

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 SEPTEMBER 2023

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

28 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr. Brown-Reckless.

Angela Holt (Principal Scrutiny Officer) was also absent, with Nicola Newton and Erica Painter taking her place.

29 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

30 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 11th July 2023 and 3rd August 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

31 : SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

Members were advised that this item sought to provide background information to aid the scrutiny of the draft report to Cabinet titled 'Shared Prosperity Fund Update', which was due to be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 21st September 2023. The revised delivery program covered a total of £8.3m of funding, and the report examined proposed programs, delivery steps, the role of the council and the proposed management arrangements.

The Chairperson welcomed:

- Cllr. Huw Thomas, Leader of the Council
- Jon Day, Cardiff Council's OM Tourism and Investment
- Natalie Southgate, Cardiff Council's Partnership Delivery Manager, Housing & Communities
- Louise Bassett, Cardiff Council's OM Partnerships & Commissioning, Housing and Communities
- James Wilcox, Cardiff Council's Project Commissioning Officer, Housing & Communities

The Leader of the Council was invited to make an opening statement, in which he emphasised that the proposals were informed by engagement and conversations with key partners, and highlighted the importance of spending within communities. While the initial spend profile had focused on council services to benefit communities and businesses, this report outlined their intention to work more now with external organisations in delivering the remainder of the funding.

Officers provided a presentation, which explained that the council had spent £5.2m last year within communities via the Shared Prosperity Fund, and with 18 months left of the program there was a need to up the pace of spending. Of all the applications they had received, the new approved schemes would go live in October. The funds allocated had focused on the council's priorities, including community facilities, neighbourhood regeneration, public safety, Child Friendly Cardiff, Into Work services, financial advice and adult literacy.

Members asked how Open Call funding would ensure community needs were taken into account rather than better organised applicants getting priority. Officers assured the Committee that their analysis was comprehensive and outcome led. Members discussed the branding of schemes linked to Levelling Up funding and heard that there were no clear details on this yet, unlike EU structural funding received in the past.

Members highlighted the longevity of projects as a key factor and noted that gaps could appear in funding, especially in third sector projects, which in turn might prevent good projects being submitted. Officers acknowledged that third sector grants would be affected when the current funding round ended at the next general election, although the Leader of the Council noted that it was hard to envision the SPF coming to an end without a successor scheme being created.

Members discussed the bureaucratic side of the fund and heard that schemes could claim up to 4% to manage administrative costs. The Leader agreed with Members that there was a strong case for block grants.

The Committee approved of the recommendations in the report as a whole. Members highlighted pockets of need in north Cardiff, and officers confirmed that there was the opportunity to bid in years 2 and 3. The Youth Council representative praised the focus on local projects and emphasised that realistic expectations were key.

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.

32 : CARDIFF MARKET RESTORATION PROJECT

Members were advised that this item sought to provide background information to aid the scrutiny of the draft report to Cabinet titled 'Cardiff Market Restoration Project', which was due to be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 21st September 2023.

The Chairperson welcomed:

- Cllr. Huw Thomas, Leader of the Council
- Jon Day, Cardiff Council's OM Tourism and Investment
- Eirian Jones, Cardiff Council's OM Strategic Estates Manager
- Louise Thomas, Cardiff Council's Asset Management Officer, Strategic Estates

The Leader of the Council was invited to make an opening statement, in which he described the market as a fantastic asset to the city and a critical anchor of the council's post-Covid recovery strategy. He noted that while it remained thriving and vibrant, the building was in need of investment, and there were other covered markets around the country that were even more of a destination than Cardiff's.

This was followed by a presentation from Jon Day which set out how the council intended to invest £6m in its refurbishment, focusing on renovation and restoration rather than redevelopment. He highlighted issues with the roof, drainage and lighting, as well as a lack of meeting space and anything that recognised or showcased the building's heritage. Officers had explored a number of different options including a complete or phased closure, and concluded that with so many traditional and established tenants it was important to keep the market open as much as possible. The work would be phased, requiring some temporary relocation of tenants but for no more than a 12 week period.

Members were then asked for their questions, comments and observations. They were pleased to hear that the restoration would keep stallholders in mind, and highlighted the need for displaced tenants to have equity in the spaces they were relocated to. Consultation was key, and the Committee heard that 80% of stallholders had attended an open day put on by the council to cover these issues, while those who didn't attend had been contacted separately. Officers also reassured Members that they were in regular dialogue with stallholders in order to respond to their concerns proactively.

