

Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Venue
By Zoom

Meeting Date
Monday, 7 November 2022

Meeting Time
10.00 am

For further information please contact

Rachel Pugh - Scrutiny and Democratic Support Officer
rachel.pugh1@powys.gov.uk



County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5LG
31-10-2022

Mae croeso i chi siarad yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg yn y cyfarfod. Rhowch wybod pa iaith rydych am ei defnyddio erbyn hanner dydd, ddau ddiwrnod gwaith cyn y cyfarfod.

You are welcome to speak Welsh or English in the meeting. Please inform us of which language you wish to use by noon, two working days before the meeting.

AGENDA

1.	APOLOGIES
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To receive apologies for absence.

2.	DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST
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To receive any disclosures of interests by Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting.

3.	DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS
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To receive 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.

(NB: Members are reminded that under Section 78 Members having been given a prohibited party whip cannot vote on a matter before the Committee.)

4.	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)
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To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the previous meeting(s) held as follows as a correct record:

23-06-2022

25-07-2022

(Pages 5 - 22)

5.	RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET
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To receive and approve the following recommendations for submission to the Cabinet.

1.Recommendations of the Purchase of Private Properties Working Group

2. Recommendations of the Virtual Scrutiny of the Information Governance Report

(Pages 23 - 28)

6.	SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS
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To receive the Cabinet's response to Scrutiny Recommendations.

1.Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme

2.Shared Prosperity Fund

(Pages 29 - 36)

7.	FEEDBACK FROM PHOSPHATES WORKING GROUP
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To receive feedback from the Working Group following the meeting held on 06-10-2022.

8.	WORK PROGRAMME
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To note that future meetings of the Committee will be held as follows:

Date and Time	Type and Detail
07-12-22 14.00 – 15.30	Pre-Meeting
12-12-22 10.00 – 12.00	Committee - Public Q2 Performance Q2 Risk Q2 Finance All Heads of Service
2023	

Date and Time	Type and Detail
Jan	Pre-Meeting
19-01-23 10.00 – 12.30	Committee - Public Well-Being Assessment – relevant sections New CIP – relevant sections for scrutiny Performance and Risk Q3 All Heads of Service Finance All Heads of Service
Jan	Work Programming
Jan	Pre-Meeting
30-01-23 14.00- 17.00	Committee - Public Budget Scrutiny
Feb	Pre-Meeting (if required)
13-02-23 14.00 – 16.30	Committee - Public Alternative Budget (if required)
Mar	Pre-Meeting
03-04-23 10.00 – 12.30	Committee - Public
Mar	Self-Assessment
May	Pre-Meeting
05-06-23 10.00 – 12.30	Committee - Public Q4 Performance and Risk All Heads of Service Finance All Heads of Service
July	Work Programming
July	Pre-Meeting
17-07-23 14.00 – 16.30	Committee - Public
Sept	Pre-Meeting

Date and Time	Type and Detail
18-09-23 10.00 – 12.30	Committee - Public Q2 Performance and Risk All Heads of Service Finance All Heads of Service
Oct	Pre-Meeting
30-10-23 10.00 – 12.30	Committee - Public
Dec	Pre-Meeting
11-12-23 10.00 – 12.30	Committee - Public

Committee Reflection

Following the close of the meeting the Committee is asked to take 5 to 10 minutes to reflect on today's meeting.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMY, RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BY TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 23 JUNE 2022

PRESENT: County Councillor A Davies (Chair)
County Councillors D Bebb, A Cartwright, T Colbert, B Davies, I Harrison, A Jones, E A Jones, K Lewis, G Mitchell, J Thorp and S L Williams

Cabinet Portfolio Holders In Attendance: County Councillors J Berriman (Cabinet Member for a Connected Powys), J Charlton (Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys), R Church (Cabinet Member for a Safer Powys), M J Dorrance (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys), J Gibson-Watt (Leader) and D A Thomas (Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation)

Officers: Matt Perry (Head of Highways, Transport and Recycling), Nigel Brinn (Executive Director - Economy and Environment), Gwilym Davies Head of Property, Planning and Public Protection), Clive Pinney (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Jane Thomas (Head of Finance), Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services) and David Morris (Income and Awards Senior Manager)

1.	ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR
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RESOLVED that County Councillor Karl Lewis be elected Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

2.	APOLOGIES
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An apology for absence was received from County Councillor C Walsh.

3.	DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST
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The Committee received the following disclose of interests by Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting:

£150 Cost of Living Support Scheme payment to all households:
County Councillors D Bebb, T Colbert, A Davies, I Harrison, B Davies, G Mitchell, S Williams and A Jones. (Personal Interest only)

£150 grant to residents who live in homes that have an off-grid fuel supply:
County Councillor A Davies. (Personal and Prejudicial Interest). Councillor Davies left the room for the discussion on this matter.

Other grants:

County Councillors G Mitchell, D Bebb and B Davies indicated a potential interest in relation to other grants. However, there was no discussion in relation to the grants in which these Councillors has indicated that they might have an interest and therefore they did not need to disclose a personal and prejudicial interest and remained in the meeting.

4.	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.

5. DISCRETIONARY COST OF LIVING SUPPORT SCHEME

Documents Considered:

- Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme – joint report of the Cabinet Member for Fairer Powys and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation.

