

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 MARCH 2018

Present: Councillor Howells(Chairperson)
Councillors Gordon, Gavin Hill-John, Parkhill, Robson, Sattar
and Stubbs

57 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ebrahim.

58 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

59 : CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL BUSINESS PLAN

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader, Councillor Russell Goodway, Cabinet Member – Investment and Development, Neil Hanratty, Director of Economic Development and Jon Day Economic Policy Manager to the meeting.

The Chairperson explained that this item enabled Committee to consider the draft Business Plan prior to consideration by Full Council. Overall, the City Deal has £1.2 billion to invest; with £734m allocated to the Metro, there is £495m remaining to be invested and this Plan sets out the priorities for this investment.

The Chairperson invited the Leader to make a statement in which he noted the length of time it has taken for the Business Plan to reach maturity and he was pleased to present it to Committee. The Leader wished to express his thanks to the Leaders of the opposition parties and the positive relationship that had enabled them to keep people abreast of developments.

The Leader noted that there had been concerns previously from Cardiff's point of view but now that some in principle projects had been identified, he was happy and confident to take forward for Full Council approval, after which Cardiff would be fully committed and there would be no further recourse.

Members were provided with a presentation on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Business Plan, the Chairperson then invited questions and comments from Members;

- Members referred to Metro Central and asked how robust the relationship was with Network Rail and how confident Cardiff was to take this forward. The Leader stated that there was a good relationship with Network Rail, they were working with the Council and its partners in developing land south of the railway station. He added that there was also a good relationship with the UK Government and the Secretary of State for Wales who had been very supportive, and there had been broad support from the Minister of Transport.
- Members noted that £40 million had been asked for from the City Deal fund for the Metro and asked where the rest of the funding was coming from. The Leader provided the breakdown of funding as £40million from City Deal,

£40million from Welsh Government, £40million from the private sector and the rest from Network Rail and UK Government.

- Members were pleased to see the indicative spend figures and noted that this Committee and other Committees in other local authorities would want to see how this meets the gateway reviews which were getting closer.
- With regard to the Metro theme, Members considered that most people will judge the success of the City Deal on the success of the Metro. The Leader shared this analysis and noted that this was why the proposal had been built around Metro Central, and that investment in the Valley lines was needed for these to run into an improved Central Station.
- Members noted that people would want more detail on Metro maps, lines, stops, stations etc. to see how it will work. The Leader shared the frustration on the lack of clarity around this currently; the selection of the preferred bidder in May would enable the council to engage with them and shape the final map and details.
- Members noted that the Cabinet Member had previously said that the Cardiff Region City Deal was an insult for Cardiff and asked if he was happy with where it was now. The Cabinet Member stated that there had been significant improvement, which was credit to the Leader and his engagement with Leaders of the other Authorities. He added that he had needed to see what the money from the region would be spent on; he had no hesitation in supporting the Council's adoption of the business plan to remove the reserved powers. He stated that personally he had never been persuaded that the deal was the same as the City Deals agreed in England, he considered it was a political fix with Welsh Government using money already identified as match funding rather than finding new funding.
- Members asked if any details of sites for housing development were available and were advised that they weren't, but they would be brownfield sites where costs couldn't be met otherwise, there needed to be a focus on developing northwards and also a focus in the valleys.

The Cabinet Member added that it was a personal ambition of his to use the Housing Fund for different types of development such as smaller properties to help people affected by the bedroom tax and also bungalows for older people, creating mixed communities but he noted the numbers had to stack up.

- Members asked how the Digital Strategy was progressing and if there were any partners identified. The Leader stated that he was encouraged by conversations with very large players in the digital world who would like to link into Cardiff. The Chief Executive added that one line of enquiry was a funding stream from the UK Government DCMS for local fibre networks, developing match funding from City Deal to have an ultra-fast fibre network across the region, linking public functions such as hospitals, councils, business parks etc. The idea is to have a spine that is independent to the Tele co's. He added that the Council has a lot of fibre as an asset and could build up a range of initiatives around that.

With regards to timescales around this, Members were advised that bids would be submitted in June and delivery would be 1-2 years from then.

- Members asked why there were no more details on the developments north and south of the railway station as yet, any architecture drawings to share and asked for further assurance that there would be a taxi facility at the station. Officers advised that the process was a very lengthy one with a significant timescale, currently it was at business planning stage, not at detailed master planning stage, so there were no architect drawings etc. to share as this was a year or so away yet. The only detail that has been shown so far has been the conceptual drawings. Funding needed to be secured, then a budget would be known to go to planning stage. Officers added that Members could be confident of the transport facilities and gave assurance that there would be a taxi facility to the north of the station.

The Leader added that there was a need to be creative in what can be done; once the financial contribution from the UK Government had been established then the project could be designed.

- Members made reference to 're-emerging towns' and noted that lots of work had been done on this over the years, Members asked what evidence there was to support this. The Leader stated that some towns have no purpose to exist other than being commuter towns to Cardiff and this needed to change, they need a purpose in their own right, with home-grown enterprises etc.

The Chairperson noted that Welsh Government have previously looked at this, there have been Strategies and European funding and he asked what was going to be different this time. The Leader stated that the Metro will give the connectivity, quick access to high quality jobs and money then being spent back in the towns. The Cabinet Member added that it was incumbent on the other local authorities to revisit the purpose of their towns. He added that he had previously wanted shared services across the 22 local authorities and to base these shared services in the valley towns. He hoped that now Wales has acknowledged what City regionalism can deliver, then serious conversations can take place about making it happen and Cardiff will once again have a stake in the valleys.

- Members asked how the Leader can use his position to ensure that other local authorities stop looking internally and influence a much broader goal. The Leader stated that conversations are already happening with other Leaders on how they can collaborate and share services, expanding on those arrangements already in place and looking at, for example, back office, digital services and planning on a regional basis. The Leader added that the Local Development Plan was only passed 3 years ago and it wouldn't be too long before another one was needed, there may need to be a strategic development plan overall with lighter local development plans underneath it.

RESOLVED: that the views of the Committee would be discussed during the way forward section of the meeting and a letter sent to the Cabinet Member in due course.

60 : EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: that the presentation and discussion of the item be heard in closed session as it contains confidential information by virtue of paragraphs 14 and 21 of Parts 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

61 : INTERNATIONAL SPORTS VILLAGE UPDATE

The presentation and discussion of the item was heard in closed session as it contained confidential information by virtue of paragraphs 14 and 21 of Parts 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

62 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Members were provided with a correspondence update report.

RESOLVED: To note the report.

63 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next scheduled meeting of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee is 12 April 2018 at 4.30 pm

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