoll Estate Country Park travelling from more than 30 minutes' drive away. We assume daily spend per visitor of £39.49 (as per the *Wales Tourism Performance* study for 2019) and additionality at 0.675.

Combined, visitor accommodation impacts are £11.958 million NPV (including 10% optimism bias) over the appraisal period.

### *Local recreational benefits*

The Green Infrastructure Valuation Toolkit (GI Val, as described above) assumes a low 'willingness to pay' of around £1 per local visit for general recreation. This is applied to the additional 'local' visitors anticipated in the *Destination Development Framework* (i.e., those living within 30 minutes' drive of the park). Assuming low additionality of 0.5, this yields benefits of £276k NPV over the appraisal period.

### *Health and wellbeing benefits*

Using GI Val, we identify monetisable health benefits in the form of improved walking and cycling infrastructure impacting on reduced mortality, applied to all additional visitors to the Gnoll. GI Val's calculations rely on DfT 'cost of life' estimates, which we inflate to 2022 values. This yields benefits of £923k per year (or £19.769 million NPV over the appraisal period).

### *Volunteering*

We anticipate around 20 additional volunteering opportunities at Gnoll Estate, as a result of increased momentum behind groups such as Friends of the Gnoll, strengthened links (physically as well as in partnership terms) with the Woodland Trust, and new opportunities for engagement with heritage. Using GI Val's calculation of £15 per hour in volunteer benefits, we anticipate benefits of £14,400 per year (or £232k NPV over the appraisal period). In addition, there are likely to be individual wellbeing benefits to volunteering that are not captured in this calculation.

### Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan

#### *Visitor economy impacts*

We assume the *Destination Development Framework's* estimate of 9,461 potential bed nights, with additionality (as per the Gnoll) of 0.675, and average economic impact per visitor of 50% of that commanded at the Gnoll self-catering offer. As the proposals are at a relatively early stage, we also assume 25% optimism bias. The *Destination Development Framework* also anticipates an additional 5,995 day visitors, for which we make the same spend assumptions as for the Gnoll.

Combined, this yields total visitor economy impacts of £9.088 million NPV over the appraisal period.

#### *Employment benefits*

The new farm shop offer and visitor accommodation will support four FTE jobs. We assume GVA per job of 70% of the Neath Port Talbot all-industries average (reflecting relative sector productivity). This yields benefits of £134k per year (or £2.218m over the appraisal process).

### *Health and wellbeing benefits*

Although Pontneddfechan does not directly deliver new walking and cycling infrastructure, it will facilitate access to this. To approximate for the health benefits of this, we use the methodology contained in the GI-Val toolkit, although we apply a relatively low level of additionality (0.5) to account for the likelihood that many new visitors would have otherwise accessed outdoor recreation elsewhere, along with 25% optimism bias. This yields benefits of £2.062m NPV over the appraisal period.

### *Net revenue*



### Construction

There will be some benefits arising from both projects in the construction phase. These benefits should be heavily discounted (and are considered as 'adjusted' benefits below). They account for £880k and £558k NPV at the Gnoll and Pontneddfechan respectively.

## **5.4 Value for money**

In this section applicants should set out the Value for Money (VfM) of their bid, taking account of monetised and non-monetised impacts and risks and uncertainties.

Prior to completing this section the application should complete the relevant **Costings and Planning Workbook – Table A – VfM**

**5.4.1** Please provide a summary of the overall Value for Money of the proposal. This should include reporting of Benefit Cost Ratios (BCR).

If a BCR has been estimated, please provide the BCR of the proposal below.

If you only have one BCR, please enter this against the 'initial' BCR.

'Initial' BCR (single bid)

'Adjusted' BCR (single bid)

Based on the analysis of costs and benefits set out above, we have estimated value for money through the calculation of benefit:cost ratios for each of the two projects and for the package overall.   


Overall, the package represents high value for money.

### Overall package

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### Initial benefits and adjusted benefits

Initial benefits include: visitor economy benefits (through increased overnight stays and day visitors); health and wellbeing benefits; benefits arising from volunteering and employment; and local recreational use.

Adjusted benefits include benefits arising from construction (which are substantially discounted).

### Commentary on the economic appraisal of each project

[REDACTED]

The BCR for the Gnoll Estate Country Park is High (adjusted Benefit: Cost Ratio = 2.58 (based on the value for money category guidance issued by the UK Department for Transport). Most of the monetised impacts relate to visitor economy and health benefits.

The BCR for Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan is also High (adjusted Benefit: Cost Ratio = 2.06)

[REDACTED]

**5.4.2** Please describe the non-monetised impacts the bid will have and provide a summary of how these have been assessed, including the expected scale of these impacts. These will be factored into the overall Value for Money assessment of the bid.

Significant non-monetised impacts include:

#### Spillover and 'catalytic' benefits

As well as generating benefits as a result of investment at Gnoll Estate Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan, the package aims to generate cumulative benefits across the Vale of Neath. This is set out in the Strategic Case: essentially, the proposition is that the two projects are part of a network of assets which will be collectively promoted and developed over time. We anticipate that additional visitors to Gnoll Estate will also visit Aberdulais Falls (for example), and will be likely to make return trips to other destinations in the area. Over time, this will increase the 'density' of the offer, so that the overall mix is greater than the sum of its parts, helping to improve perceptions of the area and strengthen its wider investment 'brand'.

To avoid double counting, we have not monetised the impact of this. However, with effective marketing and product development (as proposed in the *Destination Development*

*Framework*), the 'catalytic' effects of investment could be significant, as business cases strengthen for other schemes.

#### Residential land values and amenity

There is evidence that access to green space increases land values (see ONS research on *Valuing Green Space in Urban Areas* (2019)). Investment at Gnoll Estate Country Park could have a positive effect on residential values, if the amenity value is increased, although as the park already exists, most of the 'value' is already captured.

There will be benefits to residents in Pontneddfechan through resolution of the current parking challenge, which is a major local issue. This will bring a direct benefit to residents (avoiding anti-social and dangerous parking), and improve general environmental quality. The village will also gain amenity value from the proposed local shop (not separately monetised, since the employment benefits capture the value).

#### Environmental benefits through improved management of the asset at Gnoll Estate

Investment at Gnoll Estate should lead to natural environment benefits, in terms of better management of the woodland and watercourses and opportunities to enhance biodiversity. This should be assessed at the next stage of the design process, but sustainability and enhancement of the natural environment is central to the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor proposition.

In addition, there will be energy efficiency benefits through the improved Visitor Centre at the Gnoll Estate, and through EV charging points.

#### Educational benefits

Better interpretation and accessibility should support school visits, holiday clubs, etc. Pontneddfechan will also encourage young people's access to active leisure. These benefits are partly counted in local visitor numbers, although engagement with heritage and nature should have broader impacts.

#### 'Intrinsic' benefits in heritage value

*Valuing Culture and Heritage Capital* includes 'willingness to pay' as an accepted way of monetising the value of heritage assets. At the Gnoll Estate, we assume that 'user' value is already captured in the visitor economy benefits. However, the Estate's heritage is of intrinsic value (locally and to South Wales in terms of the network of nineteenth century industrialists' estates), and better awareness will make a wider contribution to 'pride in place'.

**5.4.3** Please provide an assessment of the risks and uncertainties that could affect the overall Value for Money of the bid.

Key risks and uncertainties impacting on the value for money of the package include:

- **Changes in visitor demand.** A substantial part of the value for money of the package is based on additional visitors, and the appraisal is quite sensitive to falls in numbers.

Visitor modelling has been carried out in detail, with the benefit of bespoke surveys and the estimates we have used are conservative. But it will be important to link the new offer with active marketing and implementation if the *Destination Development Framework*.

- **Additional costs**, as a result of inflation, labour and materials shortages and unforeseen issues in the construction process. Designs are currently in the early stages of development, and these issues will be considered in the next stage.
- **Construction delays**. This is an important risk, given the need for works to be carried out in a sensitive natural environment, outside of nesting seasons, etc. Delay would mean a consequential delay in benefits realisation, as well as potential cost implications.
- **Competition** from other potential visitor attractions. We think that this is a minor risk, given the scope for different attractions and landscapes to add value to each other: the aim is that the success of the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor will lead to further complementary investments in neighbouring authorities.

**5.4.4** We would expect an Appraisal Summary Table, to be completed to enable a full range of impacts to be considered. This should be consistent with the relevant appraisal guidance for the bid.

**For package bids**, please provide an Appraisal Summary Table for each component project. For Regeneration or Cultural bids, the Appraisal Summary table should be consistent with the DLUHC appraisal guidance. For Transport bids it should be consistent the **Transport Analysis Guide**.

Any additional evidence to support your responses to this section should be referenced within your responses (5.1.1 – 5.4.3) and attached as a single annex.

## Part 6 Deliverability

### 6.1 Financial

Within this section applicants are required to provide clear and robust details of the financial aspects of the bid, including sources, secured status, and type of match funding, project costs, financial risks and mitigation measures, and how funding is structured – e.g. if you are intending to further disburse the LUF grant with bid partners.

Management and consultancy costs should be clearly shown within the project budget, and any work to be sub-contracted explained within the application form.

Prior to completing this section applicants should complete the **relevant Costings and Planning Workbook** - Table B – Funding Profile and Table C – Cost Estimates

**6.1.1** Please confirm the total value of your bid.

Total value of bid (LUF + match funding) = £19,728,177

All expenditure will be defrayed by March 2025

**6.1.2** Please confirm the value of the capital grant you are requesting from LUF.

Total value of the capital grant requesting from LUF = £17,755,177

We can confirm that LUF grant will only fund direct capital costs associated with the delivery of the project.

**6.1.3** Please confirm the value of match funding secured. Where match funding is still to be secured please set out details below. If there any funding gaps please set out your plans for addressing these.

*Local match funding contributions will be taken into account during assessment. A local contribution of 10% or higher (local authority and/or third party) of the bid costs is encouraged.*

*Match funding can include a mix of public and private sector contributions.*

*Applicants should note that a contribution is expected from private sector stakeholders, such as developers, if they stand to benefit from a specific bid.*

*Applicants are encouraged to submit evidence of match funding e.g. match funding letters. Match funding letters should be signed by an appropriate authority, clearly reference the amount of funding committed to the project (within the scope of the LUF bid) and set out any conditions that may apply to the funding.*

*Applicants should explain what if any funding gaps there are, and what further work needs to be done to secure third party funding contributions.*

*Please clearly set out your approach to raising additional funds.*

Neath Port Talbot Council has committed 10% match funding for the package bid  
The confirmed match funding total is £1,972,818.

**6.1.4** If you are intending to make a land contribution (via the use of existing owned land), please provide further details below and confirm who currently owns the land, details of any restrictions and the estimated monetary value.

N/A

**6.1.5** Please confirm if your budget includes unrecoverable VAT costs and describe what these are, providing further details below.  
(250 words)

The package bid budget is net of VAT. All VAT will be paid and recovered in full from HMRC.

**6.1.6** Please describe what benchmarking or research activity you have undertaken to help you determine the costs you have proposed in your budget. Please advise on any assumptions.

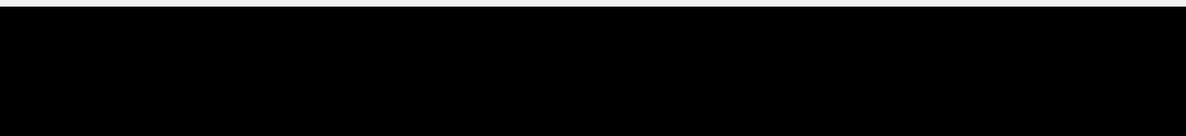
*For each cost item, applicants should provide a clear explanation of the benchmarking/market research undertaken to support the proposed cost, including details of any assumptions.*

### **Gnoll Estate Country Park**

The elements of the cost plan correspond to the projects set out in the Environment Partnerships Project Overview drawing D945.100.001.

