

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

16 May 2018

Chairperson: Councillor A.N.Woolcock

Vice Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Councillors: M.Crowley, J.Evans, S.E.Freeguard, M.Harvey, S.K.Hunt, J.D.Morgan, S.M.Penry, L.M.Purcell and A.L.Thomas

Officers In Attendance A.Evans, A.Jarrett, G.Nutt, S.Phillips, K.Jones, C.Griffiths, Hinder and Miss.C.Davies

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors C.Clement-Williams, D.W.Davies, D.Jones, R.G.Jones, E.V.Latham, A.R.Lockyer, P.D.Richards, A.J.Taylor and A.Wingrave

1. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF CABINET AGENDA

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following Cabinet Board items:

Cabinet Board Proposals

1.1 Members Community Fund

Members received information on the Members Community Fund that is to be financed in 2018/19 from Council Reserves. It was noted that permissions are sought to set aside £10,000 for each Ward Member to facilitate investment in projects that support the delivery of the Council's policies and priorities, as contained within the circulated report.

Members welcomed the report and asked whether privately owned rear lanes and school crossing patrols would be eligible under the criteria, and if so how can they be sustainable when the project is for a 2 year period only. Officers highlighted that

the project will eventually expire, and the responsibility would lie with the Member. The director of environment highlighted that the Authority currently does not adopt un-adopted rear lanes. It was noted that the proposals will be looked at in detail prior to submitting them to Cabinet for their approval.

Members asked that in relation to the applications of the projects, members are required to declare an interest if they have an interest in a subject that is being discussed. It was noted that members are able to apply for dispensation; however there was concern that the Head of legal services would be inundated with applications. It was noted that the Cabinet would have the decision and therefore would be the Cabinet that would have to be concerned with the Declarations of interest. It was noted that there would be an all members seminar for members on the Community fund that will include more detail.

It was noted that the money can be used for match funding and highlighted that this is a community benefit fund and needs to benefit the Community.

Members asked whether projects involving purchase of land would be eligible. It was noted that money could get tied up in that type of a project and therefore precautions have been put in place to protect the money from getting ring fenced.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet Board

1.2 Local Government Reorganisation

Members were provided with advice on the Welsh Government's Green Paper "Strengthening Local Government, Delivering for People" issued on 20 March 2018 (at Appendix 1) and the terms of a suggested response, as detailed in the circulated report.

Members highlighted that they were supportive of the response that the Chief Executive had included in the circulated report. In relation to the proposed merger between Neath Port Talbot and Swansea councils, members were concerned about the financial impact of such a change on the residents of Neath Port Talbot. Members also highlighted concerns that an enlarged authority might see a re-focusing of activity into the

city to the detriment of Neath Port Talbot and its valley communities. Members felt strongly that local government should remain “local” not “regional”. The Leader of the Authority highlighted that the letter had been sent to opposition party leaders prior to the meeting for their views. Members requested that should the Cabinet agree to send the proposed letter, then the report of the Chief Executive should be appended for further information of the Welsh Government.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet, subject to the Chief Executive’s report being reproduced in full to accompany the letter included in the papers.

1.3 Welsh Language Promotional Strategy

The Chair of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee presented a draft Welsh Language Promotion Strategy that had been created by a task and finish group of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

It was noted that the Group had met on several occasions between 29 January 2018 and 1st May 2018.

It was highlighted that the Council needed to achieve an increase in the number of Welsh Speakers in Neath Port Talbot over the next five years.

In presenting the work, the Chairman thanked the members of the task and finish group, officers, Mr O.Glenister of Menter Iaith Castell Nedd and Mr C.Campell of Sbectrwm for their efforts and help in producing the draft Welsh Language Promotional Strategy for Neath Port Talbot.

Following Scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by Cabinet.

CHAIRPERSON

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