



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 17 August 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
T J Hennegan
W G Lewis
G J Tanner

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
P K Jones
C E Lloyd
W G Thomas

Councillor(s)

D W Helliwell
H Lawson
S Pritchard

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas A Roberts

Councillor Co-opted Member(s)

S M Jones L R Jones J W Jones

Others Present:

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

Officer(s)

Steve Hopkins	Tourism and Marketing Manager
Clare James	Economic Development Manager
Frances Jenkins	Strategic Manager -Tourism, Marketing and Events
Kate Jones	Democratic Services Officer
Brij Madahar	Scrutiny Team Leader
Huw Mowbray	Development and Physical Regeneration Strategic Manager
Debbie Smith	Deputy Chief Legal Officer
Sue Woodward	Inward Investment Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): T M White

Councillor Co-opted Members: C A Holley and P R Hood-Williams

26 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interests were declared:

Councillor Wendy Fitzgerald – Minute No. 30 – owns a holiday let - Personal

Councillor Clive Lloyd – Minute Nos. 30, 31 & 32 – Councillor Clive Lloyd declared a personal and prejudicial interest and withdrew from the meeting for the items.

27 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips.

In accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, no declarations of Whipped Votes or Party Whips were declared.

28 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on the 13 July 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

29 Public Question Time.

There were no public questions.

30 Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities: Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism (Councillor Robert Francis-Davies).

The Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism and Officers were present for consideration of the report on Tourism and the report on Business & City Promotion.

Tourism

The Tourism and Marketing Manager provided a verbal address further to the written report circulated and specifically highlighting the following: -

- The value of tourism to the local economy
- The impact of Covid-19 on the tourism industry
- Strategic Priority 1: Review and Research – Maintaining information on visitors, identifying market trends and undertaking bed stock, occupancy and trade surveys
- Strategic Priority 2: Inform and Support – supporting businesses through the pandemic with grant and advice on legislation and guidance
- Strategic Priority 3: Remind and Return - Marketing campaigns had to centre around what was on offer once open
- Good engagement on social media
- The event sector had only recently re-opened and that was an important part of Swansea's offer
- Destination Management Plan
- Difficulties of different rules between England and Wales
- Interest from new businesses and operators
- Key focus on making the season last longer
- New marketing campaign for this year – 'Happy Place'
- Successful applications for funds from the Economic Recovery Fund
- Tourism Recovery Plan
- PR Coverage

Questions and Discussions focussed on the following: -

- The Tourism Recovery Plan
- Deadline and target audience when marketing Swansea as a tourist destination
Increase in staycations and benefits to Swansea
- Recommendations arising from the previous Tourism Scrutiny Working Group which were not accepted by Cabinet, and potential to revisit – particularly on the promotion of eco-tourism with environmental organisations
- Relationship with Gower Commoners Safety Action Group
- Promotion of the railway station at Gowerton especially from an eco-tourism perspective as well as the possibility of a bike hire at the station to promote access to Penclawdd / North Gower
- Virtual Tourism – Possibility of QR codes at destinations which could provide information / history for that destination
- Promotion / Marketing for the local market – ‘Door Step Detectives’
- Accessible maps of footpaths for people to enjoy a green holiday
- Importance of the look and feel of Swansea to tourists, e.g. cleanliness and necessary improvements to public toilets
- The Red Lady of Paviland and its significance to the area
- Celtic Wave Project – Swansea was identified as possible port – restrictions on size of vessels that can come into the port.
- Tourism Tax – idea mooted by the Welsh Government

Business & City Promotion

Questions and Discussions focussed on the following: -

- Accessibility of advice and support for businesses. Noted an increase in information on social media. Noted that the new Council website was due to launch tomorrow which would have relevant and improved information for businesses
- Progress of Parc Felindre site in attracting new businesses – told that the last 18 months had been difficult but the economy was improving as well as interest with 3 live discussions currently ongoing
- Effect of pandemic on the city centre and recovery plans – noted a ‘City Centre Repurposing Strategy’ report was scheduled to go to Cabinet in September
- The development of the Arena and regeneration agenda provided an improved view of Swansea
- Occupation of empty units in the Quadrant including Debenhams – work was ongoing with the owners of the Quadrant and new lettings were due to come on board
- All the Arena units were under offer with good quality local businesses and the Arena was expected to generate 200 plus events per year from around year 3 onwards
- Promotion of local food – Gower salt marsh lamb
- Importance of a mixed use city centre
- Student accommodation, the Kingsway development and increased footfall in the city centre

- Promotion of local food – e.g. on the back of recent protected status given to Gower Salt Marsh Lamb

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers.

Resolved that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Member, reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

31 Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Service Improvement & Finance (Councillor Chris Holley, Convener).

Councillor Jeff Jones presented the Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel Update Report, on behalf of the Convener.

Further to the written report provided, he specifically highlighted: -

- Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring 2020/21
- Loss of income resulting from the pandemic - £2.2 million had been met by the Welsh Government
- Swansea Council had high levels of borrowing
- General Fund Expenditure of £150 Million - some had been met by the Welsh Government
- £50 Million in Reserves – mainly grants and parallel funding
- Capital financing costs were down – mainly due to some projects not being progressed
- Council tax deficit of £2.5 Million which had been met by Welsh Government
- Corporate Complaints Annual Report
- Progress in meeting the Welsh Housing Quality Standard
- Performance in relation to Welsh Language Standards

The Chair thanked Councillor Jeff Jones for the update.

Resolved that the update be noted.

32 Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21.

The Chair presented the Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21.

Resolved that the Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 proceed to Council.

33 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

The Chair presented a report on the Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

Resolved that Councillor Joe Hale be added to the Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel.

34 Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Chair presented a report on the Scrutiny Work Programme.

He referred to the decision to wind down the ERW (Education Through Regional Working) regional consortium and establish a new South West Wales Education Partnership. A legal agreement between the 3 Councils involved in the new partnership will confirm the terms of the partnership and governance arrangements, including scrutiny arrangements.

The Committee noted a public request for scrutiny and were informed that the Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel would be looking at Planning Services at a Panel meeting in November.

The next Scrutiny Programme Committee was scheduled for 14th September 2021. The main items scheduled were discussions on the Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities listed below: -

1. Litter and Community Cleansing with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Enhancement & Infrastructure Management
2. Energy Policy (Incl. Generation, Supply & District Heating) with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Service Transformation

Resolved that the report be noted.

35 Scrutiny Letters.

The Chair presented a report on 'Scrutiny Letters' for information.

It included correspondence relating to the recent meeting of the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Working Group for Committee awareness.

Resolved that the scrutiny letters log be noted.

36 Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.

The dates and times of the upcoming Panel / Working Group meeting were noted.

The meeting ended at 5.55 pm

Chair