



SPECIAL CABINET

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 19TH MAY 2021 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor P. Marsden (Leader) - Chair

Councillors:

N. George (Waste, Public Protection and Street Scene), C. Gordon (Corporate Services), S. Morgan (Economy and Enterprise and Infrastructure), L. Phipps (Housing), E. Stenner (Customer, Performance and Property Services), R. Whiting (Learning and Leisure) and A. Whitcombe (Sustainability, Planning and Fleet).

Together with:

C. Harry (Chief Executive), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services), D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services) and M.S. Williams (Corporate Director – Economy and Environment).

Also in Attendance:

A. Dallimore (Regeneration Services Manager), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), S. Harris (Head of Corporate Finance and Section 151 Officer), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer) and M. Harris (Committee Services Support Officer/ Chauffeur).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Leader reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed but would not be live streamed, however a recording would be available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here To View](#). She advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Cook (Cabinet Member for Social Care) and R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

3. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE

Cabinet were provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports for 19th May 2021 to 23rd June 2021. Members were reminded that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme is a working document and therefore subject to change.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the Forward Work Programme be noted. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme be noted.

4. UK GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIES – THE LEVELLING UP FUND, UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND AND UK COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND.

The report provided Cabinet with an update on the UK Government's recent announcements of a number of new funding and finance programmes for local and regional economies and outlined the opportunities and constraints for the Council presented by the new UK funding programmes and initiatives including eligibility criteria, funding allocations and development timescales.

The report proposed an initial pipeline list of Council projects eligible for submission to the new funding programmes and sought endorsement to begin the necessary pre-application development work. The report also highlighted the impact the programmes will have on the Council in administering the new programmes.

Cabinet noted that the UK Government has recently published details on several new funding and finance programmes for local and regional economics, which are intended as the "replacement programmes" for EU Funds, namely: The Levelling Up Fund, The UK Community Renewal Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Members were provided with an overview of each of the new UK funding programmes and their future funding opportunities for the Council. A move towards this domestic funding arrangement will be instrumental to the future economic resilience and prosperity of Caerphilly County Borough but will have resource implications for the Council who will be responsible for administering the programmes.

Cabinet thanked the Officer and Cabinet Member for the report and discussion ensued.

Members noted the tight timescale for the submission of the various bids and shared concerns in relation to resources including Officer capacity, in order to work up the various applications. Officers emphasised the need to manage expectations in relation to the £800M Levelling Up Fund as this single sum was the allocation for the duration of the programme and with applications invited country wide it was unlikely that every bid made would be successful.

The CRF was discussed and Members debated in the impact to Caerphilly and Bridgend being outside the targeted top 100 priority places and it was noted that extensive lobbying had and was still taking place on this issue with active dialogue taking place between the Leader and various politicians including the Prime Minister. Although this was disappointing reassurances were given that there were still other funding streams available, including the Cardiff Capital Region and the Council's own Placeshaping investment programme. The removal of EU Funding had necessitated a shift from the grant funding model to a more competitive process and the quality of bids would be vital to success.

Members noted that schemes for consideration had been geographically profiled to align with the MP Constituency which had implications for the A469 Relief Road proposal which could require a partnership approach with Merthyr Tydfil Council. Assurances were sought that partners in Merthyr Tydfil appreciate the strategic importance of this project to the north end of

the valley and the Officer confirmed that there was a shared understanding of the vital role of this roadway and could be met through a cohesive joint bid.

In this regard, Members were referred to recommendation 3(iii) of the Officer's report and were advised that following consideration of timelines and discussion with Merthyr Tydfil more time was needed in order to make the bid as robust as possible and to this end it was agreed that recommendation (iii) be amended to reflect that the bid would be made within the 2022 round instead of June 2021.

Officers assured Cabinet that opportunities for match funding were being explored with all possible partners including the private sector and it should not be forgotten that there were great opportunities to tap into the Placeshaping money already put aside to drive projects forward.

