

Pecyn Dogfennau Cyhoeddus



- 1 CYDBWYLLGOR TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU BARGEN DDINESIG
PRIFDDINAS RANBARTH CAERDYDD - DYDD GWENER, 18fed MAWRTH
2022 at 10.00 AM



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**A meeting of the
CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

**will be held virtually
FRIDAY, 18TH MARCH, 2022 at 10.00 AM**

Contact: Sarah Daniel, Council Business Unit

LIST OF ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest: and
2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they must notify the Chairman when they leave.

3. MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the 13.01.2022 as an accurate record of the meeting

(Pages 3 - 10)

4. GRADUATE SCHEME

(Pages 11 - 28)

5. URGENT BUSINESS



Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

Councillors:

Councillor J Hill – Blaenau Gwent Council
Councillor G Davies (Deputy) Blaenau Gwent Council
Councillor JP Blundell - Bridgend Council
Councillor T Thomas (Deputy)- Bridgend Council
Councillor J Ridgewell - Caerphilly Council
Councillor C Elsbury (Deputy Member) Caerphilly Council
Councillor R Patel - Cardiff Council
Councillor N Howells (Deputy Member) Cardiff Council
Councillor G Lewis - Merthyr Tydfil Council
Councillor K Gibbs (Deputy Member) Merthyr Tydfil Council
Councillor P Jordan - Monmouthshire Council
Councillor R Roden (Deputy Member) - Monmouthshire Council
Councillor J Clarke - Newport Council
Councillor G Thomas – RCTCBC
Councillor S Powderhill (Deputy Member) RCTCBC
Councillor V Crick - Torfaen Council
Councillor B Brooks - Vale of Glamorgan Council
Councillor S Sivagnanam (Deputy Member) - Vale of Glamorgan

Officers:

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Thursday, 13 January 2022 at 10.00 am

County Borough Councillors - Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Cllr JP Blundell – Bridgend County Borough Council (Chair)
Cllr J Ridgewell – Caerphilly Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr J Hill – Blaenau Gwent
Cllr R Patel – Cardiff Council
Cllr G Lewis – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Cllr V Crick – Torfaen Council
Cllr B Brooks – Vale of Glamorgan Council
Cllr G Thomas – RCTCBC
Cllr P Jordan – Monmouthshire Council
Cllr N Howells – Cardiff Council (Deputy Member)

Officers in attendance

Christian Hanagan – Service Director Democratic Services and Communications
Kellie Beirne - Director of the CCR City Deal.
Nicola Somerville - Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth
Gareth Browning - CCR Challenge Fund Manager
Sarah Daniel – Principal Democratic Services Officer
Tracy Watson – Senior Democratic Services Officer

35 Welcome and Apologies

The Chairperson welcomed the following officers to the meeting:

Kellie Beirne - Director of the CCR City Deal.
Nicola Somerville - Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth
Gareth Browning - CCR Challenge Fund Manager

Apologies

Cllr James Clarke – Newport City Council
Cllr Richard Roden – Monmouthshire County Council

36 Declarations of Interest

None

37 Minutes

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 4 November 2021 subject to the

amendment of Councillor Crick's name.

38 Verbal Update: Establishment of Corporate Joint Committee

The CCRC Director reminded Members that a report had been submitted to Regional Cabinet on the 20 September 2021 which set out the lift and shift proposed delivery model to deliver the CJC. That report flagged up some risks and issues, namely around the regulations and VAT and corporation tax needed to be added in. There were also some issues around financial status. It was thought at the time that working with Welsh Government (WG) would help to resolve those issues ahead of the go-live date, which is when the CJC had to set its first statutory budget.

The CCRC Director therefore provided an update to the report of the 20 September 2020, which set out an alternative approach. She confirmed that the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal would continue to run, through the accountable body contractor model with Cardiff Council and the Regional Cabinet and on the other side the same 10 Members with the Brecon Beacons National Park forming the new statutory corporate joint committee. The CJC in the first instance would be on a bare minimum basis e.g., set up the CJC, do all the basic statutory undertakings but won't enact its budget in full or enact its business plan in full until such time those major issues can be resolved through the regulations. WG had undertaken some consultation to push back the date of those immediate commencement duties around the regional transport plan and the SDP to the 30 June 2022.

Members would receive a report, either through their Cabinet or Councils, to set out what it meant because the duty to set up the CJC didn't fall on the Cardiff Capital Region it fell on the 10 local authorities who make up and comprise the CJC, so it was right and proper that all got an individual report coming through their frameworks internally. In the meantime, an ordinary regional Cabinet meeting would be held on the 31 January with a standard agenda e.g., investment proposals, the annual business plan, quarterly updates on performance and budgets. Straight after that meeting an inaugural meeting of the CJC will be held, with the agenda for that meeting a very basic one e.g., appointing a Chair and Vice Chairs, making sure all the relevant insurances and indemnities are in place, setting out the new standing orders, which will cover schemes of delegation, the policy environment, setting up the Audit & Risk committee, setting up a Standards committee etc. It will then be straight into the annual business plan and the budget, which would be the bare minimum to avoid any detriment and then Audit Wales will come in and set their audit fee.