The budget cost estimates prepared by MJB Associates for the Gnoll project are based on preliminary studies undertaken by Hiraeth Architecture Ltd., The Environment Partnership, Red Kite Environment with the Letha Consultancy and Mann Williams Civil and Structural Engineers.

No detail surveys, intrusive investigations or detail design has been undertaken to date and the costs provide an 'order of cost' only at this stage.



Contractors preliminaries costs are included in the estimates at 20% of construction costs. This provides for site administration of the project and includes an allowance for the dispersed and remote locations of the projects.

Professional fees are included at 12% of costs and includes for the extensive survey works which will be required for the schemes.



### **Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan**

The cost plans prepared by MJB Associates for the Pontneddfechan project are based on preliminary studies undertaken by Hiraeth Architecture Ltd., The Environment Partnership, Red Kite Environment with the Letha Consultancy and Mann Williams Civil and Structural Engineers.

No detail surveys, intrusive investigations or detail design has been undertaken to date and the costs provide an 'order of cost' only at this stage.

**A cost summary and brief scope of works is included in Section 2 of the cost report**

Contractors preliminaries costs are included in the estimates at 20% of construction costs. This provides for site administration of the project and includes an allowance for the dispersed and remote locations of the project.

Professional fees are included at 12% of costs and includes for the extensive survey works which will be required for the schemes.



**6.1.7** Please provide information on margins and contingencies that have been allowed for and the rationale behind them.

*Applicants should provide a clear explanation of the margins and contingencies that have been allowed for and justification for these being realistic.*

**Gnoll Estate Country Park**

Contingencies are included in the estimates at 10% of construction costs allowing 5% for design development and 5% for construction contingency.

The costs are calculated at current day costs and are realistic. An allowance of 10% has been added in the Cost Summaries for increased tender costs to second quarter 2023. This percentage increase is based on a 4.5% increase in tender prices as projected by the Building Cost Information Service published by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and an allowance of 5.5% increase to update to current tender costs.

**Pontneddfechan**

Contingencies are included in the estimates at 10% of construction costs allowing 5% for design development and 5% for construction contingency

The costs are calculated at current day costs and are realistic. An allowance of 10% has been added in the Cost Summaries for increased tender costs to second quarter 2023. This percentage increase is based on a 4.5% increase in tender prices as projected by the Building Cost Information Service published by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and an allowance of 5.5% increase to update to current tender costs.

**6.1.8** Please set out below, what the main financial risks are and how they will be mitigated, including how cost overruns will be dealt with and shared between non-UK Government funding partners. (You should cross refer to the Risk Register).

*Bids should highlight the key financial risks from the Risk Register and detail how cost overruns will be dealt with and shared between non-UK Government funding partners.*

*Any risk mitigations proposed should be relevant, costed and timely. In addition, applicants should detail the contingencies they intend to put in place in the event that mitigations are unsuccessful.*

*Any impacts on communities, cultural groups and local transport groups such as disruption or displacement should also be considered, with impacts costed and mitigations or compensations identified.*

**Financial Risks:**

The main financial risks and mitigation are included below and are cross referenced against the **risk register** [REDACTED]

**FR1) Increased capital costs due to construction market inflation, market disinterest**

Mitigated by: effective project management and budget monitoring / realistic contingencies and change control processes / early engagement with contractors / monitoring local supply chains / realistic contingencies.

**FR2) Significant increase in material prices**

Mitigated by: robust cost plan to check affordability / regular cost reporting / effective project management / monitoring local supply chains.

**FR3) Operational risks / failure to realise cash-releasing benefits**

Mitigated by: costs and benefits to be reviewed at regular stages / regular budget monitoring / effective project management.

**FR4) Running costs exceed expectations**

Mitigated by: regular budget monitoring and reporting / effective project management.

**Covid 19 impact on delivering project – time resources**

Mitigated by: strategy to be agreed with Contractor – regular contractor client meetings / effective programme and project management.

All financial risks will be monitored and updated with mitigating control actions through the Directorate Management Team (DMT) and regularly presented to the Council’s Corporate Directors Group (CDG) which includes the Council’s Chief Finance Officer who will determine any actions necessary to address identified issues arising from the risk register in relation to financial risks.

**Impact on the Local Community**

Construction works will be phased and carried out considerately, taking into account the needs of communities, cultural groups, residents, businesses and the environment. Early and consistent communications will be a key feature of delivery.

There is no cost associated with any impacts associated with the works and no compensation events have been identified. This will be monitored through the robust project management processes.

**6.1.9** If you are intending to award a share of your LUF grant to a partner via a contract or sub-grant, please advise below. NB: You must ensure any further disbursement of the grant is done so in accordance with subsidy controls and public procurement rules. (750 words)

N/A

**6.1.10** What legal / governance structure do you intend to put in place with any bid partners who have a financial interest in the project? (750 words)

N/A

**6.2 Commercial**

Within this section, applicants should set out their commercial and procurement strategy for effectively awarding and managing any contracts for goods, works or services to be funded by the grant. The strategy should include all key procurement lifecycle activities, timescales and who will lead on procurement / contractor management.

**6.2.1** Please summarise your commercial structure, risk allocation and procurement strategy which sets out the rationale for the strategy selected and other options considered and discounted.

(1500 words)

*Applicants should set out their procurement approach to managing the project. The procurement route should also include an explanation as to why it is appropriate for a bid of the scale and nature proposed.*

*Please note - all procurements must be made in accordance with all relevant legal requirements. Applicants must describe their approach to ensuring full compliance in order to discharge their legal duties.*

*The procurement strategy should be proportionate with value of the project and should cover the full procurement cycle.*

*All applicants should clearly set out:*

- *Which key contracts will be procured*
- *What pre-market engagement/research activity has been undertaken to date or is planned*
- *Whether or not a health check of the market has been undertaken to identify any potential capability or limitations that may impact on project/procurement timescales and how these will be mitigated.*
- *What procurement approaches have been explored or discounted*
- *What route to market is proposed, including an explanation as to why it is appropriate for scale / nature of the contract/s?*
- *Set how you will effectively manage your contracts with key suppliers/contractors to ensure quality and manage/mitigate supply chain risks.*

*The procurement strategy should also demonstrate alignment with Net Zero ambitions, and where appropriate, include details of a sustainable approach such as:*

- *use of innovative clean technology*
- *support the growth of green skills*
- *use of sustainable supply chains*

*All applicants should set out how contracts will be procured and managed effectively; in accordance with procurement best practice and all relevant legal requirements including public contract regulations 2015 and 2020 amendments (post EU exit) and other appropriate legislation including the Modern Slavery Act, as applicable.*

***Additionally, local authority applicants should:***

- *demonstrate that they have considered government policies and guidance including the Sourcing and Consultancy Playbooks and Construction Playbook.*
- *demonstrate innovative procurement, including for example how they have factored **social value** into their procurements*

- *set out in their procurement strategy and risk register how government guidance on Resolution Planning<sup>[1]</sup> has been considered.*

*For package bids, please note that we need to understand the procurement activities for each component project.*

*More detailed information on procurement activities, timescales, and the resources required should be included in the project delivery plan.*

<sup>[1]</sup> *Guidance on resolution planning is applicable to new procurements by Relevant Authorities of:*

- *Critical Service Contracts;*
  - *other outsourced service contracts with an estimated value exceeding £10m per year<sup>1</sup>; and*
  - *Critical Construction Contracts.*
- (together "In-Scope Contracts").*

As lead local authority for the package bid, Neath Port Talbot CBC will lead each of the procurements and will be responsible for ensuring compliance with public procurement rules and regulations. The procurement strategy will be aligned to Circular and Foundational Economy principles.

As a public sector organisation Neath Port Talbot CBC has a duty to operate in an open, fair, and transparent way, allowing the market freedom of opportunity to trade with it. Its procedures for procurement are known as 'Contract Procedure Rules'. These are important as they help to:

- Give a legal and auditable framework to its procurement activities;
- Obtain value for money services for the public;
- Ensure the council complies with the law governing the spending of public money;
- Protect its staff and members from undue criticism or allegations of wrongdoing.

Here is a summary of our main procurement procedures:

- For purchases under £25,000, at least one quotation must be obtained (unless the purchase is made through one of our corporate contracts)
- For purchases between £25,000 and £50,000, a minimum of three written quotations/ tenders must be sought.
- For purchases over £75,000, a minimum of three written tenders must be sought using a formal 'invitation to tender' document.

The Council also has a legal requirement to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and 2020 amendments (post EU transition period). This governs the way in which the public sector procurement process must be conducted for contracts over certain specified thresholds. The Council's Contract Procedure Rules are in line with the Modern Slavery Act.

The thresholds are revised every two years. As of January 2022, these thresholds stood at £213,477 for supplies and services, and £5,336,937 for works contracts.

The regulations are based on the following principles:

- Contracts that exceed the thresholds must be advertised so that all interested parties have an equal opportunity to submit tenders.
- All enquiries must receive equal treatment in order to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of nationality of the contractor or the origin of the supplies, services or works; and
- All supplier selection, tendering and award procedures must involve the application of objective and transparent criteria.

Additional procurement consideration will include:

### **Community Benefits**

The Council and its partners will work in partnership with appointed contractors and their supply chain to deliver community benefits and ensure social value in procurements, including 'targeted recruitment and training' outputs as a 'core' requirement of tenders to support the delivery of social, economic and environmental objectives.

### **Risk allocation**

Service risks for this programme vary by procurement. The procurement of the infrastructure projects entails standard contract risks.

### **Charging mechanism**

Appropriate payment mechanisms will be devised as part of each procurement design period.

### **Key Contractual Arrangements**

Contract terms will be devised as part of each procurement design period.

### **Accountancy treatment**

Assets generated through the life of the projects will be accounted for and held on the balance sheet of Neath Port Talbot Council.

### **Procurement strategy & route**

A decision has been taken to procure project management services to support our 'in-house' programme management teams, to ensure that sufficient capacity is available to deliver a compliant procurement process that offers maximum value for money. This process will commence in July 2022.

The decision to utilise the South West Wales Regional Construction Contractors Framework has been taken, as it is well established and has already tested the market to ensure that there is sufficient appetite to meet our design and construction needs. A mini tender exercise will be carried out as per the framework instructions to ensure maximum value for money. The option to procure services via an open tender exercise through Sell2Wales or other means was discounted due to the added time constraints and the need to ensure that all project elements could be completed within LUF delivery timescales.

### **Alignment with Net Zero ambitions**

The procurement strategy will be aligned to Net Zero ambitions in the construction and delivery of the projects, including the use of innovative clean technology such as PV, the use

of sustainable supply chains, supporting the growth of green skills. The projects will be aligned to the emerging green skills ambitions of the UKSPF Investment Plan.

More details on the procurement timeline is at **section 6.3.1** XXXXXXXXXX

**6.2.2** Who will lead on the procurement and contractor management on this bid and explain what expertise and skills do they have in managing procurements and contracts of this nature? If the procurement is being led by a third party and not the lead applicant, please provide details below.

