

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

9 June 2021

Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Vice Chairperson: Councillor S.E.Freeguard

Councillors: N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt, D.Keogh, S.A.Knoyle, A.Llewelyn, S.Miller, R.Mizen, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry, S.H.Reynolds, R.L.Taylor, A.N.Woolcock and W.F.Griffiths

Officers In Attendance K.Jones, A.Jarrett, A.Thomas, N.Pearce, H.Jenkins, C.Griffiths, S.Brennan, L.Willis, C.Plowman and J.Woodman-Ralph

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors C.Clement-Williams, M.Harvey, D.Jones, L.Jones, E.V.Latham, A.R.Lockyer, P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards, A.Wingrave, D.Cawsey and S.Pursey

1. Pre-decision Scrutiny

The Committee scrutinised the following cabinet items:

UK Levelling Up Fund – Neath Port Talbot project proposals

Members were provided with an update and a presentation on the proposed package of bids for Neath and Aberavon constituencies to submit to the UK government an application for funding from the UK Levelling Up Fund.

Members shared their concern on the delivery of the UK Levelling Up Fund from the UK Government, however welcomed the purpose of the funding.

Discussions took place around the closure of Banks across the UK and whether the Council would be in a position to prevent bank buildings being purchased with the use of the commercial property

grant and utilised for alternative reasons as former banks are important buildings within the community.

It was mentioned that transport was a priority and that officers acknowledge that transport was critical in ensuring that there was connectivity for tourism and employment. It was noted that officers were exploring ways to make community transport more sustainable under this fund.

Discussions took place around the timescales on producing applications of the bid, it was noted that there was a very quick turnaround to gather and produce the bid applications. It was suggested that in future the capacity of the teams preparing bids would need to increase to assist in the development of the proposals when faced with such short timescales.

Members were keen to see a real benefit and positive impact to the valleys following receipt of the UK Levelling Up Fund investment.

Members asked for an explanation as to what was meant by the Council being included as a Category 1 Local Authority within the UK Levelling up Fund criteria. Officers confirmed that they would provide information outside the meeting on how Neath Port Talbot fall under Category 1.

Members sort clarity as to the involvement of community councils in the consultation process. Officer clarified that time had not permitted for consultation with everyone, however, it was highlighted that there were a number of stakeholders that were consulted with, such as the MPs in Neath and Aberavon, Private Sector representatives and the Public Services Board.

Members commended the team for their work on submitting the bids within such tight timescales.

Following scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by Cabinet.

2. **Forward Work Programme 2021/22**

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

CHAIRPERSON