



Report of the Director of Place

Economy & Infrastructure STC
11 April 2024

Economy & Infrastructure Service Transformation Committee Annual Report 2023-2024

Purpose:	To summarise the progress made in relation to the work programme for 2023/2024.
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For Information	

1. Introduction.

1.1 This report sets out the progress made on the work programme during the 2023/2024 municipal year.

2. Work programme 2023/2024.

2.1 The STC met to discuss and endorse its workplan topics on 8th June 2023.

2.2 The Chair detailed the proposed topics for the Work Plan 2023-2024:

- Tawe Riverside Corridor Action Plan (to include improvements, grant opportunities and the potential for any transport opportunities, including the Metro River, taxis, etc).
- Swansea Bay Strategy Projects. (The Chair referred to convening a Workshop and suggested that this would take place at 4pm on a date to be confirmed to allow Officers/Members to attend).

- Destination Management Plan.
- Review of the Council's Housing Allocation Policy.
- Maintenance of Road Infrastructure.
- Local Economic Delivery Plan.
- More Homes Delivery Programme.

Resolved that: -

1. The topics listed above be endorsed.
2. The Work Plan be circulated to the Committee.

2.3 Thursday, 23 June 2023 at 2.00 pm

Local Economic Delivery Plan Strategic Framework.

The Economic Development Manager presented a 'for information' report which outlined the draft strategic framework for the new Local Economic Delivery Plan (LEDP) for Swansea.

She referred to the update provided to the former Economy & Infrastructure CDC on 26 January, 2023 and detailed the contents of the LEDP, the indicative timescales for completing the work and the evidence base for the development of the LEDP.

Members noted the strategic context, the three ambitions and the draft strategic framework.

The Chair thanked the Economic Development Manager for informative update.

Resolved that:

A further update report be submitted to the Committee on 2 November 2023.

Swansea Bay Status Strategy Report

The Head of Planning & City Regeneration provided an update on the workshop session held on 4th July 2023 which explored opportunities for development within five of the six Swansea Bay destinations.

He detailed the background and workshop outcomes.

Members discussed the outcomes, in particular focussing on St Helen's, Mumbles (Quarry Car Park and the Tennis Courts) and Langland.

The Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration, Events & Tourism referred to the lack of parking facilities in Mumbles and the facilities at Langland. He

agreed that the Committee include the Quarry Car Park and Mumbles Tennis Courts in their examination of the Swansea Bay Strategy.

Resolved that:

1. The Chair organise a site visit to Mumbles and Langland.
2. A second workshop be convened following the site visit to Mumbles and Langland.

2.4 Thursday, 21st September 2023 at 2.00 pm

Destination Management Plan 2023-2026.

The Tourism and Marketing Manager presented the Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2023-2026 for Swansea.

He defined the DMP and detailed:

- Visitor economy recovery in Swansea
- The three strategic pieces of research informing the DMP
- Strategic priorities and outcomes
- The bigger picture (including completed projects, development)
- Swansea visitor economy
- Hotel room occupancy figures
- Bedstock figures.
- Value of tourism.
- Visitor survey 2022 (key facts about our visitors)
- Tourism Trade Survey 2022 (key findings).
- Swansea City Centre Hotel Demand Study 2022 (key findings and recommendations).
- Destination marketing.
- Major events.
- Strategic fit.
- Governance and delivery.
- What success looks like.
- Looking forward to 2026.
- What are partners say.

The Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration, Events and Tourism, praised Officers (including Officers who were tasked with securing grant funding) for their work. He referred to the need for more hotels in Swansea and the potential to attract large conferences, the development of river taxis and the growing demand for air B&B's.

He referred to the huge capital programme within Swansea and opportunities this afforded.

Members discussed the report and asked questions of the Officer who responded accordingly.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration, Events and Tourism and Officers for their informative report.

Whilst the report was for information, the Committee wished to express their support for Destination Management Plan.

2.5 Thursday, 2nd November 2023 at 2.00 pm

Swansea Bay Strategy Projects.

The Head of Property Services assisted by the Project Manager, presented an update report on the workshop session held on 23 October, 2023, which explored opportunities for development of Langland Tennis Courts as part of the Swansea Bay Delivery Plan.

The Head of Property Services provided an overview of potential locations, identified under six destinations that were considered during the workshop sessions.

