

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **27th January 2022**

Report Subject: **Cardiff Capital Region City Deal
Performance Review 2020/21 Q2**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels -
Leader/Executive Member Corporate
Services**

Report Submitted by: **Michelle Morris, Managing Director**

Report Written by: **Ellie Fry, Head of Regeneration &
Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Regeneration Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
16.11.21	18.11.21				08.12.21		27.01.22	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform Council on the performance of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) against projects relating to investment in Blaenau Gwent during over the middle period of 2020/21.
- 1.2 This report summarises and highlights key programmes of work Blaenau Gwent (BG) are engaged in and are of interest to BG.

2. Background and Context

- 2.1 The report includes progress of the programme against key targets identified within the CCR Business Plan for 2020/2.
- 2.2 Highlights for BG include:
 - Metro Plus Programme - Transport for Wales (TfW) progress
 - Ultra Low Emission Transformation Fund
 - Housing Catalyst Fund
 - Challenge Fund Application
 - Aspire Roll Out
- 2.3 There are a number of projects that are now being progressed with CCR funding in Blaenau Gwent and these are outlined below with an update on the current position.

2.4 **Metro Plus Programme - Transport for Wales (TfW) progress**

Progress is continuing on the rail project components put forward as part of the Metro Plus scheme in BG on the Abertillery spur.

2.5 This local authority Metro Plus scheme is progressing as part of the wider programme of small, regional enabling infrastructure, to stimulate economic growth and regeneration across Cardiff City Region, supporting the sustainable mobility of people, and improving the way people make their economic contribution.

2.6 The GRIP 3 development and design work on the Abertillery line funded by CCR is being progressed by TfW and will continue through 21/22 and 22/23. The links and services to both Cardiff and Newport are still being tested in detail as part of the wider infrastructure and scheduling work.

2.7 Conversations with UK Govt Department for Transport are ongoing in terms of providing funds to bring the Abertillery spur back into use alongside the other work being done on the mainline. This opportunity might well have been missed if we hadn't had the CCR Metro money to develop the initial WeITAG work and designs in preparation.

2.8 **Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Transformation Fund**

The progress on the £1.3million from the Welsh Government Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Transformation Fund which will assist with the transition to Low Emission across the region is set out below.

2.9 As a reminder the two projects being funded across CCR are: the Taxi ULEV project and the Taxi ULEV charging infrastructure on taxi ranks for the sole purpose of charging taxis. The charge points have now been installed in the taxi ranks and we are just awaiting last checking for them to 'go live'.

2.10 The work programme is now focussing on the Depot charger installations and we will be installing a rapid charge point at the Depot for use by taxi operators. Charging times will be limited to those when taxi operators are on site for annual testing on Tuesday – Thursday at 11am or 1pm which the funders are happy to accept. We are currently awaiting a date for the site visit with the contractor to agree the optimum location for the charger taking into account the supply and parking/operational needs on site. The Head of Community Services will attend the site visit to ensure he is happy with the installation arrangements.

2.11 Charge point power connection timetable:

- Carmel Street – we are still waiting for WPD to confirm the date their works will commence.
- Ebbw Vale Taxi Rank – DNO works complete, meter will be installed on 23rd November, so the charge point should be live late November / early December
- Station Rd, Brynmawr – DNO works complete, we are waiting on a meter installation date

