
GREAT WESTERN CITIES - UPDATE

Purpose of report

1. To provide Members with background to the 'Great Western Cities' proposals for Cardiff, Newport and Bristol in advance of receiving an update on the proposed collaboration and joint working between these cities.

Background

2. At the 19 March 2015 Cabinet meeting, authority was delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to develop a programme of joint activity with the cities of Newport and Bristol. The relevant cabinet report is attached at **Appendix A**.
3. A Statement of Intent is included at **Appendix A1** which sets out the three priority areas in which the three cities will work jointly. These are:

Connectivity – cities will seek to significantly reduce journey times between the Great Western Cities, and will make the case for connectivity into the UK high speed network and for continued investment in the Great Western Mainline.

Clean and Renewable Energy – cities will develop a joint strategy to unlock the potential of the Severn Estuary and Bristol Channel.

International Marketing – the cities will establish a joint marketing programme for the Great Western Cities.

4. Members will note that much of the priority work outlined above would fall under the terms of reference on the Environmental Scrutiny Committee. However, underpinning these commitments is the recognition that by working together the Great Western Cities can drive improvements in economic output and create a 'power house' region for the UK economy. Pages 12 – 17 of **Appendix A2** expand upon the priority areas to demonstrate how it is hoped they will strengthen the Great Western economy. **Appendix A2** recognises that the Great Western Cities are some of the most successful cities in Britain, but highlights that they can be doing even better.
5. **Appendix A2** contains comparator data demonstrating how, when combined as a region, the Great Western Cities lead the way (outside of London) in terms of economic output, employment opportunities and critical mass of graduates. These are factors which lead to the region being considered an asset to the national economy.

Previous Scrutiny

6. At the February 2015 Committee Meeting, members questioned whether the 'Great Western Cities' would conflict with the Cardiff City Region plans and the City Deal. Members received assurances that there would be no conflicts and that the 'Great Western' partnership would complement these aspirations and help generate increased interest in Cardiff and South Wales from a business perspective.

Way Forward

7. The Leader, Councillor Phil Bale has been invited and may wish to give a statement. Gareth Newell (Operational Manager) will also be in attendance to answer Members' questions.

Legal Implications

8. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this

report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

9. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/ Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

Recommendations

10. The Committee is recommended to give consideration to the information attached to this report and received at this meeting and to submit any recommendations, observations or comments to the Cabinet Member.

Marie Rosenthal

County Clerk and Monitoring Officer

29 May 2015