This was procedural, it was not going to be value adding at this stage but trying to prepare for the point that it would be value adding to be able to have a greater range, greater influence and be able to act directly and tackle some of the issues that the current CCRC model didn't afford the benefit of.

A Member sought clarification on the reports going to all Council's.

The CCRC Director confirmed that reports would go to all Council's, although she explained the reports were not CCR reports, because the statutory duty to undertake the CJC fell individually on the 10 Council's e.g., own legal and financial advice. All the S151 Officers and Economic Development leads had been engaged and all the Members of Regional Cabinet have been involved. This gave consistency across the 10, and the opportunity to reaffirm the

principles and to be clear about what it is Members wanted to get out of the CJC and the impact it can have.

A Member observed that it seemed at this stage that with regard to the whole CJC notion, the legislation had been poorly thought through. The Member registered his concern that when the idea was proposed, he was very surprised and disappointed that these crucial issues were not thought through at the time. The Member registered his sympathy towards the CCRCD Director and the team in what they were now having to do.

The CCRCD Director had sympathy with this view, whilst learning as we go through the process, so yes, some lessons learned. What the CCRCD Director was trying to stay focussed on was the utility of the CJC and helping to overcome some of the current limitations. There was a need to ensure the CJC had the relevant status to be able to access all of the opportunities for the region, and Wales and would continue to push to do the best but absolutely understood the frustration.

A Member noted that the CJC was going to be a slightly different mix with the Brecon Beacons Park becoming a Member and asked if it was going to be difficult to run two meetings with different authorities. The Member also felt that voting rights would be an issue with CJC's.

The CCRCD Director confirmed the regulations stated that the Brecon Beacons National Park had to be the 11th member of the CJC, but they only voted in relation to their jurisdiction, which was as a national park planning authority, so they only got a vote in relation to the strategic development plan. Whilst this was straight forward there would be a component of the budget that related to the strategic development plan, they would get a vote on, but not the rest of the budget. The SDP, would be reflected in the standing orders and in other parts of the governance, so it is difficult, to think about how that role would be isolated. There had been some really good positive meetings with Brecon Beacons, who were very pragmatic about this and fully understood their jurisdiction around the SDP. This would bring a different dynamic.

The CCRCD Director confirmed that it was one member, one vote for CJC's. The budget being brought forward on the 31 January 2022 did have to be unanimously agreed and there were also conversations about the SDP and governance around that. The CCRCD Director had until 30 June 2022 before that duty commenced and hopefully some work could be done in the meantime to resolve some of those governance issues alluded to.

A Member stated that he had similar concerns to the previous Member. He felt that all of this seemed to have been rushed through by WG where it had not been established correctly e.g., Tax, VAT, which should have been thought through. The Member stated that his personal view was that as Scrutiny the job was as a critical friend to the Cabinet, and they needed to be able to express concerns that this was set-up in a bit of a rush, and he did not think it should just be for the local authorities to try and muddle through as at the end of the day WG had a responsibility. The Member felt that training budgets, had always been poor, and it was left for local authorities to sort it out and try and find the funds, and some local authorities maybe struggling. WG had a duty of care if they were going to take this committee seriously. He felt that the Committee at some point, should be expressing that very clearly to WG, especially after the election, because maybe that was a time, they needed to put some more funding

in.

The CCRCD Director agreed that the Member raised a good point on budgets. She noted that to date WG had given every region in Wales, £250k to set up the CJC's. In the recent budget settlement it states that local authorities have some further continuation costs for CJC's, but it is hypothecated, it can't be identified what it is and where it has gone, but it was clearly a conversation needed because this wasn't going to be done for free and there was going to be a cost associated with this. The CCRCD Director noted that since highlighting the issue around VAT, etc., WG had submitted a comprehensive business case to HMRC. WG were also working with National Government around things such as the pension status. They were also looking at other forms of taxation e.g., stamp duty land tax. She felt that WG were on the case, in doing the best that they could but it was unfortunate that these issues couldn't have been sorted out sooner, to allow the integrated model envisaged from the start and lessons were being learnt.

The Member acknowledged the response from the CCRCD Director and noted that everyone could learn lessons, but this was basic stuff which should have been done and the Member felt the need to be critical on this occasion, and scrutiny should be strengthened.

The CCRCD Director acknowledged that the points the Member made in relation to scrutiny and strengthening that going forward, were well made.

A Member also raised the issue of why the taxation issues weren't ironed out much earlier and asked the CCRCD Director, with the date of June now looming, whether WG anticipated that being sorted out by then.

The CCRCD Director explained that it was not known at the moment with conservative estimates that the turn around time for HMRC was about six months. WG had put forward a really solid case and as soon as she had that answer she would share it with Members.

The Member thanked the CCRCD Director, but felt it seemed such a basic requirement for it to have been missed until now and for the CCRCD Director to be in the position she was in, which seemed regrettable.

The CCRCD Director stated that she blamed herself for some of that because the regulations read that the CCRCD would have the same status as local authorities and it was only in September when everything was looked at line by line that the VAT issue was identified.

She was hopeful HMRC would give us a response and as soon as that update was received, she could plan for lift and shift. She hoped to come back to the committee with a more positive story soon.