The suggestions captured at the Workshop on 4 July 2023 encompassed:

- Create a Destination Management Plan to complement the destinations.
- Promote All Year Tourism.
- Any development must include a travel plan.
- Make the most of the seafront - More Hotels, Commercial opportunity.
- Create an offer to benefit visitors and local communities.
- Create more café and toilet facilities along the coast and somewhere you can just a buy a bucket and spade along the way.
- Blackpill - Consider commercial opportunities on the promenade, improve the Lido, visitor centre.
- Langland – Commercial opportunities to include; serviced apartments, toilets, restaurant/s and boutique hotel/s to benefit and attract visitors.
- St Helen's - Slip Bridge – Elevated Café on the sand.
- Recreation Ground – Park & Ride, multi-level parking, High value apartments.
- The suggestions captured at the Workshop on 23 October 2023 encompassed:
 - Development opportunities for Langland Bay were explored. It was imperative that a viable development would present opportunities and benefits on balance for the community and public, whilst promoting commercial opportunities.
 - Refine the particulars for Langland marketed by B2P on behalf of Swansea Council during 2020.
 - Seek opportunities for the community and visitors as an affordable destination as a mixed-use development.

- Non-Residential Stay and dine location – Serviced Apartments, Hotel and Restaurant.
- Recreational activities.
- Retail
- New Public Conveniences and Change Facilities.
- Incorporate Planned and Preventative Maintenance (PPM).
- Beach Hut (daily/weekly hire).
- Low level development.
- Leasehold of 125yrs.
- Seek Capital and Revenue Offers from all interested parties with the intention of maximising financial return.
- Revenue linked to percentage of turnover with stepped increases after a defined period.
- Emphasis on cost savings and quantifying benefit.

The Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration, Events & Tourism referred to the other sites within the Swansea Bay area that would benefit from examination.

The Head of Property Services stated that the sites within the Swansea Bay area would require finance and resources, unless a third party were to come forward. Blackpill, in particular, was a site that may require the engagement of consultants.

A discussion ensued and Members asked questions of the Officers who responded accordingly.

The Chair thanked Officers for their informative report.

Resolved that:

- 1) A revised development brief be drafted in accordance with the findings of recent workshops.
- 2) The Committee support sponsoring the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration, Events & Tourism and Corporate Services & Performance to develop and agree a viable delivery plan for Llangland Bay Tennis Courts as a priority under the Swansea Bay Strategy.

2.6 Thursday, 14th December 2023 at 2.00 pm

Local Economic Delivery Plan

The Economic Development Manager presented the new Local Economic Delivery Plan (LEDP) for Swansea.

She referred to the update provided to the Economy & Infrastructure Service Transformation Committee on 20 July, 2023 and stated that the Plan had been

produced to set out the economic regeneration priorities and actions for Swansea. The Local Economic Delivery Plan complements the Regional Economic Delivery Plan, covering Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea and will guide the implementation of the Regional Economic Delivery Plan in a local context.

Members noted the strategic framework which sets out our local missions, strategic aims and objectives through to 2030 and the accompanying action plan.

The Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration, Events & Tourism referred to the work that had been undertaken in developing the Plan and thanked all involved.

The Chair thanked the Economic Development Manager for informative update.

Resolved that:

1) The progress in producing the Local Economic Development Plan be noted.

2.7 Thursday 18th January 2024 at 2.00pm

Maintenance of Road Infrastructure.

The Group Leader, Highways & Maintenance, presented a report which set out the functions, standards and operational activities of the Highways Maintenance Group in relation to its work on the maintenance of road infrastructure.

Members noted the highways carriageway asset, the Statutory requirements relating to the provision of the service, routine repairs, planned maintenance repairs, highway drainage, asset management, future challenges and opportunities and risks.

Committee questioning and discussions focussed on the following:

- Highways Works Forward Programme.
- Planned Maintenance Repairs (reactive and preventative, assessment approaches and scoring systems, materials for methods of repair, the PATCH programme and the different treatment programmes for each particular road).
- Highway Drainage.
- Maintenance of Footways/Footpaths.
- Welsh Government Grants and Council finance.
- Members Community Budgets.
- Joint working between Parks and Highways.
- Future challenges and new ways of working.

The Chair thanked the Group Leader, Highways & Maintenance, the Head of Highways & Transportation and the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure for their participation and attendance.

Resolved that:

1) The progress in relation to the maintenance of Road Infrastructure be noted.

2.8 Thursday, 29th February 2024 at 2.00 pm

More Homes Delivery Programme.

The Cabinet Member for Service Transformation introduced the More Homes Delivery Programme and stated that it was a key mechanism to deliver the corporate commitment to increase the amount of affordable housing in Swansea.

The Head of Housing & Public Protection assisted by the Senior Policy & Leasehold Officer reported that the first Housing Revenue Account Development Plan had been approved in February 2019, which set out a programme to develop over 140 new homes. In January 2020, the Council increased the goal and approved a 10-year ambition to deliver 1,000 additional Council homes from 2021-2031. The recommendations of the report also noted that any changes in the financial assumptions made at that time would result in an increase or decrease in the number of units that the Council could afford to deliver.

