

Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub Committee

**(MULTI-LOCATION MEETING – COUNCIL CHAMBER PORT TALBOT
AND MICROSOFT TEAMS)**

Members Present:

29 August 2023

Chairperson: Councillor P.Rogers

Vice Chairperson: Councillor C.Jordan

Councillors: C.Clement-Williams, C.Galsworthy, S.Pursey,
R.G.Jones, H.C.Clarke and A.J.Richards

Officers In Attendance C.Griffiths, D. Phillips, T.Davies, N.Blackmore
and T.Rees

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors S.A.Knoyle and A.Llewelyn

1. **Chairs Announcements**

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

It was confirmed that the committee would be scrutinising items 5 from the Cabinet Board Agenda.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest recorded.

3. **Pre-decision Scrutiny**

Miscellaneous Grant Fund Application (Showmen's Guild South
Wales and Northern Ireland) (Pages 3 - 8)

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack.

Members queried if any study had been carried out to understand the effect that Neath Fair has on local trade within Neath Town. Members were keen to understand why the Showmen's Guild had not received any Government funding during COVID.

Officers clarified the application was in relation to the funfair only and not the street fair. The £31,000 outlined in the application covers the cost of the funfair for both the September and Easter events that take place.

Officers advised that the criteria for COVID funding at the time was set by UK and Welsh Government. Applications for funding had to be made by organisations directly to UK and Welsh Government. Officers were unable to comment why the Showmen's Guild did not receive funding.

Officers were not aware of any specific analysis that has been undertaken with regards to the impact of the fun fair being present in the town as opposed to not being present.

Officers confirmed that an application for financial assistance is assessed on the criteria outlined in the report. There is no requirement on the applicant to demonstrate their affordability for the event for which they are applying for funding.

Members raised concern with the use of the policy and whether it was fit for purpose in relation to being for charitable and voluntarily organisations and for the benefit of the community. Members queried what benefit does the Showmen's Guild have and how is that putting back into the local community, as the profits are distributed amongst those involved in the event, not given to the community.

It was confirmed that the Showmen's Guild is a collective of individuals and is not a legal entity within their own right and therefore was no requirement specifically for an organisation to be a voluntary or charitable organisation, only that if an organisation of this type applied they must be committed to endeavours of a local nature.. Officers clarified that the terms outlined above do not preclude other organisations from applying. The purpose of the miscellaneous grant is to be a general catch all, where no specific grant is capable of being utilised. Discretion vests in the local authority as to whether members wish to grant a relief or not to the organisation applying.

The report documented that if the grant was not successful then the fair would not be proceeding. Members expressed their concern that NPT Communications had issued a statement on 23rd August 2023, which clearly indicated that the fair was proceeding.

Officers confirmed that a number of policies are being reviewed by the Head of Culture, Leisure and Tourism, working with the Head of Regeneration and other relevant officers to consider events and events management in general and how the Council relates to those organisations. Part of the review will be events that the Council are asked to make a financial contributions to. This may touch upon the Miscellaneous Grant Scheme and any other grant pot which touches upon this area. Any changes required would be an executive decision so the scrutiny committee would have an opportunity to consider the items in more detail at the appropriate time should they wish.

Following scrutiny, the report was supported to cabinet board.

4. **Urgent Items**

There were none.

CHAIRPERSON