



**To/
Councillor Rob Stewart
Cabinet Member for Economy and
Strategy**

*Please ask for:
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Overview & Scrutiny

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6th February 2019

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Strategy following the meeting of the Panel on 9th January 2019 with the Head of Planning and City Regeneration and various officers from the service. The meeting concerned the Dashboard Update and Planning and Student Accommodation.

Dear Councillor Stewart,

We are grateful to officers for attending the meeting on 9th January 2019. The Panel had in depth updates and asked questions which the officers responded to. Unfortunately the Cabinet Member for Delivery was unable to attend on the day.

We had the usual monitoring update in relation to the Dashboard Report and also received an overview of Planning and City Regeneration.

We are pleased by the progress and updates on these projects overall but do have some observations we would like to share with you.

Dashboard Update Report

Regarding Phase 1 of the City Centre, we heard how Cabinet had approved some early works and the intention is to have some local contractors involved in the City Centre development projects. We were told that the Arena and Hotel will be moved slightly to accommodate some issues around residents 'right to light' and these issues have now been resolved.

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We heard how work has restarted on the Kingsway with the North side of the road due for development next. It was explained that architects are working on the design of the new Digital Village and so far, there has been positive public feedback on the work which has already been completed. It is encouraging that public protection issues are in place as the Panel feel this is an important aspect of the developments.

The Swansea Central Phase 2 plans, which looks at the future of the City Centre with the mix of leisure and quality retail is starting to be considered. We will look forward to hearing how Phase 2 develops and what ideas are generated.

We did hear how Timescales and Resources are currently flagged as 'red' and this is down to some team vacancies within the service. We are keen to know if this has been resolved yet.

Relating to the Tawe River Corridor, it is reassuring that flood mitigation issues with Natural Resources Wales have been resolved, the Penderyn start date is imminent and that discussions with Skyline are ongoing.

The Panel were disappointed that the City Deal Business Case had still not been signed off but were informed that the Business Case would be signed off shortly. The Panel looks forward for confirmation of this.

Planning and Student Accommodation

We heard how the policy in relation to planning and student accommodation was drafted with significant public consultation. The student accommodation in Swansea has grown in recent years with both universities making a positive contribution to the economy.

We did have some queries in relation to the data which informed the demand for student accommodation but were told that the number of student developments in Swansea is actually fairly low.

We heard how Uplands and Castle wards have the highest level of demand in planning applications for student housing with St Thomas following. We are aware that on campus accommodation is usually quite expensive and only allowed for first year students so an increase in demand outside of campus housing is inevitable.

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It was explained that although there has been a growth in the number of planning applications made, any accommodation which is developed is encouraged to be appropriate and have sustainable resources - this is very positive.

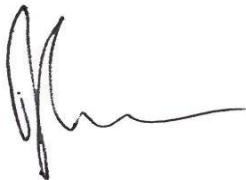
We had some discussion around students and the issue of car parking as certain areas are very congested during term time in particular. However it was explained that there is no way to restrict students bringing their cars when they come to University and that most purpose built student accommodation does not provide for car parking.

We also heard that there are plans on the Kingsway to have development above shops for non-student accommodation and we are supporting developers with this as part of Phase 2.

We would welcome your thoughts on any issue within this letter, but would request a written response to the following issue by 27th February 2019.

1. Timescales and Resources are currently flagged as 'red' is this down purely to some team vacancies within the service? What plans are in place to deal with this?

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Jeff Jones
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