

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 11TH MARCH, 2025

REFERENCE FROM CABINET: 6TH MARCH, 2025

“C287 LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES AT COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE SITES (DL/SP) (SCRUTINY – ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION) –

The Deputy Leader presented the report to seek authorisation to licence a pilot, on water leisure activity in Cosmeston Country Park.

The Council had been approached by a leisure operator who would like to explore the opportunity of using part of the eastern lake at Cosmeston Country Park for water-based activities from May 2025 through to September 2025 to test the suitability of the location. The proposal would be a pilot project and the matter would come back to Cabinet for consideration at the conclusion of the pilot.

Local ward Members were consulted on the proposals and three responses were received, regarding

- concern for the ecology, ornithology and biodiversity;
- noting that the proposal was for the summer and not over the winter period;
- potential for noise pollution for local residents;
- safety of users of the water activity equipment.

The Deputy Leader said that the concerns of the local Members would be shared with relevant staff and the provider, considered during the pilot scheme and would form part of the report back to Cabinet at the conclusion of the pilot.

The Deputy Leader proposed an additional Recommendation that on conclusion of the pilot, the matter for any future use be considered as part of an update report to Cabinet.

Councillor John said that people seemed to visit certain areas as there was a purpose or an attraction, and the proposal was an opportunity to pilot the leisure opportunity before reporting back to Cabinet after its conclusion in September. He understood there were concerns, but the proposal was only a pilot at this stage.

Councillor Wilson welcomed the pilot and that it remained to be seen if it would be successful. He felt the use of CCTV would be a benefit, that the site would be well managed between the Council and the operator and hoped that younger people who wanted to make better use of Cosmeston would utilise the water activity equipment and make them more confident in and around water. He looked forward to the pilot

and subsequent feedback being reported to Cabinet, as well as the views of Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader also acknowledged that concerns had been raised concerning risk-taking behaviour over the summer period at Cosmeston on the environmental and conservation areas of the lake. Young people had told the Council what leisure activities they would like to see and there was an opportunity to pilot an activity that they have said they would want and would be on the non-conservation area of the lake.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T Cabinet agreed to pilot an on-water aqua leisure activity with a third-party operator (for a maximum of 20 weeks through late spring and summer from May 2025 through to September 2025) as a water-based leisure opportunity on the eastern lake at Cosmeston Country Park with terms aimed at minimising any impact on the general visitors and users of the park and in a suitable location to minimise any impact on those areas of nature conservation.

(2) T H A T the Director of Place be given delegated powers, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Finance/S151 Officer, Operational Manager (Property) and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places, to agree fees/charges, terms and conditions for new the pilot leisure use with the operator and to authorise the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services to enter into the appropriate legal agreements on behalf of the Council in that regard.

(3) T H A T the report be referred to Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 11th March, 2025 for their consideration.

(4) T H A T Officers investigate tourism and commercial opportunities regarding the Medieval Village buildings and report further to Cabinet.

(5) T H A T on conclusion of the pilot, the matter for any future use be considered as part of an update report to Cabinet.

Reasons for decisions

(1) To increase opportunities for leisure activities in lower impact areas to support the wider provision of green and blue space and secure future income to support the costs of running Countryside facilities.

(2) To allow commercial arrangements to be identified and agreed on a pilot basis for the summer of 2025.

(3) In order that the Scrutiny Committee could consider the report prior to any final agreement with the relevant Leisure operators which would be required by 1st April, 2025.

(4) To promote opportunities for sustainable tourism and realise income opportunities.

(5) To consider the matter on conclusion of the pilot before deciding any further future similar use.”