



**Report of the Leader and  
Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy**

**Scrutiny Programme Committee – 17 January 2023**

**Key Portfolio Headlines: Economy, Finance and Strategy**

<b>Purpose:</b>	This report seeks to outline notable activities and achievements in terms of ensuring the delivery of key priorities within the Economy, Finance and Strategy portfolio. This report focuses on three key areas of significance, being: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cost of living and budgetary impacts</li> <li>2. Regional work</li> <li>3. Progress on major projects</li> </ol>
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**1. Introduction**

**1.1** As Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy, key responsibilities covered within this portfolio include the following:

- Capital Programme
- City Centre Strategic Redevelopment
- City Deal
- Communications
- Community Leadership
- Constitutional Changes
- Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) – Chair
- Finance Strategy, Budget & Saving Delivery
- Financial Services

- Legal Services
- Local And Regional Investment Strategy
- Major Projects
- Planning Policy (Regional)
- Poverty Reduction Corporate Lead
- Public Service Board (PSB)
- Recovery Plan
- Regional Working Lead (All Bodies)
- Risk & Resilience Management
- Strategic Partnerships
- Swansea Bay City Region Joint Committee – Chair
- Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) – Deputy Leader
- WLGA Lead on Economy & Inward Investment, Europe & Energy
- WLGA Representative To LGA

**1.2** Owing to the breadth and scope of the Economy, Finance and Strategy portfolio, it is not the intention of this report to provide an update on all of the responsibilities within the portfolio, but rather to highlight key areas of national, regional and local significance. Progress on each of the constituent elements of the Leader’s portfolio are scheduled and reported through existing scrutiny arrangements throughout the municipal year.

## **2. COST OF LIVING CRISIS & BUDGETARY IMPACTS**

**2.1** The challenges experienced under the Cost-of-Living crisis, linked to this portfolio, are wide ranging and cross-cutting. Following on from the Covid-19 Pandemic and the Cost-of-Living crisis, many of our core functions had been overtaken by ‘new’ work on behalf of Welsh Government to pay out a variety of grants. Priority has been given to the grants, but performance against those core functions has suffered, for example we are taking longer to process benefit applications and the collection rate for Council Tax is the lowest it has ever been. We acknowledge it will take some time to recover from this position.

**2.2** Demand for hardship payments is increasing. We have obtained top up funding from Welsh Government via the Housing Department for 2022/23, however as costs rise, we need to choose whether to help less people and give them a little more financial help OR help as many people as we can but give them a little less help (on the basis that other grants/payments are also available). At this time, we will be taking the latter option and helping as many people as we can.

**2.3** In response to the continuing challenges, following on from the pandemic and now also arising from the Cost-of-Living crisis, there are a number of far-reaching achievements, as outlined below:

**2.3.1** Approximately £152,000,000 in grants and rates relief has been paid to Swansea businesses since the pandemic started, resulting in direct feedback from businesses informing us that this help kept them afloat during restrictions.

**2.3.2** *Winter fuel payment 2021/22* – 18,100 applications have been dealt with; 13,800 applications have been approved and £ 2,760,000 paid to Swansea citizens.

**2.3.3** *Self-Isolation Payments* - 16,000 applications have been dealt with; 11,000 applications have been approved and £6,509,500 paid to Swansea citizens.

**2.3.4** *Unpaid Carers Payment* – 4,560 applications dealt with, 3,449 approved and £1,724,500 paid to Swansea citizens.

**2.3.5** *Cost of Living Payment* – 110,000 payments made to Swansea citizens to a total value of £12,165,000 so far.

**2.3.6** *Fuel Payments 2022/23* – 25,700 applications received in three weeks with more coming in daily, 16,800 approved and £3,360,000 paid to Swansea citizens so far.

**2.4** As detailed in the report to Cabinet (July 2022) 'Revenue Outturn and Savings Tracker 2021/22', it was highlighted that a significant element of the Contingency fund (including the previous year unused element) was potentially required, along with other reserves, as emergency funding to mitigate the un-forecastable impact of Covid-19 costs in year. As the year progressed and Welsh Government support both increased, and became clearer, the level of emergency funding likely to be required to mitigate any unfunded Covid-19 costs reduced. The third quarter overall position, based on known Welsh Government funding at that time was forecasting a net underspend in the region of £12m. The further improvement during the last quarter to out-turn is largely as a result of ongoing action taken in the third and fourth quarter by all Services to contain or reduce potential spending and significant additional late Welsh Government funding including additional Revenue Support Grant, compensation for Council Tax collection reductions, Cost of Living Support scheme and Social Services regional funding in addition to further funding for both additional costs and assumed loss of income with regard to Covid-19 in 2021-22.

