

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

**REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE
REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**SUBJECT: SPECIAL REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9TH JUNE, 2021**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. HILL (CHAIR)

Councillors G.A. Davies

M. Cook

M. Cross

P. Edwards

K. Hayden

S. Healy

W. Hodgins

J.C. Morgan

C. Meredith (*substituting for S. Healy*)

K. Rowson

B. Willis

**AND: Corporate Director Regeneration & Community
Services**

Head of Regeneration & Development

Service Manager Business & Regeneration

Team Manager, Connected Communities

Marketing & Communications Officer

Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u>	

	Apologies for absence were reported for Councillor L. Parsons and the Corporate Director of Social Services.	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declaration of interest was reported:</p> <p>Councillor G. Paulsen – Item No. 5 Community Renewal Fund (CRF)</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u></p> <p>The Committee AGREED that future meetings continue to be held at 10.00 a.m.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND (CRF)</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>The Team Leader Connected Communities presented the report which provided an update on the Community Renewal Fund and associated local project assessment process. The report also outlined the proposed project shortlist that would form the Blaenau Gwent CRF application to UK Government; and recommend that the Executive formally endorse BGCBC involvement in the Regional Employability Project Proposal (CELT). The reported also provided an update in respect of the UK Levelling Up Fund and the Council's submission preparation, and further details of this bid would be subject to a further report.</p>	

The Officer then went through the report and highlighted the key points contained therein.

A Member asked whether there would be opportunity to work with RSL's to potentially bring in investment for the Borough's housing estates.

The Officer explained that the timescale for submitting applications was challenging as they had to be submitted by 20th May, 2021. RSL's would have been provided the opportunity to put forward proposals but none were received.

In response to a further question raised by the Member, the Officer said the funding was available for pilot projects deliverable within 2021/22. The UK Government would then learn from these projects and test the different approaches on a 1 year basis.

Another Member asked whether it was possible to combine some of the projects listed in the report. The Officer said it would be up to individual partners to start those discussions, but unfortunately the tight timescales did not allow for that to happen. The Officer also confirmed that all projects were scored against the same criteria based on local strategic priorities.

A Member referred to the figure highlighted in section 2.18 of the report and asked how this would be allocated. He also referred to the CELT and enquired as to the functions of the group and the Council's representation.

He then referred to the fact that the successful projects would receive funding in two tranches, and asked there would be any funding implications for the Council in drawing down the second tranche of funding in the event of the project not delivering the anticipated outcomes.

In response the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services said the funding identified in section 2.18 of the report would be used to support development of the CRF. In relation to CELT he said this stemmed from work happening across the region and was established to

look at employability programmes. If the report was endorsed, the Council would sit on that group and ensure that discussions at a regional level are replicated locally.

The Team Leader Connected Communities confirmed that a plan would be put in place to safeguard the risk of non-delivery of a project to prevent recovery of any monies.

In response to a comment made by a Member regarding engagement with local businesses, the Officer pointed out that this was one of many funds administered by UK Government and WG over the last year in response to the Covid pandemic. She confirmed that Officers had continued to engage and support the business community, and whilst this activity had been held via Microsoft Teams due to Covid restrictions, she was confident that the support provided during the last year had been beneficial to local businesses.

A Member referred to section 5.2.3 of the report, namely staff resources, and the Corporate Director confirmed that a piece of work was being done to determine what resources were needed. He said when the initial stage was completed and targeted projects had been agreed, then discussions would take place with UK Government officials regarding the delivery arrangements for projects, and at this point the Council would have a clearer understanding of the scale of resources required.

A discussion ensued when a Member asked whether it was intended to seek Members views on projects, and the Corporate Director confirmed that when the CRF was set up, the next stage would be Member engagement around certain options for the Level Up Fund.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted, and supported Option 2, namely:-

- That the Scrutiny Committee recommend approval by the Executive Committee of the proposed project shortlist which would form the Blaenau Gwent CRF application to UK Government; and

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That the Scrutiny Committee recommend approval by the Executive, involvement in the Regional Employability Project Proposal (CELT). | |
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