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## ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2023.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

The recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor S. Lloyd-Selby (Chair); Councillor I.A.N. Perry (Vice-Chair); Councillors C.E.A. Champion, P. Drake. V.P. Driscoll, A.M. Ernest, M.J. Hooper, C. Iannucci, E. Penn, J. Protheroe and S.T. Wiliam.

Also present: Councillors C.P. Franks, W.A. Hennessy and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

### 452 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Chair read the following statement: “May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing.”

### 453 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2023 be approved as a correct record.

### 454 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

### 455 SHARED PROSPERITY FUND UPDATE REPORT (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 was presented by the Operational Manager – Regeneration.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund was part of the UK Government’s wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK. It was a mix of revenue and capital funding. The overarching aim of the fund was to build pride in place and increase life chances. Underneath that aim were three investment priorities: communities and place; supporting local business; and people and skills.

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The purpose of the report was to further update on the decisions taken to date relating to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. It was reported that the funding profile for the Vale of Glamorgan remained a challenging one, particularly for 2023/24. For that reason, delegated powers had been granted to named officers in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder relating to the local delivery of the Investment Plan. The challenge around the ability to spend the multiple elements existed at a regional level and so would not be easily overcome.

Councillor Hooper queried the process around the determination of how bids were successful and the makeup of the Panel established to appraise Shared Prosperity Fund projects. He also asked how the funding worked with Welsh Government schemes given the money came direct from the UK Government. Councillor Hooper's final question related to Chwarae Teg which had recently gone into administration, and how was funding managed in those circumstances. In reply, the Operational Manager advised that the full makeup of the Panel would be shared electronically, but it included Cabinet Members and Officers from the Council's Strategic Leadership Team. In terms of Welsh Government, the Operational Manager stated that an amount of £212million had been allocated across the region, with £14million for the Vale of Glamorgan. That was less than previous European funding so some areas, such as higher education, had been affected. That meant that in certain areas there were more challenges, but in some areas such as transforming towns there was a process in place which allowed some elements of projects to be funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund. Regarding Chwarae Teg, the Committee was advised that no funding had been allocated to that organisation so the Council was looking at how the money could be spent and what outcomes could be achieved. The Operational Manager added that from a strategic point of view and because there was only 18 months in which to spend the money from the Shared Prosperity Fund, the Council may need to rethink its local investment plan and consider the outcomes given the current economic situation. That meant that over the next few months the Council would be carrying out a piece of work around the outcomes that it wanted to achieve, some of which may be on a regional basis.

Councillor Ernest commented on the availability of public wi-fi particularly in the Penarth area, which had very little coverage and he asked for improved connectivity. In response, the Operational Manager highlighted work that had been undertaken with Cowbridge Town Council as a way of improving connectivity which should be encouraged for other parts of the Vale. In addition, the Council was working on solutions with Welsh Government as part of its 'Smart Towns' programme. Bridgend town had recently introduced a shared router system with several local businesses which was a low-cost model that could be a possibility.

Councillor Protheroe queried Council plans to tackle inequality within rural areas, particularly in relation to energy and as there were some rural villages that did not have a mobile phone signal. In reply, the Operational Manager referred to the good work undertaken in rural areas from previous European funding. The area of fuel poverty was a priority that needed to be considered in greater detail, but would be a challenge given the timescales and deadlines of the Shared Prosperity Fund. Mobile phone coverage came under the theme of connectivity, and the Council was working with broadband providers. There was opportunity for

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communities to apply for funding, but the Council was also conscious of the need to prioritise the most deprived areas, particularly in relation to the cost of living crisis.

Councillor Penn highlighted apprenticeship schemes as a way of assisting those that had been out of work for a long time. The Operational Manager advised that there were several projects currently being run and it was an area that the Council wanted to strengthen. On a regional basis there was upskilling projects being devised through the Cardiff Region City Deal. The Operational Manager advised that he would provide further information of the related projects.

Councillor Protheroe asked if the Council could look at schemes aimed at supporting children that lived in rural parts of the Vale. In response, the Operational Manager stated that funding required a clear evidence base but there was a toolkit that could assist communities.

