



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
MERTHYR TUDFUL  
MERTHYR TYDFIL  
County Borough Council

## MINUTES OF MEETING

# **SCRUTINY : REGENERATION** **AND PUBLIC PROTECTION** **MEETING**

**TUESDAY, 14TH NOVEMBER, 2023**

**PRESENT:** Councillors L Davies (Chair)  
D Sammon (Vice-Chair)

Councillors C T Jones, J Thomas and A Williams-Price

**Other Councillors in Attendance:**  
Cabinet Member Councillor M Symonds

**Officers:**  
A Owen (Deputy Chief Executive), N Howells (Performance and Scrutiny), J Davies (Regeneration) and I Evans (Regeneration), E Galeozzie (Democratic Services Officer), M Phillips (Democratic Services Officer) and O Moore (Democratic Services Officer),

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
449	Apologies for Absence	Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Thomas.
450	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	No Declarations of Interest were received.

451	Long Term Plan for Towns	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive introduced the item to the committee and outlined the salient points within the report.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and responded to in detail by the officers in attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation was sought on whether the funding was dependant on the current Government still being in power after a Parliamentary Election in 2024</li> <li>• This was introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> October and the report was published on 6<sup>th</sup> November - Can you confirm how much officer time has been spent on this project so far</li> <li>• Three priority areas for the spending have been highlighted, how well do you feel they fit with the current priorities</li> <li>• Confirmation was sought on whether the funding had to be spent in the town centre as defined by the current boundary</li> <li>• If this funding is made available, could other funding streams that had been earmarked for the town centre be spent elsewhere in the County Borough</li> <li>• The report highlights the Town Board – is there any further information available in relation to the how recruitment and appointments will be carried out</li> <li>• Who will be responsible for evaluating the Town Board, this will be very difficult if Central Government and the Senedd are overseeing the project</li> <li>• There is mention of a UK Task Force and a Regional Partnership Board, can you confirm how you think this will work</li> <li>• Page 7, 4.2 states that ‘Once Board structure is in place, capacity funding will be made available for Spring 2024 for Boards to build their vision and priorities to write their Town Plan. However, until more detail is available nobody has any idea how to set up the Board</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity was sought on the where the current town centre boundary sits</li> <li>• Can the Board determine a new boundary or make changes to our existing boundary</li> <li>• The Report states that there is a vast number of representatives who can sit on this new Board, however until we have clarity about the number of seats on the Board no decisions can be made to move forward</li> <li>• When do we expect to get further guidance on setting up the Board</li> <li>• Have we requested further information in relation to setting up of the Board</li> <li>• Clarity was sought on whether a report would be put to Full Council and whether that would come once further guidance had been received</li> </ul> <p>It was confirmed by the Deputy Chief Executive that a briefing paper will be sent to all Councillors confirming to the current situation in relation to the Long Term Plan for Towns programme.</p> <p>The Chair stated that CRF and SPF funding have all been severely delayed and thought that it is unlikely that further guidance would be received before Christmas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report stipulates that the Town Board is run by a Businessperson or a Community Leader (which is not a Councillor) then Local Authorities to bring together local partners to form part of the Board. From our understanding it looks as though the Local Authority will not have a lot of say on how this funding will be spent</li> <li>• Clarity was sought on when the first payment is due to be made</li> <li>• Clarity was sought as to what the specific reasons for the delay in SPF funding were and how long was the delay</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With a one year delay in SPF funding do you think it is realistic to expect the first payment by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 with the possibility of a General Election</li><li>• With the 1<sup>st</sup> payment expected on 1<sup>st</sup> September, which is half way through the financial year. Would we be able to roll any remaining funds over into the new financial year</li><li>• Three other Local Authorities in Wales have been chosen, can you confirm if you have had any discussions with them and if so, what are their current concerns</li><li>• If this comes to fruition, surely officer involvement will be required with the Board so we will have to make a commitment to Officer time from within the Authority</li><li>• Can you confirm why Merthyr Tydfil was chosen</li><li>• Will the partners chosen to sit on the Board have to be based within the Town Centre</li><li>• There are three investment themes – will there be a set amount of money for each of these themes</li><li>• Clarity was sought on whether there are plans to hold Councillor Workshops in relation to the setup of the Board</li><li>• The report states that all funding must be spent within the defined Town Centre Boundary, however any improvements to the Transport within the town centre will surely benefit the whole authority</li><li>• Place making was mentioned, will this have any effect on that funding coming to us as a local authority</li></ul>
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452	Forward Work Programme 2023/24	<p>It was confirmed that a Councillor workshop will be organised in relation to public transport and the Hoovers Site due to their sensitive nature.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that a request had been made to remove the empty property report in January due to long term sickness within the Environment Health Department.</p> <p>Concerns were raised by the Committee as this is a vitally important report due to the current homelessness issue and the number of empty properties within the County Borough.</p> <p>The Chair requested an update from Council Tax as to whether any houses had been brought back into use since the introduction of the 100% increase in Council Tax had been imposed.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that this report should be brought back to the committee as the earliest opportunity, and it was requested that the Cabinet member provide all Councillors with an update in relation to the capacity within the Environmental Health Department as they stated they were unaware of the current situation.</p>
453	Scrutiny Referrals	<p>Cllr D Sammon raised of Fly Tipping / Littering that was raised at the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Meeting and confirmed that he would be emailing all Councillors in relation to the Task and Finish group that had been set up.</p> <p>The committee agreed that the current situation with Fly Tipping / Littering being split between two Directorates isn't working and it needs to be looked at. The Chair of Neighbourhood Services will be raising this with the Directors and a Joint Workshop will be set up between Neighbourhood Services and Regeneration Scrutiny.</p> <p>The committee raise the importance of being kept up to date in relation to the current public transport issue as they will be discussing budget setting in the near future and public transport may need to be factored into that process if things don't work out with the funding from Welsh Government.</p>
454	Report Recommendations	<p>The Chair and the Committee considered the recommendations in the report and agreed that they had been addressed.</p>

455	Feedback on Scrutiny Activities	The Chair raised the Task and Finish Group set up by Cllr D Sammon and the feedback report on South Wales Police HQ and Public Service Centre Site Visit.
455a	Feedback Report: South Wales Police HQ and Public Service Centre Site Visit	No questions were raised in relation to this item.
456	Any Other Business deemed urgent by the Chair	No other business was deemed urgent by the Chair, he thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.