

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 NOVEMBER 2021

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

39 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Stubbs and Eshaan Rajesh

40 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Henshaw declared a personal interest in item 4 as her daughter has a business in Cardiff Market.

41 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

42 : RECOVERY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Members were advised that this item enabled Committee to receive an update on the key themes emerging from engagement with the public and city stakeholders on the draft City Recovery & Renewal Strategy, which Committee scrutinised earlier this year. The update provides Members with an opportunity to input their views into the way forward, ahead of a report to Cabinet later in the year.

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Huw Thomas – Leader; Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development and Jon Day – Operational Manager – Economic Policy to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Leader to make a statement after which Members received a presentation from Officers and were invited to ask questions and make comments/observations.

Members were pleased to receive an informative and interesting presentation.

Members referred to the push for Bus use and asked whether the balance was right between Active travel and bus use and if the Highways Team are kept up to date with changes in the City Centre. The Leader explained that there was a Bus Strategy currently out for consultation, the Highways team and Cabinet meet with Cardiff Bus regularly to look at the City centre changes; he also added that there would be an announcement shortly around how the Council can help buses more broadly for the lead up to Christmas.

Members asked about the Population Charts and sought confirmation that the population had fallen by 2000 since 2004. Officers explained it was an Annual

Population Survey which was a measure of employment and there had been a mistake with the labelling of the chart.

With reference to the City of Villages, Members noted this was a new concept for the Council and asked what work was being done to see what this would entail for the provision of services in different areas of the City to meet the different needs of its communities. Officers added that district works were being looked at and they very much recognise that a different approach was needed in different areas of the City.

Members considered that there was poor 5G coverage in parts of the City and asked what was being done about this to ensure that Cardiff was a tech City. The Leader considered that there was very good 5G coverage and that 98% of the City had 4G coverage. Figures for 5G coverage could be provided to Members if required.

Members were pleased to see that green spaces and public realm in the City were being protected and new ones developed.

Members were concerned about the closure of a part of Bute Park for the Bute Park Christmas Lights, as this means that a commute route for pedestrians would not be able to be used. Members were advised that there should be diversion routes in places and they were not aware of any issues, however they would go back and check to ensure pedestrians have access.

Members considered that there should be more visible information in Central Square informing people when/where the bus station would be.

Members sought assurance that there was enough Wheelchair Access being provided; the Leader explained that correspondence had been received from the public on this as there was concern around loss of disabled parking. He gave assurance that they are looking to expand the provision.

A discussion took place around cleanliness across the City. The Leader explained that cleanliness as a measure is a KPI embedded in the Corporate Plan. There would be additional funding from the FRM to bolster the blitz cleansing teams. Officers added that there would also be a restructure in the cleansing team, including a 4 day week and cleaning after waste collections, so this was an area of focus.

Members noted the issue of staffing in the hospitality industry and asked what the Council could do to support the sector. The Leader stated that there was a whole host of initiatives such as Into Work Services, a joint recruitment event between FOR Cardiff and the hospitality sector, Cardiff Commitment linking employers to schools and much more partnership working; however he added that the industry could do more to help itself by looking at pay levels and becoming a real living wage employer.

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.

43 : OLD LIBRARY & NORWEGIAN CHURCH - TO FOLLOW

Members were advised that this item was to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of a report to Cabinet that proposes changes to the way the Old Library is used and the way the Norwegian Church is managed. The report seeks Cabinet authority to lease the Old Library to the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama. It also seeks authority to write off outstanding debt of the current Norwegian Church Charitable Trust, and to delegate authority to transfer the Trust to the newly established Norwegian Church Cardiff Bay Charity and then wind up the Trust.

The scope of the scrutiny was to examine these proposals, whether there are any risks to the Council, the financial implications for the Council and the next steps. Committee's comments, observations and recommendations will be sent to the Cabinet ahead of Thursday's meeting.

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Bradbury – Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure; Cllr Goodway – Cabinet Member for Investment & Development; Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development; Kathryn Richards – Head of Culture, Venues, Tourism & Events; Jon Day – Operational Manager – Economic Policy and Dr Martin Price, the Chair of the newly established charity Norwegian Church Cardiff Bay – to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Members and Dr Price to make statements after which Members received a presentation from Officers and were invited to ask questions and make comments/observations.