(500 words)

*The applicant should clarify who will lead the procurement/s and demonstrate that the core project team have the relevant skills and expertise for managing procurements and contracts.*

Neath Port Talbot Council will lead on each of the procurements and will be responsible for ensuring compliance with public procurement rules and regulations.

Neath Port Talbot Council's Architectural Design and Project Management Team will contract manage the various procurement exercises, with support from an external Project Manager and an independent Quantity Surveyor to ensure sufficient resource.

The Architectural Design and Project Management Team have the necessary skills, expertise and experience to manage procurement exercises and contracts. They have well established client / contractor processes in place.

The core Project Team has an excellent track record in delivering a wide variety of complex construction projects and programmes including:

- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme (new build schools)
- Bay Technology Centre – an award winning £8.5m energy positive / net zero commercial building (two-stage design and build contract)
- Harbour Court – a refurbishment of a disused building on Harbourside
- Retail / leisure facility in Neath Town Centre (new build)
- Plaza redevelopment – the refurbishment of a listed building, which was formerly a Cinema but left derelict for many years, into a mixed-use community / business hub.

The core Project Management Team is supported by the Council's Regeneration and Strategic Funding Teams, as well as an in-house Procurement and Legal Services Team, to ensure compliance with Neath Port Talbot Contract Procedures Rules.

**6.2.3** Are you intending to outsource or sub-contract any other work on this bid to third parties? For example, where you have identified a capability or capacity gaps.

(750 words)

*Applicants should set out plans for engaging with key suppliers/contractors so it is clear how suppliers/contractors have been selected and how contracts will be effectively managed to ensure the desired outcomes are delivered. This should*

*include the use of key performance indicators (KPI's) and other measures that will be used to drive quality.*

*Applicants should also clearly set out in their response how they will manage any capability or capacity gaps.*

Neath Port Talbot Council has identified a potential capacity issue within its Architectural Programme Management and Regeneration Teams, which, if not addressed could potentially have a detrimental impact upon on the delivery of the schemes. To mitigate this risk from the outset, the decision has been taken to procure Project Management Services, along with an independent Quantity Surveyor to work with our in-house teams to support the successful delivery of the projects. The detailed design of the projects will also be outsourced to external consultants as part of a two stage, design and build contract.

The Council has performance management processes in place, which includes integrating a number of key performance indicators within contracts to provide quality assurance, to ensure that work is completed effectively, on time and will achieve the delivery of planned outcomes.

The South West Wales Regional Construction Contractors Framework is already in place and contractors receive advance notice of emerging projects and programmes via regular engagement with Local Authorities across South West Wales.

The external evaluation for this programme will be carried out using an independent consultant, who will be procured via an open tender process. This work will be undertaken by the Council's Regeneration Team, with support from the Strategic Funding Programmes Team.

**6.2.4** How will you engage with key suppliers to effectively manage their contracts so that they deliver your desired outcomes. What measures will you put in place to mitigate supplier/contractor risks and what controls will you implement to ensure they deliver on quality.

*Applicants should set out what measures will be put in place to manage contractor / supplier risks. This should include due diligence, the checking of the financial and economic standing of suppliers, and effective contract / payment structures.*

Neath Port Talbot Council actively encourage and participate in 'Meet the Buyer / Supplier' Open Days and Partnering Work Shops to ensure that the project Charter (Aims and Objectives) is communicated throughout the supply chain and that suppliers deliver community benefits through Targeted Recruitment and Training, Supply Chain Opportunities and other benefits that include sponsorships and community support.

The design and build contractor will be procured via the South West Wales Regional Construction Contractors Framework (SWWRCCF). The 2020 version of the framework is the third iteration of the Framework. It is a collaborative arrangement led and managed by Carmarthenshire County Council on behalf of the South West Wales regional Local Authorities (Ceredigion Council, Neath Port Talbot Council, Pembrokeshire Council and Swansea Council).

The Framework has a pool of both local and national highly experienced and qualified contractors.

The core value of the Framework is to provide a collaborative platform to deliver high quality construction related design and project management services to meet Local as well as Partner requirements whilst taking account of the principles of the 'Best Value' process and of 'Rethinking Construction'.

There are six key aims and objectives of the SWWRCCF 2020 strategy:

- Promote the inclusion and contribution of SMEs as Framework Suppliers, with emphasis on local supply provision
- Increase and maintain Minimum Standards to support Growth of Contractors across the region
- Support best practice and continuous improvement amongst both employers, contractors and suppliers in the region
- Secure improvement to the built environment through delivery of best value
- Promote the use of modern methods of construction and innovative construction techniques
- Ensure value for money for both client and contractors.

The NEC 3 forms of contract also ensure that contractors are incentivised to provide the best value for money, through the inclusion of an element of gain share.

Framework Governance arrangements and a plan for future actions have been established. The Framework is governed by a Framework Management Group, consisting of two members from the five local authorities (Carmarthenshire County Council, Ceredigion County Council, City and County of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Pembrokeshire County Council). The Group meets quarterly to discuss and review existing and forthcoming policy matters, opportunities, and the general management arrangements of the Framework.

The Framework also consists of working groups which develop strategies and advertise the Management Group accordingly e.g., in relation to community benefit and 21st century schools). The aim of these Working Groups is to share best practice as well as discuss and resolve relevant issues within the industry in a regionally consistent manner.

Rigorous due diligence checks are carried out on all contractors prior to inclusion on the Framework including health and safety, financial and economic standing of contractors / suppliers, assurance, assurance.

Once the contractor is appointed off the framework, there is an inception meeting and regular client / contractor progress meetings and reporting to effectively manage the contract,

Robust and effective contract and payment structures are in place to manage contractor / supplier risks.

## 6.3 Management

Prior to completing this section applicants should complete the relevant Costings and Planning Workbook - Table D – Milestones Delivery

**6.3.1** Please set out how you plan to deliver the bid (this should be a summary of your Delivery Plan).

(1000 words)

*Applicants should set out clearly how they plan to deliver the bid. The response should consider the following:*

- *Key milestones: The project plan needs to clearly identify the key capital build and construction phases and include the 'stage gates' that might be used to verify build and infrastructural works completed by any contractor/s. Timescales should be realistic and meet scheme requirements.*
- *Key dependencies and interfaces, resource requirements, task durations and contingencies*
- *A description of roles and responsibilities of those involved in the project. Plans should identify the roles, responsibilities and resource for each activity – including a delineation of key responsibilities such as project management, finance etc.*
- *An understanding of the skills, capability, or capacity needed - some bids may require specialist skills. If specialist skills are required, they should be set out here.*
- *Arrangements for managing any delivery partners and the plan for benefits realisation.*
- *Engagement of developers/ occupiers (where needed)*
- *The strategy and communication approach for managing stakeholders and considering their interests and influences.*
- *Confirmation of any powers or consents needed, and statutory approvals e.g., Planning permission and details of information of ownership or agreements of land/ assets needed to deliver the bid with evidence*
- *Please also list any powers / consents etc needed/ obtained, details of date acquired, challenge period (if applicable) and date of expiry of powers and conditions attached to them.*
- *The approach to monitoring progress of the project including budget management.*

*Stated benefits should be well defined and measurable as part of the monitoring and evaluation process.*

- *Any other information to support the delivery approach*

*Applicants are encouraged to submit a detailed delivery plan to support their response to this question. The delivery plan should be proportionate and realistic to*

*the bid submitted and the timelines presented should be feasible, allowing sufficient time for each phase of the programme.*

*Applicants are also encouraged to submit evidence of statutory consents/land acquisitions.*

### **Programme and project management governance arrangements**

The programme will be delivered using proven programme and project management methodologies to ensure the outputs, benefits and outcomes are achieved in a controlled, well managed and visible set of activities.

The implementation strategy is based on the principles of programme and project management standards in line with Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) and Projects IN Controlled Environment (PRINCE2).

The programme governance arrangements are detailed below:

Neath Port Talbot CBC Cabinet

Neath Port Talbot CBC Corporate Directors Group

Neath Port Talbot CBC Directorate Management Group

### **SRO**

The Programme SRO is the Neath Port Talbot CBC Director of Environment and Regeneration

The SRO is accountable for the programme and for ensuring that it meets its objectives and delivers the expected benefits

### **Programme Team**

The Programme Manager will liaise with the project managers for each of the two interlinked projects and will drive forward the delivery of the programme and ensure progress towards outputs, outcomes and impacts and linkages to other developments in the area. The Programme Manager will be supported by the Strategic Funding Programmes Team.

### **Support services**

Support services for the programme will be provided by Neath Port Talbot CBC including:

Finance

HR

Legal

Procurement

### **Use of specialist advisors**

The programme will use specialist advisors in the following areas:

Financial – Neath Port Talbot CBC – Financial Services

Legal – Neath Port Talbot CBC – legal services

Technical – CADW, NRW, Woodland Trust, Friends of Gnoll Park, Gnoll Working Group, Brecon Beacons National Park, other technical advisors as appropriate

Programme / project management – Programme Manager, Neath Port Talbot CBC Strategic Funding Programmes Team, Architectural Design and Project Management Team (procurement and construction)

Programme / project assurance – Internal Audit, Gateway Reviews

### **Delivery Plan**

The delivery plan will be used to control and track progress and delivery of the programme and resulting outputs, outcomes and impacts. It describes how, when and by whom a specific project activity, milestone or target will be achieved.

  
  
**Dependencies**

Funding approval  
Statutory consents and planning approval  
Public sector delivery

**Interfaces**

UK government  
Neath Port Talbot CBC (planning authority)  
Neath Port Talbot CBC

**Benefits realisation**

The necessary management arrangements will be put in place to ensure that the programme delivers its anticipated benefits. The Programme Manager will develop a benefits realisation plan and benefits register in accordance with the HM Treasury Green Book guidance which will be monitored by the Programme Manager and reported on a regular basis.

**Risk Management Arrangements**

The Programme Manager will develop a risk management strategy and further develop the risk register in accordance with HM Treasury Green Book guidance. The programme risk register will be sub-divided into the areas of: development; implementation; operational and financial.

**Programme assurance**

The Programme Manager will develop an Integrated Assurance and Approval Plan (IAAP) and will plan programme assurance gateway reviews.

**Monitoring during implementation**

An initial **monitoring and evaluation plan** has been developed   
 which will evolve as the programme matures. The programme will report on progress at regular intervals.

**Contingency arrangements and plans**

The Programme Manager will hold regular monitoring meetings with the SRO and programme governance structures to review programme progress, risks, issues and performance against targets timescales and budget.

**Stakeholder management / engagement plan**

An initial stakeholder mapping exercise has been carried out - the mapping will inform the programme communications plan in line with the good practice example of the power / interest matrix to manage stakeholders and align to their interests and influences throughout the stages of delivery. There will be a targeted campaign to engage occupiers / developers.

**Statutory consents**

Neath Port Talbot Council owns the land at the Gnoll Estate Country Park and has commenced early engagement with the planning authority in terms of planning, consents, surveys, biodiversity.