Issues Discussed:

- Questions:

Question	Response
How was the decision made about the additional discretionary awards – who the vulnerable groups were to receive the grants	It was considered that an arbitrary basis would not work for Powys due to the nature of the Council tax base. Therefore, vulnerabilities were considered such as circumstance, income or disabilities as it was felt to be the better approach and would show a need. Consultation was also undertaken with services to identify vulnerable groups.
What does Off-grid mean and how were the numbers of potential recipients calculated.	Off-grid fuel supply relates to properties without a direct gas supply to the house e.g. LPG or a non standard gas supply. The Council would be seeking to develop a scheme for those who use oil or LPG heating as costs for these types of utilities are higher than for standard utilities. The estimate of 1000 properties came following a discussion with the Housing Service.
If someone qualifies for this grant they should not be disqualified from the main scheme.	The Cabinet member indicated that the 1000 property estimate was likely to be an underestimate. There is also a caveat in the scheme that it will be a panel decision as to whether someone will receive this grant if they have not received a grant under the main scheme. The Panel will decide if we can allow a payment under the main scheme and also make a discretionary payment as well.
The 1000 properties is probably an underestimate. Has there been any	We are sharing information about the different schemes and approaches in

<p>sharing of ideas of best practice between Councils. Do we know what other Councils are doing.</p>	<p>an all Wales group. Rhondda Cynon Taf Council started their scheme earlier than others, which is up and running. Other Councils are the same as us now looking at their processes. Most authorities are looking at the occupied exemptions as the basis for their schemes. Some are looking at other property bands. After that they are looking at vulnerable groups so very similar approaches including supporting foodbanks. Powys is different in looking at developing energy efficiency responses as well and supporting those with mortgage difficulties through the housing side.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member indicated that it is important to look at what rest of Wales is doing and also have a flexible approach to build a Powys solution and the cost of living crisis. Discussions with groups such as foodbanks have been undertaken to see what they need other than blanket grants and that has been important in shaping this scheme. A home loss prevention scheme was also developed following discussions on the ground. This discretionary system has provided the flexibility for the Powys response.</p>
<p>Agree there is a need to reconsider the figures for off-grid. Foodbanks – general concern about putting money into reactive solutions rather than proactive measures, not maintaining the status quo and move people away from the need for foodbanks and provide support schemes for prevention. Where do we draw the line between foodbanks and food surplus projects as most communities in Powys has either of these. How can we consider food surplus projects within the figures. It would also be useful to evaluate the grants spent and their impact.</p>	<p>The 11 projects in the report are in relation to specific foodbanks. There are many food surplus groups / projects around the County. The difficulty is where you draw the line with the funding available. This can be considered after the main scheme has been implemented as there may be funding available from the main fund or the discretionary scheme which could be used in the second phase.</p>
<p>Communication – the offer is quite difficult to understand so there will be a need for clear communications to</p>	<p>There is much variety in the scheme to support vulnerabilities which does create complexity. Some of this will</p>

<p>residents and community groups. What is the capacity in the Communications team as there is much to be done.</p>	<p>be direct communication to individuals as we know their circumstances e.g. means tested data. For others we will need to let them know that these grants are available but it will not be the full range of items in the scheme.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member indicated that concern about communications had been picked up in the impact assessment and mitigation included but the mitigation involved full communication through partners and Council services.</p>
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County Councillor A Davies disclosed an interest and withdrew from the meeting. The Vice-Chair took the Chair.

<p>Energy efficiency scheme and the installation of photo-voltaic panels. Will this work for systems upgrades or is this purely for new systems – what does this cover.</p>	<p>We have not looked at the details of whether we are looking at upgrades or not as yet. Housing will have worked with home owners so we know the homes and the vulnerabilities. What is then planned is if we have done some insulation work and this does not reduce costs then we can look at these alternative solutions to supplement these reductions. The Council is limited in terms of funding. The Income and Awards Senior Manager can raise this with the Housing Team but the emphasis is looking at vulnerable residents first.</p>
<p>With regard to the Off-grid grants will all property bands be eligible or only those in main scheme.</p>	<p>Originally the proposal was that if you received a grant from main scheme, those residents would not be eligible for this grant as well. However, if they could not receive a payment under the main scheme they could receive a payment under the off-grid scheme. The Council would then look at the wider circumstances and see whether if someone qualified under the main scheme an additional grant could be made. As there is limited funding it was the intention to consider those not eligible for funding under the main scheme initially. It will be a decision for the Panel whether the grant is opened to everyone or focus only to</p>

	<p>those who have not had grant in first round.</p>
<p>How much thought has gone into the process for delivery. The Welsh Government indicated that payments had to be made by September which does not leave much time for spotting duplicates, how onerous will the application process will be, and how we will deliver this by September.</p>	<p>The main scheme has to be delivered by September. Once the main scheme ends we will know how much funding is left to go into the discretionary scheme. Welsh Government has moved the discretionary scheme end date but has not specified a date which allows more flexibility as we will not know how much money is left until end of September, which is helpful.</p> <p>The process itself is quite well structured. A comprehensive infrastructure is in place now. Work has been done to prepare and the scheme can be put in place fairly quickly. It is intended that the application process is as straightforward as possible as there is likely to be a high throughput to be dealt with.</p>
<p>Section 2.3 refers to supporting a fuel and transport initiative for rural communities. How would you determine a figure for this as fuel costs rarely comes down.</p>	<p>This is an indicative suggestion from Welsh Government as guidance as to what we might want to consider for inclusion in our discretionary scheme. Powys does not have a transport initiative or fuel scheme specifically in the discretionary scheme as there is only limited funding. This is something we could do rather than a requirement of the scheme. There is flexibility in the system such as the funding provided to services so if they identified a vulnerability for an individual needing support for example to travel to hospital then this could be supported from that funding.</p> <p>The Head of Finance commented that in relation to the end date Welsh Treasurers had lobbied to move the end date to 31st March which has been agreed by Welsh Government. Assurance was also provided that there was a robust process in place to reduce the risk of fraud.s</p>
<p>If there is a vulnerable person who does not have family support, could someone else nominate them for a</p>	<p>A person's eligibility is based on their entitlement to the grant so for example if there is a person in a</p>

