

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 MAY 2021

Present: Councillor Howells(Chairperson)
Councillors Henshaw, Gordon, Gavin Hill-John, Lay, Parkhill,
Robson and Stubbs
Eshaan Rajesh (Youth Representative)

16 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Gavin Hill John and Lay advised that they may be late joining the meeting.

17 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

18 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held 22 February 2021 and 11 March 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

19 : LET'S MAKE CARDIFF GREENER, HEALTHIER AND WILDER - TO FOLLOW

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Bradbury – Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure; Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development and Jon Maidment – Operational Manager – Parks & Cardiff Harbour Authority to the meeting.

Members were advised that this item was to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of a report to Cabinet, which provides an update on progress made in implementing the motion passed by Council on 28 January 2021. The motion was put forward by Cllr Gordon and seconded by Cllr Henshaw, with an agreed amendment by Cllr Parkhill.

The Chairperson invited Cllr Bradbury to make a statement after which he invited questions and comments from Members;

Members discussed the reference to Cardiff being a World leading recycling City and asked that the focus be shifted to reducing waste rather than increasing recycling. The Cabinet Member stated it was people's personal responsibility to reduce waste; there are issues with contaminated recycling and the Council are trying to encourage a better recycling communication strategy and there is a lot of work going on, some as part of the One Planet Cardiff Strategy. The Cabinet Member stated he would feed back the concerns to Councillor Michael. Officers added that it would be straightforward to amend the report to say both Increasing Better Recycling and Reducing Waste. The added that Welsh Government targets are currently all about recycling but there will be policy changes going forward.

Members referred to promoting access to Riverbanks and the Bay edge and asked if the wording could be more exacting to state how much of a margin was needed

between any water and a development to allow proper access for cyclists/pedestrians etc. Officers supported this sentiment but explained that not all the land is in Council control so it requires planning policy. Also the amount of space available can be an issue and if a certain width was required it may be to the detriment of the development; there may be a cost trade-off with the developer as someone would have to pay for it. Officers would however endeavour to maximise as much space as practical.

Members referred to Coed Caerdydd and increasing the tree canopy in the City; asking what the scale of planting would be. Officers explained that there would be woodland creation on large sites as well as the planting of street trees, trees in parks etc.

With regard to National Parks Cities, Members asked what this means in practical terms for Cardiff and what impacts there would be for residents. Officers explained it was an emerging, new concept and only London holds the status currently; the report sets out the benefits but in summary London has seen a greater development of wild spaces; improved air quality; more people enjoying outdoor recreation; communities feel more connected and the economy has benefitted. The concept is new so there is no data at present. The Cabinet Member added that the Council would work with stakeholders to achieve its aims such as increasing the tree canopy, improving biodiversity etc.

Members asked if any areas had been scoped out for urban forests as yet and Officers advised that they have identified 50 hectares in phase 1; meetings will take with ward Members between June and August to enable engagement.

Members referred to Ash die-back, noting it was a particular problem in some Wards and asked if there was a particular strategy to address the issue as part of these proposals. Officers explained that the current position was that there were routine tree inspections across the City; 1200 trees had been identified with various degrees of disease; the worst were felled and others were being monitored. £50k from the FRM had been allocated for felling and a strategy for replacing those trees. An Ash die-back plan was being developed and would be ready in the Summer.

With regard to Forest Farm Nursery, Members asked if this was the most cost effective way of working versus working with private sector garden centres. Officers explained that both ways of working would be undertaken.

The Chairperson explained that given the overlap of this item with their terms of reference, he had offered Environmental Scrutiny Committee Members the opportunity to put questions via the Chair:

Cllr Derbyshire had asked a question around urban trees. 'During his time in the Cabinet he had many requests to remove street trees from residents for various reasons in terms of the impact on their garden/ house. What can be done with this strategy to encourage residents to respect and enjoy the fact they are lucky to have street trees, which have been proven to enhance wellbeing'. A discussion took place around street trees and that it was very difficult to remove them unless they were dangerous and unhealthy. It was important to encourage people to embrace trees on

the street and in neighbours gardens and communicate the positive biodiversity impacts around them.

