

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 JULY 2022

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

11 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Cunnah and Henshaw

12 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Lloyd Jones declared a personal interest as Chair of the Penrhys Pilgrimage Project.

13 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

14 : SHARED PROSPERITY FUND: PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - TO FOLLOW

Members were advised that this item provided them with an opportunity to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the report to Cabinet, attached at Appendix 1 of the papers.

This scrutiny builds on the scrutiny Committee undertook at its last meeting. Committee were advised the report to Cabinet sets out the proposed bids for SPF for Cardiff and regionally, and reaffirms the proposed bids for Levelling Up funding, at points 42-45 and that Committee can also explore the role of the Council and lead authority, the governance and programme management, and whether there are any risks or other implications for the Council.

To take Committee through the proposed approach, the Chairperson welcomed:

- Cllr Thomas – Leader
- Paul Orders – Chief Executive
- Jon Day – Operational Manager – Investment & Tourism

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

Members noted it was a framework rather than a detailed proposal and were pleased this would come forward in the autumn. The Leader agreed it was a framework and that they are trying to keep as much flex as possible.

Members asked if any thought had been given to the discreet proposals; and how much funding would be allocated to each individual heading. Members considered that more time for planning would have been beneficial. The Leader explained that there had been some initial work on allocation to specific lines, but this needs to be tested over the summer months. Officers added that there are also practical considerations with delivering the framework in the timeframe. Details on allocation were awaited from the UK Government but there will need to be robust arrangements in place. The Chief Executive added that the key issue is the spend profile, he anticipates ramping up of key expenditure across the programme such as into work services. Then there would be a need to understand the range of projects going forward and align them with a programme of spend.

Members asked about the Governance arrangements to ensure that the share earmarked for Cardiff gets to Cardiff. Monitoring and compliance arrangements details were still awaited but Members noted the intention is to use the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and successor Corporate Joint Committee as the governance structure for regional programmes and projects. Members noted Cardiff Council will establish local systems for monitoring, evaluation and compliance, for local programmes and projects. Members also noted that the City Deal is leading discussions on maximising benefits regionally, for example on skills, training and business support so that the region can avoid duplication and benefit from good practice and synergies.

Members were pleased to see reference to public transport for hard-to-reach communities.

Members referred to the Wales coastal path. Members wished to highlight that, as well as the Wales Coastal Path mentioned in the proposed programmes, many areas of Cardiff host walking routes that could be used to promote these areas to visitors, such as the Penrhys Pilgrimage route, which starts/ends in Llandaff, walks in Penylan, Creigiau, St Fagans and Pentyrch.

Members asked how the SPF will be used to tackle inequalities, which are deepening due to the impact of cost of living crisis and impact of covid pandemic. Members specifically referenced BAME and gender inequalities and concerns these have become more entrenched in recent years. The Leader highlighted the need to be careful not to overplay what SPF could achieve and that his administration is focused on tackling inequalities, for example via the Living Wage, the work of the City Deal on increasing GVA etc. He added that certain streams of the SPF will help tackle inequalities, for example the Into Work stream are very targeted and focusing on high needs. He concluded that SPF will help but is not a gamechanger on its own.

Members asked whether there was scope for projects to embed targets for employment and to monitor compliance on these. Officers responded there is scope to do this and to create incentives so it is properly done. They informed Members that they are working with the Inclusive Growth Network to learn from best practice and engage with key groups locally.

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.

15 : ATLANTIC WHARF REGENERATION UPDATE: PRE-DECISION
SCRUTINY - TO FOLLOW

Members were advised that this item provided them with an opportunity to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the report to Cabinet, attached at Appendix A of the papers.

The scope of the scrutiny is to explore the proposed changes to the Multi-Storey Car Park, land strategy, and the Atlantic Wharf masterplan, the update on the Indoor Arena, the proposed agreement in principle to use Compulsory Purchase orders, the role of the Council and whether there are any risks or other implications for the Council. Members were asked not to refer to confidential information in open session.

To take Committee through the proposed approach, the Chairperson welcomed:

- Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development
- Chris Barnett – Operational Manager – Major Projects

Officers provided Committee with a presentation after which the Chairperson invited questions, comments and observations.

Members had a discussion around what parts of the report were confidential and in the public domain. Members were concerned that there was public/open information in an exempt appendix and questioned why this was not separated out to be open and transparent. Members requested that all non-confidential information is made available for the public and interested stakeholders to read by ensuring it is contained in non-confidential reports or appendices. Confidential appendices should only include confidential information. If this is not practicable, information should be duplicated in both a non-confidential appendix and a confidential appendix, with the non-confidential appendix using redaction to block out confidential information.

Members noted that the proposal included building a car park for 1800 cars and questioned whether this fitted with Active Travel plans and Climate Emergency. Members asked if the project would have been able to be delivered without this and whether consideration around this had been given to future projects. Officers noted the legitimate questions and clarified the car park was for 1300 spaces which was a requirement from the developer of the Arena, it is a condition precedent which is a legal contractual commitment on the Council. The principle behind it is that there are 1800 surface car parking spaces. There was an agreement to stack up into a Multi Storey Car Park and not provide any additional spaces to what is currently on the site. There will be significantly more demand for the arena which will be serviced by public transport and Active Travel.

Members asked if there was any carbon off-setting as part of the scheme. Officers explained that they were committed to deliver the whole Atlantic Wharf scheme as carbon neutral. There would be 400 spaces for EV charging through green energy, solar panels and hydroponic roof spaces with stored batteries.

Members were advised that 50% of the roof hydroponics will produce food, aiming to deliver 500 food baskets a month to the community and allotments. Green walls would also be used but mainly for aesthetics and not crops.

Members noted that when the masterplan went to Planning Committee, there had been criticism around the outline cycling facilities. Members asked if there will be equivalent level of safe cycling to support the sustainable travel agenda. Officers explained that they are not taking the full business case for the car park until the autumn. The car park will have an active travel element and a public transport Hub.

Members asked about the land acquired from Future Inns, asking if it is currently in use and whether this poses any issues. Officers explained it was the car park and the Pizza Hut building that has been closed for years, the parking around Miller and Carter will see a net loss of 4 car parking spaces.

Members asked how much the Arena is costing and how much is being borrowed. Officers advised that the report to Cabinet is about acquisition of a piece of land/car park. In the autumn a business plan will be brought to Committee for full scrutiny. In October officers will present the costs, and explained that these are changing and rising quite drastically, however Members were advised that the Council's exposure is limited and inflationary pressures are having to be borne by the developer.

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.

16 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

17 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - TBC

The meeting terminated at 6.10 pm