

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

(Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot & Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

10 May 2023

Chairperson: **Councillor P.Rogers**

Councillors: T.Bowen, C.Clement-Williams, C.Galsworthy, J.Henton, J.Jones, R.G.Jones, C.Phillips, R.Phillips, S.Pursey, S.H.Reynolds, A.J.Richards and M.Spooner

Officers In Attendance K.Jones, A.Jarrett, A.Thomas, N.Pearce, C.Griffiths, H.Jones, C.John and J.Woodman-Ralph

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors W.F.Griffiths, S.Harris, S.K.Hunt, J.Hurley, N.Jenkins, S.Jones, S.A.Knoyle, D.M.Peters and J.Hale

Eurus Consulting David Gwynne

1. **Chairs Announcements**

The Chair welcomed the Committee.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

There were none.

3. **Pre-decision Scrutiny**

Members were updated on the outcome of the Welsh Freeport Competition announced by the UK and Welsh governments and the request to take forward the work involved in submitting an Outline Business Case which is the next stage of the Freeport policy process, as detailed within the circulated report.

Officers advised the committee that there was an error within recommendation (e) detailed within the circulated report. It was noted that recommendation (e) read:

- 'Approves the commitment of £250,000 revenue to prepare the Outline Business Case and Financial Business Case and notes any requests for additional financial commitment will be brought back to Cabinet for further approval;' – 200k and not 250k.

It was noted that the figure £250,000 were to read £200,000 and not £250,000 as detailed within the report.

David Gwynne from Eurus Consulting was in attendance to present the report.

Members queried the financials detailed within the report. It was noted that there was a financial risk of £150,000 to £250,000. Members were concerned whether this would have an effect on the reserves within the upcoming budget if the monies were not recovered within this financial year. Officers provided members with assurance that the reserves would cover this risk comfortably.

Members shared concerns in relation to the governance arrangements with the additional set up of panels. The Chief Executive reassured members that they would have an opportunity to scrutinise and invite representatives of the Investment Panel as well as consider their Terms of Reference.

Members queried the location on which Freeport's would remain within the Portfolios going forward for governance purposes. Officers advised that Freeport's would be within the Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services portfolio for scrutiny going forward.

Discussions took place around business rate retention and exploring a community benefit scheme in future. It was noted that officers hadn't yet received guidance around the expectations on what is required around the business case however, it was noted that discussions had started to take place in establishing the business case to ensure wider economic benefits. This would result in maximum benefit of jobs and therefore requiring additional housing.

Members therefore queried the education within colleges to ensure the appropriate skills are available to those within the Neath Port Talbot community in acquiring these potential jobs. Officers ensured that conversations were taking place with relevant officers and outside parties and updates on upskilling within colleges would be provided to members in due course.

Following scrutiny, the recommendations (inclusive of officer's technical amendment to Recommendation (e)) were supported to Cabinet.

4. **Urgent Items**

There were none.

CHAIRPERSON