<p>grant such as a county councillor.</p>	<p>councillor's area who is eligible and has not applied they should be encouraged to do so.</p> <p>With regard to eligibility under the discretionary scheme, the Council will be contacting those that we can directly.</p> <p>However if there is a resident who has not had a payment under any of the schemes Councillors can encourage them to apply.</p>
<p>If an individual could not apply themselves, could a councillor make the application for them or get someone from the Council to help them</p>	<p>There is a team of officers who deal with grants and can do this for individuals over the phone or by email. Individuals can also use customer services points in libraries. Individuals need to be provided with the phone number for the support team.</p>
<p>Stakeholders – have you spoken to community support groups who are very localised and are in close touch with older generations.</p>	<p>We did engage with PAVO who represents the third sector, and with statutory services and voluntary organisations. It will also be important for local members to feed information into the process about voluntary organisations in their area as well.</p>
<p>The report mentions that individuals in HMOs can apply as individuals. However, this is not mentioned in the Powys report. Do we not have many HMOs in Powys.</p>	<p>No we do not have many, but they were not included in the scheme following a conversation with the housing service to see if anything specific was required for HMOs. Housing felt that because they have regular contact with HMOs through the private sector team the funding to the service could support those that are vulnerable.</p>

Comments:

- The Cabinet Member asked the Committee whether the balance of funding in the report was appropriate, whether it was targeted appropriately and there were proper controls in place to make sure that it was successful.
- In a number of Members' areas there were a high percentage of properties which were off-grid. There is also a need to move away from fossil fuels and move to ground source and air source heating as well as photo-voltaic systems.
- Great deal of consideration in the report into areas of vulnerability and to split the funding between vulnerabilities.
- Need to take account that if people do not come forward for the grants that a substantial amount could be remaining which will need serious decisions as

to where that is utilised. Some individuals have had renewable systems installed which have had to be replaced.

- The delivery of the scheme will be monitored on an ongoing basis and funding adjusted between the various elements.
- It was suggested that the Cabinet consider ground source heat pumps as an alternative as although they are more expensive to install than air source heat pumps they last longer.
- There should be the latitude to move funding between pots rather than having to seek further approval.
- The underspend on the main scheme would be considered by the Panel, which will be established following Cabinet approval of the scheme.

Outcomes:

Scrutiny made the following observations:

<p>1. The Committee commented that the report was balanced in relation to the funding proposals;</p>
<p>2. The Committee suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) that in relation to the grant to residents who live in homes that have off-grid fuel supplies:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• that the estimate for the number of properties for this element was probably significantly underestimated as there were a large number of people in Powys who relied on off-grid fuel supplies.• that the Panel should consider not excluding those who are eligible for the grant from the main scheme as well.• that although a fuel and transport support was not included in the current proposal, that in further phases of the scheme consideration be given to assisting with the rural fuel crisis.(b) that food surplus projects could be considered for funding and welcomed the view that these might be considered in the second phase of the scheme.(c) that other sources of heating such as ground source heating be considered as part of the energy efficiency element of the scheme.(d) that for future consultations the Council should engage with local community support groups as well as representative bodies such as PAVO, and local Councillors.
<p>3. The Committee expressed concern regarding the emphasis on funding reactive services such as foodbanks as opposed to into more preventative services such as food surplus projects which could provide support to individuals by different means.</p>
<p>4. The Committee was assured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• that in relation to communications of the scheme there would be direct communication with individuals who the Council was aware would fall into the eligibility categories.• that Welsh Government had moved the end date for the delivery of the scheme to allow more flexibility for authorities;• that it was intended that the application process would be straightforward, and that support was available by means of the grants team or at customer service points at libraries, to assist individuals who had difficulty in applying;

5. In relation to energy efficiency schemes, the Committee noted that clarification would be sought with Housing Services in relation to photo-voltaic panels and whether these would work with either existing systems or with new systems only.

Scrutiny's Recommendation to Cabinet:

1. that for future phases of the schemes that consideration be given to providing support to food surplus projects and the rural fuel crisis
2. that the Panel be asked to consider not excluding those eligible for the off-grid fuel supply grid from the main scheme.
3. That other sources of heating such as ground source heating be considered within the energy efficient element of the scheme.
4. that for future engagement exercises that local Councillors and local community support groups be included.

6. WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Documents Considered:

- Recommendations of the Buying Homes Working Group held on 22-03-2022.

Issues Discussed:

- None

Outcomes:

- **The Committee accepted the recommendations of the Working Group for consideration by the Cabinet.**

7. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Documents Considered:

- Draft Forward Work Programme.

Issues Discussed:

- Work Programming sessions for the Committee to be established on a twice yearly basis.
- The pre-meeting on 21st July will need to be re-arranged.
- Shared Prosperity Funds – a paper will come to the Committee on 25th July.

Outcomes:

- **Noted.**

County Councillor A Davies (Chair)

Public Document Pack

Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee – 25-07-2022

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMY, RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BY TEAMS ON MONDAY, 25 JULY 2022

PRESENT: County Councillor A Davies (Chair)
County Councillors D Bebb, T Colbert, B Davies, I Harrison, A Jones, E A Jones,
K Lewis, G Mitchell, J Thorp and C Walsh

Cabinet Portfolio Holders In Attendance: County Councillors J Charlton (Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys), R Church (Cabinet Member for a Safer Powys), D Selby (Cabinet Member for a More Prosperous Powys) and D A Thomas (Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation)

Officers: Matt Perry (Head of Highways, Transport and Recycling), Clive Pinney (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Diane Reynolds (Head of Digital Services and Economy), Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services) and Rebecca Jeremy (Economic Strategy and Climate Lead)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors J Berriman (Cabinet Member for a Connected Powys) and S Davies (Cabinet Member for Future Generations – on other Council business).

