

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 NOVEMBER 2022

Present: Councillor Wong(Chairperson)
Councillors Berman, Henshaw, Jenkins, Lloyd Jones and
Naughton

Zach Hellard – Youth Council Representative

35 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Brown-Reckless and Robinson.

36 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

37 : SHARED PROSPERITY FUND UPDATE

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 Committee's scrutiny is to explore the proposals contained in the report to Cabinet, in terms of the proposed programme, delivery plan, implementation arrangements and governance, the financial implications for the Council, whether there are any risks to the Council, what the next steps are, and, critically, to examine the recommendations to Cabinet.

The Chairperson welcomed

- Cllr Huw Thomas- Leader
- Paul Order – Chief Executive

- Louise Bassett – Operational Manager – Partnerships & Commissioning, Housing & Communities

- Jon Day – Operational Manager – Tourism & Investment

- Natalie Southgate – Partnership Delivery Manager, Housing & Communities

The Leader and Chief Executive were invited to make statements after which Members were provided with a presentation by Officers. Members were asked to make any comments, observations or ask any questions.

Members were keen to know whether start-up programmes in Cardiff will come under this scheme. Officers explained that there will be a grant programme established in

year 1 and there will be a regional conversation around it; allocations will happen in years 2 and 3.

Members referred to Pre and Post 16 targeted support and considered that help with funding for travel to education would be very beneficial. Officers stated that this was something that the service area could pick up with funding. The Leader referred to Cardiff Commitment and noted that there had been good performance on this in the last 10 years, and also with regards to employment.

Members discussed the 15 Minute City and hard to reach communities. Members sought clarification on how 'hard to reach communities' are classed, noting that some communities are close to the city centre but still do not have good transport links. Members also noted there was no mention of a walking strategy, making reference to pavement improvements and dropped kerbs. The Leader noted that these were fair points but the challenges need to be viewed in the context of the budget gap faced by the Council, and the need to prioritise on a needs basis – material poverty and inequality. It was noted that 'hard to reach' means access to public transport as well as access to a means of transport such as cars. The Chief Executive stressed the importance of working with Members and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team to ensure that local issues are raised.

With recent changes at UK Government level, Members asked for an update on the funding position and asked if there was a risk of cuts to the programme. Officers explained that the expectation was that Cardiff will receive what it has been expecting, there had been no further update.

Members referred to Transport issues and congestion, asking if there were any plans to target these within the programme. The Leader explained there is funding but it is at the margins of what the Council does. He added that the Transport Strategy is ongoing, there have been discussions around an Environmental Levy, there was the issue of a lack of satisfaction with public transport and all sides, including Welsh Government, were facing funding pressures, the SPF cannot address all of the issues.

A discussion took place around the City Centre with regard to cleanliness and public realm, areas that have been dug up by utilities companies and not reinstated effectively etc. and whether issues such as these could be addressed by the SPF. Officers stated that the programme would be putting capacity back into the city centre to address exactly these types of issues. The Leader added regarding utilities that the issue with capacity for enforcing good standard of reinstatement would come under the SPF programme.

The Youth Council representative asked about how value was assigned to each and every sector, giving the example of the Cardiff Music Strategy seeming to be given more than Child Friendly City. Officers explained it was important to see the programme as a whole, Child Friendly City, Youth Services, Education etc have different funding streams so needed to be looked at in the round. Officers explained that allocation was on a scoring process basis, this was still a work in progress and a live and evolving document that can still be influenced. The Leader explained the importance of place making and culture and how these have been identified as vital to making Cardiff economically viable going forward, to create jobs for young people

and to make Cardiff an attractive place for people to live and work. The Chief Executive added that it was important to look at the totality of spend re making Cardiff a Child Friendly City.

Members asked about how the Council mitigates the uncertainty of funding and whether this limits ambitions, decision making and projects that are ready to go. The Leader stated that in his opinion there has been a rigorous prioritisation to support services even though the SPF was yet to come through, the example of the Into Work Service was provided. He added that the third sector are however understandably concerned with structural funds coming to an end. Officers added that they have tried to design this to mitigate as much as possible; most funding would come in year 3, ideally there would be more time to plan but officers have done what they can to get the best for the people of Cardiff.

Members noted that there are only 5 months left of the financial year and asked if it was expected that the funding would be carried over. Officers explained that they have been told there would be no carry over, this was based on funding being received in October, so there may be further discussion on this given that now in mid-November.

Members noted that during the 3 years of the programme there would be a General Election and asked if this had been reflected upon with regards to whether this would complicate things. The Leader stated that it is the reality that has to be dealt with and plans made accordingly. As the General Election draws closer there may be more clarity on what policies would be prioritised.

Members discussed Governance and asked if there would be opportunities for Members to influence outside of the scrutiny process. Members also asked about the third sector and whether there would be an opportunity to influence as the programme goes on. Officers explained that there would be engagement with Members, in scrutiny sessions, with the Neighbourhood Renewal Team as well as an open call to Members who may want to shape and determine the programme. The Leader added that he is keen to ensure Cabinet involvement and accountability, also adding that scrutiny is essential alongside FOR Cardiff, C3SC, PSB etc.

Members noted that this was a grant programme but asked if there was scope in the scheme for loans for start-up businesses. Officers explained that the programme will focus on grants rather than loans as it's not a financing programme. Officers also did not envisage that they would be dealing with people with initial business ideas, it would be businesses that are already established somewhat. The Leader added that there is a crowded market for business support in Cardiff, which means it is quite a complicated gateway for business to get Government support, this needs to be made more straightforward.

Members referred to the Race Equality Task Force elements that impact on the progress of those values embedded in the programme, especially regarding outcomes for the BAME community. The Leader explained that would be a separate report on the Race Equality Task Force in December with recommendations. In terms of mapping those commitments into the SPF, there were various interfaces such as Into Work Services, Equality Impact Assessments etc. these would be embedded into the programme and not an 'add-on'.

Members referred to the term 'flexibility' and asked what this meant for the Council. Officers explained that it means being able to adapt to any changes that may come about such as difficulty in recruiting etc.

Members asked if not being able to recruit staff would impact on the money Cardiff gets. Officers explained that if they cannot spend the money then yes it would. The Chief Executive added that as part of the draw down, you have to be certain you can spend the money, so flexibility is needed as it may have to be reallocated.

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.

38 : CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY: UPDATE

The Chairperson advised that this item provided Members with an update on the work of the City Deal Scrutiny Committee.

The Principal Scrutiny Officer advised Members that this was the first report to this Committee so it provided mostly background information.

AGREED: to note the update provided on the CCRCD Cabinet and Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

39 : CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairperson advised that this item enabled Members to receive an update on correspondence sent and received.

The Principal Scrutiny Officer provided an overview of correspondence received and responses awaited.

AGREED; to note the report.

40 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

41 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 12 December 2022 at 5.00pm.

The meeting terminated at 5.45 pm