

JOINT POLICY & RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 10 June 2021

PRESENT: Councillor A.G. Morgan (Chair)

Councillors:

S.M. Allen, K.V. Broom, D.M. Cundy, H.L. Davies, J.S. Edmunds, D.C. Evans, R.E. Evans, S.J.G. Gilasbey, J.K. Howell, G.H. John, B.W. Jones, C. Jones, H.I. Jones, K. Madge, S. Matthews, H.B. Shepardson and D.E. Williams

Also in attendance:

Councillor E. Dole, Leader of the Council
D.M. Jenkins, Executive Board Member for Resources

The following Officers were in attendance:

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services
J. Jones, Head of Regeneration
H. Pugh, Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance
G. Ayers, Corporate Policy and Partnership Manager
C. Jones, Principal Procurement Officer
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer
L. Jenkins, Executive Board Support Officer
M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer

Virtual Meeting: 2.30 pm - 4.25 pm

1. TO APPOINT A CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillor A.G. Morgan be appointed as Chair for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor W.R.A. Davies.

3. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
K. Broom	4 - Carmarthenshire Economic Recovery and Delivery Plan;	Has a business interest in Carmarthenshire;
E. Dole	4 - Carmarthenshire Economic Recovery and Delivery Plan;	Wife has two business interests;
A.G. Morgan	4 - Carmarthenshire Economic Recovery and Delivery Plan;	Is a tenant at Council offices, Delta Lakes, Llanelli.

4. CARMARTHENSHIRE ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DELIVERY PLAN

The Leader presented an update report on Carmarthenshire's Economic Recovery and Delivery Plan which identified some 30 actions to support the recovery of the Carmarthenshire economy from the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit. The report detailed the Council's priorities for supporting Business, People and Place. It was considered that this support would enable Carmarthenshire's economy to recover as quickly as possible to become one which was more productive than before, more equal, greener, healthier, and with more sustainable communities. The Plan's purpose was to set out the short-term priorities and immediate actions over the next two years that protected jobs and safeguarded businesses in Carmarthenshire.

Amongst the issues raised on the report were the following:

- It was emphasised that this was a County recovery plan rather than a growth plan with 3 town-centre recovery plans for the primary towns in place. The '10-towns' growth plans were also being finalised;
- It was considered that 'localism' was a crucial pillar which would underpin any recovery;
- Whilst the Council had limited powers to influence the level of business rates under a Welsh Government initiative currently in place until March 2022 landlords had to pay the business rate on any empty retail property which, it was hoped, would incentivise landlords to secure tenants for such properties;
- Monitoring reports would be presented to the Executive Board on a quarterly basis;
- In response to a concern over the need to speed-up the planning processes with regard to planning applications which could bring job opportunities the Leader commented that a review had been undertaken and proposals were being implemented to ensure the Authority's ambitions in regard to regeneration;
- A response was awaited from Westminster regarding Carmarthenshire's proposals in regard to the 'Levelling Up' fund;
- Reference was made to the '100% Sir Gar – Go for Local' scheme which had given smaller retailers a digital platform and also the rebranding of Carmarthenshire tourism which had seen a team of tourism and regeneration officers working with communities in the tourism hot-spots;
- Whilst it was noted that regional and local transport issues had been mandated to the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee it was considered essential that local representations and requirements were not overlooked;
- The Leader confirmed that the Aman Railway had been included in discussions on the regional metro;
- Arising from comments on the promotion of Carmarthenshire as a tourist destination the Leader stated that a meeting had been requested with Welsh Government to discuss the issue of second homes which was a concern;
- It was noted that the West Wales Energy Group was investigating issues relating to grid connectivity as poor connection hampered renewable energy creation and ambitions to become net zero;
- With regard to a concern that some of Carmarthenshire's beauty spots were

blighted by rubbish-strewn bottle banks the Committee was advised that plans were in hand to enable the door-step collection of glass for recycling.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the report.

5. ADVANCING PROGRESSIVE PROCUREMENT

The Executive Board Member for Resources presented a report detailing the Council's commitment to advancing progressive procurement. The review of progressive procurement opportunities had originally been planned under the Carmarthenshire public sector food procurement project, funded through the Welsh Government Foundational Economy Challenge fund. Whilst this was still supported the COVID-19 situation had, it was considered, provided greater focus and impetus and the opportunity had been taken to extend the original scope of the project from just food to cover all of the Council's procured spend. This work was very closely aligned with the Council's economic recovery plan with progressive procurement being a key theme of that plan.

Amongst the issues raised on the report were the following:

- As part of the proposals detailed in the report officers would be encouraged to 'think local first' for purchases/contracts of £25k or less;
- SMEs would be made aware of where the Council's spend was likely to be over the coming years so that they could be more prepared in terms of tendering. The Council also had a dedicated team to help and engage with SMEs on tendering processes;
- There would be an increased focus on local entrepreneurship and business start-ups;
- It was noted that larger contracts could be 'lotted' so that smaller local companies could bid for elements of the work;
- A Suppliers Guide had been produced for companies wishing to bid for work with the Council;
- In response to a comment it was recognised that in some areas there was a lack of start-up units available for new businesses and this would form part of the work of the recovery plan with funding available for property developers;
- Cognisance would be taken of the way in which the main contractor for the Pentre Awel scheme engaged with local companies;
- Companies in the Authority's Construction Framework for Pentre Awel would be expected to deliver community benefits such as apprenticeships.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the report.

CHAIR

DATE