

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2021

Present: Councillor Howells(Chairperson)
Councillors Henshaw, Gordon, Lay, Parkhill, Robson, Sattar and Stubbs

13 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Gavin Hill-John and Eshaan Rajesh who would join the meeting later as he was contributing to a Race Equality Taskforce Citizen Voice meeting.

14 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

15 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June were agreed as a correct record.

16 : ATLANTIC WHARF UPDATE

The Chairperson advised that this item was to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of a report to Cabinet that covers several aspects of the Atlantic Wharf scheme, including: a brief update on the Indoor Arena project, proposed changes to the Atlantic Wharf Masterplan and details of the proposed Multi-Storey Car Park. The report seeks authority to progress a Full Business Case for the car park and to progress an Outline Business Case for the Red Dragon Centre.

Committee last scrutinised this scheme in December 2020. The confidential letter arising from that meeting had been shared with all Committee Members. The scope of the scrutiny covers the proposals and proposed changes, whether there are any risks to the Council and the recommendations to Cabinet.

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Goodway– Cabinet Member for Investment & Development; Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development, Ruth Cayford – Creative Industries and Culture Manager and Chris Barnett – Operational Manager – Major Projects.

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

Members urged officers to give consideration to the frontages of office buildings on Lloyd George Ave. Officers explained that the offices will be double fronted with one frontage now onto the new public square and one onto Lloyd George Ave. Both will be required to be designed to a certain standard and good quality with interesting architecture which will improve Lloyd George Ave.

Members were pleased to see that a footbridge would be provided over the A4232. Officers explained the footbridge was a long term rationale to direct access from Atlantic Wharf/ the indoor arena to the transport hub, taking people from residential areas to the transport hub then onto the city centre and St Mellon's parkway.

Members asked if there was any indication of how the new transport hub was coming along. Officers explained the progress, there was a good position with the landowner, the actual detail of the hub was now being developed for the business case to Welsh Government through the extension of the Metro line. Proposals included a Crossrail going back to Central station and to Pierhead St and the extension of the line from Queen St to Cardiff Bay. This work is currently underway.

Members noted County Hall car park and the reference to it supporting the delivery of the Arena and the redevelopment of the Red Dragon centre. Members asked if there was any reason why there is no mention of County Hall in the presentation. Officers explained that the explicit detail of the County Hall car park was explained later on in the confidential report. It was noted that the multi storey car park will replace the County Hall car park, it can be used by County Hall staff from Monday to Friday. 250 spaces would be kept immediately outside County Hall. It was noted that this information could have been used as a preamble in the presentation.

With regards to the footbridge, Members considered it would be helpful to see a map as it was difficult to visualise. Officers explained that the master plans are attached to the report and these set the context. The report went to Cabinet and Scrutiny last December. Planning consent would be sought this September and then a detailed consultation would be undertaken and a strategy developed which would explain how it will be managed. Coming from the arena there would be 2 transport hubs to split the crowd, one from Cardiff Bay to the City centre and one from Pierhead St to the East of the City and St Mellon's. The footbridge would be a level bridge with the ramp at Pierhead St so it would be accessible.

Members referred to the private rented sector apartments and asked if officers have bottomed out whether there would be an element of social housing and asked for reassurances that these apartments will not end up a student accommodation. Officers explained they are not designed or proposed to be student accommodation. There will be a high level of affordable housing across the site, circa 1,000 units. All this will need to go through Planning Committee. Members explained their concerns that the private rented sector apartments would not be affordable for local people, adding to the gentrification of Butetown. Officers explained that this was not the intention and that there would be social housing on site as well. They will seek to test the market for private rented sector accommodation, after the Cabinet decision has been taken, to inform the business case and more details would be available in the report to Cabinet on this, scheduled for October.

Members referred to the Memorandum of Understanding Delivery Strategy being agreed through delegation asking why this was and whether it would be more transparent if it was a Cabinet decision. Officers explained the intention was to align strategies, they were doing pioneering work with education to meet the needs of the creative sector, explaining it is quite a complex plan but the bulk of the new space will be for creative industries. Members considered this was excellent but could be more transparent by having an additional report to Cabinet on this.