39 Supporting Enterprise and Business Growth

The Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth provided Members with an overview of the activity to support enterprise and business growth specifically through the lens of the City Deal and the foundational economy; Well-being of Future Generations; placed based strategies; economic Inclusion; Anti-poverty; Valleys Regional Park; Valleys Task force; Mutual / Co-ops and Shared prosperity.

The Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth noted there was a

number of big projects being delivered with one of the main principles and drivers for City Deal activity being around inclusive growth. Two of the main projects identified, that focused on various parts of the region, were the valley's task force and the valley's regional park. She explained that one of the main evidence base used to help target some of the activity and intervention, was the UK competitive index, which strengthened the argument for locality based plans and enabled more of a focused approach and to be more targeted in the activities being delivered. This has a strong influence on the investment prospectus which pulls out some of those key activities in terms of housing viability funds, transport activity, looking at making sure every locality has an element of investment and help's that local authority to become more competitive. In respect of place based activity there had been investment in Zip World, a really important investment focusing in the heads of the valley, encouraging additional supply chain opportunities and business growth, providing additional opportunities for foundational economy, workplaces and lots of activity around skills and development.

The Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth explained that as it stood, City Deal wasn't in a position to be able to apply into shared prosperity funds because of the way it was set up from UK government, although the bid was supported. As and when the shared prosperity fund became available on a regional footprint, it was hopeful that the CJC would have some potential influence into the distribution and the allocation of those funds. Further activities taking place across the region were some skills programmes, under what was badged as venture skills hub. There was a graduate offer, an apprenticeship offer, currently being explored, and venture specialists, through engagement with innovate UK, to provide some additional funding to support women in innovation and young people in innovation in SE Wales in addition to working alongside Cardiff University to develop a cyber masters.

In respect of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth confirmed that full consideration was given to the impact on all reports that went through to Cabinet, and a full assessment was undertaken to make sure projects were sustainable and looking at the long term. She noted that

Regional Cabinet had allocated £10m to the challenge fund pot which, was aimed around building local wealth and bringing innovative solutions to tackle some of the societal problems across the region, working alongside the 10 local authorities to identify those challenges and potentially how go out to the market to identify some of the solutions that could be brought forward. The Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth finished by explaining that this was some of the activities based upon the core principles that were being done across the region to try to support enterprise and encourage business growth.

A Member thanked the Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth for the report and noted that he had raised in the past the importance of ensuring that skills are available, in particularly for the new technologies. The Member recalled the visit made to the Newport semiconductor factory and he had pressed upon the supply chain and what was being done. If the skills weren't available there would be a reliance on imported skills and imported component parts. The Member asked the Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth if she could enlarge upon the graduate programmes, including both the apprenticeship and graduate basis, one for the research and development and one for the hands-on production.

The Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth acknowledged that it was recognised that skills were a huge component of attracting businesses and getting them to stay in the area and there was a coordination affect needed, to start addressing what industry needed, to ensure filling the right gaps, rather than a cyber vacancy. Working alongside the regional skills partnership, a venture skills hub had been developed, recognising the support needed for apprenticeships, which would look at expanding, developing and rolling out a shared apprenticeship programme across the region, linking to priority sectors e.g. compound semiconductors, advanced manufacturing, the creative cluster and digital. In respect of the supply chain component, e.g., IQE, it was really important for them to have apprenticeships and equally important for their supply chain support network, to have a supply of good pipeline skilled workforce, so they were not only aware of their skills needs but that of the broader supply chain.

With regards to the graduate component, the Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth explained engagement had taken place, predominantly with SMEs across the region, giving them support to look at their future business needs and trying to encourage businesses to take on graduates across the area, recognising the benefits of recruiting a graduate, Over 100 graduates had been placed to date, and engagement with over 600 businesses across the region, recognising the need to keep that talent in Wales. Alongside that, an Academy concept was being developed, which was an industry lead concept, with graduates able to go into intensive boot camps where they pick up all of the skills necessary to be able apply it into the workplace. Again, working with industry and recognising some of the skills deficit, a cyber masters was being developed with Cardiff University. This meant on completion of those courses, those graduates would get an automatic interview with some high profile businesses. So, there was a full suite of activity recognising everything the Member had said.

The Member thanked the Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth for her comprehensive answer. He welcomed the Academy approach which would hone the skills in a practical way. There was also a need to engage with WG, as there would be other funds available. The Member noted once the skills were in place, a place would be needed to operate. Whilst it was accepted it would be difficult to get the major names back into the Valley areas, what could be done, via City Deal, to ensure that run down industrial estates are revigorated with the right units to feed into the supply chain.

The Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth noted there were a couple of initiatives, including the strategic sites and premises fund, which was a pot of money available for all of the local authorities to be able to access and to put in applications, around the redevelopment, new build or expansion of business parks across the region. It was recognised, for the northern valley's there was a slightly different viability assessment needed and so looking at a slightly different model. With regards to inwards investment, it was also being looked into more broadly to showcase that the long-term success of some of those areas. On a micro level, WG had been doing some work looking at co-worker spaces across the region to give businesses the opportunity to have satellite centres, so there were a couple of layers of intervention and support available.