AGREED: that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

20 : GREENER, FAIRER, STRONGER: CITY RECOVERY AND RENEWAL STRATEGY - TO FOLLOW

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Huw Thomas – Leader; Cllr Goodway– Cabinet Member for Investment & Development; Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development and Jon Day – Operational Manager – Tourism & Investment to the meeting.

Members were advised that this item was to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of a report to Cabinet. The scope of the scrutiny includes the proposals for recovery and renewal in Cardiff as well as the next stage with the ‘*For Cardiff*’ Business Improvement District. As part of this, the Global Perspective Report by Dr Williams, attached as Appendix 3 in the papers, provides interesting insight into the possible future of cities, which Members may wish to explore. Committee also need to consider whether there are any risks to the Council, the proposed timelines and the recommendations to Cabinet.

The Chairperson invited Cllr Thomas to make a statement in which he outlined the timeline for the strategy; the four key policy themes before scrutiny and Cabinet. The draft strategy outlines the Council’s initial response as well as longer term priorities – informed by Tim Williams report and the six key mission set out within. During the summer there would be engagement with stakeholders, residents and the business community, with a further report brought in the Autumn to finalise the strategy.

Members were provided with a presentation after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments;

Members were pleased to see the strategy and asked about the timeline and funding. The Leader stated that the Council is ambitious for Cardiff and has a track record on delivery. Capital Ambition was refreshed in January 2020 and then the pandemic hit and things are still in a state of flux so there will be an incremental build going forward. Cllr Goodway added that the Council also has a track record on getting private sector to engage with the Council on funding. He added that lots of the proposals pre-date Covid and it was very fortuitous that they were in a position to draw on plans that were already being developed to help Cardiff’s economy and recovery. He conceded that some things will be different going forward but for the most part people wanted to go back to normal so the Council has to help deliver that.

Members asked for more information about Kickstart and asked if it can be directed to the deprived areas of the City. Officers explained that they are taking an active role in pushing the scheme, and encouraging people to access benefits so they can access it. The Council has taken Kickstart workers on as well as people accessing it via Into Work services and also fully funded workplace placements for unemployed people.

Members referred to the target on Grade A office space in the city and asked if this was being reconsidered since the pandemic and the move to remote/hybrid working, which could see organisations reducing their office spaces. The Cabinet Member stated that the indication from the private sector was that they needed more space per employee even if they are choosing a hybrid route. Going forward Cardiff has to place itself in a position to take any opportunities that are presented, such as Civil Servants moving out of London into the regions. The Leader added that Legal and General has indicated they are expanding their office space in Cardiff and the report positions Cardiff to take up opportunities including different types of office solutions such as collaborative working spaces.

Members asked if there was a role for the Council to offer communal work spaces throughout the City; Officers stated this work has already started, the Council was being approached by agencies who already do this, to expand across the City and in local centres.

Members asked about the timescale for the report to Cabinet post-consultation and Officers stated it would be Autumn time.

Members asked if the Wales Coastal Path could be built into the renewal programme, emphasising its role as a visitor attraction and resource for local people to enjoy. Officers considered this to be a good suggestion and would take it forward. The Leader said it would also be an opportunity for synergy with coastal defences work.

Members discussed local centres and noted that some areas just needed better signage, car parks, advertising etc. and asked if this was being budgeted for. The Cabinet Member explained that there was no specific provision at the moment, it was important to manage expectations. The decline of local centres had been because of reducing footfall since banks and post offices etc. closed local branches. So while it was important to look at signage and car parks etc. it was also important to identify a reason why people want to go there such as telling the history of the area or a local attraction with public displays; they also need to be easy to get to. Officers added that in some parts of the City, local centres can access regeneration funding from the Welsh Government.

