

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

30 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, J.Hale, J.Jones, R.Phillips, S.Renkes, S.Pursey, D.Whitelock and R.W.Wood

Co-opted Voting Members: M.Caddick

Officers In Attendance K.Jones, A.Jarrett, A.Thomas, N.Pearce, H.Jenkins, H.Jones, C.Furlow-Harris, C.Morris, S.Brennan, D.Griffiths, P.Hinder, M.Shaw, P.Walker, P.Dorrell, C.Plowman, C.Davies and J. Lewis (Carmarthenshire) for Minute Number 3 only

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

1. Declarations of Interests

The following Members made a declaration of interest at the commencement of the meeting.

Councillor S.Rahaman

Re: Agenda Item 3, Swansea Bay City Deal Skills and Talent Programme. As he is a member of the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor S.Freeguard

Re: Agenda Item 3, Swansea Bay City Deal Skills and Talent Programme. As she is a member of the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor A.Llewelyn

Re: Agenda Item 3, Swansea Bay City Deal Skills and Talent Programme. As he is a member of the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee.

2. **Pre-decision Scrutiny**

The Committee scrutinised the following Cabinet Board items:

Swansea Bay City Deal Skills and Talent Programme

Members were provided with information on the Swansea Bay City Deal Skills and Talent business case, as detailed within the circulated report.

It was noted that Members from the Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee and Regeneration, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee were in attendance to participate within the discussion.

A power point presentation on the Skills and Talent project was provided to Members providing further information on the business case.

Discussions took place around the importance of connectivity being inclusive within rural and valley areas. It was noted that the Skills and Talent project would work alongside the Digital Infrastructure project to ensure optimum results of connectivity. Connectivity would be an important aspect in future working providing assistance with home working.

Transport links were also discussed to ensure those in all areas could access job opportunities. Assurance was provided to members that projects such as the Earth project would provide resources.

Members of both the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet Scrutiny Committee highlighted that this project was a regional project and would also be under the remit of the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee. Members noted the points raised from today's meeting would be captured and the progress be monitored at the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny meetings.

Members commended the report and the detail of the project. It was highlighted that it was critical that those that were in existing employment were made aware of the extra training that is available to them to upskill their education and skills providing them with further opportunities.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the Recommendations to be considered by cabinet.

Pontardawe Arts Centre Cinema Project.

Members were provided with an update on the request for approval to allocate an additional £600k for the development of a 70 seat new build external cinema and ancillary accommodation at Pontardawe Arts Centre, as detailed within the circulated report.

It was noted that Members from the Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee were in attendance to participate within the discussion.

Discussions took place around the extra costings. It was asked why the extra funds were required and why this wasn't estimated in the first instance. Officers explained that the build required additional costs due to there being technical aspects to the build along with more detailed designs to have a better visual customer facility.

Members queried whether the build would have been eligible for the levelling up fund. Officers confirmed that they considered the Levelling Up Fund, however, after consideration it was deemed ineligible.

Members discussed the positive impact the build would have on the valleys and members were therefore in support of the recommendations.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the

Recommendations to be considered by cabinet.

Audit Wales review of the Corporate Performance Management System (CPMS)

To receive information on the Councils response to the 'opportunities for improvement' identified by Audit Wales following the review of the Corporate Performance Management System (CPMS), as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that the implementation of the decision was omitted from the Audit Wales Review of The Corporate Performance Management System (CPMS) report within the Cabinet Papers. It was noted that the report should have stated that the decision was subject to the 3 day call in period.

Members highlighted that there were numerous areas within the action plan that required completion and it was queried how the Council would address all the points raised. Officers assured members that the schedule for the completion of actions were on track and the majority had been completed since the publication of the report. It was noted that a further update would be provided in the autumn.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the Recommendations to be considered by cabinet.

Investments from Reserves 2021/22

Members were informed of the request to approve additional investments in service activities funded from reserves, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members asked how the Valleys would benefit from these investments, as detailed within the Valleys Communities Impact. Members were informed that the community fund scheme would allow each member to have £10k to spend within their wards, which would be a positive impact to all areas within Neath Port Talbot. Along with the Vehicle Renewals Programme which would also provide further support to the whole County Borough.

It was noted that due to the pandemic there had been a lot of pressure and resource issues within the Environment department and members asked what support was being provided in this area. It was

noted that the report included several investment proposals for the Environment department to help with these concerns.

Members queried what the remaining reserves would be if the spends within the report were approved. It was noted that there would approximately be £51.5M in reserves left following approval of the recommendation. It was noted that there would be an opportunity to re-consider reserves in the autumn.

Discussions took place around the Levelling Up Fund and the potential to have applied for the maximum amount available.

Members discussed the Vehicle Renewal Programme and queried whether the vehicles would be low carbon. It was noted that the Council were looking to move to low emission vehicles and considering electric vehicles.

Members made reference to the valleys task and finish group report and queried how the 'investment and reserves' report would reflect against the valleys action plan. It was noted that current investment was being managed alongside the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic, however, it was noted that consideration needed to be given to what was being delivered in the valleys.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the Recommendations to be considered by cabinet.

Swansea Bay University Health Board and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Joint Working Paper on The Upper Afan Valley

It was noted that there were two separate but linked issues that would impact on the residents in the Upper Afan Valley within the next 5 year period due to issues with the highway infrastructure and an ongoing assessment of the facilities to deliver appropriate healthcare within the area, as detailed within the circulated report.

The Local Ward Member Cllr. Scott Jones was in attendance to share his concerns on the structural issues in the Upper Afan Valley. It was noted that the need to ensure communities within valleys had good communication links.

Members required assurance that the Cymmer White Bridge would remain in place and future efforts would remain in securing funding to keep it open. Officers highlighted that they had put measures in place

for the bridge to remain open. The Council and the Health Board would continue to jointly pursue Welsh Government to provide funding to enable the best services within the upper afan valley.

It was asked where the location of the new healthcare building would be located. It was noted that the decision would be for the Health Board to make.

It was highlighted that future planning needs to be considered for maintaining further listed buildings with Neath Port Talbot

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the Recommendations to be considered by cabinet.

An Anti-Racist Wales: The Race Equality Action Plan for Wales - consultation draft response.

Members were informed of the request to approve a response to the consultation of the 'Welsh Government's An Anti-Racist Wales: The Race Equality Action Plan for Wales', as detailed within the circulated report.

Discussions took place around the need to emphasise and ensure that the action plan would be adhered to in every school. Officers provided reassurance that the action plan would be raised and adhered to in schools as it was a requirement.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the Recommendations to be considered by cabinet.

Recover, Reset, Renew

Members were updated on the ongoing response to Covid-19 and the request to commence a public engagement exercise to engage with an external peer panel to inform the Council's approach to recovery planning, as detailed within the circulated report.

It was noted that further information would take place in the Coronavirus-Member Panel, along with an additional All Members seminar.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the Recommendations to be considered by cabinet.

The Members Community Fund (protocol for relaunch)

Members were updated on the relaunch of the Members Community Fund, as detailed within the circulated report.

Discussions took place around the deliverability of the scheme, following a shorter timescale of the scheme and a decrease in staff supporting the scheme. Officers provided reassurance to members on these concerns.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the Recommendations to be considered by cabinet.

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

Forward Work Programme for noting

CHAIRPERSON

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