A Member acknowledged that he was encouraged by response to the Member and asked, in terms of the investment in Zip World, could the Head of Business

Development & Inclusive Growth define what payback might be from that

The Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth provided Members with an overview on which the principles on which the investment was made but took into consideration the commercial sensitivities in her response.

A Member stated that Wales needed to be competitive because it was competing with City's such as London and Bristol, etc., when it came to inward investments to Wales. For the valley town's, there was a need for far more investments to come into those areas because jobs were needed, so there was a need to think outside the box. There was a need to attract businesses from abroad e.g., pharmaceutical companies, because these were long-term businesses, which would stay for far longer, and were committed to spending money in Wales because of the conditions and facilities and this was a job for the committee to put a bit more pressure on WG. There was also a transport issue because some companies would say they wouldn't come into valley town's, because transport links were poor, which needed to be sorted. The Member felt that local authorities should run as businesses, which was the only way to get the money and investment coming in and local authorities needed to spend more time on this but recognised that there wasn't always the business expertise available and therefore sometimes there was a need to employ consultants.

The Head of Business Development & Inclusive Growth stated that the Member had made a couple of really good points, particularly about local authorities' capacity to be able to take some of the initiatives forward. She explained that as part of the skills programme, they were keen to look across the 10 local authorities to see what could be done to help with graduate recruitment in local authorities, particularly looking at succession planning, so there was fresh blood coming through.

The Member acknowledged that one of the things often talked about was graduate recruitment, although it was not always this. There were apprenticeships, and people who had not gone to University who had been some of the most successful. He emphasised there needed to be a mixed economy and it was about getting a different kind of workforce ready for the future.

A Member noted the contrast between graduates and apprentices and the idea of the apprenticeships being at a lower level than graduates. In terms of investment, the Member took on board that when incentives were put in, for firms abroad coming in, that once things dried up, they often moved away. In terms of investment, what he was talking about was UK based investment, by UK firms and if there was a need to import skills and bring people from abroad, bring those skills back to a UK based company.

The CCR Challenge Fund Manager end the discussion by noting that there was a small section on the Challenge fund. It was early days in the challenge fund but there were opportunities around the foundation economy benefits, the food related challenges and the compound semi-conductor. There were some exciting challenges around circular economy, lots going in health, big opportunities around social care although was early days in a lot of this, but the CCR Challenge Fund Manager was happy to give a more detailed update to Members in the future.

40 Information Reports

No questions were raised by Members in relation to the Information reports.

It was agreed at the next meeting Members would consider reports on the Graduate scheme and Apprenticeships.

41 Urgent Items

None

**This meeting closed at Time Not
Specified**

**A Morgan
Chairman.**



CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 March 2022

FUTURE READY SKILLS FRAMEWORK – GRADUATE OFFER 'VENTURE'

REPORT OF HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide The JOSC with an overview of the principles that were approved in the Future Ready skills Framework in March 2020, specifically focussing on the coordination and delivery of the graduate offer, along with the creation of the Venture Skills hub.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Talent and skills development across the Region is a key lever for inward investment and creating prosperous communities. Regional Cabinet recognise the benefits of having a skilled talent pool available to support economic activity across the geography, as well as recognising the benefits of creating a supportive environment to retain talented people in sustainable careers within our SME community.
- 2.2 The Future Ready Skills framework, approved by Regional Cabinet in March 2020 (appendix B) sets out a vision of how a coordinated eco-system of support can not only reduce the 'brain-drain' from the Region; but also help create a supportive eco-system of peer to peer support and access to a pool of gifted graduates that can support indigenous business growth.
- 2.3 The mission guiding delivery for the framework is : *To leverage the potential and impact of CCRCD investments and programmes in creating an inclusive and entrepreneurial future-orientated system for jobs and skills.*

- 2.4 The vision sets out 8 principles of development
- Scaling up the Graduate offer
 - Seamless learner pathways
 - Real time labour market information
 - Connecting learners and employers
 - Considering an Entrepreneurship strategy
 - Economic Inclusion and Local Wealth building
 - Alignment with Regional Skills partnership
- 2.5 Progress is being made against all of the principles in the Framework, a short summary of each provided below. Beyond this, the core focus of the report is to provide a deep dive into the performance and progress of the graduate component of the Framework
- 2.6 ***Considering a shared apprenticeship scheme for priority sectors*** – Regional Cabinet approved an internal request 29 November to shape a CCR-shared apprenticeship scheme, capable of scaling across the relevant parts of the region. The seed investment will help establish proof of concept, which wider than just future CCR or WG funding, could set up the scheme to secure an industry or ‘cluster levy’ and to access Shared Prosperity Funds at regional-scale. The proposed seed fund will be managed through the partnership with an expectation that as the proof of concept/ MVP is developed, leverage and co-investment is banked along the way, in order that the CCR investment shows incremental gains as well as potentially, helping develop the case for an injection of Shared Prosperity Funding in the near future.
- 2.7 ***Seamless Learner pathway*** - as the Venture skills hub is further developed the ambition is for it to be a single point of entry for industry and students alike to access information and guidance on support that is available to assist with career progression or businesses seeking talent. Currently the Venture Skills Hub has a developing apprenticeship offer, a graduate offer, offers the Cardiff University Masters in Cyber security and technology , along with a sponsorship programme with Innovate UK to widen access for enterprising women and young people and their businesses or business ideas, domiciled in the CCR. Further work is needed to embed these components into the framework so as they become an increasingly an integral part of the regional offer.
- 2.8 ***Real time labour market information*** - the Regional Skills Partnership currently access labour market information through the Burning Glass platform which allows insight into developing and emerging priority sector skills needs, along with highlighting current skills gaps. Progress is also

being made on algorithmic developments which match real world and real time skills needs to vacancies. As this develops more information will be shared.