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest by Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting

3. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS

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. SHARED PROSPERITY FUND: SUBMISSION OF A REGIONAL INVESTMENT PLAN FOR MID WALES

Documents Considered:

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

Issues Discussed:

- The funding for the fund stems from the UK Government. The Council has until the 1st August 2022 to submit its first investment plan. The overarching fund for Powys is £27.4m but the plan has to be submitted as a region with Ceredigion.
- The £27.4m is split over three years and there are three aspects for the fund to be considered namely communities and place, supported local businesses and people and skills (this has a separate fund identified as Multiply predominantly for an adult numeracy programme).

- The funding allocated to local authorities are predominantly revenue funding with a certain element set aside in each year for capital funding and in the first year that is a minimum of 10% increasing each year.
- The funding is split £2.7m for 2022-23, but as confirmation of the investment plan is not expected until the Autumn, there will only be a short timescale to allocate this funding. The Multiply element is £4.7m in total.
- The funding allocation has been set by UK Government in accordance with a funding methodology.
- The Council needs to ensure that for the funding each year, there are sufficient projects identified to spend the allocation in full each year. £40k has been received to develop capacity within the teams to develop the plans as a region.
- The Regional Plan will be very high level and strategic and will not identify individual projects. It has to identify which interventions the Council wishes to support and what difference in outcomes the plan intends to make. However, there is no need to identify how much will be spent across each individual project.
- A local partnership group needs to be established across Ceredigion and Powys. Ceredigion has been identified as the lead local authority and delivery agreements will need to be finalised, but Powys will have full control of how it allocates its share of the funding.
- The plan needs to identify why as a local area and region the interventions that have been selected will address local regional issues and the challenges and why we are choosing the investment opportunities. Key strategic documents have been used for this such as background for the Growth Deal, current well-being assessment reports and other local strategies and reports.
- From engagement session which were undertaken the Council has mapped which interventions are coming out as a priority which are listed in the report. Those identified do reflect and capture the need and allow the need across Powys to be addressed. Adjustments to the plan in terms of interventions selected is also possible at a later date.
- The split in funding has been set at 40% for communities and place, 40% to support local businesses and 20% for people and skills as well as the Multiply intervention. Ceredigion are considering a similar split for their allocation as well as there are predominantly the same challenges across the region.
- The Council is allowed to take a percentage of the fund (4% management fee) for administering the plan such as assessing projects and monitoring and evaluation.
- Matched funding is not required as part of the fund but where we have grant allocations the Council may determine that for certain areas there needs to be matched funding to add extra value to projects. We can also allocate grant funding which does not require matched funding.
- There has been engagement with Town and Community Councils who were asked if they had any ideas for projects.
- Questions:

Question	Response
In respect of the balance between revenue and capital expenditure, the	The UK Government has set out the rules for this process and we do not

concern is that community and place applications tend to generally be capital. Why is most of this revenue.	have any choice.
The prospectus does not give any indication of the split. Why did you only allocate 10% for capital as it states that this is the minimum figure. Is this discretionary. Include in the investment plan that this is discretionary.	The minimum is 10% and you can increase above the 10% which is discretionary. Advice from UK Government officials is that the plan is predominantly revenue based funding and this is the information they are providing to all local authorities.
What involvement does the UK Government have in where this funding is allocated. Have you involved the Powys MPs.	Yes we have engaged the two Powys MPs and their views are vital and will be taken into consideration. We will also continue to involve the MPs as the plan develops over the three years.
In terms of the 40% for community and place and the inclusion of flood defences which is important based on past events in the county. What percentage of the £8.9m is earmarked for flood defences.	We have not allocated anything as yet. Most flood defence schemes are capital schemes. The organisations involved would need to look at how they can use revenue funding for this such as for preparatory work. The capital schemes themselves are likely to be outside the scope of the fund. There will be different projects as to how we address flood defences such as technology solutions for example LORAWAN sensors to give early indication of where flooding might occur which could prompt different types of response.
In terms of energy efficiency, is this for domestic households or for businesses.	There is no restriction in the intervention wording so it would apply to either of these.
Powys has been allocated a higher core funding than Ceredigion. How was it allocated, by population / land mass.	It is a complicated methodology and there are links in the report to the funding allocation methodology in paragraph 2.6.
Is the list only Powys's priorities or does it cover Ceredigion's priorities as well. If not how does Ceredigion's list match up with Powys'.	The interventions for both councils exactly mirrored each other. Ceredigion have added two further interventions. Powys is considering whether to include these as well. We are keen to support regional projects working across both areas.
In respect of the Regional and Local delivery team, who will be on these teams.	These will be officer teams which are being established to deliver the funding.
In the prospectus it states that MPs will be represented in all phases of the plan including delivery. Why are they not	As this is UK Government funding we understand why there needs to be involvement of MPs outside of the

