



CORPORATE AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD IN PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor G. Johnson - Chair
Councillor A. McConnell - Vice Chair

Councillors:

M. Adams, G. Enright, A. Gair, D. Harse, L. Jeremiah, S. Kent, D. W. R, Preece, C. Thomas,
L. Whittle and C. Wright

Cabinet Members:

Councillors N. George (Corporate Services, Property and Highways), P. Leonard (Planning and Public Protection), C. Morgan (Waste, Leisure, and Garden Spaces) J. Pritchard (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change), E. Stenner (Finance and Performance)

Together with:

M. S. Williams (Corporate Director for Economy and Environment), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services), R Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), L Donovan (Head of People Services), A. Dallimore (Regenerations Services Manager) P. Hudson (Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader), I. Raymond (Principal Project Officer), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), S. Pugh (Communications Manager), S. Ford (Communications Manager), K. Roberts (Communications Assistant), M Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), A. Jones (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING, FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live-streamed and recorded and would be made available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#) Members were advised that voting on decisions would be taken via Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. Forehead, J. Fussell, M. Powell, C. Mann and W. Williams

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

4. CORPORATE AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report, which outlined details of the Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme (FWP) for the period September 2023 to March 2024.

A Member requested a copy of the Terms of Reference for the Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services confirmed that the Terms of Reference would be circulated to all members of the committee following the meeting.

It was moved and seconded that the report recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 10 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

5. CABINET REPORTS

It was confirmed that there had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

6. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND – 6 MONTHLY MONITORING UPDATE REPORT

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance presented the report which sought to update the Scrutiny Committee on the delivery of the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) within Caerphilly CBC as part of the UK Government's Levelling Up programme.

It was explained that The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a central pillar to the UK Government's ambitious Levelling Up agenda and a significant component of its support for places across the UK. It provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula. The UKSPF is intended to support the UK Government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK by delivering on each of the levelling up objectives. The

primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK.

It was further explained that underneath the overarching aim of building pride in place, and increasing life chances, there are three UKSPF investment priorities which are Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills. Caerphilly County Borough has an allocation of £28,272,298 and an allocation of £5,901,499 for *Multiply (*UK Government Adult Numeracy Programme).

Members were advised that the guidance had been received in Spring 2022 and required all Authorities to submit their plans to Rhondda Cynon Taff Council, as the lead Authority for the ten Authorities within the Sub Cardiff Capital Region. Rhondda Cynon Taff then had to submit the regional investment plans to UK Government by December 2022. Members were informed of Caerphilly Council's proactive approach in identifying projects for funding and noted that a report was presented to Cabinet in June last year.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the update and Member questions were welcomed.

A Member requested that more details be provided in relation to 5.12 of the report and asked for confirmation on what funds have been spent and where they have been distributed throughout the borough. The Member also asked for further details on which businesses have been supported, where jobs have been created or saved, and asked for confirmation on which areas have been levelled up with the use of these funds.

Members were advised that as part of the information gathering and collection exercise, a document is being collated and would provide this information on all projects, which will show which businesses or individuals are being helped. This is currently being mapped by the postcode areas and is being dealt with by colleagues in the Planning Department. Members were advised that a link to this document would be provided to Members of the Committee outside of the meeting. Members were informed that as part of the governance arrangements for the Shared Prosperity Fund regular update reports will be brought to the Committee every 6 months and any concerns raised could be referred to the Shared Prosperity Programme Board, which has oversight of the programme and ensures that any concerns or suggestions are considered.

A Member asked a question in relation to section 5.13 of the report and enquired about any delays from the UK Government and the risks going forward for future allocations.

Members were informed that due to the delay in the programme start it was recognised that certain outputs and outcomes for Multiply would not be achieved in Year 1 and so it was agreed to reduce the Year 1 funding allocation by 50%, subsequent to this the UK Government agreed that this unspent allocation could be carried forward to Year 2 and could either be kept within the 2022-23 Multiply or ringfenced to the People and Skills pillar. Caerphilly allocated its underspend across to People and Skills, in doing so Officers identified a risk as this pillar has quite a large amount of money and it needs arrangements to be put in place. To recruit the Team, some of which are transitioning from Welsh Government and European funding programs, retaining a number of staff and also recruiting new staff. There were also arrangements with local colleges to deliver some of the interventions. Members were advised that there was also a regional project being led by Torfaen around the Green Skills Agenda. Targeting high carbon industries to look at retraining opportunities to gear up for a transition from those sorts of sectors, but it was outlined that this takes time to put in place. There was also an arrangement which had recently been confirmed by the Welsh Office and DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up Housing Communities). This was the potential to carry forward funding from Year 2 into Year 3. The Officer confirmed that he would not have the opportunity to carry money forward from March 2025 when the programme ends. Members were advised that it would be possible to allocate funds from one pillar to another if underspends were identified and