- 2.9 **Connecting learners and employers** - The Regional Skills partnership commissioned a piece of research to review Careers Information, Advice and Guidance in the Cardiff Capital Region, with the focus of capturing the extent of school engagement with business and access to work experience. The report highlighted there were some 48 different initiatives on offer, with a range of approaches and accessibility points. An action plan has been developed which the Regional Skills Partnership is currently coordinating.
- 2.10 **Considering an Entrepreneurship strategy** – part of this approach includes a seed investment into developing the FinTech ecosystem, CCR made a contribution of £50k into the first FinTech foundry and played a role in the decision making process for the businesses within the cohort. The foundry supported 8 companies, leading to £9m fundraising through private funding (a mix of venture capital and angel investment), 12 new senior roles created and a total of 20 new hires across the cohort. The 8 businesses represent a combined market size of £2.5bn.
- 2.11 **Economic inclusion and local wealth building** The CCR £10m Challenge Fund aimed at re-building local wealth through bringing innovative solutions to tackling some of the CCR's most urgent societal problems, is now in delivery phase (report link appendix B). Working in partnership with Cardiff University and Y Lab, the fund invites our public sector bodies to convene around key local wealth building challenges and connect with organisations that are able to provide innovative solutions to the intractable problems identified. This approach aims to draw on the region's creativity and ingenuity and bring together the public and private sector in order to deliver novel solutions, where no commercial solution currently exists, and to provide a route to market for the solution. The City deal is also a strategic partner in the delivery of the Innovative Future Services (INFUSE) programme, which is £5,6 m capacity building initiative funding through WEFO. The programmes aim is to up-skill the public sector in procurement, data and adaption.
- 2.12 **Alignment with Regional Skills partnership** – continued engagement and communication occurs between the 2 bodies to ensure alignment of activity, reduce duplication and ensure resources are targeted to maximise impact.

3 CCR Graduate Programme - Venture

- 3.1 Regional Cabinet approved the pilot scheme in December 2018 (appendix B) The objective of the scheme was to reverse 'brain-drain' with around 35% of all graduates leaving the region to seek employment opportunities elsewhere each year. The scheme works with businesses, predominantly SME's that historically, have had little or no engagement with the graduate market. Conversely, most graduates don't gravitate towards smaller organisations to begin their careers, by their nature SME's are not as visible in the marketplace, despite being a great environment to grow. Therefore the job at hand was to increase awareness of opportunities and take control of the candidate journey from attraction to selection. The scheme operates in collaboration spanning the University of South Wales, Cardiff University, Cardiff Metropolitan University and the Open University, as well as business groups and trade bodies.
- 3.2 A review of progress (in 2019), lessons learned and scope for the future, was presented to Cabinet in December 2019, with a proposal to extend the pilot into a continuation period to fully build upon and optimise progress made. Cabinet believed that the review showed sufficient scope and promise to move beyond a continuation period and requested to receive a case for rapid deployment of a programme-level in March 2020.
- 3.3 Year one of the programme saw 50 unique establishments advertising posts with 27 graduates placed and more following in quick succession. The initial model was based upon a demand led approach where vacancies were advertised as when they became available. It was soon concluded that this approach was resource intensive, therefore a review was instigated to provide guidance on more suitable delivery models.
- 3.4 The initial programme generated £540,988 in private leverage (based on an annual salary rate) and with on-costs of 30% equates to £702,284. Based on costs invested to date in the pilot, this represents £5.80 for every CCR £1 invested. This demonstrated a largely untapped market for graduate recruitment and retention.
- 3.5 The Business Case to roll out the programme until March 2024 has a target of advertising 500 positions in the region. This has led to a significant change in the delivery and operating model. When the programme was approved in 2018, it was branded as the 'Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Graduate Scheme'. Little time was focussed on the branding at the time due to getting the programme up and running whilst developing partner relationships with local businesses and universities. As the programme

started to gain traction, and through a peer review (Gradcore), it became evident that a more strategic approach with a professional feel needed to be created. This is when 'Venture' was born.

3.6 The 'Venture' Skills hub was launched in September 2021, majoring on the Venture Graduate programme. The platform provides a landing page for all skills related activity across the City Deal, including 'Venture Graduate'. Since the launch of the new platform and adapting to a cohort model of delivery the programme has gone from strength to strength, which can be evidenced in table 1 below Table 1

year	Number of Businesses engaged	Number of vacancies advertised	Number of graduates placed
2019/20 yr 1 CCR	212	58	27
2020/21 yr2 CCR	89 *	51	28 (55)
2021/22 yr3 CCR	40*	46	31 (86)
September 2021 launch of Venture Graduate			
Cohort 1 sept - November	68*	31	7 (93)
CCR Graduates			10 (103)
Cohort 2 Feb - April	70*	41	
Total to date (08.03.2022)	479	227	103

* Number of new business engaged each year.

