



City and County of Swansea

**Minutes of the Economy & Infrastructure Policy
Development Committee**

Committee Room 5, Guildhall, Swansea

Thursday, 14 November 2019 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor V M Evans (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
J E Burtonshaw
W G Lewis

Councillor(s)
P Downing
P M Matthews

Councillor(s)
P R Hood-Williams
T M White

Officer(s)
Caritas Adere
Phil Holmes
Martin Nicholls
Paul Relf
Samantha Woon

Senior Lawyer
Head of Economic Regeneration and Planning
Director of Place
Economic Development & External Funding Manager
Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): P Lloyd

25 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

26 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Economy and Infrastructure Policy Development Committee held on 17 October, 2019, be approved as a correct record subject to the inclusion of apologies in respect of Councillor P R Hood-Williams.

27 High Street Empty Properties.

The Economic Development and External Funding Manager, accompanied by the Director of Place and Head of Planning and City Regeneration, provided a presentation on High Street Empty Properties.

The presentation detailed:

- How many properties are empty.
- What are the reasons?
- What resources are being used to mitigate?

- What is the future?

How many properties are empty (main street)

8 properties currently empty:

- 224: no plans apparent
- 202-204 Elysium: repairs undertaken when requested
- 205 Shoulder of Mutton: no plans apparent
- 225 no plans apparent
- 226 currently scaffolded
- 209 city bakery – empty
- 22-23 for sale
- 238 coral – empty

What are the reasons?

- Shifting in public shopping habits on line
- Change in 'axis of opportunity' in the City Centre
- Building ownership and motivation
- News headlines don't necessarily represent full picture
- Developments are usually commercially sensitive and require lengthy preparation

What resources are being used to mitigate?

Strategic Context:

- South West Wales Economic Regeneration Framework
- Swansea Central Area regeneration Framework
- South West Regional Plan for Regeneration (WG TRI Programme)

What resources are being used to mitigate?

Vibrant and Viable Places programme

- Property Enhancement and Homes Above Shops grant support
- Working with Coastal Housing on Urban Village
- National Station Improvement Programme

What resources are being used to mitigate?

Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme and Town Centre Loan Fund

- Property enhancement grants
- Sustainable living grants (market housing)
- 0% interest loan availability
- 2 PEDG grants awarded to date
- 1 SLG grant awarded to date

What resources are being used to mitigate?

European Regional Development Fund:

- Palace Theatre acquisition and renovation

What resources are being used to mitigate?

Private investment

- Mariner Street student accommodation
- Oldway House student accommodation
- Multiple developers match funding grant opportunities

On site or occupied

- 32-33 High Street Mackworth Court Coastal with TRI PEDG support
- 73 High Street with TRI SLG support
- 228 High Street Coastal?
- Shopping Arcade: mostly occupied
- 211, 214 and 216 redeveloped and occupied as part of Urban Village
- Palace – major catalyst for upper High Street

What is the future

- Early shoots Urban Village, Palace, Range of VVP and TRI investments
- Funding availability leads to incremental improvements
- Negotiation and partnership more effective than enforcement
- Efficient use of limited resources
- Student economy

In response to Members' questions, Officers stated that:

1. It is a condition of the grant that buildings have to be maintained. Enforcement was achieved through negotiation and this could be a challenge.
2. Partnership working with both public and private sector organisations raises awareness regarding the Council's ability to assist.
3. Negotiations were underway with the owners of the former Palace Theatre, however, it was an elongated process.
4. Whilst properties were recorded as 'empty', technically only 8 were officially empty. Factors such as ownership changes, awaiting demolition and refurbishment would result in them being included in this category.
5. Officers would be meeting colleagues from Community Safety in regard to the viability of utilising empty properties for the benefit of the homeless.
6. Liaising with developers was a challenge and must be linked to planning consent.
7. The Council was having a direct dialogue with Transport for Wales.
8. CCTV and enhanced lighting would be committed within the next 6 months.
9. Consultation will be undertaken with local residents.
10. It was agreed that maximising the High Street area to promote Swansea was of utmost importance.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their informative presentation.

Resolved that the report be noted.

28 Swansea Economy (Implications of Brexit).

The Economic Development and External Funding Manager, accompanied by the Director of Place and Head of Planning and City Regeneration provided a presentation on the implications of Brexit.

Whilst many scenarios were circulating there was a general lack of clarity. It was noted that projects/grants had been committed and would be honoured for 2022-23.

Minutes of the Economy & Infrastructure Policy Development Committee (14.11.2019)
Cont'd

The meeting **adjourned** at 2.50 due to a fire alarm.

The meeting **reconvened** at 3.05 but was inquorate and the remaining items were cancelled.

The meeting ended at 3.05 pm

Chair