

**Report of the Cabinet Member for Enterprise,
Development and Regeneration**

Cabinet – 15 October 2015

TALL BUILDINGS STRATEGY (REVISED DRAFT GUIDANCE)

Purpose:	To seek Cabinet agreement to undertake public consultation exercise on a draft revised draft Tall Buildings Strategy for Swansea.
Policy Framework:	Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework Review draft 2015.
Reason for Decision:	To allow City Centre (CC) regeneration to be progressed in line with the vision for Swansea City centre.
Consultation:	Planning, Highways, Legal, Finance and Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) Cabinet authorise that a public consultation exercise be undertaken and that the results of that public consultation exercise be reported back to Cabinet for final approval.
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In January 2015 Cabinet approved a draft Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework Review (SCC SFR), which sets out a new role for the City centre, and its potential for regeneration.
- 1.2 In order to implement the new vision and aspirations highlighted in the SCC SFR there is a need to revisit the extent of the areas where the development of tall buildings will be supported in principle.

2.0 Context

- 2.1 The draft Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework Review (2015) aims to define a new role for areas of the City centre, and encourage a greater diversity of mixed uses with opportunities for living, working and learning in areas like the Kingsway and Alexandra Road, and within high quality mixed use developments on the City Waterfront and St Davids.
- 2.2 Development schemes which incorporate tall buildings can provide the opportunity for landmark developments contributing significantly to the City's skyline, with exceptional sea views due to Swansea's seafront location. They can also capture the imagination and become associated with the City's image, consequently having a symbolic or iconic role. More significantly they can introduce intensive levels of activity which Swansea requires in order to become a more vibrant and viable destination. Whilst tall buildings can have a positive role in the City, they must relate to the context of the area, be well designed and sustainable and be close to supporting uses and infrastructure.
- 2.3 The City and County of Swansea's current Tall Buildings Strategy was prepared by Consultants White, Young and Green. Following a process of public consultation it was adopted as supplementary planning guidance to the Unitary Development Plan in October 2008. An updated and revised Tall Buildings Strategy will aim to provide greater opportunity for tall buildings to be developed in the City centre to align with the aspirations of the Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework Review.
- 2.4 The overall aims of the Tall Building Strategy is to do the following:
 - Respond to matters outlined above with regard to regeneration aspirations for the City centre
 - Provide clear guidance to developers
 - Provide a basis for consistency in the consideration of proposals
 - Take account of the National Guidance and examples of good practice in the production of strategic guidance
- 2.5 The Tall Buildings Strategy is applicable to the whole of the City and County of Swansea. The main thrust of the Strategy however focuses on the City centre where tall buildings are considered more physically and economically viable. It also considers other areas including Swansea University and the SA1 Waterfront development.

3.0 DRAFT REVISED STRATEGY

- 3.1 A copy of the draft revised Strategy is attached. As in the original 2008 version of this document, the analysis section sets out key factors such as the City's topography, landscape and seascape and the existing built form with updated plans and graphics. Reference is also made to key approaches and gateways to the City Centre. The updated policy section also sets out the key design principles that must be reflected in any development proposal and the Tall Buildings Zone plan identifies the locations where tall buildings will now be welcomed and considered. Design Commission for Wales has recently published guidance 'Designing for Tall buildings', and recommendations included in that guidance are incorporated within this draft revised Tall Buildings Strategy for Swansea.
- 3.2 The key change proposed to the Tall Buildings Strategy is the extension to the area where tall buildings will be 'considered', to include:
- The remainder of the retail core, including the Kingsway
 - Areas adjacent to the Railway Station including the Mariner Street/ Alexandra Road site
- As part of the revised Tall Buildings Strategy it is also proposed that the area where tall buildings will be 'welcomed' has also been extended to include areas of the City waterfront.
- 3.3 Subject to Cabinet approval, the aim is to seek public response to the draft revised Tall Buildings Strategy. Following the public consultation exercise, the responses will be analysed and a further report to Members will be prepared identifying any proposed amendments and seeking formal adoption as Council policy. It is anticipated that the revised Tall Building Strategy will be adopted as supplementary planning guidance to the prevailing development plan and will supersede the 2008 Tall Buildings Strategy.

4.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment Screening has been undertaken and concludes that a full EIA report is not required as there is generally a low equality impact and any accessibility issues would be addressed by separate (building) regulations. The Screening will be reviewed during the public consultation exercise, based on any relevant feedback received.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report, however when / if schemes are developed FPR7 reports will be required.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 None

Background Papers: Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework Review 2015 (draft), Tall Buildings Strategy 2008

Full report web link: <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/tallbuildingsstrategy>