

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

16TH FEBRUARY 2017

WELSH GOVERNMENT'S VIBRANT AND VIABLE PLACES REGENERATION FRAMEWORK: PROPOSALS FOR POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, REGENERATION AND PLANNING IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR R BEVAN

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report provides details of project proposals for potential funding opportunities for the Pontypridd settlement area and seeks approval for the submission of proposals to Welsh Government should further funds become available.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 The proposals for potential further funding opportunities are approved and submitted to Welsh Government should further funds become available.
- 2.2 The Director of Regeneration and Planning is authorised to make revisions to the proposals provided it does not fundamentally alter their composition or impact, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Tourism and Planning.

3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Should Welsh Government funding be made available in 2017/18 it will be important to be ready to build on the success of the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Welsh Government's Regeneration Framework Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP), was launched in March 2013 as a result of a review of approaches to regeneration in Wales.
- 4.2 Tackling Poverty is a priority for Welsh Government and the VVP framework supports this agenda, setting out its vision is that everyone in Wales should live in well connected vibrant, viable and sustainable communities with a strong local economy and good quality of life.
- 4.3 The main aims of the VVP investment are:
- To revitalise and promote the sustainable development of settlement areas, making the most of their green infrastructure, heritage and historic character;
 - To build sustainable and vibrant communities that are more prosperous, better educated and healthier
 - To tackle poverty by creating jobs, encouraging skills development and helping people into work;
 - To encourage wider investment in housing; and
 - To deliver strategic, regionally important projects of significant scale.
- 4.4 In July 2013, Cabinet approved that the settlement area of Pontypridd should be the focus of regeneration investment due to the role that the areas can fulfil in terms of economic growth and as a catalyst for future prosperity.
- 4.5 Welsh Government approval of £6.678million for the Pontypridd Settlement area for the period April 2014 to March 2017 has been received to date.
- 4.6 For the period April 2014 to March 2017, Welsh Government have been successful in obtaining extra funding for the VVP Programme to allocate to new and existing projects. In June 2015, a delegated decision approved that a proposed list of additional projects should be submitted to Welsh Government for consideration. The Council benefitted from this with a contribution of £500k for the Taff Vale site in February 2015 and £198k for Townscape Enhancement Programme+ in December 2016.

- 4.7 VVP is proving to be a highly successful regeneration programme for Pontypridd Town Centre and the wider settlement area. The programme includes a range of schemes that are delivering major regeneration benefits for Pontypridd.
- 4.8 The **Homes Above Retail Premises** (HARPs) scheme has delivered housing units in the previously untapped housing market in the town centre. The complementary **Townscape Enhancement Programme+** (TEP+) has continued to regenerate properties by working with owners and businesses to deliver high quality, viable and attractive business premises. HARPs and TEP+ have worked successfully together to provide excellent examples of mixed development schemes, resulting in a growing population of working residents living in the town centre.
- 4.9 VVP has also provided opportunities for major regeneration schemes to be delivered in the town. VVP has supported the Council to purchase the derelict **Taff Vale** site. Now an office led scheme of regional significance is progressing well and will create jobs in the heart of Pontypridd. **Pontypridd YMCA** is also being redeveloped into a state of the art multi-purpose facility within a prominent position in the main retail area of town.
- 4.10 The wider settlement area for Pontypridd has also directly benefitted from the programme. The **Homestep Plus** scheme is purchasing and refurbishing empty properties for resale helping first time buyers get onto the housing ladder and **Heat and Save** is tackling fuel poverty by introducing energy efficiency measures in homes throughout the settlement area.

5. VVP POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2017/18

- 5.1 Welsh Government have advised that there is likely to be a transitional year between the current VVP Programme which will end in March 2017 and a new Programme which is likely to commence in April 2018.
- 5.2 Although transitional funding arrangements are unknown at this stage, Welsh Government advised that it is likely that funding will be available during 2017/18 and local authorities will be required to submit bids for consideration.

6. THE OPPORTUNITY

- 6.1 Potential funding opportunities include some existing VVP schemes which require additional investment in order to achieve maximum

impact and new proposals that contribute to the aims and objectives of the VVP Programme.

- 6.2 Welsh Government have yet to confirm the process for transitional funding in 2017/18. Therefore, only outline information has been identified at this stage. Work will however continue to identify anticipated costs and delivery timescales for all proposals before potential submission to Welsh Government.
- 6.3 The potential funding opportunities link back to the themes of the VVP Programme for Pontypridd approved by Cabinet in November 2013. Proposals will need to be developed in sufficient time to take advantage of the potential funding opportunities that are expected to become available.

The themes previously agreed include: -

Sustainable and Inclusive Housing: Improvement and redevelopment of key buildings to provide residential accommodation such as Homes Above Retail Premises in the current VVP Programme.

Development of Employment Sites: Support major development opportunities in the town centre such as the Regeneration of Taff Vale.

Enterprising and Innovative Voluntary Sector: Supporting the development of facilities and maximising opportunities for effective collaboration that will improve the delivery of services and have an impact on the wider community.

Infrastructure and the Historic Environment: Economic Infrastructure improvements in the town centre such as the Link Bridge between the town centre and the park.

Growing and Developing Business: Supporting the development of key business premises in the town centre such as the Townscape Enhancement Programme in the current VVP Programme.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required at this time. Further information may be required during implementation.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 The approach has been approved by the officer VVP Programme Board.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

9.1 There are no direct capital or revenue implications on the Council. Additional funding to manage and administer projects is yet to be confirmed by Welsh Government.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 There are no legal implications or legislation to be considered.

11. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

11.1 The Vibrant and Viable Places Programme contributes to the Building a Strong Economy priority within the Corporate Plan.