3.7 As can be seen from the table above, a significant amount of business engagement initially took place with a relatively low conversion rate into advertised positions and subsequent placements. The initial spike in contact was to ensure coverage, information sharing and raising awareness. Many businesses were keen to see how the programme delivered before getting involved. As with all new activities there can be a sense of nervousness. There are several reasons behind the low conversion rate into employment, these ranged from the needs of the business changing, some roles did not receive any applications, timescales and graduates securing alternative employment. After running the scheme for 2 years on a demand led approach, where vacancies were advertised as and when received, it soon became apparent that a review of processes was needed to refine the approach.

- 3.8 Gradcore were commissioned in May 2021 to undertake a review of processes and systems and provide recommendations to move the programme forward. Gradcore are an organisation that originated from a partnership between the University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield City Council to create a business support initiative that built a bridge between graduates and SME's across their Region. The aim of their partnership, similar to ours, is to enable local SME's the opportunity to recruit more graduates and access the untapped talent in the area. They, the same as us, experienced the many challenges of setting up and being exposed to the reality of engagement and accessing the graduate pool, they were the preferred partner to help the CCR scheme on the journey.
- 3.9 The review provided the following recommendations
- Adopt a cohort model of delivery – this would provide assurance around business engagement timeframes and when vacancies would be advertised
 - Creating a strategic communications plan
 - Re-branding
 - Investing in governance arrangements – operational and strategic groups
 - Investing in relationship management with the universities.
- 3.10 The recommendations have been actioned, which has resulted in the new Venture operating model – Launched Sept 2021.
- 3.11 As can be seen from the figures above, cohort 1 had a great success with business engagement and adverting rolls, the conversion rate highlights a few concerns. The feedback from businesses was that they had to change their operating models quickly with some of the uncertainties around COVID at the time. Other businesses expressed a change in the European trading markets had an impact on their ability to grow, so could not proceed. Another area of improvement that we identified was the marketing campaign for advertising the vacancies. This has since been resolved with some external support and using the Universities resources to help advertise the positions.
- 3.12 The programme has just launched it's second cohort of vacancies (Feb 2022) which has resulted in 41 vacancies being advertised. Confidence has improved that these businesses are in a position to recruit, hopefully resulting in a higher conversion rate. Marketing of the vacancies has ramped up and application numbers are already exceeded previous advertisements.

- 3.13 Confidence in taking a cohort model is growing, It provides more assurance to businesses and graduates around timeframes and allows for a more efficient use of time, improved relationship management and longer term efficiencies. It is planned to have a 1 year review (Sept 2022) to identify what have been Covid related challenges and improvements to the programme. It has been a difficult few operating years, however, feedback about the programme remains strong.
- 3.14 The type of businesses and sector representation spans all disciplines across the region, from data analysts to surveyors to accountants. Supporting statements and case studies can be found in appendix C. All of which highlight the benefits of the programme for both businesses and graduates.
- 3.15 Another key recommendation from the review was to establish effective governance arrangements to wrap around the programme. This has led to the creation of an operation group that consists of all of the partners and officers who deliver the programme. The operation group feed into the strategic group, which is again made up of partners (managers in the universities) along with a representative from the regional skills partnership. Regular reporting of the programme is then made internally through the City Deal quarterly performance management framework.
- 3.16 As JOSC will be aware, the main outcomes of the City Deal programme centre around Job Creation, Private sector leverage and growth. The link between the programme and job creation is clear. Private sector leverage (using average salary of £22k + 30% on costs) is just under £3M. This is based upon a single year, further analysis needs to be undertaken as many of the graduates have been in post for more than a year.
- 3.17 Future developments under the Venture Skills Hub, include an aspiration to develop a public sector graduate associate model. The City Deal has recruited 10 graduate associates into the team this year, their input, professionalism, innovation and commitment to team has been invaluable in the overall programme continuing to go from strength to strength. We have adopted a 1 year employment model to provide the support and guidance to the associates that will, hopefully, provide them with the platform to continue a career in public services. Broader engagement and consultation with our 10 Local Authority partners is currently underway to determine appetite to engage in a potentially regional offer.
- 3.18 Other initiatives being explored, is the industry driven model of an intense training academy. The details of this are still being developed, however, the concept is around creating an industry led route into accessing vacancies with local employers. The model has been tried and tested in Belfast which

has delivered impactful results, further information can be found in appendix D

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:-

- 4.1 Note the contents of the report and associated appendices
- 4.2 Provide feedback and suggestions on improvement

Appendix A: Well-being & Future Generations Assessment

Appendix B: [Future ready Skills framework](#)

Appendix C: Case studies

Appendix D: [Assured skills training programme | nidirect](#)

[Assured Skills Programme | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

[PwC to create 600 new jobs in NI over five years - BBC News](#)

Appendix E: [Venture - Find Your Future \(venturewales.org\)](#) [\(43\) Venture Graduates: Overview | LinkedIn](#)

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising from this report and no Equality Impact Assessment is deemed necessary for the purposes of this report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 7.1 There are no Legal Implications in relation to this report

Future Generations Assessment Evaluation

Name of the Officer completing the evaluation: Nicola Somerville Phone no: E-mail: Nicola.somerville@cardiff.gov.uk	Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal The core aim of scaling up the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Graduate Scheme is to enhance productivity, innovation and economic growth while promoting the CCR as a destination for talented graduates. This would be achieved by providing targeted human resource support services to businesses and facilitating events to release untapped graduate-level recruitment potential.
Proposal: CCR Graduate Scheme	Date Future Generations Evaluation form completed: March 2022






1. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal.