The use of skateparks was highlighted by Councillor Penn as a way of creating coastal destinations.

The Chair stated that opportunity was there for Councillors to raise ideas and suggestions outside of the Committee meeting and she asked for update reports to be presented at future meetings.

Subsequently, the Committee

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T further reports are presented to the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee which set out progress against the allocations as set out in the report.

#### Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.
- (2) To allow further updates to be presented to the Scrutiny Committee.

456 VALE OF GLAMORGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2026:  
ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2022/2023 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 was presented by the Head of Sustainable Development.

The report related to the fifth Local Development Plan (LDP) Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which assessed the performance of the policies in achieving the integrated Plan objectives which incorporated sustainable development and Strategic Environmental Assessment having regard to the Monitoring Framework

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set out in the LDP and agreed by the Inspector as part of the LDP Examination and consequently adopted by the Council on 28th June, 2017.

The format of the AMR followed the suggested format set out in the latest Development Plans Manual Edition 3 (March 2020). It included both core and local monitoring indicators and a 'traffic light' rating system was used as a visual aid to monitor the effectiveness of the Plan's policies and to provide a quick overview of policy performance.

The report set out the key policy achievements to date and confirmed that while most of the relevant monitoring targets continued to be met in several areas targets had not been achieved. This primarily related to areas likely to be affected by the current economic climate across Wales and the UK and whilst being of concern, these indicators would continue to be monitored in future AMRs.

It was reported that overall, the AMR showed that good progress was being made in implementing most of the Plan's policies and that the LDP strategy remained sound. Accordingly, Cabinet had recommended that the fifth AMR be submitted to the Welsh Government by 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2023 and published on the Council's website in accordance with LDP Regulation 37. In addition, the AMR acknowledged that the Council had commenced work on a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), in accordance with LDP Regulation 41.

Councillor Protheroe commented on some of the visual representations contained within the report which did not show the ward that she represented. The Head of Service stated that those would be amended prior to submission to Welsh Government.

Councillor Ernest queried as to how the Council would ensure that the aims and aspirations within the current LDP that had not been met would be brought forward into the next 12 months and for the next review. In reply, the Head of Service advised that 700 further dwellings were due to go to the Planning Committee for approval, so it was likely that a number of sites would be progressed over the next 12 months. As an LDP came to an end, it was expected for there to be a slow down of the rate of sites as most allocations would have already been consented and built upon. It was important to recognise that market conditions for house builders was challenging, so it was important for the Planning Department to ensure that the planning applications were in the best possible shape prior to consideration.

In closing the debate, the Chair advised that all Elected Members would have opportunity to scrutinise the Replacement LDP over the next few weeks, through workshop sessions and a report being presented at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

Subsequently, it was

**RECOMMENDED – T H A T** the fifth Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report be accepted for submission to the Welsh Government by 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2023.

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Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

457 1<sup>ST</sup> AND 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKING  
2023/24 AND UPDATED COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME  
SCHEDULE 2023/24 (DCR) –

The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer presented the report the purpose of which was to report progress on Scrutiny recommendations and to consider the updated Forward Work Programme together with any slippage for 2023/24.

The report advised Members of progress in relation to the Scrutiny Committee's historical recommendations and the updated Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2023/24:

- 1st Quarter Recommendation Tracking Apr to June 2023 (attached at Appendix A to the report);
- 2nd Quarter Recommendation Tracking July to September 2023 (attached at Appendix B to the report); and
- Updated Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2023/24 (attached at Appendix C to the report).

With regard to Task and Finish review work, the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer advised that the Scrutiny Committees Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group had agreed for the review into procurement, as suggested by the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee, would be progressed as a priority. Further Task and Finish activity would be considered when that review had been completed.

The Committee was advised that reports relating to Residential Parking Permits and Bus Services would be added to work programme prior to it being uploaded to the Council's website.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the status of the actions as listed in Appendices A and B of the report be agreed.

(2) T H A T the Forward Work Programme schedule for 2023/24 be updated to include future reports regarding residential parking permits and changes to local bus services and once updated for Appendix C to be uploaded to the Council's website.

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Reasons for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.