The Committee heard that footfall was consistently increasing on both the ground floor and balcony, with around 2.5 million visitors in total expected this year. Officers were considering various ways to make the market more accessible to groups who might not normally come to it, including the Learning Suite, new seating area and additional outreach work with schools both inside and outside Cardiff. Members heard that the seats in the seating area would be more accessible and advocated providing Changing Places toilets for both children and adults, which officers agreed to consider.

Members heard that five tenants would be displaced by the new ground floor seating area and would be offered similar alternative spaces, on the ground floor and on the same aisle where possible. The Committee discussed the rents charged, noting that the last review took place in 2017, and heard that the next one would take place when the restoration was complete.

Members explored the relationship between food and retail, emphasising the need to preserve the latter, and were reassured by officers that their goal was to maintain the current mix of about 45% food to 55% retail. Members suggested that a food-only model like Newport Market would not suit Cardiff, and advocated modelling the long-term sustainability of different market models in case there was a shift over time.

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.

33 : CABINET RESPONSE - SHAPING CARDIFF'S POST PANDEMIC ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Members were advised that this item sought to update them on the Cabinet response to the recommendations made in the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee January 2023 inquiry report 'Shaping Cardiff's Post Pandemic Economic Recovery.' 16 of the recommendations had been fully accepted, while the other three (12, 17 and 19) had been partially accepted.

The Chairperson welcomed:

- Cllr. Huw Thomas, Leader of the Council
- Jon Day, Cardiff Council's OM Tourism and Investment
- Rebecca Hooper, Cardiff Council's OM Neighbourhood Regeneration, Housing Development & Regeneration
- Ken Poole, Cardiff Council's Head of Economic Development

The Leader of the Council was invited to make an opening statement, in which he noted that much of the work to fulfil the recommendations had already begun. Those which were partially accepted were on grounds of deliverability and viability, and the spirit of the report was fully endorsed by the Cabinet.

Members were asked for their questions, comments and observations, and highlighted the recommendation on enhanced city centre management arrangements which was under review and queried what this review would look like, for instance in terms of timescale. Officers confirmed that they were taking on board comments from ward members and businesses and would respond in due course.

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.

34 : CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL JOINT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: UPDATE; AND PROPOSALS IN RELATION TO SCRUTINY OF THE SOUTH EAST WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

Members were advised that this report provided Members with an update on meetings of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) Cabinet and the CCRCD Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JOSC), following the last update provided at Committee in January 2023, and sought agreement of proposals in relation to scrutiny of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC).

The Chairperson welcomed:

- Cllr. Owen Jones, Chair of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Officer explained that both Cllr. Wong and Cllr. Jones sat on the joint committee on behalf of the council, and that all ten constituent local authorities had been asked to review and approve the draft terms of reference. Members were asked for their questions, comments and observations.

The Committee agreed with the recommendation from Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council that the terms of reference should be reviewed at the first meeting, and emphasised that robust terms of reference would be required in order to maintain high standards of transparency and accountability. The joint committee oversaw tens of millions of pounds worth of projects across ten authorities, and also had Cardiff's name in the title, so there was significant reputational risk as well as financial.

Members raised concerns around the democratic pathway, especially the questions of how the joint committee selected its topics of scrutiny and how it reported back to the constituent authorities. There was frustration around the level of transparency and engagement that the committee provided compared to Cardiff Council's own scrutiny committees, with Members noting the issue of access to confidential papers. The Committee advocated greater accessibility and visibility in terms of where exactly the JOSC's output went, and suggested circulating papers, agendas and minutes to all members of the constituent authorities to improve engagement.

The Committee noted that it would be difficult to carry out proper scrutiny of such a large portfolio when the joint committee only met four times a year, and queried their terms of office. Members suggested that quotas could be implemented to improve diversity, and noted that it would be useful to see the relevant Equality Impact Assessments. Members queried whether non-attendance was reported back to the constituent local authorities, and whether there were any sanctions associated with this.

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.

35 : CORRESPONDENCE

The Committee noted that there were no responses outstanding from the letters sent out since the last update.

36 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were none.

37 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17th October 2023 at 4:30pm.

The meeting terminated at 7.10 pm