

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 OCTOBER 2016

Present: County Councillor McKerlich(Chairperson)
County Councillors Dilwar Ali, Howells, Hyde and Simmons

15 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received however Councillor Howells had advised the Chairman that he would be late arriving.

16 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

17 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 9 June 2016 and 21 July 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

18 : SUPPORT FOR START-UPS AND ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESSES

The Chairperson welcomed the Leader, Councillor Phil Bale, Jon Day Economic Policy Manager and Warren Fauvel Cardiff Start to the meeting.

Members were provided with a presentation on Support for Start-Ups and Entrepreneurial Businesses; the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

- Members asked how many start-up workshops there were in Cardiff. Officers didn't have the information to hand but the Leader noted that most of the workshops were in the South and West of the City.
- Members asked for information such as rent charged per square metre, length of stay allowable and the size of the units. Officers stated that the rent was at the lower end of the spectrum but would come back to Members with a full analysis of information on the units, including the units behind Western Avenue.
- Members noted that Newport have small units for people starting out, then they are able to move to bigger units as their businesses grow and asked if Cardiff had the same. Officers confirmed that start-ups would have access to larger spaces as they grew but ultimately they would be encouraged to move out to their own premises when their business reached a level of maturity.
- Members asked if technical support was provided to start-ups and were advised that they would be signposted to Business Wales for technical support. The Leader added that in Europe it was common for the Economic Development Function to provide support; with the City Deal, Economic Development and Strategic Planning was starting to be looked at on a regional

basis; he added that Brexit had opened up discussions regarding European Funds and having to look at different models.

- Members asked about waiting times for a start-up unit; Officers agreed to provide this information after the meeting. Members were concerned that there was a lack of information available at the meeting.
- With regard to the Tramshed, Members asked if the Council had any influence over how people make bookings; Officers agreed to speak to the owner/management about this.
- Members asked for more information on the Cardiff Capital Fund, officers advised that equity investments had been a success and were still in operation beating market performance; officers were expecting loan repayments to replenish over the next year or so, performance had improved as the fund has gone on. Members noted that a huge amount had been achieved from what was invested and considered there may be problems if the fund is depleted and loans are used instead. Officers stated that the approach would then be to leverage partner investments. The Leader added that partnerships with creative industries such as S4C had already been developed, there were also other funds to access such as the Social Innovation Fund; there had been huge cuts to the service area and many functions remain with just minimum staff, therefore decisions had to be made on what to prioritise, and networks such as Cardiff Start have been identified for support.

Members were provided with a presentation from Warren Fauvel of Cardiff Start; the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

- Members asked how Mr Fauvel was involved with the Council and were advised that he was independent from the Council, the only involvement was that Cardiff Start was funded in part by the Council.
- Members were advised that Cardiff Start provides mentoring, advice and support for founders. The Leader added that he visited the founders Hub on the day that it closed and he realised that there needs to be suitability of infrastructure in the City and issues such as the speed of broadband need to be considered when developing future spaces; Cardiff competes with others and needs to have a high profile, therefore it is important to develop partnerships with universities and others.
- Members asked how people can get in contact with Cardiff Start and were advised that they are a community of people who advise and support each other, they are very active on Facebook, twitter and have a website; they also have a live event list and people are often referred via word of mouth.

The Chairperson thanked Officers and the Leader for attending the meeting.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes on the Committee's behalf to the Leader to convey their comments and observations.

19 : FLAT HOLM ISLAND PARTNERSHIP

The Chairperson invited Councillor Bob Derbyshire (Cabinet Member - Environment), Jon Maidment (Operation Manager Parks & Sport) and Natalie Taylor (Team Leader) to the meeting.

The Chairperson also invited external witnesses Cellan Michael (RSPB) and Peter Sampson (Flat Holm Society) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which he said that he was pleased to bring this item to Committee, the last time it had been was over three years ago, since then there had been lots of progress and there was a strong interest in the topic. Flat Holm Island provided lots of challenges; it needed to be protected and improved and to provide an enhanced visitor experience.

Members were provided with a presentation which included an update on Flat Holm Island; the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

- Members asked if match funding would be needed and were advised that it would be; Members were also advised that landfill tax funding was available to Flat Holm Island currently.
- Members asked what the vision for Flat Holm Island would be if the grant application was successful. Cellan Michael stated that they would wish to take forward partner efforts, make the island sustainable, be realistic with what can be achieved with the Island's heritage and make the most of the iconic location of an island off shore a capital city. The Cabinet Member added that Flat Holm had so much to offer such as nature, birds, historical value, gun turrets, the Marconi story, tides and landing stages; but this needed to be balanced, consideration needed to be given to visitor numbers and breeding seasons for example. He added that engaging with more schools would provide the opportunity to widen awareness about the island.
- Members sought clarification on the freshwater on the island. Officers advised that there had been an issue around 5 years ago and they had looked at bore hole options but this had proved to be too costly; currently the water system was working ok with a new filter and ultra violet systems so was passing water quality tests; bore holes have not been ruled out for the future though if needed.
- With regard to soil contamination, Members were advised that officers have been working with the university but unfortunately were no further forward with this. The lead in the soil means that they island cannot produce eggs/meat but it does provide interesting research opportunities for universities.
- Members asked for an update on the Lewis Alexander and were advised that the boat used to bring groups to the island quite easily but unfortunately there was no longer the budget to fund it, it was important therefore to improve links with commercial operators going forward.

- With regard to the Heliport, officers advised that they had looked at opportunities but they had not been hugely positive; the Heliport has contracts with organisations such as the BBC and therefore did not have the flexibility to transport passengers; this was however three years ago and could be further explored. Officers added that hopefully now the RSPB were on board and with the increased marketing this would provide there may be opportunities to explore with helicopters in the South West to transport visitors, especially in the winter non breeding season months. The experience with Ramsey Island, with an exclusive contract with a boat company with limited numbers of visitors to ensure there is no environmental damage.
- With regard to lease/water access, officers advised that they currently hold the lease and there are no suggestions that this would not be continued.
- It was noted that visitors to the island are guided by the tides and that lots of trips are cancelled due to rough sea.
- Members made reference to volunteers carrying out maintenance work on the island; Mr Sampson stated that volunteers go regularly and maintain and reinstate buildings. The Cabinet Member added that it was a shame that the National Trust were no longer involved especially with regard to the buildings, but discussions were ongoing with other organisations for help and expertise in restoring buildings and maintaining ruins such as the cholera hospital. It was noted in relation to the hospital that it should be managed in the short term as a ruin and maybe in the long-term partners could restore it; however, the HLF bid was for £500k and a seven figure sum would be needed to restore the hospital.
- With reference to the HLF bid, Members asked what the selling point would be and were advised that the RSPB are currently working on various component parts and will meet shortly to discuss built heritage, visitors, accommodation on the island, school partnerships and interpretation on and off the island. Officers added that better links to the island and mainland also needed to be established with improved signposts and accessibility; officers were looking at the Barrage Café as a good opportunity to make this link.

The Chairperson thanked Officers and the Leader for attending the meeting.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes on the Committee's behalf to the Leader to convey their comments and observations.

20 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Members were provided with a work programme and asked for their views on whether any topics should be added. Members considered that a topic on the Castle could be included in the new year and it was noted that the work programme as it stands provides a degree of flex for topics to be added or moved.

Members noted that all correspondence was up to date.

21 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would need to be changed. The principal scrutiny officer would circulate a list of available to date to Members by email and determine a suitable date.