there were projects that could deliver across outputs and outcomes in other interventions across the programme. However, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council must be notified if more than £5m is moved between pillars so that they can notify the UK Government and secure their agreement in writing. It was outlined that this presents a challenge for capital projects, particularly as the process can take some time and the projects could come up against unexpected complications once groundwork commences. However, this is something that the Board is mindful of and takes into consideration.

Members thanked the Officer for a thorough response.

The Chair invited the Deputy Leader to speak to the Committee.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Chair and informed the Committee that in addition to the update already provided by the Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader, he has seen the benefits that the business community have experienced through the advancement of the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund. He highlighted that 78 businesses had contributed to the creation of nearly 150 jobs and safeguarded another 426 to date. The Fund's popularity is due to the fact that it can be easily accessed to support businesses up and down the length of the County Borough. The Deputy Leader welcomed the mapping exercise as an opportunity to add a greater depth of information on the outcomes achieved. Members were advised that the benefits that the business community get out of this fund were game changing and heard about the impact that £5000 to £7000 can make particularly in a cost-of-living crisis. The Deputy Leader wished to put on record his support to the Business Team who have been absolutely brilliant in advertising the fund.

A Member sought clarification on what limits there were on grant funding and enquired if there were any restrictions on how monies could be spent. Members were advised that there is already an established Caerphilly Enterprise Fund and there are quite a range of opportunities that the funding can be used for, the grant programme provides up to £25,000 which is in line with the pre-existing programme that is in place. Businesses are asked to match fund the other 50% this shows the level of commitment from the business and enables the funding to be spread out more evenly. There is a Business Support Team that is supported by SPF to ensure that evidence shows that businesses have contributed their 50% of match funding. It was also noted that an additional fixed term post had been appointed to help with monitoring and evaluation.

Members were advised that some businesses may not survive, however all checks are undertaken to mitigate against this. Members were informed that there is a fund to encourage businesses to train and encourage entrepreneurship and startup and would like more people particularly younger people to think about setting up a business and are looking to set up a fund to encourage this further. It was noted that under intervention W23 under the Business Support Pillar, a number of organisations that submit applications for funding will deliver outputs and outcomes and support on the Council's behalf. The funding is given to them to work with new and existing businesses to try and help them to develop in areas of innovation, training, management competencies and startup and business growth support. Officers confirmed that there is an allocation of around £1m to award in Year Three, however CCBC would be looking to award as early as possible to allow mobilisation and time to develop. Universities and business organisations that are already operating would be included.

A Member asked for confirmation that the grants are allocated fairly. Members were advised how the grants process works from the initial application form being received by the Business Support Team who assess each application and look at the value and the worthiness of the project and match against the intervention of the outputs and the outcomes as determined by the programme. They will then make recommendations to a

panel which includes the Finance Team, Line Manager, Head of Service and Cabinet Member who will officially sign it off.

The Chair thanked The Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader for the report.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 11 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED that.

1. Members Note the detail of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund update and six-monthly monitoring report and the opportunities for the programme to contribute to the Council's own Place Shaping, Transformation, and Regeneration agendas.
2. Members recognise the progress officers and stakeholders have made in mobilising a significant investment programme within the time constraints afforded by the funding programme.

7. DEMONSTRATION ON MY CAERPHILLY – CCBC INTRANET SOLUTION

The Communication Managers and the Communications Assistant advised Members that they were tasked to come up with a new design for the Intranet and to make it more accessible for staff. Members were shown the new system and shown how staff will be able to navigate through the new Intranet. Members were advised that the design layout was in purple which represents innovation, and this was a fundamental part of the design process. Members were shown how easy it was to find information with the easy search engine and were informed that this has been driven by staff engagement and staff will continue to contribute to the develop following this initial phase. The system will be going live in October and the next stage will be on developing the Members portal and the Team will work with all Members to develop this service.

The Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services thanked the Team for their hard work, this was echoed by the Chair.

The meeting closed at 18:24 p.m.