Clarification was sought as to the operation of the Task and Finish Group and it was confirmed that this would be an Officer led working group.

Members recognised the impact the administration of the various bids would have across all Council departments and this would need to be closely monitored going forward it was felt that the £125K capacity funding due to be received as part of the Levelling up fund would be wholly inadequate in terms of the resourcing required.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that recommendation 3.1(i-iv) be approved subject to the amendment of recommendation (iii) to read approve that Officers work with their counterparts in Merthyr CBC to formulate a joint bid for the Merthyr and Rhymney constituency in round 2 (June 2022) of the programme. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's Report: -

- i) The details of each of the new UK Funding Programmes and the opportunities for the Funds to contribute significantly to the Council's own Place Shaping, Transformation and Regeneration agendas be considered.
- ii) The project set out in paragraph 5.12 be approved in respect of the Levelling Up Fund that has been identified through a Project Prioritisation exercise and to seek approval to add the Risca brownfield site to the Council's Place-shaping Framework.
- iii) Officers work with counterparts in Merthyr CCBC to formulate a joint bid for the Merthyr and Rhymney constituency in round 2 (June 2022) of the programme.
- iv) The need for funding to be earmarked to support the projects development in order to maximise their chance of success and to cover the necessary match requirements be noted.
- v) The creation of a Task and Finish Group, under the TeamCaerphilly governance framework, to further develop the prioritised projects for the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) including all necessary pre-application work, including engagement with neighbouring Local Authorities on collaboration projects be endorsed.
- vi) The continuation of our collective challenge towards the UK Government prioritisation methodology used to determine the Community Renewal Fund Priority 100 places, to enable us to influence the forthcoming UK Shared Prosperity Fund indicators be supported.
- vii) It be acknowledged that there will be a significant resource impact for the Council in administering the Programmes and a need to identify suitable resources to

administer the Levelling Up, CRF programmes and the impending Shared Prosperity Fund.

5. **A469 TROEDRHIWFUWCH FUNDING BID**

The report sought the views of Cabinet on allocating Capital funding of £300k to allow progression and development of the outline design and detailed budget estimates for the next phase of the A469 Troedrhifwuch highway improvement scheme.

It was noted that following the closure of the A469 at Troedrhifwuch in 2014 due to a Welsh Water main burst, an option analysis for alternative routes suggested a funding requirement of some £80m was needed. A feasibility report was presented to Welsh Government and it was requested that an extensive review of the existing carriageway condition be undertaken before any commitment to road diversions would be considered. An initial study undertaken in 2016 indicated the likelihood that the failure mechanism appeared deep seated and monitoring of the site movement was commenced. A resilient roads grant secured in 2020 allowed a more extensive site investigation which has identified that the depth and extent of the disturbed area within the landslip is not as great as that initially indicated, although the road cannot be fully opened without remediation works. Progress in 2020/21 identified potential solutions and further funding is required to progress the next phase of development. Given the ongoing stability issues and only one traffic lane access restrictions, securing funding to allow the development of the outline design of the preferred solution is a priority for 2021/22.

Cabinet thanked the Officer and Cabinet Member for the report and discussion ensued.

Members emphasised the vital importance of this route and saw this proposal as a positive way forward that would be welcomed by all the residents of the area.

Officers provided reassurance that continual inspection and monitoring of the site is ongoing to ensure that there are no immediate safety concerns.

It was noted that the recommendation within the report had not identified the funding source for the £300k and it was agreed that an additional recommendation be included to approve its allocation from the Placeshaping earmarked reserves.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report and the aforementioned additional recommendation be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that:

1. As the Welsh Government resilient roads funding only extended until 31st March 2021, it be agreed that a further £300k be allocated to enable the completion of the feasibility / design to arrive at a preferred option which can then be taken forward to a position that incorporates detailed highway design, procurement, and construction.
2. The £300k be funded from the Placeshaping earmarked reserves.

The meeting closed at 11.14pm

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 9th June 2021.

CHAIR