

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMY, RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON MONDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2022**

PRESENT: County Councillor A Davies (Chair)
County Councillors Adrian Jones, B Davies, C Walsh, D Bebb, I Harrison, J Brignell-Thorp, K Lewis

Cabinet Portfolio Holders in Attendance:
Cllr D Selby (Cabinet Member for a More Prosperous Powys)

Officers:
Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services)
Nigel Brinn (Executive Director - Economy and Environment),
Diane Reynolds (Head of Digital Services and Economy)
Paul Bradshaw (Head of Workforce and Organisational Development)
Catherine James (Interim Head of Transformation and Democratic Services)
Andy Thompson (Interim Head of Service for Housing)
Jenny Ashton (Interim Head of Community Services)
Jane Thomas (Head of Finance)
Debby Jones (Professional Lead – Legal)

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors A Cartwright, Arwel Jones, G Mitchell, T Colbert, Sarah Williams, D Thomas, J Charlton, J Berriman, M Dorrance

2.	DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST
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There were no disclosures of interest by Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting

3.	DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS
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The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4.	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meetings held on 23 June 2022 and 25 July 2022 as correct records.

5.	RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET
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Documents Considered:

1. Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme -Report of Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys Cllr Matthew Dorrance and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation Cllr David Thomas.

Issues Discussed:

- Details of the funding scheme by UK Government has been delayed and would be included in the budget announcement due in November.
- The Committee were pleased that the Cabinet had taken the comments on board.
- The Cabinet had indicated that it would consider all options in respect of the funding proposals, and it would be helpful if the Committee could be provided with details of what was being considered.

Outcomes:

To receive the Cabinet's response to Scrutiny Recommendations who met on 26 July 2022
Noted.

Documents Considered:

2. Shared Prosperity Fund: Submission of a Regional Investment Plan for Mid Wales
Report of the Cabinet Member for a Prosperous Powys, County Councillor David Selby.

Issues Discussed:

- Confirmation of the final funding decision was awaited from the UK Government, with a budget announcement due in November 2022.
- The scheme was being prepared by officers whilst awaiting the decision of UK Government.
- The Committee suggested that updates throughout the process would have useful to the Members.

Question	Response
What is the timescale for the spend of the £2.7m, can it be rolled into next year or does it have to be spent by the end of this year.	<p>Officer Response:</p> <p>The original information indicated that the spend had to be within the same year. However, UK Government officials have been asked, due to the delay if funding can be rolled over and an answer is awaited.</p>
If the funding does not go ahead, what costs have been incurred by the Council and can they be claimed back (officer time etc)	<p>Officer Response:</p> <p>The two Councils (Powys and Ceredigion) received £40k to set up the scheme. This funding has been pooled with Ceredigion Council for fund the recruitment of a Regional Fund Manager post. If the funding is withdrawn the Council can ask for the repayment of fees.</p> <p>Cabinet Member Response:</p> <p>We can ask but there is no guarantee that we will be successful.</p>

What will happen to the post if the funding is withdrawn	Cabinet Member Response: It is hoped to offer the position to the successful candidate on the day the budget goes through. There are also alternatives being considered if funding is not made available.
Is the council operating on the hope of receiving funding	Officer Response: Work is continuing at pace in the background to prepare.

6. SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

Documents Considered:

- Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme -Report of Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys Cllr Matthew Dorrance and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation Cllr David Thomas.

Issues Discussed:

- Details of the funding scheme by UK Government has been delayed and would be included in the budget announcement due in November.
- The Committee were pleased that the Cabinet had taken the comments on board.
- The Cabinet had indicated that it would consider all options in respect of the funding proposals, and it would be helpful if the Committee could be provided with details of what was being considered.

Outcomes:

That the Cabinet's response to the Scrutiny Recommendations be noted.

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Issues Discussed:

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Is the council operating on the hope of receiving funding	<p>Officer Response: Work was continuing at pace in the background to prepare.</p>

7.	FEEDBACK FROM PHOSPHATES WORKING GROUP
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The Working Group met on 06 October 2022 and considered where the Group would be able to influence as this is a complex issue with multiple groups and organisations discussing the issue. It was agreed that as the Council and Cabinet were actively engaged in wider discussions through multiple forums it was felt that the group could provide support elsewhere. The continuation of the group would also depend on the Nature Emergency motion which was passed by Council on 13 October 2022. It was suggested that a further meeting was likely to bring the group to a conclusion.

8.	WORK PROGRAMME
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The Committee noted the dates of forthcoming meetings and that a separate meeting was to be held to consider future work programming.

Members commented that the following items should be added to the work programme:

Review of the development of the economy on a sector by sector basis and whether this is working, to include the resiliency of the economy in Powys. As many economy issues are led by Welsh Government policy it was suggested that a Member Development session on the economy should be held which was accepted.

County Councillor A Davies (Chair)