<p>involved in the regional teams.</p>	<p>Council. We will lead MPs through the process at the next stage as we will with others. It is a complex process and we need to work with MPs to make sure that they are supportive of what Powys is doing.</p>
<p>Why is Ceredigion the lead partner as Powys has double the funding.</p>	<p>This mirrors what was set up under the Mid Wales Growth Deal so saves time and expenditure for both organisations and uses the existing framework which is already in place.</p> <p>This also makes no difference to decision making for Powys schemes and Powys will continue to make its own choices.</p>
<p>Is the relationship between Powys and Ceredigion working well</p>	<p>Yes the relationship has already been established under the Growth Deal which is already a positive and progressive relationship and Shared prosperity is being built into that.</p>
<p>Who are expecting to apply for the funding, is it only or primarily local authority projects or are there opportunities for external bodies to bid for the funding.</p>	<p>The intention is to have as broad a range of applicants as possible. Some may be internal from the Council but these may be working with external bodies as well. Others will come from other sources such as private and third sector which will assist in getting the scheme approved.</p> <p>There are some interventions which would be better led by the Council and some better led by local communities and some might have a mixture of both. Interventions will be considered on a project by project basis as to the best option.</p>
<p>Will there be an adequate period of time given to outside bodies to apply as this has been rushed for some previous schemes.</p>	<p>Currently timescales are clear but some might be tight but we have to work within the timescales that we are given.</p> <p>The funding reflects the growth in ideas and schemes. In the investment plan we need to look at supporting feasibility projects in 2022-23 to support the delivery of projects in the next two years.</p>
<p>How will you make sure this is shared fairly between urban and rural areas as the needs are so different, and not dominated by urban areas.</p>	<p>Most of the schemes will be cross county and therefore cover both areas. There needs to be monitoring of the geographic spread of the grants to ensure that projects are not</p>

	concentrated in one area.
Are there any areas identified as priorities.	Geographically no. The interventions listed are the areas of concern and are specific to different issues rather than areas.
Are all Councils applying the 4% management fee or are others doing something different. Have we benchmarked to work out if the funding available is adequate.	The 4% management fee is the same fee across all local authorities and is the maximum that all Councils can charge against the fund. The amount is quite tight to manage a fund of this value and complexity. We do know what size of team we need to deliver this based on previous experience with other funds. Where we can work together to deliver this across the region with Ceredigion could be more efficient.
Has inflation been factored in this percentage. Also, the paragraph about matched funding needs to be clarified.	Inflation has not been built into the fund and this has been raised as a question by Welsh Government and the WLGA. Currently we have to account for pressures within the current funding available.
In respect of the three defined areas and allocations set at 40% and 20%, if one of these funding pots is not fully utilised can funding be vired to one of the other areas.	UK Government has given an early indication that up to 30% can be vired between the three different areas within a year between the 3 areas (excluding the multiplier) without needing to seek approval for a different investment plan.
Who is taking the decisions on the allocation of funds to the bids that are submitted, is that the Cabinet or a Committee	An internal officer group will initially review applications received. A Working Group with Members is to be established to review applications and recommend the funding allocation. Cabinet will approve the final allocation for some projects and the Working Group will have delegated authority to approve others.
In relation to those whose applications are unsuccessful will they receive feedback so they can improve their applications next time.	Yes.
How will applications be graded.	The team that we have has got experience of doing this from previous funding schemes that the Council has administered. The assessment criteria has not been finalised as yet. However, from experience we will learn from programmes that we have run before and select the most appropriate elements of those three assessment

	<p>criteria to assist the Council assess applications fairly. All the assessment criteria are focussed on what are the benefits in terms of outcomes for local communities and people.</p>
<p>Is the Welsh Parliament involved.</p>	<p>In the documentation received it states that UK Government has developed this funding in consultation and partnership with Welsh Government.</p>
<p>If we feel we should spend more on capital than revenue is there any scope to lobby Westminster MPs.</p>	<p>There is always scope for lobbying but whether we get an outcome is difficult to know. We need to understand that this is a revenue fund but where we might need to obtain more capital funding we could lobby for that for particular projects.</p>
<p>As this is a three year project are you anticipating there will be a fresh call for applications in one and two year's time or are the applications being sought for three year projects.</p>	<p>We anticipate there will be a call for a blend of applications which include an in year spend or applications which develop over a three year period. We expect first year applications to include research and development projects with subsequent bids for years two and three.</p> <p>We do envisage more bidding rounds in years two and three and possibly on more regular intervals during the year as well.</p>
<p>It was stated earlier that the Council has reached out to Community Councils for ideas. Has this been done or is it proposed.</p>	<p>This has happened. Information was sent out to all Town and Community Councils and a meeting with Town and Community Councils was also held recently where the Shared Prosperity Fund was discussed.</p>
<p>Can we view any information provided by Town and Community Councils.</p>	<p>We are not at that stage as yet. All Town and Community Councils had the opportunity to complete the external consultation. A webinar was undertaken since and this can be sent out to all Town and Community Councils to remind them of the information provided.</p> <p>This was about providing information about the fund and advising that the council would be approaching Town and Community Councils at a later date seeking ideas for projects.</p> <p><i>(NOTE: Following the meeting it was clarified that the webinar could not be circulated due to potential GDPR issues and the slides would be circulated instead)</i></p>
<p>For smaller Town and Community</p>	<p>There would not be any financial</p>

<p>Councils, who have part time staff, they do not have capacity to apply for funding. Is there support for them through Powys to apply for a more localised project.</p>	<p>support but that could be part of a bid to manage a project. Support from the Council would be available to them as it would for any applicant. In addition, Town and Community Councils could work together or with the third sector to prepare bids.</p>
<p>How are we publicising this fund across the county.</p>	<p>A webinar of external stakeholder consultation was undertaken. It will be important to do this at the next stage where expressions of interest are being sought and an engagement process will be developed at that stage.</p>
<p>There is a 30% virement possibility between elements of the fund. If there are more applications than funds available will you look at applications with the highest payback.</p>	<p>A funding window will be provided with a timeframe for applications. Applications are then assessed within the criteria as well as the funding pot to see if all the applications meeting the criteria can be funded.</p> <p>If the scheme is over-subscribed then some assessment scoring will be used. Often, schemes are undersubscribed so we undertake a second call for applications. If one intervention is over-bid we can look at those where there is under bidding and seek to vire funding between interventions. There is no opportunity with UK Government to ask for further funding.</p>

Outcomes:

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The Committee were in support of the proposal and the funding this would bring to Powys over a three year period.
- The Committee was assured that:
 - the interventions identified by both Powys and Ceredigion were identical so that there was a synergy to the approach across the Mid Wales region.
 - a similar funding allocation between the three investment priorities had been determined by both authorities.
 - the management fee which could be charged by all Councils was a maximum of 4% of the funding.
 - Town and Community Councils had already been advised of the funding proposal and asked to consider projects which could be submitted for funding.
 - local Members of Parliament had been engaged to seek their support to the Powys application.
 - the balance of funding between capital and revenue funding was determined by rules set by UK Government.