AGREED: that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

21 : CANAL QUARTER REGENERATION - TO FOLLOW

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Goodway – Cabinet Member, Investment & Development; Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development and Chris Barnett – Operational Manager – Major Projects to the meeting.

Members were advised that this item was to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of a report to Cabinet. Committee had not received the report and so the scope of our scrutiny was limited to what is contained in the presentation and discussed at this meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which he said that Members would acknowledge that this is one part of the City that needs regeneration; it was a long held ambition to re-open the canal feeder as an attraction. An opportunity had arisen to deliver this as part of a wider masterplan for the area. Members received the open part of the presentation. Members were invited to ask questions and make comments;

Members asked if the water in the public realm would be still or flowing as they were concerned about water quality. Officers advised that it would be junction off the canal and therefore the water would be flowing. Members further asked if the levels would need pumping; Officers advised that this hadn't been established as yet; there was quite a flow in the dock feeder and it does build up quite quickly.

Members considered that active frontages were a good thing and asked if there was a possibility of using the scheme for rear access to Queen Street station to alleviate footfall. Officers stated that active frontages were the ambition as it was important to create the right type of place. With regard to Queen Street Station, Officers explained there was work ongoing with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales as part of the South Wales Metro Project and the intention was for a direct route from Queen Street to Newport Road.

A discussion took place around David Street and bus priority. Officers explained that the idea was to stop traffic through David Street and the lower part of Churchill Way would have bus priority; the provision for buses will improve; cars will feel the impact of David Street but still be able to get where they need to and it will improve access to the car park.

Members noted it was planned to be a lively area and asked how potential conflicts with residential properties would be managed. Officers explained the intention was mixed use with new residential developments in the area too. Officers noted that conflict could be complex to manage; some can be addressed in the design and materials etc. A mixed use of offices and retail on the lower levels could take the residential properties further from street level, if this was possible to deliver; inevitably there will be some conflict when people decide to live in the City Centre however there is a management role too as well as Licensing etc. to mitigate this.

The Chairperson sought Committee's agreement to consider the exempt information.

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting at this point during consideration of this item as the Committee discussed exempt information of the description contained in paragraph 14, 16 and 21 of Part 4 and Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The public may be excluded from the meeting by resolution of the Committee pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during discussion of this item.

AGREED: that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

22 : LLANRUMNEY REGENERATION - TO FOLLOW

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Goodway – Cabinet Member, Investment & Development; Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development and Chris Barnett – Operational Manager – Major Projects for this item.

Members were advised that this item was to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of a report to Cabinet. As with the previous item, Committee had not received the report and therefore the scrutiny was based on the information in the presentation and what is discussed at the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which he said that he had committed to return to Committee after the public consultation to bring the responses and also to inform Committee that he intends to seek a resolution of Cabinet to dispose of the land.

Members were provided with the open presentation after which the Chairperson sought Committee's agreement to consider the exempt information.

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting at this point during consideration of this item as the Committee discussed exempt information of the description contained in paragraph 14,16 and 21 of Part 4 and Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The public may be excluded from the meeting by resolution of the Committee pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during discussion of this item.

The Cabinet Member concluded by saying he was delighted to bring this scheme as it would improve access and open up employment opportunities for the people of Llanrumney.

AGREED: that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

23 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Members were advised that all correspondence was now up to date.

Members were advised that attached at Appendix B to their papers was a briefing note on '*Capturing and Reporting the Impact of Scrutiny*'. The briefing note sets out that a model has been developed for capturing the impact of the work of the five scrutiny committees. Data and evidence of scrutiny activity throughout the year is collected, supporting the Council in complying with the self-assessment requirements of the new Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

The briefing also sets out plans for a single Scrutiny Annual Report for 2020/21, which will be considered by this Scrutiny Committee in June 2021.

24 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

25 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 10 JUNE 2021 AT 4.30PM

The meeting terminated at 7.35 pm