**6.3.2** Please demonstrate that some bid activity can be delivered in 2022-23.

(  
*Please confirm the plans for LUF project activity in 2022-23.*

The delivery plan confirms that some bid activity can be delivered in 2022/23. The majority of these costs are in relation to capital development costs including consultancy. See **delivery plans** at 

**6.3.3** Risk Management: Applicants are asked to set out a detailed risk assessment.

(500 words)

*Applicants are encouraged to submit a Risk Register to support their response to this question. This can be in any format but should provide sufficient information regarding clearly defined risks with impacts, owners, dates, mitigations and costs.*

*In responding to this question applicants should set out a detailed risk assessment, covering all types of risks including, for example, environmental risks, health and safety, withdrawal of funding, potential partner disputes, legal risks, reputational, delivery etc. The risk assessment should demonstrate that all potential risks have been carefully considered and cover the whole project lifecycle.*

*In particular risk assessments should cover:*

- *the barriers and level of risk to the delivery of your bid*
- *appropriate and effective arrangements for managing and mitigating these risks*
- *a clear understanding on roles / responsibilities for risk management and reporting risk*

*Please detail any key risks that you have identified as part of your risk assessment for this bid and details of mitigation measures. This should align with your risk register.*

*For package bids, please set out the risk assessment and mitigations for each component project.*

The Programme Manager will develop a Risk Management Strategy and will further develop the Risk Register as the projects progress. [REDACTED]

Initial Risk Registers for the projects have been developed and will be developed further as live documents in accordance with HM Treasury Green Book guidance. The risk registers are sub-divided into the areas of: development, implementation, operational and financial, with impact (risk levels), owners, dates, mitigations and costs where applicable.

Key risks identified as part of the risk assessment for this bid and details of mitigation measures see [REDACTED]

The initial risks detailed within the risk register have been assessed by the Programme Manager, Senior Responsible Officer and Chief Financial Officer and have been deemed to be at an acceptable level to proceed with the programme of projects. All risks will be monitored closely throughout the programme and project lifecycle.

The risk register is an integral part of programme management meetings.

An initial issues log has been developed and is an integral part of programme management meetings.

Contractors tendering for works will develop project specific Risk Registers as part of their tender submissions. These registers will also be reviewed at regular contract management progress meetings.

**6.3.4** Please provide details of your core project team and provide evidence of their track record and experience of delivering schemes of this nature.

Please explain if you are intending to sub-contract any of this work or if a third party is managing the project and not the organisation applying.

(750 words)

*Applicants should explain the roles and people involved in the core project team, and demonstrate they have the necessary skills, experience, and capabilities to support successful project delivery through all key stages of the project.*

*Applicants should set out the measures they will put in place to address any capacity or capability gaps.*

*Track record of delivering similar projects for example in terms of size, value, or complexity should be demonstrated. Applicants are encouraged to provide case studies.*

*If a third party is managing the project and not the authority applying, the applicant should set out clearly in this section how this arrangement will work.*

**Core Programme Team**

[REDACTED]

### **Programme Manager**

Responsible for delivering the package bid and ensuring progress towards outputs, outcomes and impacts and linkages to other developments outlined in the masterplan.

### **Project Managers**

1 Project Manager for each project within the package bid

The Project Managers will manage the day-to-day delivery including regular contact with the Architectural Design and Project Management Team

*Track record of delivering similar projects for example in terms of size, value, or complexity should be demonstrated. Applicants are encouraged to provide case studies.*

### **Core Project Team - Track record**

The Programme Manager and Project Managers have extensive experience, the necessary skills and capabilities to ensure the successful project delivery through all key stages of the project. The Team will procure a Project Manager to lead the contract management of the design and build contract.

The Team have successfully delivered a number of regeneration programmes including:

#### **Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) Programme**

The VVP programme was delivered from 2013 – 2018. The Council secured over £12.5million of Welsh Government funding as part of a £35million housing led regeneration programme. The programme included the refurbishment of the vacant Aberafan House into 41 residential units, redevelopment of Glanafan School to create 47 residential units and two commercial units, demolition of the Police Station in Port Talbot to create 30 residential units along with 3 commercial units and the redevelopment of the Green Park Industrial Estate to create 34 residential units. The successful programme also included public realm and access improvements along with the redevelopment of the former Fire Station in Port Talbot into an employment hub.

#### **Welsh Government Building for the Future programme**

The BFTF programme was delivered from 2018 – 2022. The Council secured over £4million of Welsh Government and ERDF funding to deliver the refurbishment of the former Magistrates Court in Port Talbot - a prominent listed building - into high quality office accommodation, the redevelopment of the derelict Plaza Cinema in Port Talbot to provide an employment, training and community space, and the refurbishment of 8 Wind Street, Neath - a listed building in Neath Town Centre to provide essential office accommodation.

#### **Tourism investment schemes**

##### **South Wales Cycling Centre of Excellence Project (2011 – 2014)**

The Council secured £5.2million ERDF funding to deliver investment in mountain biking infrastructure within four local authority areas across South Wales. Delivered to time and on budget.

##### **Valleys Regional Park Gateway Project (2021 – 2022)**

The Council secured £500,000 Welsh Government funding to deliver infrastructure improvements at Afan Forest Park Visitor Centre including adventure play area, refurbishment of public facilities, additional car parking, EV Charging and camper van electric hook up points. Delivered to time and on budget.

### **Aberavon Seafront Changing Place and Margam Country Park Public Facilities and EV Charging (2022 – present)**

The Council secured £500,000 Welsh Government funding to deliver both projects which are creating provision for visitors with access needs at key attractions within Neath Port Talbot. Aberavon Seafront Changing Place delivered to time and on budget, delivery of Margam Park Project planned for March 2023.

### **Core Project Team Case Study**

Our experienced Property and Regeneration team has a proven track record of successfully delivering major regeneration projects. One recent example of this is the redevelopment of the former Magistrates Court, now known as Harbour Court, which is a prominent, Grade II listed building located in Port Talbot Town Centre. The building had been vacant for a number of years until the Regeneration Team, in collaboration with the European and Strategic Funding Team, successfully secured funding from Welsh Government's Building for the Future programme to transform the building into high quality, modern office accommodation. The regeneration team worked collaboratively with many other departments within the Council including, Architectural Design and Project Management, Economic Development, Finance and Legal in order to deliver the project. As a result of this collaboration, very strong working relationships have developed within these teams.

The delivery of this complex project also required the project team to work with multidisciplinary contractors as many specialist skills and services were required.

Following completion of the project the building was let to Keytree (since taken over by Deloitte). Based in London's Covent Garden, Keytree opened its new Managed Services Centre of Excellence at Harbour Court at the end of 2019.

The centre currently employs around 40 staff but there are plans to increase the head count to 120 over the next 18 months with recruitment already under way.

Deloitte works with some of the biggest brands in world business, including BP, British Gas and Jaguar Land Rover, as well as Governmental departments and organisations such as the UK Ministry of Justice and Transport for London. The project has met all of its objectives and outputs and is just one example of a successful project delivered within the town centre by Neath Port Talbot Council.

### **Council track record**

Neath Port Talbot Council has strong capability and capacity, with a successful track record of securing funding and ensuring successful delivery, project compliance, monitoring and reporting for a wide variety of local and regional, revenue and capital funded projects. Some examples include:

PDR Harbour Way Transport Scheme - £111m

21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme - £122m

Neath Port Talbot Regeneration - £15m

Vibrant and Viable Places - £35m

UK Community Renewal – suite of six local projects - £2.4m

**6.3.5** Please set out what governance procedures will be put in place to manage the grant and project.

We will require Chief Financial Officer confirmation that adequate assurance systems will be in place.

**For large transport bids**, you should also reference your Integrated Assurance and Approval Plan, which should include details around planned health checks or gateway reviews.

(750 words)

*All applicants are required to describe what governance and assurance procedures will be put in place to manage the grant and project. This may include (but not limited to):*

- *Delegated authority – including Project Board or Committee approvals*
- *Financial controls*
- *Audit*
- *Counter fraud, corruption, and anti-bribery*
- *Procedures to avoid Conflict of Interests*
- *Cyber security, and data management*
- *Code of conduct setting standards for ethical and professional behaviour.*

*Applicants should also consider how to communicate and inform governance policy and procedures to partners working on the project, how progress will be reported and reviewed, and the involvement of the board and senior management in decision making.*

*In responding to this question applicants are encouraged to refer to the [HM Government Published Code of Conduct for Recipients of Government General Grants](#)*

*For large transport bids, applicants must have an **Integrated Assurance and Approval Plan**. This should include details around planned health checks or gateway reviews.*

*Other bids may submit an Integrated Assurance and Approval Plan, if they have one. If not, they should set out their assurance and approval process here.*

This package bid will be delivered and managed by officers of Neath Port Talbot Borough Council with Governance from elected Members of the Council. The Senior Responsible Officer is the Director of Environment and Regeneration, who reports to Council Members Cabinet.

In addition to being accountable to elected Members of the Council, officers are also accountable to:

- Neath Port Talbot Local Economic Forum
- Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board

#### **Financial Controls:**

The executive management arrangements of the Council, backed up by the professional audit and financial scrutiny mechanisms of central and local government, will ensure compliance with programme regulation and the transparency and propriety of investments sanctioned under the package bid.

Full cost and procurement records will be maintained by the Council for audit in accordance with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council requirements.

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2021-2022 dated 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] has been prepared by the Corporate Governance Group and complies with the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework: (CIPFA/SOLACE, 2016). The AGS demonstrates the system of internal controls which have been in place within the Council for the year ending 31st March 2022 and provides examples of how the Council demonstrates compliance with good practice and meets the core and sub principles of effective governance. The AGS also provides details on the assurances taken during the year on the effectiveness of our governance arrangements.

The Chief Finance officer monitors all financial systems to confirm compliance.

### **Grant Administration**

The LUF grant will be administered in line with the Council's 'Accounting Instructions and Guidelines' No. 14 Grant Administration. This Accounting Instruction provides details of a system for dealing with the administration of grants within Neath Port Talbot CBC. It aims to:

- Highlight the financial procedures to be adopted when applying for grants
- Detail the procedures to be followed when notifying the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate of successful grant applications
- Identify the systems, procedures and controls to be implemented in the administration of grant claims and receipts.
- Identify the records that must be kept as a minimum for audit purposes
- Outline the procedures to be followed to verify grant claims before they are submitted to the external auditors for approval.

### **Integrated Assurance and Approval Plan (IAAP)**

An IAAP has been developed [REDACTED] which outlines the assurance and approval process

### **Audit:**

Financial records will be maintained by the Council for Audit. The Council is responsible for implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability. The Council's Draft Statement of Accounts 2021-2022 has been completed in draft and is being reviewed by Wales Audit office.

### **Code of Conduct:**

Employees are expected to treat other colleagues, stakeholders, clients, members of the public etc. in a respectful professional manner at all times.

The Council's Employee Code of Conduct sets out how those employed by the Council should conduct themselves both while in work and outside work. The Code of Conduct is written in accordance with Welsh Government's "The Code of Conduct (Qualifying Local Government Employees) (Wales) Order 2001".

The Council's Employee Code of Conduct sets out how employees should act in accordance with the principles of the code and includes sections on:

- Confidentiality and disclosure of information.
- Conflict of interest.
- Code of conduct.
- Corruption and anti-bribery.

Any staff working on the project will be made aware of the Code of Conduct for Recipients of Government Grants to ensure that the requirements contained therein are adhered to.

Conflicts of Interest Declarations are completed on all Tenders by the members of the delivery team involved in the Tender Assessment.

**Data Management:**

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Data Protection Policy sets out how the Council processes data that is collected for a specified legitimate purpose lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner.

**Cyber Security:**

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council have a series of measures in place to safeguard the integrity and security of our systems and comply with the relevant government standards.

**Reporting:**

Tender Reports are authorised by the Department Head of Service and Cabinet Member prior to any contact award. Funding is approved by The Director of Environment and monthly financial / progress reports are provided to the Head of Service for Property and Regeneration and Head of Finance.

