



City and County of Swansea

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

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Monday, 14 September 2020 at 1.30 pm

Present: Councillor J W Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

P M Black
S J Gallagher
P R Hood-Williams
P K Jones

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
D W Helliwell
L James
T M White

Councillor(s)

S M Jones
C A Holley
M H Jones

Other Attendees

Robert Francis-Davies
Rob Stewart

Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism
Cabinet Member - Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)

Officer(s)

Emily-Jayne Davies
Phil Holmes
Liz Jordan
Huw Mowbray
Ben Smith

Scrutiny Officer
Head of Planning & City Regeneration
Scrutiny Officer
Property Development Manager
Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): P Downing, T J Hennegan and W G Thomas

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

No disclosures of interest were made.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

No declarations were made.

3 Minutes of previous meeting(s)

The Panel considered letters and minutes from previous meetings and agreed the minutes of the meeting on 27 January 2020 and 18 February 2020 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

No questions were submitted by members of the public.

5 Project Update Report

Huw Mowbray, Property Development Manager updated the Panel on the regeneration projects in Swansea. The Cabinet Member for Economy and Strategy (Leader), the Head of Planning and City Regeneration and the Chief Financial Officer also attended for this item and answered the Panel's questions.

Swansea Central Phase 1

- Panel received clarification that ATG tickets are selling well for concerts in other venues across the world.
- Cairns, the appointed hotel developer, are a major UK hotel developer and investor owning 40 significant hotels across UK
- Steelwork of arena and north side residential core and MSCP is complete. Panel requested sight of images.
- Panel queried if a visit could be arranged to arena site. Confirmed this can be arranged in due course.
- Cairns application for grant funding to Visit Wales is ongoing. Council hopes to meet with Cairns and WG next week to discuss. Under current regulations, Council cannot build hotel itself.
- Panel queried number and type of commercial units in area around arena.
- Full tender process was undertaken for hotel developer. Four to five competitive bids were received.
- Panel concerned if marina residents were consulted about siting of hotel development. Informed hotel site has been moved as a result of feedback from marina residents.
- Confirmed arena does not need to be finished before construction of hotel starts but it does need to be at a certain point, so hotel will start sometime next year.
- Panel queried effect of covid-19 pandemic on supply. Informed some issues with supply of concrete and working with concrete (due to social distancing), causing a 4 to 6 week delay. Overall has had a reasonably minimal effect.
- Panel queried the performance of the budgetary position of Phase 1 and were informed the spend was within limits.

Swansea Central North

- Panel queried if report coming to Cabinet later in year on the Civic Centre is linked to this. Received confirmation that it is. Timetable for moving out of Civic Centre is dependent on timetable for proposed office block.
- Proposed office block is part of phase two scheme. It would be partly occupied by the Council and partly by UK Government. Aim is to transfer quality jobs from London and other parts of UK to Swansea.
- There are currently options for funding – preferred option would be for developer to fund project, if not Council would. Amount of borrowing required is not yet known but the intention is that income will cover cost of borrowing.
- Number of government departments expressed interest in locating hubs in Swansea. This information will be provided to the Panel.

Kingsway – Infrastructure and Public Realm

- Green infrastructure is mainly planting and grassed areas. Council is encouraging developments there to have green walls. Also improvements to public realm
- Damage to green areas was mainly in early days of project. Contractor will have to make good any damage made to green areas and replace any dead trees under maintenance regime.
- Council will continue to submit bids for green infrastructure.
- Traffic – initial signs that system is working well and distributing traffic.
- Cabinet Member for Economy and Strategy confirmed we are not at point where can provide carless city centre. Council will continue to invest in electric charging strategy and progressing work on SW metro and encourage other forms of transport.

Kingsway – Strategy and Digital Village

- Panel queried need for additional office space given the present amount of vacant office space in Swansea and the effect coronavirus was having in respect of more home working.
- Panel queried occupancy rate for office building to make it viable to build. Informed pandemic has had effect on when tenants sign up but there is a lot of interest. There is ongoing discussion. Final report to Cabinet in October/November for decision on proceeding with build.
- It will be one of the few building in the UK which will be as pandemic proof as possible
- Currently in budget for the scheme with what is known at this point in time.

City Centre Marketing of Strategic Sites

- Launch went well. Lots of interest that will hopefully result in formal bids.
- Flood Consequence Assessments – Complying with NRW policies. Panel feels this long-term thinking is encouraging.
- Updating Parking Standards – this is looking at appropriate parking mechanisms for the City Centre and how it links to public transport to ensure it is fit for purpose. A transport plan will be needed in the future.
- There are seven sites currently in the procurement process. Looking for one partner or consortium of partners.

Strategic Sites and Project Overview

- Wind Street – there are several accommodations and Panel queried if disabled tenants had been consulted to ensure developments are compatible with their needs. Informed same process will take place as for Kingsway including consultancy with disability groups and Coastal Housing as landlord
- Hafod Copper Works – Building should be completed in 12 months and will probably be 18 months before it is open. Confirmation to be provided on number of jobs that will be created.
- Swansea Vale – Panel requested further information in terms of mitigation measures and what is involved in developing a wildlife management plan. Direct discussion to be held between Cllr Peter Jones and member of Project Development Manager's team.

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- Felindre – Panel disappointed still only one business operating from this site given the substantial investment. External company is currently being used to market the site. Marketing strategy needs to be reviewed. Panel to be kept up to date on marketing of this site.
- Number of sites important as historical sites, for example Castle Square and Hafod Copper Works. Panel would like to see plenty of interpretation boards on site for these schemes. Property Development Manager agreed to take this suggestion on board.
- Budget is showing as green for all schemes but they are currently in feasibility stage. The building of them is not funded at this point and will be a decision for Cabinet and Council in due course.

Actions:

- Images of arena, north side residential core and MSCP to be circulated to Panel
- Panel visit to arena site to be arranged, once possible dates provided and safe to do so.
- Information on government departments interested in locating hubs in Swansea and number of jobs that are to be transferred to Swansea to be provided to Panel.
- Detail on number of jobs to be created at distillery to be circulated to Panel
- Cllr Peter Jones to have direct discussion with member of Property Development Manager's team regarding Swansea Vale.

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm.