

To:
Councillor Robert Francis-Davies
Cabinet Member for Investment,
Regeneration & Tourism

Please ask for:
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Overview & Scrutiny

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18 August 2021

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism following the meeting of the Panel on 1 July 2021. It covers the Project Update Report.

Dear Councillor Francis-Davies,

On the 1 July the Panel met to discuss the Project Update Report. The Panel are grateful for your attendance and input at this meeting. We also thank Phil Holmes, Head of Planning and City Regeneration, and Huw Mowbray, Development and Physical Regeneration Strategic Manager for their attendance and contributions.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion, share the views of the Panel, and, where necessary, raise any issues or recommendations for your consideration and response. Our discussions were centred around the following:

Copr Bay - Phase 1

It was reported to the Panel that there have been some minor delays in the progress of *Copr Bay – Phase 1*, although all is proceeding well taking account of delays in material supplies and labour as a result of lockdown impacts. It was pleasing to hear that the residential block is being fitted out and nearing completion. Officers explained about the aligned developments including the coastal parkland / landscaping which is progressing prior to greening and the additions of water features.

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We were interested to hear about the Bridge and the finishing touches being added to the floor and interior. Members queried whether visual handicap groups have been consulted and officers confirmed that consultations had taken place, the subsequent views having been taken account of in the design and installation.

Officers explained that the Council is exploring funding options to move the Hotel development forward. The Panel expressed some concerns over the delay in finalising the funding for the hotel development. Members also queried whether this would operate through a UK-based company and officers confirmed that the current preferred operator is a well-known Hotel brand with international links. Officers explained that the Hotel development would be constructed alongside the Arena, the site having been designed to provide works access when needed.

It was pleasing to hear that that leasing of units is progressing well. Officers explained that all units around the Arena are under offer and the Council is also close to finalising legal agreements for the Pavilion operator. Members questioned whether these would be local companies. Officers confirmed that all Council-let units would be local businesses, as the Council purposely did not target national operators, choosing to engage with local food / beverage operators on this particular opportunity.

Members queried the maintenance of the LED bulbs on the Arena and who will be responsible for maintenance. Officers confirmed this is outlined within the business plan and that the management responsibility for the external façade is the Council's.

Swansea Central North

We heard that the *Government Property Agency* is exploring locations for employment hubs, having identified a number of departments who may wish to occupy the site in Swansea. Members queried where exactly the hub would be located and officers explained this would be adjacent to the multi-storey car park opposite the Arena.

Panel Members queried whether the jobs would be newly created or relocated. Officers explained that some jobs may relocate from other areas of the locality, and some would be completely new. Officers suggested this would also benefit the City Centre by bringing a critical mass of employees and associated footfall into the City Centre.

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Wind Street

Officers explained that most of the street paving has been replaced or re-laid. We heard that new street furniture is to be installed shortly, and landscaping elements are progressing. Officers confirmed that the hospitably layout has now been planned, in terms of adjacent seating areas, as agreed between consultation groups, traders and the Council.

Panel Members discussed the use of information trails and QR codes throughout the area as a useful source of visitor information. Officers took these suggestions on board and agreed these ideas would be explored in the future.

Powerhouse & Outbuildings

The Panel heard that the Council has granted a two-week extension of time to the contractor, although an October completion date remains on course. Officers confirmed that a 'Project Bank Account' is now in place and that the issues of gas and water easements are now also being resolved.

Panel Members queried the anticipated timescale on the Penderyn Distillery fit out and whether or not the lease has been signed. Officers undertook to check on this point and revert with further information.

We noted that the Council has submitted an application to the UK Government's *levelling up fund*, which, if successful, would be allocated in part to help move this project forward.

Strategic Sites

We heard that the Council is hopeful progress will continue regarding the Skyline project, and positive communications are ongoing.

The Panel remarked on the long-term marketing of the Felindre site, querying whether this site is given substantial significance in the context of marketing objectives. Officers explained that speculative enquires are regularly made and that all due regard is given to the site where applicable.

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Tawe Riverside Corridor

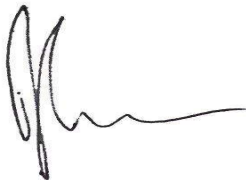
Officers informed us that the associated costs of the *Bascule Bridge* project have escalated and that discussions were ongoing. The Panel would be grateful for further information about these project specifics, in particular the costs and timescales.

Your Response

We are interested in any thoughts you may have on the contents of this letter. We would be grateful if you could please provide a written response to the following points by 9 September 2021:

1. Regarding the **Bascule Bridge**, please may we have a breakdown of information about the associated cost escalations.
2. Please confirm the status of the lease pertaining to the **Penderyn Distillery** site, and whether this has been agreed and signed in final form.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Jeff Jones
Convener, Development and Regeneration Performance Panel
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