By exception, any significant issues are then escalated to the Capital Programme Steering Group for decision.

All final accounts are accompanied by an Audit Report that feeds into a Monitoring and Evaluation report that demonstrates validity and best practice.

**6.3.6** If applicable, please explain how you will cover the operational costs for the day-to-day management of the new asset / facility once it is complete to ensure project benefits are realised. You should also consider any ongoing maintenance and servicing costs.

Please note that these costs are not covered by the LUF grant.

(750 words)

*Assets/facilities should provide value and be (financially) sustainable.*

*Applicants should set out how they will cover the operational costs for the day-to-day management of the new asset/facility once it is complete to ensure project benefits are realised.*

*Applicants should also consider any ongoing maintenance and servicing costs.*

*Examples of operational costs: utilities, systems, maintenance and repairs, staff & labour, administrative expenses etc.*

*Please note that these costs are not covered by the LUF grant.*

**For cultural bids** that will require an organisation, local authority or other body to operate the resultant asset/ facility, please explain how that organisation will manage the asset/ facility in a long-term sustainable way to deliver value in line with those aims set out in the Case for Investment.

*Where this applies, applicants will need to set out details of:*

- *A high-level description of the cultural and broader value being delivered (sometimes called “a “Cultural Mission Statement” or similar)*
- *A description of how people/audience groups will be encouraged to engage with the new asset over time (sometimes called an Audience Engagement Plan, or similar) with a particular focus on people with typically lower engagement levels.*
- *High-level activity plans*
- *Financial modelling (including Income and Expenditure budgets with explanation of income sources, any need for revenue funding/ fund-raising/development and strategies for achieving these)*

*For significant cultural bids including those with a complex operational model you may wish to upload more information via a short additional attachment if you cannot supply everything within this word limit.*

A detailed operational plan will be developed, all revenue funding has been identified within the Council’s revenue budget.

All maintenance and servicing costs are included in the Council’s maintenance plan.

As a not for profit operation, any additional income generated will be reinvested into the facility.

The project team will link in with UK Shared Prosperity Fund to develop a programme of community events supported by the Friends of Gnoll and other community groups.

## 6.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Prior to completing this section please complete the relevant **Costings and Planning Workbook - Table E – Monitoring and Evaluation**

**6.4.1** Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: Please set out proportionate plans for monitoring and evaluation.

(1000 words)

*Applicants should refer to Annex E in the Technical Note [Insert Link Here] and explain what their plans are for meeting the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) requirements of the Fund, as well as meeting their own ambitions for learning, and determination of impact, at the local level.*

*This plan should cover:*

- *Aims of the bid level monitoring and evaluation, including key evaluation and learning questions to be answered, aligned with bid objectives and Theory of Change*

- *Key components and deliverables of the bid level monitoring and evaluation (e.g., process and impact evaluations; interim and final reports) and how these will be used and disseminated to maximise learning*
- *Outline of the approach to the bid level monitoring and evaluation, including how it will be ensured that data is collected in an accurate and timely manner, and how this data will be used in the evaluation of the bid*
- *Governance arrangements and resourcing for bid level monitoring and evaluation, including key personnel/organisations and budgets*
- *Summary of key outputs, outcomes and impacts, informed by bid objectives and Theory of Change*
- *M&E activities should be included in Table E in the relevant Costings and Planning Workbook [Insert Link Here]*

*Evaluation plans should be proportionate to the size and complexity of the project to be delivered.*

*For large projects, applicants should seek to address complex queries (e.g., attribution of impact).*

*M&E plans can include multiple approaches, aligned to the different phases of the project being delivered.*

A draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plan has been developed, to be followed by a robust Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be developed aligned to HM Treasury Green and Magenta books guidance, together with UK Government's Project Delivery Guidance and includes guiding principles and good practice to ensure that performance and impact is managed and maximised.

Our Monitoring and Evaluation approach will establish whether the projects have been completed in accordance with set objectives, outputs, outcomes, the project delivery plan and budget, as well as examining the wider economic impact to Neath Aberavon and the wider Swansea Bay City Region. The importance of measuring performance, expected benefits and the impact of the projects is reflected in our approach to learn from experience and make continuous improvements to our project planning processes.

At bid level, we have collected initial baseline data as part of the project development process and will continue to collect data from sources including ONS and public surveys to ensure that we have a verified evidence base for project monitoring and comparison during the evaluation

phase. The M&E Plan will be developed in tandem with the planning and procurement phases, in collaboration with key stakeholders.

Our evaluation process will combine internal and external project assurance through the implementation of an Integrated Assurance and Approval Plan, to include peer reviews and a formal evaluation which will focus on the following research elements:

- The effectiveness of project delivery;
- The implementation, operation and as far as possible, the impact of the projects;
- Any added value benefits, including how the projects performed against investment objectives, outputs and outcomes, as well as reviewing what worked well, what didn't work and lessons learned;
- How the projects delivered against local, regional and UK Government policies and strategies;
- Monitor net zero and sustainability through construction and operation [REDACTED]
- An assessment of governance and project management;
- Identification of key lessons relevant to future projects

This work has been costed based on the delivery of similar projects and a sum of [REDACTED] has been included within our project budget for this purpose.

Our Theory of Change approach will be monitored to evaluate the logical relationships between the resources being used (inputs), activities, outputs, outcomes and impact of the proposed interventions.

**Investment Objectives:**

- 1: Developing the quality and value of the visitor economy
- 2: Supporting wellbeing through access to and participation in heritage, nature and outdoor activity
- 3: Enhancing the natural environment
- 4: Increasing 'pride of place' within the context of the Vale of Neath's wider offer

**Inputs:**

- Project feasibility - including Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor: Destination Development Framework (funded by Neath Port Talbot CBC)
- £17.755m Levelling Up Fund
- £1.973m Neath Port Talbot CBC
- Neath Port Talbot CBC project management resources

**Activities:**

- Planning and procurement processes
- Construction works
- Promotion of new facilities

**Outputs:****Culture – LUF Standard outputs:**Gnoll Estate Country Park

1991m2 made up of:

- **1722m2 cultural space created or improved.**
- **269m2 heritage buildings renovated / restored**
- **Volunteering opportunities supported**

Pontneddfechan

- **696m2 cultural space created or improved**
- **Volunteering opportunities supported**

**Vale of Neath custom outputs:**

- Improved access to and interpretation of heritage
- Improved access to natural environment
- Increased walking and active leisure opportunities
- New accommodation at Gnoll Estate Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan
- New and improved visitor facilities at Gnoll Estate Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan
- Parking solution at Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan

**Outcomes / Outcome indicators:****Culture – LUF standard outcomes:**

The early to medium term results will be:

- Change in the number of visitors to cultural venues
- Change in the number of cultural events
- Change in consumer spending at cultural events

Vale of Neath custom outcomes:

- Increased visitor numbers
- Increased overnight stays and associated visitor spend
- Increased take-up of/ participation in active leisure
- Increased public participation in interaction with heritage and natural environment
- Reduced pressure on key gateway site at Pontneddfechan
- Increased sustainability of asset at Gnoll Estate, through efficiency improvements at visitor centre and reductions in future maintenance risks

**Impact:**

- The long-term results include:
- Quantifiable impacts: £45.6m in total quantifiable benefits over 30 years
- Improved wellbeing outcomes through better access to green and open space and active leisure
- Cumulative improvement to Vale of Neath visitor offer, 'de-risking' future public and private investment and raising the quality bar
- Strengthened 'pride in place' through improvements to key natural assets

- Environmental improvements through net positive gain to natural environment (via woodland and water management) and through reductions in congestion and pollution at Pontneddfechan

### **Capturing the Required Data**

Much of the data that will be required to effectively assess the delivery and progress of the projects will be collected through project monitoring and documentation. Baseline data will be collected by means of footfall surveys and online surveys to ascertain perceptions of the town centre at the outset. In addition, data will be required from the construction contractor(s) to map construction impacts, ascertain the training provision and any environmental processes that have been adhered to.

### **Assessing Economic Impact**

Operational impacts will be captured using a mixed method approach though primarily drawing on a survey of the businesses in the town centre post-completion. The survey will capture information on employment, sector and whether staff are local (to determine local impact), changes in turnover (to ascertain gross value added), and training provision for staff (in particular young local individuals). These surveys will also interpret qualitative responses to demonstrate perceptions of the town centre on their businesses.

### **Assessing Local Impact**

It is important to assess the perceptions of the new developments by stakeholders. The projects form part of a strategic programme of regeneration development activity in Neath Port Talbot, which will contribute to attracting high value businesses and investment into the area. To investigate the extent that the town centre improvements contribute to this wider aim, interviews with stakeholders will be conducted, as well as asking local businesses in the survey for their opinions of the Town Centre and the impact that it has for Port Talbot as a whole.

### **Risk Register**

An initial project Risk Register has been developed during the design phase [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] In summary, the potential risks to the projects include:

- Project budget exceeded – particularly in light of recent cost increases in the construction industry;
- Delays in procuring / delivering contracts;
- Planning consents not granted.

These risks been allocated an appropriate mitigating action and will be closely monitored throughout the project life cycle.

### **Reporting Arrangements**

The Contractor, once appointed will be asked to produce monthly reports on progress, risk and issues to be discussed at monthly meetings with the Council. In addition, the Council will produce regular progress and monitoring reports to be submitted to UK Government, to

include updates on project progress, outputs, outcomes and outcome indicators, expenditure and income, publicity and M&E activities.

### **Additional Monitoring Information**

Social and Community Benefit clauses including the number of contracts let to local businesses, number of individuals benefitting from work placements, training and employment opportunities will also be collated. We also routinely collect data on the following elements:

- Supply chain initiatives
- Environmental benefits / recycling data
- Community initiatives
- Training and recruitment opportunities for the economically inactive

Our M&E Plan will be targeted at Senior Responsible Officers (SROs), the Programme Manager and their team, in conjunction with providing assurances to UK Government that progress, performance and impact of LUF funding is considered and implemented in a robust manner.

The SRO, Programme Manager and their team are responsible for the implementation of the M&E Plan at a project level. This includes the collation, monitoring and communication of the project milestones, deliverables and benefits realisation.

## **Part 7 Declarations**

### **7.1 Senior Responsible Owner Declaration**

Please complete **pro forma 7** Senior Responsible Owner Declaration.

[Redacted]

### **7.2 Chief Finance Officer Declaration**

Please complete **pro forma 8** Chief Finance Officer Declaration.

[Redacted]

### **7.3 Data Protection**

#### **7.3 Data Protection**

Please note that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is a data controller for all Levelling Up Fund related personal data collected with the relevant forms submitted to DLUHC.

The Department, and its contractors, where relevant, may process the Personal Data that it collects from you as part of your application to the Levelling Up Fund, in accordance with its privacy policies. The Department will use the Personal Data provided to contact you, if needed, as part of the assessment, selection and/or monitoring process.

For the same purposes, the Department may need to share your Personal Data with other government departments (OGDs), their Arm's Length Bodies and departments in the Devolved Administrations and by submitting this form you are agreeing to your Personal Data being used in this way.

Any information you provide will be kept securely and destroyed within 7 years of the application process completing.

You can find more information about how the Department deals with your data [here](#).

#### 7.4 Publishing

When authorities submit a bid for funding to the UK Government, as part of the Government's commitment to greater openness in the public sector under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, if the bid is successful they must also publish a version excluding any commercially sensitive information on their own website within five working days of the announcement of the successful bids by UK Government. UK Government reserves the right to deem the bid as non-compliant if this is not adhered to.

Please tell us the website where this bid will be published:

## ANNEXES A – C: PROJECT SUMMARIES

These should be completed individually for each component within a **package bid**.

Please use Annexes A – C to provide detail on each component project of a package bid. A package bid can have up to 3 component projects.	For each component project please complete this form e.g., annex a would be details for component one, annex b for component two and annex c for the third package component.
A1. Project Name:	Please provide the name of the project component.
<b>Gnoll Estate Country Park Heritage and Visitor Infrastructure</b>	

A2. Please provide a short description of this project (100 words maximum)	Please provide a short description of this project component.
<p>The Gnoll Estate Country Park Heritage and Visitor Infrastructure project will deliver investment in the historic estate in addition to establishing on site visitor accommodation. The project will encourage the growth of the visitor economy, enhance the appeal of the park to attract additional visitors and will bring the heritage of the park to the forefront of the visitor experience.</p> <p>In addition to the creation of onsite visitor accommodation, the project will open access to important heritage features, enhancing the visitor experience through investment in the onsite visitor centre, diversification of play provision and the reinterpretation of the heritage and environmental significance of the country park.</p>	
A3. Please provide a more detailed overview of the project and how this project aligns with the other projects in the package bid, representing a coherent set of interventions. (250 words)	Please set out a more detailed overview of the project component and how this project aligns with the other projects in the package bid, representing a coherent set of interventions.
<p>The Gnoll Estate Country Park is a popular, loved and well visited park by the local community, however it is not realising its full potential as a visitor destination which can contribute to the wider visitor economy. The heritage of the park is entirely hidden, and visitors have no awareness of the park's past and the importance of the estate to the wider history of the town of Neath.</p> <p>The proposals will invest in the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conserving and opening access to important heritage features including Gnoll House Cellars and Cascades,</li> <li>• diversifying play offer to include the creation of a large scale 'feature' woodland play area and indoor play provision.</li> <li>• modernisation of the exiting visitor centre and catering offer including remodelling of the current visitor centre to provide a modern visitor experience,</li> <li>• reinterpretation of the park to bring the heritage significance of the park to the forefront of the visitor experience,</li> <li>• enhanced biodiversity and nature conservation</li> <li>• enhanced physical linkages with the neighbouring Woodland Trust site to double the available land for outdoor leisure at this location (and in turn increase dwell time)</li> <li>• enhanced car parking provision (incorporating EV charging facilities).</li> </ul> <p>This project forms part of a programme of improvements which will act as the catalyst for the delivery of the transformational Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Masterplan. These proposals, linked closely with those at Waterfall Country in Pontneddfechan, will create the infrastructure needed to sustainably develop the Vale of Neath (and wider area) as a visitor destination.</p>	



A4. Please provide a short description of the area where the investment will take place. If complex (i.e., containing multiple locations/references) please include a map defining the area with references to any areas where the LUF investment will take place.

**For transport projects** include the route of the proposed scheme, the existing transport infrastructure and other points of particular interest to the bid e.g., development sites, areas of existing employment, constraints etc. (250 words)

Please describe the area where this project component will take place. Maps / GIS files can be included where the area is across multiple locations.

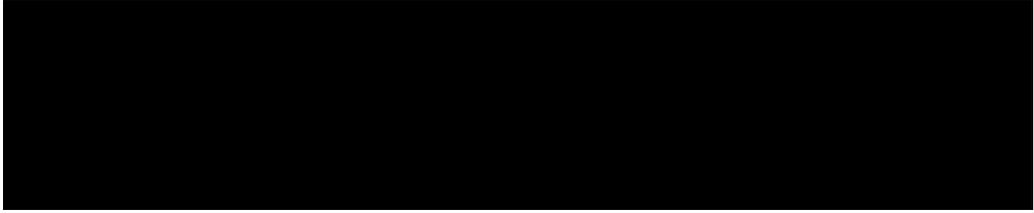
For transport projects please demonstrate the route of the proposed scheme, the existing transport infrastructure and other points of particular interest to the bid e.g., development sites, areas of existing employment, constraints etc.

The town of Neath which is the location of the Gnoll Estate Country Park project sits on the most southerly section of the A465 and is located 5 minutes from Junction 43 of the M4 at Llandarcy.

The Vale of Neath, where this package project is located, runs north easterly in a straight line from Neath town centre following the famous 'Neath Fault' that can be detected from Swansea Bay into England. The valley stretches along the A465 for approximately 13 miles, from Neath Abbey to the valley town of Glynneath and the village of Pontneddfechan, where the 'Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan' project is located at the edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Neath train station provides main line railway services to London and the Midlands. The local bus network services the surrounding urban and valleys areas and bus and train services provide convenient travel options to both Cardiff (45 mins) and Swansea (15 mins).

The Vale of Neath is one of the most historically important localities in Wales. It has for the past three hundred years been closely associated with intense industrialisation and urbanisation. However, its history stretches back many thousands of years and throughout the intervening centuries to the present day that history has been influenced by the geology and topography of the area.



<p>A5. Please confirm where the investment is taking place (where the funding is being spent not the applicant location or where the project beneficiaries are located).</p> <p>If the project is at a single location please confirm the postcode and grid reference for the location of the investment.</p> <p>If the project covers multiple locations please provide a GIS file. If this is unavailable please list all the postcodes/coordinates that are relevant to the investment.</p> <p><b>For all projects</b>, please confirm in which constituencies and local authorities the project is located. Please confirm the % investment in each location.</p>	<p>Please provide confirmation of the exact location the investment is taking place e.g. post code, grid reference etc.</p> <p>If the project is at a single location please confirm the postcode and grid reference for the location of the investment.</p> <p>If the project covers multiple locations please provide a GIS file. If this is unavailable please list all the postcodes/coordinates that are relevant to the investment.</p> <p><b>For all projects</b>, please confirm in which constituencies and local authorities the project is located. Please confirm the % investment in each location.</p>
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The package bid is located in the Neath constituency - 100%, in the unitary authority of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

The package bid comprises two projects in two locations:  
 Gnoll Estate Country Park: SA113BS (Longitude: -3.796867, Latitude: 51.660558)  
 Pontneddfechan: SA115NR (Longitude: -3.596333, Latitude: 51.755632)



<p>A6. Please confirm the total grant requested from LUF (£)</p>	<p>Please confirm the total amount of LUF (£) requested for this individual project component.</p>
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Total LUF request for Gnoll Country Park is £10,841,472.

<p>A7. Please specify the proportion of funding requested for each of the Fund's three investment themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Regeneration and Town Centre %</li> <li>b. Cultural %</li> <li>c. Transport %</li> </ul>	<p>Please specify the proportion of funding requested for each of the Fund's three investment themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Regeneration and Town Centre %</li> <li>b. Cultural %</li> <li>c. Transport %</li> </ul>
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Cultural 100%

Gnoll 61% of package bid

A8. Please confirm the value of match funding secured for the component project.

Where funding is still to be secured please set out details below. If there any funding gaps please set out your plans for addressing these.  
(250 words)

This section should provide details of all the sources of match funding within your bid.

Where funding is still to be secured please set out details. If there any funding gaps please set out your plans for addressing these.

£1,204,607.90



**A9. Value for Money**

Please set out the full range of impacts – both beneficial and adverse – of the project. Where possible, impacts should be described, quantified and also reported in monetary terms. There should be a clear and detailed explanation of how all impacts reported have been identified, considered and analysed. When deciding what are the most significant impacts to consider, applicants should consider what impacts and outcomes the project is intended to achieve, taking into account the strategic case, but should also consider if there are other possible significant positive or negative impacts, to the economy, people, or environment.  
(500 words)

This section should set out the full range of impacts – both beneficial and adverse – of the project. Where possible, impacts should be described, quantified and also reported in monetary terms. There should be a clear and detailed explanation of how all impacts reported have been identified, considered and analysed. When deciding what are the most significant impacts to consider, applicants should consider what impacts and outcomes the project is intended to achieve, taking into account the strategic case, but should also consider if there are other possible significant positive or negative impacts, to the economy, people, or environment.

Based on the analysis of costs and benefits set out above, we have estimated value for money through the calculation of benefit:cost ratios for each of the two projects and for the package overall. The approach taken is set out in the separate Economic Case Explanatory Paper.

Overall, the package represents high value for money.

[Overall package](#)

The benefit: cost ratio for the overall package is set out in the Appraisal Summary Table 



Initial benefits and adjusted benefits

Initial benefits include: visitor economy benefits (through increased overnight stays and day visitors); health and wellbeing benefits; benefits arising from volunteering and employment; and local recreational use.

Adjusted benefits include benefits arising from construction (which are substantially discounted).

Commentary on the economic appraisal of each project



The BCR for the Gnoll Estate Country Park is High (adjusted Benefit: Cost Ratio = 2.58 (based on the value for money category guidance issued by the UK Department for Transport). Most of the monetised impacts relate to visitor economy and health benefits.

However, this includes net revenue to the public sector gained from the proposed car park, which we have counted in the appraisal as a 'benefit' rather than a 'negative cost'.

A10. It will be generally expected that an overall Benefit Cost Ratio and Value for Money Assessment will be provided at Question 5.5 in the main application. If it is not possible to provide an overall BCR for your package bid, please explain why. (250 words)

It will be generally expected that an overall Benefit Cost Ratio and Value for Money Assessment will be reported in applications. If this is not possible, then the application should include a clear explanation of why not.

Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attractor overall package bid BCR  
Initial BCR 2.31  
Adjusted BCR 2.38

A11. Where available, please provide the initial and adjusted BCR for this project:

Initial BCR	
Adjusted BCR	

Where available, please provide the initial and adjusted BCR for this project:

Initial BCR -  
Adjusted BCR -

Gnoll initial BCR = 2.52  
Gnoll adjusted BCR = 2.58

A12. Does your proposal deliver non-monetised benefits? Please set out what these are and a summary of how these have been assessed. (250 words)

Please set out the non-monetised benefits, describing what these are and provide a summary of how these have been assessed.

Significant non-monetised impacts include:

#### Spillover and 'catalytic' benefits

As well as generating benefits as a result of investment at Gnoll Estate Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan, the package aims to generate cumulative benefits across the Vale of Neath. This is set out in the Strategic Case: essentially, the proposition is that the two projects are part of a network of assets which will be collectively promoted and developed over time. We anticipate that additional visitors to Gnoll Estate will also visit Aberdulais Falls (for example), and will be likely to make return trips to other destinations in the area. Over time, this will increase the 'density' of the offer, so that the overall mix is greater than the sum of its parts, helping to improve perceptions of the area and strengthen its wider investment 'brand'.

To avoid double counting, we have not monetised the impact of this. However, with effective marketing and product development (as proposed in the *Destination Development Framework*), the 'catalytic' effects of investment could be significant, as business cases strengthen for other schemes.

#### Residential land values and amenity

There is evidence that access to green space increases land values (see ONS research on *Valuing Green Space in Urban Areas* (2019)). Investment at Gnoll Estate Country Park could have a positive effect on residential values, if the amenity value is increased, although as the park already exists, most of the 'value' is already captured.

There will be benefits to residents in Pontneddfechan through resolution of the current parking challenge, which is a major local issue. This will bring a direct benefit to residents (avoiding anti-social and dangerous parking), and improve general environmental quality. The village will also gain amenity value from the proposed local shop (not separately monetised, since the employment benefits capture the value).