In relation to the Old Library, Members referred to the 120k income from the commercial unit and that despite this there was still a deficit and asked if a review date should be set now for the proposed peppercorn rent. Officers explained that they are negotiating with the Royal College about an early break in the lease to give an opportunity to review before any major investment is made in the building. The peppercorn rent is based on Royal College taking on all the inside and outside maintenance which is significant.

In relation to the Norwegian Church, Members noted the 122k debt write off as at March 2021 and asked if this should be capped before the transfer is made. Officers explained that this amount wouldn't have moved much as the Church has been closed but this would all be clarified in the report.

Members sought clarification on why the Hotel bid was not considered for the Old Library, Officers explained it was a very high level bid, more of an expression of interest and not enough detail.

Members asked why the debt was being written off for the Norwegian Church when money would have to be spent on it to bring it up to standard before it transfers. Officers explained that the debt was an accumulation of operating debts, the new charity wouldn't be able to operate if they took it on, but they will now take on future maintenance and secure the future of the building.

Members asked if the access to the Old Library would be kept. Officers said it would, there would be an opportunity to engage with the public more, there would be some facilities in there to encourage the public inside, such as tourist leaflets.

Members noted that the charity had developed a business case and asked for their initial thoughts. Dr Price stated that they would focus on Heritage and History; Arts; Community Venue and relaunch the Café with a Norwegian theme, foods etc. He added that they would build on links between Cardiff and Norway; links with Hordeland and links between the Urdd and Norwegian Youth Organisations.

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.

44 : MUSIC STRATEGY UPDATE

Members were advised that this item provided Committee with an update on what has been delivered so far regarding the Music Strategy and what the proposed next steps are. Members had the opportunity to input their views into the way forward ahead of a report to Cabinet in the winter.

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Bradbury – Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure; Jon Day – Operational Manager – Economic Policy and Ruth Cayford – Creative Industries & Culture Manager, to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement after which Members received a presentation from Officers and were invited to ask questions and make comments/observations.

Members noted that when Committee had looked at this initially there had been a focus on it being a whole City approach and asked about engagement with local groups/choirs/pubs/artists etc. across the whole City. Officers explained that during the pandemic the main focus had been getting venues back up and running, however they stated that engagement with local groups had been positive and gave examples of work that had been done including the kitting out of Butetown Pavilion and Talent Development Programmes in Splott, Riverside and Canton. As well as this Officers explained that they supported independent musicians across the whole of Cardiff; they have providing Freelancer grants and built relationships through the pandemic, Cardiff wide.

Members asked about engagement with the Police about a more equitable way to get more music genres to venues across the city. The Cabinet Member explained that he has raised this with South Wales Police and the Licensing Officers and he agreed that profiling was not appropriate; there is a live music safety forum who consider they have addressed most of the concerns but would keep a focus on it going forward.

Members discussed venue access issues for musicians having to carry their equipment, particularly for City Centre venues where they are unable to park and unload and asked what work was being done to address this. Officers explained that this was one of the principles of the Board, they were having discussions across the

sector and Council, via the City Recovery Working Group, and balancing what needs to be done with Health and Safety. They would also look at future designs.

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.

45 : REPLACEMENT LDP JOINT TASK & FINISH GROUP - DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members were advised that this report was for noting. At the last Committee Meeting Cllr Robson had expressed an interest to sit on the group. The group had met and set its Terms of Reference, which were being taken to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee, as the host committee, for formal agreement. The focus now would be the next stage of the RLDP and Strategic Options, how they address key issues as set out in the visions such as One Planet Cardiff. Focus would also be on understanding proposed engagement of under represented groups in the consultation; understanding the current projections re growth and how this fits with regional planning as it comes through. The next meeting of the group would be on 22 November 2021 followed by a series of meetings which will culminate in a report being agreed in February and going to Cabinet in March.

46 : CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Members were advised that a response was still awaited from Cllr Wild on the Committee Chairs joint letter on the Replacement Local Development Plan. All other correspondence was up to date.

Members noted that a response had been received from Cllr Goodway to Committee's public letter on James Street and the workshop improvements. Cllr Goodway had confirmed that the original intent had been to revamp the workshops but they had received more financial advice around the VAT status and officers were working to see if tenants could move into the ground floor units as a transition while the improvements are undertaken in their absence.

47 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

48 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 13 DECEMBER 2021

The meeting terminated at 6.45 pm

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