

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 JUNE 2022

Present: Councillor Wong(Chairperson)
Councillors Berman, Brown-Reckless, Cunnah, Henshaw,
Jenkins, Lloyd Jones and Robinson

1 : APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR & COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Noted.

2 : TERMS OF REFERENCE

Noted.

3 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

4 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

5 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

6 : SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

The Chairperson advised that this item provided Members with an opportunity to consider the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund priorities and how Cardiff will bid for this.

The scope of the scrutiny was to explore the proposed approach to applying for funding for Cardiff, areas where bids may be developed, the anticipated benefits and role in levelling up Cardiff. Committee can also explore the role of the Council and whether there are any risks or other implications for the Council. Members should also get a clear idea of the timeline and next steps. To take Committee through the proposed approach, the Chairperson welcomed Cllr Thomas – Leader. Paul Orders – Chief Executive and Jon Day – Operational Manager – Investment & Tourism for this item.

The Chairperson invited the Leader and Chief Executive to make statements, after which Officers provided a presentation to Members. Members were then asked for their comments, observations and questions.

Members asked questions around the Fund including whether it was allocated against specific programmes, to particular organisations and around what happens if they don't deliver. Officers explained that the programme would be monitored at a

fairly high level and the Council would expect the standards that the Council adheres to, to be maintained. The Council would audit how it works to provide reassurance to UK Government and would ask that the outputs etc be monitored. Officers added that they would be surprised if there was a scheme in place that didn't deliver, and the grant claimed back. Members were assured that there would be consistent discussion with the UK Government, it was not a prescriptive programme which gives some flexibility and the procedural detail will follow after the submissions, however the spirit was that it was not a heavy handed approach.

Members noted that there were broad categories in terms of the impacts and objectives and asked what was designed into the process to ensure there was no duplication. Officers explained that they would manage the overall programme to see what it looks like, it would be delivered locally and people in local communities are engaged and have a good relationship with officers so collectively they know what is happening around the city.

Members discussed how the money would be spent post-covid in Cardiff and talked about how it would support the renewal and recovery work that was underway. The Leader added that Cardiff is bouncing back well compared to the rest of Wales and Core Cities, although there was always scope for improvement.

Members were concerned about the timescales and deadlines and were worried it seemed a bit rushed, especially considering the lack of detail available currently. Members asked for Officers views on the governance of it going forward and whether Scrutiny would have a chance to look at it again. Officers agreed with the point on timescales and detail and reassured Members that there would be flexibility when approved. The Leader added that there would be an opportunity before October for Committee to see a more detailed plan. The Chief Executive added that the Regional Programme Arrangement would have to be robust and supplemented by very clear visibility of spend. He agreed that the challenge would be the short time frame and that all LA's would have to discuss the phasing of the spend.

Members discussed whether the fund could be spent on Transport Objectives, the Leader explained there would be flexibility in the programme and some would be transport related and could support the Levelling Up Fund for Transport.

Members asked if Cardiff would be the lead authority. The Leader stated it was not the assumption that Cardiff would be the lead authority but it would need to be a large authority with capacity and relevant experience.

Members noted the challenge around Adult Numeracy Teaching and lack of tutors and asked what the other challenges would be. Other challenges such as recruitment, inflation, cost of living etc were outlined.

Members asked how Officers intended to embed the Race Equality Task Force's objectives and officers explained they just need to build them in and do them. The Leader added that looking at the Into Work Service, a very high percentage of numbers coming through the scheme, particularly in Cardiff Works and into the Council, were people of colour.

Members asked about the confidence to meet the needs of local communities on a local basis and Officers explained that they were confident that there was enough flex in the scheme to look at the range of interventions in place to reflect what local communities want to do, and that this would be monitored.

Members noted the reference to restoring a sense of community but considered that the new build developments lacked this sense of community. Members asked if some money could be used to build a community where needed and officers advised that it could be.

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.

7 : OVERVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

The Chairperson advised Members that this item enabled Committee to gain an overview of the Economic Development Directorate areas that fall within the Committee's terms of reference. Members would get an understanding of the main areas of work this year, key challenges for 2022-23 and future priorities.

The Chairperson welcomed Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development; Ken Poole – Head of Economic Development; Kathryn Richards – Head of Culture, Venues, Tourism and Events, Jon Day – Operational Manager – Investment and Tourism, and Jon Maidment – Operational Manager – Parks, Sport & Cardiff Harbour Authority for this item.

Members were provided with a presentation on the Overview of the Economic Development Directorate after which they were asked for their comments, observations and questions.

Members asked how imaginative the Council is being in terms of what the city should look like. Members discussed the demand for office space being down yet it was a KPI in the Delivery Plan and also discussed the 15 minute city and radically reimagining the city. Officers explained that the pandemic had quickened the pace of change, with more vacant space and repurposing of that space. Officers added that today they are seeing some of the benefits of that strategy with investors stepping in and gave the examples of Howells, Central Square and Investment in Leisure facilities in St Mary Street. Officers explained that footfall was returning to near pre-covid levels; the Council had brought in expert advisors to help ensure that the 15 minute city was embedded in the Council's plan, but highlighted the challenges such as encouraging workforces to return, inflation and cost of living crisis.

Members were advised that the directorate is responsible for City Centre Management and were told that they hoped to recruit to a post for local centres and grow the team. Members were also advised that in the next few months, the St David's partnership would be bringing their strategy forward, which the team had been involved in, and this would be brought to a future committee meeting.

Members discussed the Central Square development and considered that it was not quite the gateway destination that the original plans had indicated, with too much

concrete, high buildings and nothing to break it up such as fountains etc. Members asked how it could be refined after it had been delivered. Officers explained that it is getting close to being delivered as a project. It was noted that there were varying opinions on the public square but that lots of the design has been driven by crowd management plans to move crowds from the stadium. It was added that when the public realm behind the station is delivered there may be an opportunity to soften the square but a priority had to be the safe movement of people from the stadium and this means it is going to be a hard landscape. Officers stressed that they were happy with the significant transformation in the area stating it had become one of the most successful urban regeneration projects in Wales to date but they would try to soften it where they could and also hold some events in the square in the interim period.

Members referred to piles of fencing being stacked up in the area and Officers agreed to investigate this.

Members asked what was being done about broadband provision across the city as they couldn't see reference to this in the papers. Officers explained that this sits in the Digital Services service area, the Economic Development Directorate will collaborate with them and secure funding for areas around the city with not spots. Officers added that there would also be a focus on bringing in other providers to look at the underserved parts of the city.

Members referred to the 15 minute city and the KPI's listed in the presentation. Members asked if the KPI's needed to change post covid and if so how this could be done to ensure they reflect a radical and future looking city's objectives. Officers agreed that they would need to look at the KPI's going forward, and also to include new ones to meet the new challenges and new outcomes. Officers would work with committee on this. Officers added that they have only provided a snapshot and there are more KPIs. Officers explained that some 15 minute city KPI's would sit in other Directorates such as Planning, Transport and Environment, but there was always an opportunity to update KPI's annually when the Corporate Plan is updated.

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.

8 : WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23

Members were advised that Committee needed to consider how it wishes to approach constructing its work programme for the remainder of this municipal year.

The Principal Scrutiny Officer outlined the report, the options available to Members and previous approaches taken.

Members considered that an informal work programming meeting could be scheduled to follow the next Committee meeting and that in the meantime suggestions could be emailed to the Principal Scrutiny Officer.

9 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

10 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11 July 2022.

The meeting terminated at 6.45 pm