- the reason that Ceredigion was the lead authority was a matter of expediency and mirrored the arrangements for the Growing Mid Wales Project.
- applications for funding would come from a mixture of the Council as well as external sources.
- that it was possible to vire up to 30% of the overall funding between the three investment areas should this become necessary.
- that where groups were unsuccessful in their funding bids that they would be provided with feedback to assist them with future bid preparation.
- that it was anticipated that there would be a blend of applications received, some of which would be for an in year project and others for projects crossing over the three years.
- The Committee suggested that:
 - the plan be clarified to show that there was an element of discretion in terms of capital funding, following a clarification that there was discretion for the Council to allocate the sum for capital funding above the 10% minimum. The advice received by the Council from UK Government was that primarily the funding was for revenue rather than capital funding.
 - that paragraph 4.3 relating to matched funding be clarified as to whether matched funding was required or not.
 - the webinar of the meeting with Town and Community Councils be circulated to Town and Community Councils as a reminder about the proposed scheme.
- The Committee expressed concern regarding:
 - the current lack of detail of how the funding might be spent based on the list of interventions, but understood that this was a very early stage in the process and the detail would follow as applications were received.
 - potential timescales imposed by UK Government which could limit the time for those seeking to make applications to prepare their bids, especially from community groups or smaller Town and Community Councils who would require support to prepare bids.
 - the maximum management fee that can be claimed by Councils might prove insufficient to administer the scheme given the value and complexity of the scheme, although there were opportunities for joint working with Ceredigion County Council which might provide efficiencies in the costs of administering the scheme.

Scrutiny Recommendations to Cabinet:

- 1 that the proposal be clarified in relation to:**
 - (a) the discretion available to the Council relating to capital funding;**
 - (b) paragraph 4.3 in relation to matched funding.**
- 2 that the webinar of the meeting with Town and Community Councils be circulated to Town and Community Councils as a reminder.**

5. WORKING GROUPS

The Committee was requested to establish the following Working Groups:

County Farms Working Group:

The following Members expressed an interest in this Working Group:

County Councillors Adrian Jones, Arwel Jones, Gary Mitchell, Karl Lewis, Bryan Davies.

(Cllr Jonathan Wilkinson was nominated as a co-optee for this Working Group)

Phosphates Working Group:

The following Members expressed an interest in this Working Group:
County Councillors Jeremy Thorp, Tom Colbert, Angela Davies.

To make the work of this working group manageable there is a need to look at the impact on Powys as well as local housing development. A development control paper has been received by the Council from Welsh Government in relation to mitigation. The Working Group needs to prioritise the areas for consideration and draw together the evidence. Whilst there are elements of evidence available they are not coming together. The Working Group might wish to take evidence from others such as the Nutrient Management Group, the Brecon Beacons National Park, the Planning Service.

HOWPS Working Group:

The following Members expressed an interest in this Working Group:
Danny Bebb, Bryan Davies, Karl Lewis.

6.	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP - OBSERVER
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The Committee was requested to nominate one Member as an observer on the Local Development Plan Working Group.

RESOLVED that County Councillor C Walsh be appointed as the Committee's observer on the LDP Working Group.

7.	SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME
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The Committee noted the schedule of future meetings.

County Councillor A Davies (Chair)

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Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: ??

The Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee Working Group reviewing Council purchases of properties for housing met on 22-03-2022 and considered the following documents:

- Powerpoint presentation by the Head of Housing and Community Development and the Professional Lead – Housing.

The Working Group thank officers for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The Working Group commented that it would be helpful if:
 - local members advised the Housing Service when properties came on the market to assist in potential properties which might be purchased by the Council.
 - an overview of the new Housing Service teams, who is in those teams and what roles are undertaken could be circulated to Members and Heads of Service.
- The Working Group expressed concern:
 - that the Council could be in competition with housing associations for properties. Officers advised that the Council did consult regularly with housing associations but agreed to discuss this with them.
 - that electric car charging points had not been included in the revised WHQS requirements.
 - that in more affluent areas of the county with high property prices this would make it difficult for the Council to purchase properties, and there is also a shortage of single person homes in the county.
- The Working Group welcomed:
 - that the calculations relating to the sixty year pay back for properties purchased was reviewed annually.
 - the process for the selection and acquisition of properties which was being continually refined.
 - that of 39 properties purchased between 2018 and 2022 only two had been subsequently sold as they could not be brought up to the required standard. However they had been sold at a higher price than the purchase price.

Scrutiny's Recommendation to Cabinet	Accept (plus Action and timescale)	Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
1 That the omission of electric car charging points outside properties be			

<p>taken up with Welsh Government as part of the consultation response on revisions to the WHQS.</p>			
<p>2 That local Members be requested to provide the Housing Service with details of any properties coming onto the market in their area.</p>			
<p>3 That details of the new Housing Teams be circulated to Members.</p>			

In accordance with Rule 7.27.2 the Cabinet is asked to provide a written response to the scrutiny report, including an action plan where appropriate, as soon as possible or at the latest within 2 months of the date of the Cabinet meeting i.e. by XXX

Membership of the Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee Working Group on 22-03-2022:

County Councillors:

K. Curry (Lead Member), D Selby and J Charlton.



Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: ??

The Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee undertook a virtual scrutiny of the following documents:

- Annual Information Governance Report 2021-2022

Scrutiny made the following observations:

Section 3:

Clarification:

- Consideration be given to elements of the plan being grouped in terms of priority / significance to clarify that the most important actions have been completed or the inclusion of a statement such as "Of those not complete, none are considered to be creating a risk and a plan is in place for all to be treated taking account of the urgency of each one".
- The standard to which elements in the plan are completed and what this means for data security.
- Why the timescale for the 32 elements had been revised and when would they be completed.
- Why 2 elements were unlikely to be completed in the timescale, and 3 were out of the timescale.
- The total number of elements comes to 60 rather than 61.

Questions:

- Whether the number of reported incidents has increased due to better reporting or familiarisation with the policy to report data breaches.
- To complete the plan to timescale should the CIOG meet more often than every 6 weeks.
- Why were elements of the plan not completed.

Comment:

- Disappointed that as at 31-03-22 only 23 of 61 elements completed (38%)
- Reasonable progress against the plan and further time will see a further 52% achieved.
- Almost impossible to achieve 100% completion.

Section 4:

Clarification:

- The numbers of staff required to take annual training and the process for renewing training to ensure compliance.

Questions:

- What actions are being taken with those areas of the organisation with high levels of non compliance.
- Is there an understanding why staff and Members were not completing their training and what was being done to address this.
- Why is staff compliance rate decreasing.

Comment:

- Training needs to target the services where breaches are most prevalent.

Section 5:

Clarification:

- Understanding of incidents reported and determination of data breaches and the reporting process.
- Understanding of why we are having data breaches and are they significant or minor.

Questions:

- Is there any correlation between the data breaches and those who did not undertake the training.
- Is there a pattern of incidents.
- What action is being taken to address incidents and reduce the breaches.
- Why is the reason for incidents not known.
- Why has the number of incidents increased.

Comment:

- The rise in breaches is an issue as we have received comments and recommendations from the Information Commissioner's Office.

Section 6:

Clarification:

- How many FOI requests were rejected and how much resource is taken up responding to requests.

Questions:

- Has any research been done to find out how to reduce the number of requests received and if all information was readily available in the public area would this reduce requests.
- Is the delay in responding to requests due to officer workload or another factor.
- What is the impact of non compliance – increased inspection or cost of officer time, fines or poor reputation or lack of confidence in the Council.
- What action is taken if a service is late responding.
- Why is there a low compliance rate for SARs.
- What can be done to mitigate a 11% increase in SARs.

Comment:

- Reasonable compliance across most request types.

Section 11:

Clarification:

- Details of who is the Senior Information Risk Owner and where they sit in the staffing hierarchy.

- Why is electronic information stored in a hard copy.
- Could the FTE for staff be provided as difficult to assess whether staff are full or part time.

Questions:

- What penalties can be imposed on the Council if training requirements were not met.
- Is there a role for the Governance and Audit Committee in oversight of the governance of Information Management.

Section 12:

Clarification:

- An index of abbreviations / acronyms to assist the reader's understanding.

Questions:

- Have the main risks been identified and are measures in place to minimise those risks.
- Is there a need for more staff and resources for training.

Comment:

- Appreciate that in relation to organisational non-compliance 69% in April 2021 and 59% in March 2022 relates to Highways, Transport and recycling and Housing and Community Development where employees do not have laptops and further work is required.
- Progress is clearly being made.

Any Other Questions / comments:

- The numbers of breaches of compliance in Adults and Children's Services is of concern.

Scrutiny's Recommendation to Cabinet	Accept (plus Action and timescale)	Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
<p>1 That the Cabinet be requested to provide the scrutiny committee with:</p> <p>(i) a clarification of the points raised; and</p> <p>(ii) a response to questions and comments.</p>			

In accordance with Rule 7.27.2 the Cabinet is asked to provide a written response to the scrutiny report, including an action plan where appropriate, as soon as possible or at the latest within 2 months of the date of the Cabinet meeting i.e. by XXX

Membership of the Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 2022-23:

County Councillors:

A Davies, D Bebb, A Cartwright, T Colbert, B Davies, I Harrison, Adrian Jones, Arwel Jones, K Lewis, G Mitchell, J Brignell-Thorp, C Walsh, S Williams.



Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: 05-07-2022

The Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee met on 23-06-2022 and considered the following documents:

- Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme

The Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee thank the Portfolio Holders for a Fairer Powys and Finance and Transformation and officers for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- | |
|---|
| 1. The Committee commented that the report was balanced in relation to the funding proposals; |
| 2. The Committee suggested: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) that in relation to the grant to residents who live in homes that have off-grid fuel supplies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the estimate for the number of properties for this element was probably significantly underestimated as there were a large number of people in Powys who relied on off-grid fuel supplies. • that the Panel should consider not excluding those who are eligible for the grant from the main scheme as well. • that although a fuel and transport support was not included in the current proposal, that in further phases of the scheme consideration be given to assisting with the rural fuel crisis. (b) that food surplus projects could be considered for funding and welcomed the view that these might be considered in the second phase of the scheme. (c) that other sources of heating such as ground source heating be considered as part of the energy efficiency element of the scheme. (d) that for future consultations the Council should engage with local community support groups as well as representative bodies such as PAVO, and local Councillors. |
| 3. The Committee expressed concern regarding the emphasis on funding reactive services such as foodbanks as opposed to into more preventative services such as food surplus projects which could provide support to individuals by different means. |
| 4. The Committee was assured: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that in relation to communications of the scheme there would be direct communication with individuals who the Council was aware would fall into the eligibility categories. • that Welsh Government had moved the end date for the delivery of the scheme to allow more flexibility for authorities; |

- that it was intended that the application process would be straightforward, and that support was available by means of the grants team or at customer service points at libraries, to assist individuals who had difficulty in applying;

5. In relation to energy efficiency schemes, the Committee noted that clarification would be sought with Housing Services in relation to photo-voltaic panels and whether these would work with either existing systems or with new systems only.