- Gwent Shopping Centre – DNO works due to commence on 11th November.
- 2.12 With regards to the EV Taxi provision for each local authority to encourage take up of electric taxis – BG has been assigned 2 electric taxis to enable the 30-day trials to go ahead once the EV charging infrastructure has been installed.
- 2.13 The BG EV taxi project has been out to tender for a management company to run the 30 day free trial test. BG Licensing is involved with CCR in this part of the project. The tender has been awarded to Day's Rental and they will be managing the vehicles with first 30 day vehicle loans being organised from the 1st December 2021. The website for booking was launched on 10th November for taxi drivers to book their trial. The email address is: <https://www.electrictaxiwales.co.uk>
- 2.14 The last area of work is the public EV charge point infrastructure. BG were part of the evaluation panel for the tender submission which has now appointed the successful contractor. They are currently in the process of signing contracts. We now have 12 sites identified for public EV charge points, including the car park on council owned land at the end of William Street, Cwm. We will be reviewing these initial suggestions as we progress with the project so that we try and spread provision in the areas where it is required.
- 2.15 **Housing Catalyst Fund**
The CCR Housing Viability Gap Fund second stage of the process has been ongoing since August. This is a targeted funding programme to bring forward new homes on key strategic housing sites across South East Wales.
- 2.16 The BG successful submission had a known viability gap and was ready to deliver, with the ability to progress the development within the timelines set out by CCR. The appraisal by CCR and CPRE has now agreed that there is a viability gap which requires a grant input to support the development to go ahead.
- 2.17 The next steps will be to work through the discharge of conditions over the next few weeks with an aim for the contract arrangements being agreed by the end of 2021. CBRE/CCR will make the recommendation to their Cabinet in late November for approval and issue the draft agreement. BG will review the agreement and put in place the grant agreement with the developer. Legal advisors are in place to action this work within the deadlines.
- 2.18 When the scheme is finalised and the planning has been issued the development will be subject to a further appraisal review. The scheme is also dependent on a successful land sale. The development is currently based on 77 homes which includes 10% affordable.

2.19 Subject to final approval/sign off the current indicative timeline is:

Action	Year
Secure Planning Permission	Q4 2022
Commence CCR Funded Infrastructure Work	Q1 2023
House construction works start	Q4 2023
First homes completed	Q2 2024

2.20 **Cardiff City Region Challenge Fund Application**

The funding for the Civic Crowdfunding project through the CCR Challenge Fund submissions was unsuccessful. BG was advised that it didn't fit the criteria for the CCR Challenge Fund although initially the Council was encouraged to submit it as a project. As a reminder this fund was asking us to explore creative and innovative solutions to local economic challenges; developing ideas/products that could be scaled up locally or nationally and build local wealth.

2.21 The CCR Team have advised that they will assist us in looking at other funds to bring this project forward, but this will result in a delay in implementation until we find another source.

2.22 **Aspire Roll-Out across the City Region**

CCR Investment panel received a proposal from Aspire BG to roll out the offer across the Region to provide support for Industries of the Future in 2020. Following a review of the existing apprenticeship landscape across SE Wales, specifically focussing on Shared Apprenticeship Programme aspect in relation to growing and priority sectors we have received a response from CCR.

2.23 *The CCR Investment panel approved the paper in October 2021 along with the sum of £500k for two years, this will need to be agreed by CCR Cabinet and they will meet on the 29th November. It is understood that this funding will be for a Shared Apprenticeship pilot delivery model and further research.*

2.24 The next stages of the pilot will be reported back once we have further information on process.

3. **Recommendations for Consideration**

3.1 That the content of the CCRCD report is noted.

Regeneration Scrutiny Committee approved the report at its meeting on 8th December, 2021.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 The CCRCD is a key strategic initiative for the Council, which will assist in delivering the Corporate Plan in terms of job creation, housing and improved transport connections in addition, alongside nine other Local Authorities we

are working to deliver a range of programmes to improve the connectivity, infrastructure and business governance of the region.

4.2 These projects support the amendments made to the Outcome Statements within the Corporate Plan in its review in October 2019.

Corporate Plan 2020/22 Outcome Statements:

- Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities
- Support a fairer sustainable economy and community
- To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities

5. **Implications**

5.1 There are no direct implications as part of this report as it is monitoring other projects that will or have been reported and have separately listed implications.

6. **Monitoring Arrangements**

6.1 Monitoring is undertaken through the CCR gateway review and project progress updates summarised in this report.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

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