#### Environmental benefits through improved management of the asset at Gnoll Estate

Investment at Gnoll Estate should lead to natural environment benefits, in terms of better management of the woodland and watercourses and opportunities to enhance biodiversity. This should be assessed at the next stage of the design process, but sustainability and enhancement of the natural environment is central to the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor proposition.

In addition, there will be energy efficiency benefits through the improved Visitor Centre at the Gnoll Estate, and through EV charging points.

### Educational benefits

Better interpretation and accessibility should support school visits, holiday clubs, etc. Pontneddfechan will also encourage young people's access to active leisure. These benefits are partly counted in local visitor numbers, although engagement with heritage and nature should have broader impacts.

### 'Intrinsic' benefits in heritage value

*Valuing Culture and Heritage Capital* includes 'willingness to pay' as an accepted way of monetising the value of heritage assets. At the Gnoll Estate, we assume that 'user' value is already captured in the visitor economy benefits. However, the Estate's heritage is of intrinsic value (locally and to South Wales in terms of the network of nineteenth century industrialists' estates), and better awareness will make a wider contribution to 'pride in place'.

A13. Does this project include plans for some LUF grant expenditure in 2022-23?

Please confirm the plans for LUF grant expenditure in 2022-23 for this component project. It is a requirement for at least one component within a package bid to defray grant in 2022-23.

Yes

A14. Could this project be delivered as a standalone project or does it require to be part of the overall bid?

Please set out if this project could be delivered as a standalone project rather than part of a package bid.

The Gnoll Estate Country Park Heritage Visitor Infrastructure is part of an interlinked package of projects within the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor – the aim of the package bid seeks to increase the quality, scale and sustainability of the area's visitor economy. But it also has wider objectives, in promoting access to the natural environment and the health benefits that this brings, as well as the 'intrinsic' value of heritage and green space. The projects work as a string of pearls and will act as a catalyst for further development in the Vale of Neath.

A15. Deliverability:  
Please demonstrate that project activity can be delivered in 2022-23?

Please confirm the plans for LUF project activity in 2022-23 for this component project. It is a requirement for at least one component within a package bid to undertake project activity in 2022-23.

Yes

The package bid delivery plans confirm activity can be delivered in 2022/23

The majority of these costs are in relation to capital development costs including consultancy



**Statutory Powers and Consents**

A16. Please list separately each power / consents etc. obtained, details of date acquired, challenge period (if applicable) and date of expiry of powers and conditions attached to them. Any key dates should be referenced in your project plan.	In relation to this component project, please list separately each power / consent obtained, details of date acquired, challenge period (if applicable) and date of expiry of powers and conditions attached to them. Key dates should also be referenced in your project plan.
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N/A

A17. Please list separately any <u>outstanding</u> statutory powers / consents etc, including the timetable for obtaining them.	Please list separately any outstanding statutory powers / consents etc. relating to this component project and include the timetable for obtaining them.
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Discussions are already taking place with the Planning Authority regarding the developments,  
 These early discussions have not raised any concerns.  
 Key milestones are included within our delivery plan

**ANNEXES A – C: PROJECT SUMMARIES**

These should be completed individually for each component within a **package bid**.

Please use Annexes A – C to provide detail on each component project of a package bid. A package bid can have up to 3 component projects.	For each component project please complete this form e.g., annex a would be details for component one, annex b for component two and annex c for the third package component.
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B1. Project Name:	Please provide the name of the project component.
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**Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan Visitor Infrastructure Scheme**

B2. Please provide a short description of this project (100 words maximum)	Please provide a short description of this project component.
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This Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan Visitor Infrastructure Scheme project will address significant pressures being experienced by the host community at

Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan in addition to supporting the growth of the visitor economy through the delivery of visitor infrastructure investments including a permanent parking solution, public realm enhancements, visitor hub with public facilities and [REDACTED] accommodation.

B3. Please provide a more detailed overview of the project and how this project aligns with the other projects in the package bid, representing a coherent set of interventions. (250 words)

Please set out a more detailed overview of the project component and how this project aligns with the other projects in the package bid, representing a coherent set of interventions.

This scheme will deliver much needed visitor infrastructure investment and will enable the wider Vale of Neath area to develop as a sustainable visitor destination. The following project elements will be delivered at Pontneddfechan;

- a visitor hub gateway building incorporating; public toilets, a farm/ village shop for the benefit of local community and visitors, boot and dog wash down facilities.
- [REDACTED] visitor accommodation [REDACTED]
- a permanent parking solution to include formal and overflow parking, coach and minibus parking and EV charging facilities,
- public realm/ visitor gateway improvements to enhance the sense of arrival in the village to include; a village square offering opportunities for small events such as popup markets, outdoor seating and safe pedestrian routes with a viewing platform.
- interpretation and signage.
- traffic calming measures

The project will provide the necessary capacity to accommodate existing visitors during peak times in addition to attracting additional visitors during off peak times throughout the year, this will result in extending the visitor season and easing pressures during peak times of year.

The proposed [REDACTED] accommodation development will capture additional visitor spending within the local area and will create employment.

The local community at Pontneddfechan does not currently benefit in any way from the visitors attracted to the area. [REDACTED]

B4. Please provide a short description of the area where the investment will take place. If complex (i.e., containing multiple locations/references) please include a map defining the area with

Please describe the area where this project component will take place. Maps / GIS files can be included where the area is across multiple locations.

references to any areas where the LUF investment will take place.

**For transport projects** include the route of the proposed scheme, the existing transport infrastructure and other points of particular interest to the bid e.g., development sites, areas of existing employment, constraints etc. (250 words)

For transport projects please demonstrate the route of the proposed scheme, the existing transport infrastructure and other points of particular interest to the bid e.g., development sites, areas of existing employment, constraints etc.

The Vale of Neath, where this package project is located, runs north easterly in a straight line from Neath town centre following the famous 'Neath Fault' that can be detected from Swansea Bay into England.

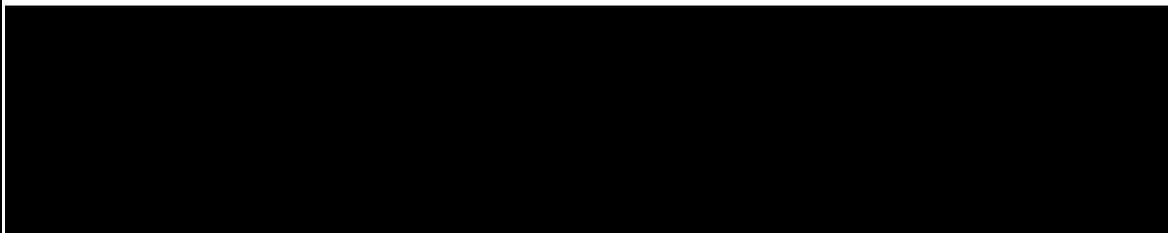
The Vale of Neath stretches along the A465 for approximately 13 miles, from Neath Abbey to the valley town of Glynneath and the village of Pontneddfechan, where the 'Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan' project is located at the edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

From Pontneddfechan there is direct access onto the A465 offering convenient access to Cardiff and the Midlands and connects to the wider south Wales valleys areas.

The town of Neath, located at the southern end of the Vale of Neath, where the Gnoll Estate Country Park project is located (forming part of this package proposal) is located 5 minutes from Junction 43 of the M4 at Llandarcy.

Neath train station provides main line railway services to London and the Midlands. The local bus network services the surrounding urban and valleys areas and bus and train services provide convenient travel options to both Cardiff (45 mins) and Swansea (15 mins).

The Vale of Neath is one of the most historically important localities in Wales. It has for the past three hundred years been closely associated with intense industrialisation and urbanisation. However, its history stretches back many thousands of years and throughout the intervening centuries to the present day that history has been influenced by the geology and topography of the area.



<p>B5. Please confirm where the investment is taking place (where the funding is being spent not the applicant location or where the project beneficiaries are located).</p> <p>If the project is at a single location please confirm the postcode and grid reference for the location of the investment.</p> <p>If the project covers multiple locations please provide a GIS file. If this is unavailable please list all the postcodes/coordinates that are relevant to the investment.</p> <p><b>For all projects</b>, please confirm in which constituencies and local authorities the project is located. Please confirm the % investment in each location.</p>	<p>Please provide confirmation of the exact location the investment is taking place e.g. post code, grid reference etc.</p> <p>If the project is at a single location please confirm the postcode and grid reference for the location of the investment.</p> <p>If the project covers multiple locations please provide a GIS file. If this is unavailable please list all the postcodes/coordinates that are relevant to the investment.</p> <p><b>For all projects</b>, please confirm in which constituencies and local authorities the project is located. Please confirm the % investment in each location.</p>
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The package bid is located in the Neath constituency - 100%, in the unitary authority of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

The package bid comprises two projects in two locations:  
 Gnoll Estate Country Park: SA113BS (Longitude: -3.796867, Latitude: 51.660558)  
 Pontneddfechan: SA115NR (Longitude: -3.596333, Latitude: 51.755632)



<p>B6. Please confirm the total grant requested from LUF (£)</p>	<p>Please confirm the total amount of LUF (£) requested for this individual project component.</p>
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Total LUF request for Pontneddfechan is £6,913,887.

<p>B7. Please specify the proportion of funding requested for each of the Fund's three investment themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Regeneration and Town Centre %</li> <li>e. Cultural %</li> <li>f. Transport %</li> </ul>	<p>Please specify the proportion of funding requested for each of the Fund's three investment themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Regeneration and Town Centre %</li> <li>e. Cultural %</li> <li>f. Transport %</li> </ul>
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<p>Cultural 100%</p> <p>PNV 39% of package bid</p>	
<p>B8. Please confirm the value of match funding secured for the component project.</p> <p>Where funding is still to be secured please set out details below. If there any funding gaps please set out your plans for addressing these. (250 words)</p>	<p>This section should provide details of all the sources of match funding within your bid.</p> <p>Where funding is still to be secured please set out details. If there any funding gaps please set out your plans for addressing these.</p>
<p>£768,209.75</p> 	
<p><b>B9. Value for Money</b></p> <p>Please set out the full range of impacts – both beneficial and adverse – of the project. Where possible, impacts should be described, quantified and also reported in monetary terms. There should be a clear and detailed explanation of how all impacts reported have been identified, considered and analysed. When deciding what are the most significant impacts to consider, applicants should consider what impacts and outcomes the project is intended to achieve, taking into account the strategic case, but should also consider if there are other possible significant positive or negative impacts, to the economy, people, or environment. (500 words)</p>	<p>This section should set out the full range of impacts – both beneficial and adverse – of the project. Where possible, impacts should be described, quantified and also reported in monetary terms. There should be a clear and detailed explanation of how all impacts reported have been identified, considered and analysed. When deciding what are the most significant impacts to consider, applicants should consider what impacts and outcomes the project is intended to achieve, taking into account the strategic case, but should also consider if there are other possible significant positive or negative impacts, to the economy, people, or environment.</p>
<p>Based on the analysis of costs and benefits set out above, we have estimated value for money through the calculation of benefit:cost ratios for each of the two projects and for the package overall. The approach taken is set out in the separate Economic Case Explanatory Paper.</p> <p>Overall, the package represents high value for money.</p> <p><a href="#">Overall package</a></p>	

The benefit: cost ratio for the overall package is set out in the Appraisal Summary Table [REDACTED]

Initial benefits and adjusted benefits

Initial benefits include: visitor economy benefits (through increased overnight stays and day visitors); health and wellbeing benefits; benefits arising from volunteering and employment; and local recreational use.

Adjusted benefits include benefits arising from construction (which are substantially discounted).