Housing demand had steadily increased since 2016 due to the impact of the pandemic and other external factors. As a result, the housing waiting list currently stood at 7948 households, 17% of which were homeless, 63% were waiting for re-housing and 20% were awaiting transfers. These were the highest numbers ever in Swansea and it is a situation replicated across Wales and nationally.

The More Homes Programme had delivered an additional 255 council homes via a mixed strategy of new build developments, acquisitions and conversions of existing properties.

All new council homes are built with energy efficiency as one of the main priorities. They have been built to a performance standard known as the “Swansea Standard”, meaning that they are very well insulated, and the energy required to heat them is very low compared to a traditional home. The addition of renewable technologies including solar panels, storage batteries and ground source heat pumps mean that Swansea Standard homes are designed as mini power stations, known as Homes as Power Stations (HAPS), and they produce a significant proportion of the energy that is required to heat the home and provide hot water. This results in very low energy bills for tenants.

The Council was working in partnership with the Welsh School of Architecture at Cardiff University to monitor the energy consumption, building performance,

and tenant experience of all the new build properties over a long-term period to understand the effectiveness and efficiency of the buildings. An interim findings report was due in the Summer.

The Swansea Standard complies with Welsh Government funding requirements for Social Housing Grant that are set out in Welsh Development Quality Requirements (WDQR21). This requires all new social housing construction standards to work towards net zero carbon, achieve an EPC rating A and not to install fossil fuel fired boilers to provide domestic hot water and heating. The guidance also stipulates the space standards and safety and security requirements that must be adhered to.

The More Homes Programme is funded via a mix of Welsh Government Grants and the HRA Capital Budget (via tenants' rents and HRA borrowing).

There are a number of additional Welsh Government funding streams which have contributed to the More Homes Delivery Programme including:

- Land and Building Development Fund.
- Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme.
- Innovative Housing Programme.
- Swansea Bay City Deal Homes as Power Stations (HAPS) Financial Incentive Fund.

Officers detailed the current schemes in development (i.e. at design or planning application stage). The longer-term pipeline of delivery was more difficult to predict given the increasing budgetary constraints/pressures faced by the HRA, as set out in the Budget report approved by Cabinet on 15th February 2024. Members noted that there are a number of HRA sites that are in the early stages of feasibility work including site surveys and concept plan development.

The main challenges for the delivery of the More Homes Programme included:

- HRA budget pressures.
- The need to increase the pace and scale of delivery to meet ever increasing demand for social housing against a challenging financial situation.
- A challenging portfolio of HRA owned land with high levels of site abnormalities, contributing to increased scheme costs.
- Delays in securing statutory planning and drainage/SAB approvals.

Members noted the actions underway to address the challenges which included:

- The introduction of a variety of delivery mechanisms, in addition to in-house delivery, to increase the pace and scale of delivery and provide additional capacity to internal teams including.
- Improving viability and cost information at an earlier stage for all schemes ensure that the most viable sites were selected for development, including undertaking a range of surveys on potential sites to determine ground conditions to assess impact on cost of development.

- Review of the Swansea Standard to undertake a value engineering exercise to find ways to reduce costs whilst maintaining quality.
- Maintain the budget for acquisitions over the next 3 years to ensure properties can continue to be rapidly added to the housing to assist in the response to increasing levels of homelessness and demand on temporary accommodation.
- Identify further opportunities for the Council to acquire s106 planning consent affordable housing units via private developments.

Officers advised that the More Homes Programme was included in the Directorate risk register, and Homelessness was recorded in the corporate risk register. Both were monitored on a regular basis.

Committee questioning and discussions focussed on the following:

- Use of community buildings (such as churches) and the challenges associated with re-modelling such buildings.
- Monitoring of Employers Agent.
- Multi-generational living and challenges associated with properties of this type.
- Finance and grant requirements.
- Issues associated with single occupancy in larger accommodation.
- Partnership working with RSL's in relation to the social housing grant.
- The 'Pattern Book'.
- Section 106 Agreements.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation, the Head of Housing & Public Protection and the Senior Policy & Leasehold Officer for their participation and attendance.

Resolved that:

- 1) The progress in relation to the More Homes Delivery Programme be noted.

3. Financial Implications.

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. Any subsequent implications would be set out in individual reports to Cabinet.

4. Legal Implications.

- 4.1 There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report. Any subsequent implications would be set out in individual reports to Cabinet.

5. Integrated Assessment Implications.

- 5.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

5.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

5.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

5.4 This is a for information report. As such an IIA screening is not required.

Background Papers: None
Appendices: None