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	The proposal seeks to build on the success of an intervention that could secure external sources of funding to embed a long-term link between graduates and businesses, particularly those in priority sectors and SMEs, in the region. This link is crucial to increasing private sector demand for highly skilled workers. Whilst wholly positive, effort must be made to ensure that businesses in the most deprived parts of the region also benefit from the scheme and that a coordinated approach is adopted with existing graduate recruitment activity.	The approach to delivery involves leaning on expertise and existing provisions across the region's universities, local authorities and partner organisations and therefore optimising public value in establishing proof of concept of the graduate scheme. A sectoral focus and experimental approach in delivering the graduate scheme would be more likely to establish partner buy in for the programme beyond the pilot. Moreover, links with business support departments in all local authorities will allow the scheme to target high-value businesses and priority sectors to maximise the value added of the programme.

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)</p>	<p>The proposal reflects an opportunity to ingrain and embed economic resilience within businesses as a result of the fresh ideas, innovation and productivity gains that graduates can contribute. Stronger links between businesses and universities would also create a fertile environment for the development of more integrated partnerships to support business resilience.</p> <p>A sectoral focus and experimental approach in delivering the pilot would also be conducive to establishing various windows of opportunity to secure sustainable support for the programme beyond the pilot.</p>	<p>The programme will work with partners to identify specific resources to incorporate practical guides on line management of interns, carrying out career conversations, principles of job design, and strategic workforce planning. Such resources are particularly important as transitioning internships into jobs may require different type of advice.</p> <p>It is likely that larger businesses and businesses from key sectors will have more established career pathways and jobs demanding higher skills than businesses in sectors reliant on lower-skilled roles. Such factors will be accounted for in the industry engagement plan.</p>
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Additional graduate level employment will have a positive impact on a range of sustainability considerations, including health benefits of being in employment and reduced pressure on public services due to individuals moving from being economically inactive or unemployed into employment.</p> <p>Furthermore, providing a higher number of opportunities that include training and development will provide potential to get local people into steady and stable work, which in turn, reduces the stress burden around financial issues which can be a key contributor to mental health problems.</p>	<p>A qualification, an induction and events have been included in the programme to instil a commitment to continuing professional development in the graduates and by extension, the wider business community.</p> <p>Working with partners to strengthen the support to businesses beyond the internship period presents the opportunity to create more sustainable employment.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>A core aim of the proposal is to sell the Cardiff Capital Region as a destination for talented graduates. Accordingly, efforts have been made to ensure that communities in each local authority area would benefit from the proposal.</p>	<p>Links with business support departments in all local authority areas will not only allow the scheme to target local economic priorities, but will also ensure the programme is conducive to delivering enhanced economic development across the whole region.</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>The project seeks to create sustainable opportunities in the Cardiff Capital Region within the context of underemployment of a high proportion of graduates.</p> <p>A graduate-facing event led by the Well-being of Future Generations Office has been incorporated into the programme to achieve a greater impact on local social, economic and environmental wellbeing. The event would involve promoting the business opportunities from the circular economy, energy efficiency and other business benefits the well-being act could offer.</p>	<p>A coordinated approach with partners, including signposting businesses to provisions that could meet their needs and working with partners to encourage additional events for graduates.</p>
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation</p>	<p>The coordinated approach between higher educational institutions, local authorities and business representative organisations underscores a significant commitment to regional prosperity and selling the brand of the Cardiff Capital Region as a destination for talented graduates.</p> <p>Additionally, the events present the opportunity for graduate involvement in or promotion of more recreational activities and networking.</p>	<p>Consideration has been given to the appropriate amount of information and events that graduate interns could be invited to in order to ensure an inundation of invitations does not detract from attendance to events that are beneficial to those on the scheme.</p>
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>Within the context of significant underemployment of graduates in the Cardiff Capital Region, the creation additional graduate-level opportunities would allow people from different and diverse backgrounds to benefit from a range of opportunities that are unlikely to emerge in the absence of this intervention.</p>	<p>Information on the application process will be included on the website for the CCR Graduate Scheme and feedback will be provided to unsuccessful candidates to help them to learn from the experience and improve their employability skills for future applications.</p>