Commentary on the economic appraisal of each project

The BCR for Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan is also High (adjusted Benefit: Cost Ratio = 2.06)

B10. It will be generally expected that an overall Benefit Cost Ratio and Value for Money Assessment will be provided at Question 5.5 in the main application. If it is not possible to provide an overall BCR for your package bid, please explain why. (250 words)

It will be generally expected that an overall Benefit Cost Ratio and Value for Money Assessment will be reported in applications. If this is not possible, then the application should include a clear explanation of why not.

Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attractor overall package bid BCR  
Initial BCR 2.31  
Adjusted BCR 2.38

B11. Where available, please provide the initial and adjusted BCR for this project:

Initial BCR	
Adjusted BCR	

Where available, please provide the initial and adjusted BCR for this project:

Initial BCR -  
Adjusted BCR -

PNV initial BCR = 1.99  
PNV adjusted BCR = 2.06

B12. Does your proposal deliver non-monetised benefits? Please set out what these are and a summary of how these have been assessed. (250 words)

Please set out the non-monetised benefits, describing what these are and provide a summary of how these have been assessed.

Significant non-monetised impacts include:

#### Spillover and 'catalytic' benefits

As well as generating benefits as a result of investment at Gnoll Estate Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan, the package aims to generate cumulative benefits across the Vale of Neath. This is set out in the Strategic Case: essentially, the proposition is that the two projects are part of a network of assets which will be collectively promoted and developed over time. We anticipate that additional visitors to Gnoll Estate will also visit Aberdulais Falls (for example), and will be likely to make return trips to other destinations in the area. Over time, this will increase the 'density' of the offer, so that the overall mix is greater than the sum of its parts, helping to improve perceptions of the area and strengthen its wider investment 'brand'.

To avoid double counting, we have not monetised the impact of this. However, with effective marketing and product development (as proposed in the *Destination Development Framework*), the 'catalytic' effects of investment could be significant, as business cases strengthen for other schemes.

#### Residential land values and amenity

There is evidence that access to green space increases land values (see ONS research on *Valuing Green Space in Urban Areas* (2019)). Investment at Gnoll Estate Country Park could have a positive effect on residential values, if the amenity value is increased, although as the park already exists, most of the 'value' is already captured.

There will be benefits to residents in Pontneddfechan through resolution of the current parking challenge, which is a major local issue. This will bring a direct benefit to residents (avoiding anti-social and dangerous parking), and improve general environmental quality. The village will also gain amenity value from the proposed local shop (not separately monetised, since the employment benefits capture the value).

#### Environmental benefits through improved management of the asset at Gnoll Estate

Investment at Gnoll Estate should lead to natural environment benefits, in terms of better management of the woodland and watercourses and opportunities to enhance biodiversity. This should be assessed at the next stage of the design process, but sustainability and enhancement of the natural environment is central to the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor proposition.

In addition, there will be energy efficiency benefits through the improved Visitor Centre at the Gnoll Estate, and through EV charging points.

Educational benefits

Better interpretation and accessibility should support school visits, holiday clubs, etc. Pontneddfechan will also encourage young people’s access to active leisure. These benefits are partly counted in local visitor numbers, although engagement with heritage and nature should have broader impacts.

‘Intrinsic’ benefits in heritage value

*Valuing Culture and Heritage Capital* includes ‘willingness to pay’ as an accepted way of monetising the value of heritage assets. At the Gnoll Estate, we assume that ‘user’ value is already captured in the visitor economy benefits. However, the Estate’s heritage is of intrinsic value (locally and to South Wales in terms of the network of nineteenth century industrialists’ estates), and better awareness will make a wider contribution to ‘pride in place’.

B13. Does this project include plans for some LUF grant expenditure in 2022-23?

Please confirm the plans for LUF grant expenditure in 2022-23 for this component project. It is a requirement for at least one component within a package bid to defray grant in 2022-23.

Yes

B14. Could this project be delivered as a standalone project or does it require to be part of the overall bid?

Please set out if this project could be delivered as a standalone project rather than part of a package bid.

The Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan Visitor Infrastructure Scheme project is part of an interlinked package of projects within the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor – the aim of the package bid seeks to increase the quality, scale and sustainability of the area’s visitor economy. But it also has wider objectives, in promoting access to the natural environment and the health benefits that this brings, as well as the ‘intrinsic’ value of heritage and green space. The projects work as a string of pearls and will act as a catalyst for further development in the Vale of Neath.

B15. Deliverability:  
Please demonstrate that project activity can be delivered in 2022-23?

Please confirm the plans for LUF project activity in 2022-23 for this component project. It is a requirement for at least one component within a package bid to undertake project activity in 2022-23.

Yes

The package bid delivery plans confirm activity can be delivered in 2022/23

The majority of these costs are in relation to capital development costs including consultancy

[REDACTED]

### Statutory Powers and Consents

B16. Please list separately each power / consents etc. obtained, details of date acquired, challenge period (if applicable) and date of expiry of powers and conditions attached to them. Any key dates should be referenced in your project plan.

In relation to this component project, please list separately each power / consent obtained, details of date acquired, challenge period (if applicable) and date of expiry of powers and conditions attached to them. Key dates should also be referenced in your project plan.

Discussions are already taking place with the Planning Authority regarding the developments,

These early discussions have not raised any concerns.

Key milestones are included within our delivery plan in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

B17. Please list separately any outstanding statutory powers / consents etc, including the timetable for obtaining them.

Please list separately any outstanding statutory powers / consents etc. relating to this component project and include the timetable for obtaining them.

Neath Port Talbot Council has received a **letter of intent** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Council has had positive early engagement with planning, highways and biodiversity on the proposal.

### Attachment Checklist

Where possible please zip attachments under the headings provided to reduce the number of attachments being uploaded. Applicants will not be able to submit more than 25 annexes in total. Zipped files will however be accepted. We cannot accept embedded links or file sharing and information submitted in this way will not be considered.

1: Workbook

<p>Have you completed the <b>Costings and Planning Workbook</b> [insert link]? Y/N</p> <p>For package projects please complete the <b>Costings and Planning Workbook for package bids</b> [insert link].</p>	<p>If N, your bid will not be assessed as LUF grant spend in 2022/23 needs to be demonstrated via the workbook.</p>
<p><b>2: Northern Ireland: Gateway for non-public sector applicants</b></p>	
<p>For NI non-public sector applicants:</p> <p>Have you attached audited financial statements covering the last three financial years (or audited annual accounts for registered charities)? Y/N</p> <p>For joint bids with non-public sector partners, financial statements/accounts will be required from partners and applicants (if applicable).</p>	<p>If N, your bid will not be assessed.</p>
<p>For NI non-public sector applicants:</p> <p>Have you provided evidence of experience of delivering two capital projects of similar size and scale in the last five years?</p> <p>For joint bids with non-public sector partners, evidence will be required from partners and applicants (if applicable).</p>	<p>If N, your bid will not be assessed.</p>
<p><b>3: Evidence of Support – Transport Bids</b></p>	
<p>For applicants using their transport allowance: Have you attached <b>pro forma 1</b> [insert link] from the relevant authority with statutory responsibility for transport? Y/N</p>	<p>If N, your bid will not be assessed</p>
<p>For large transport bids (£20M - £50M): Have you attached <b>pro forma 1</b> [insert link] from the relevant authority with statutory responsibility for transport? Y/N</p>	<p>If N, your bid will not be assessed</p>
<p>For NI applicants submitting transport projects: Have you attached <b>pro forma 4</b> [insert link] from the Northern Ireland Executive and relevant local council with responsibility for transport? Y/N</p>	<p>If N, your bid will not be assessed</p>
<p><b>4. Evidence of Support - Joint Bids</b></p>	
<p>For Joint Bids in England, Scotland, and/or Wales: Have you attached <b>pro forma 2</b> [insert link] evidencing support of participating local authorities organisations? Y/N</p>	<p>If N, your bid will not be assessed</p>

For Joint Bids in Northern Ireland: Have you attached <b>pro forma 3</b> [insert link] evidencing support of participating organisations? Y/N	<b>If N, your bid will not be assessed</b>
<b>5: Evidence of MP formal priority support</b>	
For bids in England, Scotland, and/or Wales only: Have you attached <b>pro forma 6</b> [insert link]: MP formal priority support for this bid? Y/N	
<b>6: State Aid/Subsidy</b>	
For all non-public sector applicants delivering in Northern Ireland:  Have you attached independent legal advice that is aligned to your response in this section and verifies that the award of funds considered to be UK subsidy control regime compliant?	<b>If N, your bid will not be assessed</b>
For public and private sector applicants for delivery in Northern Ireland only, if the direct award of funds from UK Government is considered to be state aid under the four EU state aid rule tests and is funded under an exemption based on the <a href="#">General Block Exemption Regulations (651/2014)</a> , and does not falls within the scope of Regulation 6(5).  Have you attached a document to demonstrate incentive effect in line with Regulation 6(2)?	<b>If N, your bid will not be assessed</b>
For non-public sector applicants for delivery in Northern Ireland only:  Have you attached independent legal advice that is aligned to your response in this section and verifies that the award of funds considered to be State aid compliant?	<b>If N, your bid will not be assessed</b>
For all public authorities in England, Scotland and Wales only, disbursing funds as a potential subsidy to third parties.  Have you attached <b>pro forma 5</b> [insert link]: statement of compliance relating to subsidy signed by your Chief Finance Officer?	<b>If N, your bid will not be assessed</b>
<b>7: GIS Files</b>	

Have you attached a GIS file (this is recommended for projects that cover multiple locations)?	
<b>8: Maps and Drawings</b>	
Have you attached a map defining the area with references to any areas where the LUF investment will take place?	
Have you attached any drawings/plans to support your bid?	
<b>9: Strategic Fit</b>	
Have you attached evidence of stakeholder engagement (letters of support, for example)? Y/N	
Have you provided an Option Assessment Report (OAR)? Y/N	
Have you attached a Theory of Change? Y/N	
<b>10: Economic Case for Investment</b>	
Have you attached an explanatory note explaining how the Benefits-Cost Ratio (BCR) has been calculated? Y/N	
For transport bids: Have you attached an Appraisal Summary Table?	
Have you provided additional documents to support the Economic Case (section 5)?  For transport bids, applicants should provide specific appraisal output spreadsheets where relevant, including <a href="#">Active Mode Appraisal Toolkit</a> , <a href="#">Local Highways Maintenance Appraisal toolkit</a> , <a href="#">Small Scheme Appraisal toolkit</a> or transport user benefit appraisal (TUBA) outputs.	
<b>11: Deliverability</b>	
Have you appended copies of confirmed match funding? Y/N	
The UK Government may accept the provision of land from third parties as part of the local contribution towards scheme costs.	

Have you attached evidence in the form of a letter from an independent valuer to verify the true market value of the land? Y/N	
Have you attached a Delivery Plan Y/N	
Have you attached evidence relating to statutory consents/land ownership and/or acquisition? Y/N	
Have you attached an Integrated Assurance and Approval Plan? Y/N	
Have you attached a copy of your Risk Register? Y/N	
For cultural bids, have you attached a document to set out how you will sustainably manage your asset/facility in the long term? Y/N	
<b>12: SRO and CFO Bid Declarations</b>	
Have you attached pro forma 7[link]: SRO declaration?	<b>If N, your bid will not be assessed</b>
Have you attached pro forma 8 [link]: CFO declaration?	<b>If N, your bid will not be assessed</b>
<b>13: Business Case</b>	
Have you attached an outline or full business case? Y/N	