

Meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3

16 July 2024

Recommendations / Information requested

	Recommendations / Information Requested:	Response:
<p>Valleys Regeneration Strategy</p>		
<p><u>Recommendations:</u> The Committee discussed in detail the current position of the drafting of a Regeneration Strategy for the Valleys, how progress was being made against the economic regeneration initiatives, the outcome of the public consultation process to inform the strategy and projects in the Valleys under the Corporate Plan Objective – a County Borough with thriving valleys communities.</p>		
1	<p>The public consultation to inform the strategy asked respondents to rate a list of elements within the Valleys area(s) from excellent to very poor, respondents were also given the opportunity to provide comments on other elements in the area, and the comments received were collated by theme in a table in the report. Members discussed various elements and the funding that would be needed to progress them in the future and going forward the Committee recommended that when looking at the Corporate Plan the elements identified to inform the Strategy be filtered into that process, and that their funding is considered when looking at the budget process.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>The plan will be presented to Corporate Management and Cabinet in advance of being approved.</p>
2	<p>Members expressed concern regarding managing expectations and the need to be mindful of not creating false hope within the Valleys, and balancing that with what the Council was able to deliver. Officers agreed it was a challenge, to manage what the Council could deliver on work on the strategy and elements that could be delivered in the Valleys. The Committee recommended that the draft strategy be reported to SOSC 3 for pre-decision scrutiny before it is reported to Cabinet later in the municipal year and that local members who do not sit on the Committee be invited to the meeting for that report.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>Will circulate the final version of the strategy to Scrutiny and Local Members before the document goes to Cabinet.</p>

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3	<p>The Committee reflected that the report received was the basic framework of what was to come and felt they had the opportunity to shape the Valley Regeneration Strategy going forward. The Committee recommended that the draft strategy should be meaningful and deliverable, taking into consideration that although it was one strategy there were three distinct valleys and the identities of each should be maintained and reflecting on experiences from other Regeneration strategies it was important going forward with the Valleys Regeneration Strategy to establish a simple road map that could be articulated, under which smaller improvements could be recognised and achieved, maintaining a little and often approach, balancing managing residents' expectations with delivering what is proposed in the Strategy.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>Will look to strengthen recognition of the three individual valleys in the final draft and recommendations from the strategy will be carried out as and when funding and resource becomes available.</p>
4	<p>Members discussed the role of the Consultants and the depth of questioning included in the consultation to inform the Strategy and the Committee recommended that consideration be given in future to whether information and data could be gathered in house, or by someone brought in to gather and maintain data/information, to enable if and when consultants are used the data to be looked at and insights drawn to help get a corporate understanding of the areas and better establish a baseline , as well as potentially getting better value for money from any use of consultants.</p>	<p>The Regeneration Department does not have the in-house resources to be able to meet this recommendation, however all data collected as part of the strategy development will sit with the authority and will therefore be available for use in the future.</p>
5	<p>The Committee recommended that the draft strategy should include graphics for the areas which Local Members could share in their Valleys communities which could assist with raising awareness of the draft strategy and could potentially increase the number of consultation responses.</p>	<p>We agree that local images and graphics are an excellent way of encouraging engagement with consultations and comms carried out by the authority. Local images were used in the social media and print marketing of the public consultation, and we will look to strengthen the final draft of the strategy with local images and graphics.</p>

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<u>Additional information requested:</u>		
6	Information regarding the Bus Network Grant (BNG), how the Grant was received, how the additional money was had been spent and how it was allocated. Officers advised in the meeting they would speak to the Public Transport Officer to gain the information for circulation to Members of the Committee.	We believe this information has now been shared as requested.
7	The Consultants used and the cost of the work. Officers advised in the meeting that they could provide this information for circulation to members of the Committee from the tender assessment.	Mott MacDonald Limited were contracted in line with the authority's Contract Procedure Regulations (CPR's) via Direct Award under the South East Wales Technical and Professional Services (SEWTAPS) Framework, Lot 10 - Master Planning and Urban Design, The cost of the contract is £63,000.