Scrutiny's Recommendation to Cabinet	Accept (plus Action and timescale)	Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
1 that for future phases of the schemes that consideration be given to providing support to food surplus projects and the rural fuel crisis			<p>There are no future phases of the scheme only this one, therefore it cant be considered.</p> <p>Also as part of the current scheme, there is a community/agency grant element that such groups can be considered for. We have asked all Councillors to provide detail of any community groups in their area.</p>
2 that the Panel be asked to consider not excluding those eligible for the off-grid fuel supply grid from the main scheme.			<p>This was rejected as the cost of including all off grid homes would have exceeded our total discretionary budget on just this one element.</p>
3 That other sources of heating such as ground source heating be considered within the energy efficient element of the scheme.		<p>It was agreed that the Panel would look at the best form of energy efficiency elements to take forward with Officer input and recommendation which is being done.</p>	
4 that for future engagement exercises that local Councillors and local community support groups be included.	<p>This was agreed by Cllr Dorrance and will be considered in the future as Powys develops its contacts and networks better into the community via the development of the</p>		

	anti-poverty work for the Powys Council.		
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In accordance with Rule 7.27.2 the Cabinet is asked to provide a written response to the scrutiny report, including an action plan where appropriate, as soon as possible or at the latest within 2 months of the date of the Cabinet meeting i.e. by 05-09-2022

Membership of the Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 23-06-2022:

County Councillors:

A Davies, D Bebb, I Harrison, T Colbert, G Mitchell, K Lewis, S Williams, B Davies, A Jones, A Cartwright, J Thorp, A Jones.



Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: 26-07-2022

The Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee met on 25-07-2022 and considered the following documents:

- Shared Prosperity Fund: Submission of a Regional Investment Plan

The Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee thank the Cabinet Member for a More Prosperous Powys and officers for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The Committee were in support of the proposal and the funding this would bring to Powys over a three year period.
- The Committee was assured that:
 - the interventions identified by both Powys and Ceredigion were identical so that there was a synergy to the approach across the Mid Wales region.
 - a similar funding allocation between the three investment priorities had been determined by both authorities.
 - the management fee which could be charged by all Councils was a maximum of 4% of the funding.
 - Town and Community Councils had already been advised of the funding proposal and asked to consider projects which could be submitted for funding.
 - local Members of Parliament had been engaged to seek their support to the Powys application.
 - the balance of funding between capital and revenue funding was determined by rules set by UK Government.
 - the reason that Ceredigion was the lead authority was a matter of expediency and mirrored the arrangements for the Growing Mid Wales Project.
 - applications for funding would come from a mixture of the Council as well as external sources.
 - that it was possible to vire up to 30% of the overall funding between the three investment areas should this become necessary.
 - that where groups were unsuccessful in their funding bids that they would be provided with feedback to assist them with future bid preparation.
 - that it was anticipated that there would be a blend of applications received, some of which would be for an in year project and others for projects crossing over the three years.
- The Committee suggested that:
 - the plan be clarified to show that there was an element of discretion in terms of capital funding, following a clarification that there was discretion for the Council to allocate the sum for capital funding above the 10% minimum. The advice received by the Council from UK Government was that primarily the funding was for revenue rather than capital funding.

- that paragraph 4.3 relating to matched funding be clarified as to whether matched funding was required or not.
- the webinar of the meeting with Town and Community Councils be circulated to Town and Community Councils as a reminder about the proposed scheme.
- The Committee expressed concern regarding:
 - the current lack of detail of how the funding might be spent based on the list of interventions, but understood that this was a very early stage in the process and the detail would follow as applications were received.
 - potential timescales imposed by UK Government which could limit the time for those seeking to make applications to prepare their bids, especially from community groups or smaller Town and Community Councils who would require support to prepare bids.
 - the maximum management fee that can be claimed by Councils might prove insufficient to administer the scheme given the value and complexity of the scheme, although there were opportunities for joint working with Ceredigion County Council which might provide efficiencies in the costs of administering the scheme.

Scrutiny's Recommendation	Accept (plus Action and timescale)	Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
1 that the proposal be clarified in relation to: (a) the discretion available to the council relating to capital funding; (b) paragraph 4.3 in relation to matched funding.	Accept – Recommendations to cabinet 26 th July 2022		
2 that the webinar of the meeting with Town and community Council be circulated to Town and community Councils as a reminder.		The webinar was not recorded due to potential GDPR issues but the presentation slides will be circulated instead by 1 st August 2022.	

In accordance with Rule 7.27.2 the Cabinet is asked to provide a written response to the scrutiny report, including an action plan where appropriate, as soon as possible or at the latest within 2 months of the date of the Cabinet meeting i.e. by 26-09-2022

Membership of the Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 25-07-2022:

County Councillors:

Angela Davies, Danny Bebb, Tom Colbert, Bryan Davies, Ian Harrison, Adrian Jones, Arwel Jones, Karl Lewis, Gary Mitchell, Jeremy Thorp, Chris Walsh.

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