With regards to consultation and engagement with the local community, Members asked how this would be managed and how previously difficult to reach cohorts would be engaged with. Officers explained that this engagement has started, there has been consultation on the Indoor Arena and the Square, the Cabinet Member held a webinar last week which was led by the developer and supported by the Council. The Council was gearing up to submit Planning applications and have developed a short video which sets out proposals and asks the community for comments. This was put on social media and the Council's website. Questionnaires have also been sent out to residents who live within 1 kilometre of the site by post and the questionnaire has been emailed to the wider community. Two more webinars are planned. There has been a fairly good response to questionnaires. The Council are also proposing a roadshow in the community and this is now being developed.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments on the Confidential information and Members were reminded that Committee are required to consider this in a closed session to discuss information deemed exempt, in accordance with paragraphs 14 and 16 of Part 4 and paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED: to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting.

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.

17 : VELODROME: INTERNATIONAL SPORTS VILLAGE

The Chairperson advised Members that this item was to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of a report to Cabinet that presents the Outline Business Case, seeks Cabinet authority to proceed and asks Cabinet to agree in principle to the allocation of the budget required to deliver the Velodrome.

Committee last scrutinised this in March 2021 and the confidential letter following the meeting had been circulated to all Committee Members. Scrutiny today focuses on the projected costs and income levels, the Financial Report, whether there are any risks to the Council and the recommendations to Cabinet.

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Goodway – Cabinet Member for Investment & Development, Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development, Chris Barnett – Operational Manager – Major Projects, Steve Morris – Operational Manager – Leisure & Sport, and Jo- Anne Phillips – Project Manager.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which he said that in March, Cabinet had approved plans to relocate the Velodrome, Capital Funding was coming from Capital Projects Education Department in line with the replacement of Cathays High School through the 21st Century Schools Programme. The report sets out the implications.

Members were provided with a presentation in open session after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments.

Members noted that the financial implications in the Cabinet report refer to testing the market for a third party operator. Members asked when this process would start and what would happen if one cannot be found. Officers were confident that one would be found, this work would be taken forward as part of the broader work on the International Sports Village. A report will go back to Cabinet in September, part of that report will seek authority to carry out full business cases on various aspects of the development. The Council will deliver the full facility including the Velodrome which will be enhanced with more facilities for cycling clubs. The Council delivers with the operator either paying a fee to operate or more likely will have commitments to health and safety and maintenance etc, this is all still to be bottomed out. It can be seen as almost an invest to earn scenario.

Members noted that when they have seen a report on the Velodrome previously, they had been told the facility would be like for like with better facilities for users, however Members have been contacted by residents saying that certain types of bikes now need to be used and people feel they are being pushed out of being able to use the facility. Members also sought more information on the Road Circuit. Officers explained that the report to Cabinet in September will deal with the wider aspect of the International Sports Village and that will include more detail on the Closed Rd Circuit. Officers added that they were clear last time they brought a report to committee that the proposal is for a 330 metre track. With regards to the types of cycles, there have been discussions with various cycling organisations who have recommended a 330 metre track as this is better usage for all level of cyclists. You do lose one element compared to a 440 metre track, the longer, flatter area on the centre of the track, but that's being picked up with the Closed Rd circuit. The cycling community are onboard via the Council's communications. Officers added that the geometry of the track can be adjusted, this is important as they need to ensure the track is conducive for people who currently use the Maindy site, it has to be an equal if not improved facility, this is the remit. Officers also discussed the steepness of the banking and the whole geometry of the track reassuring Members that it will be developed according to users' needs.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments on the Confidential information and Members were reminded that Committee are required to consider this in a closed session to discuss information deemed exempt, in accordance with paragraphs 14 and 16 of Part 4 and paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED: to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting.

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.

18 : CORRESPONDENCE

Members were advised that there were currently two outstanding responses to Chairs letters.

19 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

20 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed.

The meeting terminated at 6.00 pm