2. How has your proposal embedded and prioritized the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The proposal is about creating long-term prosperity that will enhance the number of higher level skills opportunities in the region as well as sustained growth in businesses across the Cardiff Capital Region.</p>	<p>An experimental approach combined with continual assessment will help to maximise the positive impacts.</p>
 <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The programme has been developed in partnership with universities, business representative groups, local authorities and other partners. It has taken an inclusive approach to engagement and is working with a wide-range of partners.</p>	<p>Continuing to engage partners, including those that offer additional support services to businesses, will be crucial to maximising positive impacts of the programme.</p>
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>Surveys, consultation, workshops and research from various interest groups were used to develop the scheme and strike a balance between creating an offer to graduates while minimising the burden of participation for businesses.</p>	<p>Continual engagement with businesses and graduate interns will present the opportunity to provide feedback on the programme and review whether there is scope for improvement in the programme's delivery in future.</p>
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The ambition to create a long-term support service to help businesses overcome barriers to recruitment would result in the creation of a service that provides a tailored response for businesses that face similar barriers.</p>	<p>Working with sector groups and business representative organisations could support the development of the aforementioned sustainable approaches to incentivising graduate recruitment.</p>
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>The partnership arrangements between the ten local authorities in the region, the four universities and business representative organisations ensure that a coordinated approach is adopted.</p>	<p>Not at this time</p>

3. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	Should the proposal be successful opportunities will be open to all.	None arising – although particular attention will have to be paid to how the message and opportunities is conveyed as consistently as possible to all aspects of the future workforce.	Particular attention will have to be paid to how the opportunities are conveyed as consistently as possible to all aspects of the future workforce.
Disability	Should the scheme be approved, training and skills development will be done on a flexible basis ensuring accessibility and equality of access.	As above	As above
Gender reassignment	Should the scheme be approved, training and development processes will be focused on all equalities principles and matters, including gender.	As above	As above
Marriage or civil partnership	Should the proposal be successful, employment and recruitment processes will have regard to all of the protected characteristics including the rights of married couples or those in civil partnerships.	As above	As above
Pregnancy or maternity	Should the proposal be successful, proper regard will be had to the rights of any employees with regard to pregnancy/ adoption/ maternity and paternity.	As above	As above
Race	Should the proposal be successful and a recruitment and appointment process begin, proper regard will be had at that time, regarding promoting equality of opportunity, translation services and general support to ensure opportunities are genuinely open to all members of the community/ workforce.	As above	As above
Religion or Belief	As above.	As above	As above

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sex	Again, should the proposal be successful, proper regard will be had to working conditions and rights and ensuring equity.	As above	As above
Sexual Orientation	As with all of the section above.	As above	As above
Welsh Language	Should the bid be successful we will discharge all of our duties in relation to the Welsh language Act.	Not at this time but the situation will be kept under review.	As above

4. Safeguarding & Corporate Parenting. Are your proposals going to affect either of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	Any work with young people or in the context of schools/ learning establishments, will have proper regard to safeguarding requirements and policy compliance.	Safeguarding is about ensuring that everything is in place to promote the well-being of children and vulnerable adults, preventing them from being harmed and protecting those who are at risk of abuse and neglect.	As above
Corporate Parenting	If successful, an opportunity exists to advise and support graduates about the potential for careers, growth and personal development.	None arising	As above

5. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

- Data and evidence on the Cardiff Capital Region Economy
- Academic research
- Graduate mobility trends
- Survey research and business responses
- Reports on future trends

6. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

The proposal will support businesses to grow and deliver additional graduate positions that would not be present in the absence of the intervention. The experimental approach in the pilot will allow proof of concept of various ideas to be attained thereby creating a range of paths to creating a self-sustaining programme beyond the pilot.

7. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible	Progress
NA			

8. MONITORING: The impacts of this proposal will need to be monitored and reviewed. Please specify the date at which you will evaluate the impact, and where you will report the results of the review.

The impacts of this proposal will be evaluated on:	NA
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Graduate Quotes

An invaluable chance to build skills, make connections, and grow as a professional. – Robert Stevens, Renewable Energy Graduate at Spire Renewables

I would highly recommend applying as it gives you the opportunity to gain substantial experience in your chosen field which can benefit your future employment significantly. – Henry Hopkins, International Trade Executive at SW Chamber of Commerce

I liked the fact there was the opportunities to meet other fellow graduates through the scheme who had also just started a new role. The on-hand support offered during the internship is also a great added bonus. – Chloe Simkiss, Business Support and Marketing Coordinator at Acer Ecology

It's a great scheme, and really is a fascinating approach to education. The knowledge is delivered, and it is always then applied into a self-reflection sense to create an individualistic approach. – Phil Stephenson, Graduate Development Surveyor at Monmouthshire Housing Association

Employer Quotes

Nothing to lose, no commitment, time consuming tasks taken out of your hands and its free – Sam O'Neill, Senior Adviser at Clifton Private Finance

As with everything at the moment we are looking for ways keep costs down so we can spend money where it is needed. Using the graduate scheme over traditional recruiters was one way we could do that and still end up with a fantastic candidate. We also wanted greater access to market and they [the graduate scheme] were able to engage and leverage their contacts to attract recent graduates from Cardiff University, Cardiff Met, USW and the OU. - Michael Bailey, Business Intelligence Manager at Bron Afon

With the scheme offering a full end to end service, whichever element of the recruitment process you need support with, the scheme can deliver. – Chris Hodge, Senior Business Partner (Recruitment) at Pobl

For businesses with less time and resource, the CCR can offer extra support with shortlisting and interview processes. – Rhiannon Newell, HR Officer at Monmouthshire Housing Association

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