

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

**(Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot and
Microsoft Teams)**

Members Present:

21 November 2022

Chairperson: **Councillor P.Rogers**

Councillors: T.Bowen, C.Galsworthy, J.Henton, R.G.Jones,
S.Paddison, C.Phillips, S.Pursey, S.H.Reynolds
and A.J.Richards

**Officers In
Attendance** K.Jones, A.Jarrett, A.Thomas, N.Pearce,
C.Griffiths, H.Jones, C.John and J.Woodman-
Ralph

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors W.F.Griffiths, S.Harris, S.K.Hunt,
J.Hurley, N.Jenkins, S.Jones, S.A.Knoyle,
A.Llewelyn, D.M.Peters and J.Hale

Invitees:

D.Gwynne	Euru Consulting
M.Stacy	Associated British Ports
A.Harston	Associated British Ports
A.Jones	Associated British Ports

1. **Chairs Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone in the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

There were none.

3. **Pre-decision Scrutiny**

Freeport Bid Submission

The Chair welcomed Andrew Harston, Alice Jones and Mike Stacy from Associated British Ports along with David Gwynne from Eurus Consulting to the meeting.

Officers introduced the report and provided information in relation to a bid to the Welsh and UK governments for a Freeport covering the port of Port Talbot and the port of Milford Haven and surrounding areas.

Members noted the error contained within the circulated report, in relation to Page 10 it stated “This includes £21 million (or potentially more)” it should have read £25 million.

Members sought clarity around the financial implications which highlights that £1m of Government funding would be made available for development. Offices confirmed that this would be a one off sum supporting the bidder to support the bid from the outline stage to the final business case stage in line with the treasury green book rules. In relation to any ongoing costs a business model would need to be developed.

Members highlighted the recent climate emergency statement and asked what the implications would be during construction of this development. Officers discussed that with any construction there would be an increase in emissions due to HCV traffic, however, the development is to enhance biodiversity interest and transition to renewable energy which would reduce the carbon footprint.

Discussions took place around the potential costs and resources. It was highlighted the amount of pressure that officers have experienced during these past couple of years with the pandemic and other large projects that the council have signed up to. Members were concerned around these pressures. The Chief Executive agreed that officers have received pressure due to the pandemic and other projects and reassured members that resources would be continually considered going forward.

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-Decision Scrutiny of Private Item/s**

Freeports Submission Appendix B

Members received a presentation from Andrew Harston, Alice Jones from ABP and David Gwynne from Eurus Consulting in relation to the private elements of the report detailed within Freeports Submission Appendix B.

6. - Public Session -

Members resolved to move back in to public session.

7. Pre-decision scrutiny

Freeport Bid Submission

The Chair summarised the discussions and referred to the recommendations that were listed on page 12 of the circulated report.

Members proposed and seconded the following amendment to bullet point 2 of the recommendations:

‘Members grant delegate authority to the CEO, in consultation with the Leader, and Cabinet Members for Strategic Planning, Transport and Connectivity and Economic and Community Regeneration to agree amendments to the Bid prior to its final submission to the Welsh Government’

Following the vote, the amendment fell and was therefore not supported.

Members proposed and seconded the original recommendation as detailed below:

It is recommended, that having due regard to the integrated impact screening assessment that:

- Members approve the submission of a bid for a Freeport covering the port of Port Talbot and the port of Milford Haven and surrounding areas, in the form annexed at Appendix B, subject to any variations that may be necessary prior to submission.
- Members grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of Council to agree amendments to the Bid prior to its final submission to the Welsh Government

- Members approve Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's nomination as the Accountable Body for the proposed Freeport.
- Members authorise the Leader of Council to submit a letter to the Welsh Government reflecting Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's support for a Freeport covering the port of Port Talbot and the port of Milford Haven.
- Members authorise the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to take action as may be necessary to promote the merits of the Bid post submission up to the point of Ministers decisions on the success/otherwise of the bid.

Following scrutiny the members were supportive of this recommendation to be put forward to cabinet.

8. **Urgent Items**

There were none.

CHAIRPERSON