



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Development & Regeneration**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 11 July 2023 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor C A Holley (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
D H Jenkins
J W Jones
M S Tribe

Councillor(s)

P R Hood-Williams
M H Jones
M W Locke
T M White

Councillor(s)

L James
S M Jones
W G Thomas

Other Attendee(s)

Cllr Robert Francis-
Davies
Lisa Mart

Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration, Events
and Tourism
Venue Director at Swansea Arena

Officer(s)

Phillip Holmes
Huw Mowbray

Head of Planning and City Regeneration
Development & Physical Regeneration Strategic
Manager

Lee Richards
Rachel Percival

City Centre Team Leader
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): P M Black

1 Confirmation of Convener

Councillor Chris Holley was confirmed as Convener of the Development and Regeneration Panel for 2023-24.

2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

There were no disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

3 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None.

4 Minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

5 Public Questions

The following questions were received from members of the public and Lee Richards responded.

QUESTION 1 - In the Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel on 20 March there was reference to a 'resounding positive response' at the consultation meetings. This fails to mention considerable opposition at meetings. Can this aspect have a mention?

RESPONSE - *“There is quite considerable support for the scheme and with all schemes, there will be some opposition. But mainly the opposition comments provided were ones of inquiry. This is information which is being provided to us obviously by Skyline as the Council aren't the developer here. Just reminding everybody that all we're doing is enabling and leasing the land to Skyline. So, the information that they've provided and this information forms part of their pack which is the pre application consultation. It supports their planning application, which lists all the questions that were raised during the meeting and the answers as part of the consultation event. A number of the questions were relating to things like what is the pricing that will apply to the scheme, to questions on access and ecology. So, they were the main questions that were coming forward from the various parties who attended the event.”*

QUESTION 2 - We were told at consultation that the annual pass mentioned for Swansea residents applies to the Gondola ride only (and this is what I have seen advertised). The prices for other 'attractions' had not yet been fixed. Can this be made clear at scrutiny level?

RESPONSE - *“A statement provided by Skyline reads - a pricing plan is currently being developed with the intention of ensuring that everyone will be able to enjoy various aspects of the attraction. Though currently being worked up and they're very much hope to be able to release and share it with everybody shortly.”*

QUESTION 3 - Press releases indicate that the Welsh Government have awarded £4 million rather than £3 million to the scheme.

RESPONSE *“It's actually £4 million and that has been published by Welsh Government it's £4 million of which £3 million is grant and £1 million is a loan”.*

6 Swansea Arena Update

Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Minister for Investment, Regeneration, Events and Tourism, officers and Lisa Mart from Swansea Arena attended to discuss the item, The following points were made –

- The Arena has performed better than anticipated and achieved 78.9% occupancy exceeding projection of 65% in the first year.
- There have been 241,000 tickets sold for events and 74 performances in year one which is in line or higher than other more established venues of a similar

size. Although this is less than the business plan, occupancy figures have been higher therefore revenue has averaged out.

- The venues flexibility and speed of changeover has been an asset.
- Positive feedback has been received specifically regarding music events, sound and back of house facilities.
- Challenges in the first year have included utility costs, small snagging issues, familiarisation with the technology/operation of the venue.
- Bar service and exiting the car park have both been improved after receiving feedback, but in general complaints have been low.
- The Arena works in cohesion and has a strong relationship with other local venues including the soon to open Albert Hall.
- Performing acts have provided positive feedback with some acts returning.
- Rent is paid to the Council in addition to a service charge for Copr Bay as well as a ticket share and profit from VIP lounges. This is before a profit share comes into play in due course.
- The Arena has played a key role in attracting other developers to Swansea.

7 Regeneration Programme / Project Monitoring Report

The latest report on regeneration programme / projects was presented to the Panel. Officers provided updates on the following:

Copr Bay:

- Progress is being made to finalise works.
- Painting of steelworks will be completed by the end of 2023.
- Commercial units are nearing completion. Interest in letting these has been high.

Shaping Swansea

- Urban Splash are progressing the masterplan in St Thomas.
- In the Hafod Urban Splash have appointed architects to look at the masterplan in partnership with Swansea Council.
- Bids for the Shared Prosperity Fund are awaiting outcomes shortly and the Design Commission for Wales have been engaged with.

Swansea Central North

- There is positive tenant engagement for the 350,000 ft of office space and stage 1 of designs completed.
- Progress is being made including meetings with funders.

71/72 The Kingsway

- Build has reached 4th floor level and on schedule.
- There is interest from potential occupiers.
- The nearby Barclays building is likely to be marketed to the private sector.
- This will complement the nearby Hacer biophilic development.
- Bike parking and electric bike charging is included in the build.
- Discussions are being held about a side entrance into Picton Arcade.

Castle Square

- Contract tenders are being analysed and work should start onsite early 2024.
- Funding has come from Swansea Council plus a Welsh Government Grant via Transforming Towns.

Skyline

- The Council are waiting the result of land registration and Skyline are preparing for the planning application.

Powerhouse Redevelopment Hafod Copperworks

- This is complete with formal opening imminent.

Palace Theatre

- This private sector development is progressing.

Levelling Up Fund – Lower Swansea Valley

- The recent Colliers report indicates Swansea has potential for in excess of 300 hotel rooms. There is also interest from hotel operators.
- Work on the laboratory building is estimated to start this summer.

8 Annual Review

The Panel noted the Annual Review documents.

9 Letters

The Chair informed the Panel of a proposed merger of the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Panel with the Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel. This will be proposed at the next Scrutiny Programme Committee on 18 July and if agreed this would be the last meeting of the Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel.

The meeting ended at 3.36 pm

Chair