

## ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 SEPTEMBER 2017

Present: County Councillor Howells(Chairperson)  
County Councillors Ebrahim, Gordon, Gavin Hill-John, Parkhill,  
Robson and Stubbs

### 8 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sattar.

### 9 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A declaration of interest was received from Councillor Gordon, this was a personal interest in respect of agenda item 5 as she is a trustee of a community centre that was currently funded by Communities First.

### 10 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

### 11 : WORK PROGRAMMING

Members were provided with a Work Programme for consideration and approval, based on discussions at the 18 July 2017 Committee Meeting.

Members were asked to diarise the dates provided in Appendix 1 to the report, the Principal Scrutiny Officer stated she would send electronic diary markers/invites for these dates. It was noted that when appropriate meeting would held in Hubs.

Members noted the pre-decision items that were confirmed for November and December. Members also noted that Policy Development and Review items could possibly be moved depending on pressures; any updates to the programme would be circulated to Members.

Members were content with Performance to be dealt with by exception and for Committee business and information reports to be scheduled when appropriate.

Members considered that where appropriate, independent experts would be invited to Committee meetings.

With regards to the inquiry on Safety in Parks, it was noted that this had been referred to CASSC as per their Terms of Reference. Members asked if they were able to join in that Task and Finish group and the Principal Scrutiny Officer advised that they could and that she would put that suggestion forward.

Members were content to approve the nominations of Councillor Nigel Howells, Councillor Iona Gordon and Councillor Gavin Hill-John to sit on the Parks Inquiry.

## 12 : EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member – Housing and Communities, Sarah McGill, Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Services, Jane Thomas, Assistant Director of Communities and Housing and Louise Bassett, Partnership Delivery Team Leader to the meeting.

Members were provided with a presentation on Employment Services in Cardiff after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

- Members hoped that there would be face to face consultations carried out in the community.
- Members considered that there was a lack of trust due to benefit sanctions, and in order to get people to engage more there should be more work in the communities, in person, in hubs, more mentoring and support provided than was previously available in Job Centres.

The Cabinet Member gave an example of this happening in practice where a young person was helped into work from fostering through training and into a job; showing the success of what is happening currently.

- Members asked if staff were sufficiently aware of barriers faced by vulnerable people, officers explained that yes staff were very aware and trained in the huge range of needs, including people affected by the benefit cap.
- Members asked about the TUPE arrangements for current staff and asked where the money was coming from for this. Officers explained that the employability grant provided by the Welsh Government would be used alongside some grant funding.
- Members noted that language learning needs and ESOL was a huge part of Communities First currently in some wards in the City and asked what would happen when this is withdrawn. Officers explained that they have identified this as a risk/gap and are working with current providers to look at how the provision can be continued.

It was noted that there was some significant duplication in some areas, it was important to make the best use of resources and integrate services effectively and efficiently. There are various funding streams for ESOL, to establish a full picture it was important that this was effectively mapped out then ensure funding so that needs are met.

- Members asked that with so many providers and some consequent duplication, how confident officers could be that they could meet the demand for specialist services. Officers stated that questions were currently being asked to identify what the gaps are; there are lots of specific services provided currently that are not connected to Communities First. The Cabinet Members noted that funding going forward would be much less than Communities First and inevitably some services would cease, consultation would identify what services were most important to maintain.

- Members welcomed the streamlined approach going forward, providing access for all across the City and avoiding duplication.
- With regard to building resilient communities, Members asked if mentoring could apply to community groups looking at accessing assistance. Officers stated that yes part of building resilient communities would be that of community groups being supported to find other sources of funding, this would be delivered via the legacy fund.
- Members welcomed the opportunities being open to all and barriers being removed and asked that with regards to ESOL, consideration was given to new refugees, for example from Syria, who were very well educated but needed initial support.
- With regard to the legacy fund, Members asked if there was a criteria used by the Council to identify the need across the City. Officers explained that the criteria was provided by Welsh Government and was very wide. Officers would want to provide some services City wide, questions were being asked now via the consultation to gauge what these would be. There would be a proposal on how to use the funding, which would be flexible rather than open to bidding.
- Members asked if Officers knew what the proposals regarding TUPE would be and how many people would be out of work as a result. Officers explained that there were currently 80 Communities First staff, 20 of them had already secured employment; there would be a structured exit process, some position would be ring-fenced in organisations. It was further explained that the funding would be prescribed, some posts would/wouldn't be eligible for TUPE, this would depend on the consultation results.
- Members asked if there had been any initial concerns from third parties and were advised that lots of meetings had taken place, all were concerned but had put forward clear ideas of where the gaps were; they were aware that it is a Welsh Government initiative/decision; they had seen the Councils proposal and their main interest had been the legacy fund and how it would be used.
- Members asked if the intention was that this stayed within the current Directorate and were advised that it was.
- Members congratulated officers on the positive and forward looking scheme and for the work done by officers so far.

RESOLVED that the views of the Committee would be discussed during the way forward section of the meeting and a letter sent to the Cabinet Member in due course.

13 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at 4.30pm.