

REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

18 May 2018

Chairperson: Councillor S.K.Hunt

Councillors: J.Evans, S.Purse, R.L.Taylor, R.W.Wood,
N.T.Hunt and S.M.Perry

Officers In Attendance Mrs N.Pearce, C.Morris, A.Collins, R.Davies,
J.Davies, N.Jones

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors A.Wingrave and D.Davies

Observers Elizabeth Bradfield

1. **MINUTES OF THE REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 20TH APRIL
2018.**

The Committee noted the Minutes.

2. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18.**

The Committee were informed that the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme was in the process of being updated following the suggestions made by Members at the workshop held on the 10th May, and would be available to review and sign off at the next meeting on the 22nd June.

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

3. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following items:

Cabinet Board Proposals

Item 4 – 2 x Supplementary Planning Guidance (Landscape and Seascape, Biodiversity and Geodiversity)

The Committee received information in relation to the 2 x Supplementary Planning Guidance (Landscape and Seascape, and Biodiversity and Geodiversity) as contained within the circulated report.

Members commented that there appeared to be a low response to the consultation, and queried whether there was a way of increasing the number of representations made in future, possibly by utilising social media to reach more people. Officers stated that a formal public consultation process had been adhered to which was considered robust and in line with previous consultations. Officers explained that this was the third consultation in a relatively short space of time and may have contributed to the low number of responses. Officers commented that the subject being consulted on was considered a specialist area and could also explain why there was such a low response. Officers stated that social media would be utilised where possible to maximise responses for future consultations.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the proposals to be considered at Cabinet Board.

Item 5 – The Welsh Government Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme 2018-21

The Committee received information in relation to the Welsh Government Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme 2018-21 as contained within the circulated report.

Members commented that the towns of Neath and Port Talbot were categorised as tier two settlements, and queried what the distinction was between the various tiers. Officers stated that towns were categorised into different tiers based on population size. Officers explained that the city of Swansea was therefore categorised as tier one, whilst Neath and Port Talbot, being 'large towns' were classified as tier two.

Members questioned how the 27 million pounds allocated to the South West Wales region over three years would be distributed

amongst the local authorities, and how this compared to the funding previously received by the Authority under the Vibrant and Viable Places programme. Officers stated that each local authority had to bid for funding under the new scheme, and that each local authority within the region could potentially receive around seven million pounds each, but would depend upon the way in which projects were prioritised. Officers explained that this was a reduction when compared to the 11 million pounds received for Port Talbot under the Vibrant & Viable Places scheme. Officers added that in the latter case, the Authority were able to bid for funding independently, rather than as part of a region.

Members queried whether there was a list of proposed projects with costings available to view that officers were intending to put forward for consideration by the Local Project Board and the Regional Project Board. Officers reported that there was a list which would be subject to regular updates and projects could be removed and added to reflect prioritisation and delivery. Officers added that some of the projects currently being put forward were already contained in the Neath Strategic Hub such as the proposed transport hub, acquisition of the Crown Food/Carnaud Metal Box and priorities identified as part of the Valleys Task Force programme.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the proposals to be considered at Cabinet Board.

4. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

RESOLVED

that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

5. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

Item 9 – Housing Renewal & Adaptation Service - Framework For Housing Renewal Works

The Committee received information in relation to the Housing Renewal & Adaptation Service - Framework For Housing Renewal Works as contained within the circulated report.

Members enquired whether there was an income generation opportunity to charge contractors for storing their equipment in the area where they were carrying out housing renewal and adaptation works. Members added that some contractors were storing their equipment on an ad-hoc basis in some community wards. Officers stated that contractors hired under the scheme stored their equipment in the designated sites provided to them by the Authority. Officers informed Members that discussions were held with Planning, Estates and Health and Safety in advance in order to identify suitable sites before work commenced. Officers added that they could not comment on other contractors and works not managed under this scheme.

Members commented on the positive effects on the local economy by having a number of local contractors appointed under the current framework, and queried whether this had been the intention. Officers stated that the request for expressions of interest for the new framework work were placed on the Sell2Wales website with the aim of encouraging local contractors to come forward, due to the local benefits that they brought if they were successful during the procurement process.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the proposals to be considered at Cabinet Board.

Item 10 – Proposed lease of the unused tennis courts at Dyfed Road, Neath

The Committee received information in relation to the proposed lease of the unused tennis courts at Dyfed Road, Neath as contained within the circulated report.

Members commented that it was important to raise awareness and promote the tennis courts to schools and the wider communities in order to ensure that the facility would not be underutilised.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the proposals to be considered at Cabinet Board.

CHAIRPERSON