



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.	Accept – Webinar to be circulated 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.