**2.5** Administration Grants – throughout the year the Council administered tens of millions of pounds of Covid and other support grants on behalf of Welsh Government, albeit on a smaller scale than the preceding year. Each grant came with a variable value administration fee to recompense for the work undertaken. The majority of the work was achieved by reprioritising other work and not recruiting to temporary short-term posts or by utilising software and other automated solutions which saw some modest overspending elsewhere (but substantially less than the income received). With the cessation of the bulk of covid grant support schemes

this scale of windfall will not continue into 2022-23, although an administration fee is currently due on the Council administering of the £14m Council Tax rebate scheme on behalf of Welsh Government so a modest underspend can be expected once again from this source in 2022-23.

**2.6** Grant claims to Welsh Government in relation to TTP/WVCS (Welsh Vaccination Certification Service) costs are ongoing currently but are expected to cease later in the year when the service is scaled back considerably with a new set up in conjunction with public health. As such it is expected that there will be total costs in the region of £3.9m arising.

**2.7** In addition to the specific additional service costs regarding Free School Meals in relation to Covid-19 the authority has once again continued to act as an “Agent” on behalf of the Welsh Government in relation to Self-Isolation payments, Statutory Sick Pay and Cost of Living national scheme. All of these costs are anticipated to be funded 100% by the Welsh Government and as such costs incurred and grants received will be reported later in the year once the most recent announcements/schemes have been implemented.

**2.8** The Corporate Management Team has re-enforced the current arrangements for budget monitoring in particular:

**2.8.1** focus on a range of corrective actions, particularly for services overspent even before allowing for the unfunded pay award;

**2.8.2** targeted immediate spend minimisation and deferral action;

**2.8.3** spending control on all vacancies and contracts;

**2.8.4** a continued reminder that no Responsible Officer is authorised to overspend their budget in line with Financial Procedure Rules;

**2.8.5** and consequently that Directors must work closely with Cabinet Members and the Corporate Management Team to contain, reduce, defer and delay spending as far as possible, having due regard, to existing agreed budget and political priorities to nonetheless seek to limit service spending especially given the substantially higher than expected national pay awards;

**2.8.6** but recognising that the overall spend pressures are near wholly Covid or pay award related and that reserves were bolstered to temporarily assist with such pressures in the short term.

**2.9** Offsetting opportunities do exist to temporarily ameliorate the currently identified service demand and price pressures as follows.

- 2.9.1** £1m was set aside in the budget for the potential costs relating to the impact of the Apprenticeship Levy. The final costs relating to this levy will only be known once final employee related costs are calculated at the year-end. Should the full allocation not be required then any saving will be proposed to be used to mitigate service pressures at year end.
- 2.9.2** £3.13m was set aside to meet any specific and significant inflationary increases arising in year. Given the overall financial projection at this stage, it is proposed by the S151 officer that this be earmarked as a compensating funding mechanism for likely higher than expected pay awards.
- 2.9.3** Use of the Contingency Fund as detailed below.
- 2.10** The current indication is that, for 2022/23, there needs to be continued targeted mitigating action and delivery of savings proposals to help reduce the overall overspend. It looks inevitable at this stage that major draws from contingency and earmarked reserves will be needed to achieve a fully balanced budget for the year but this was somewhat anticipated and led to the material bolstering of earmarked reserves at outturn. Any inroads to net spending will reduce the necessary draw from reserves and increase the amount of reserves available to carry into 2023/24.
- 2.11** The action being taken includes working through existing plans on an accelerated delivery basis:
  - 2.11.1** Management and Business Support Review: ongoing review of the management structure across the Council and future requirements given the Council's priorities, future challenges and the changing nature of the role of managers.
  - 2.11.2** Managing the Pay Bill: review of options to contain or reduce employee costs across the Council as part of our overall future workforce strategy (subject to trade union consultation at the appropriate time).
  - 2.11.3** Commercialism through third party Procurement Savings and Income Generation: review of further options to increase income from fees and charges, trading etc, in addition to the targets already set.
  - 2.11.4** Progressing implementation of residual phases Commissioning Reviews and Cross Cutting Themes.
  - 2.11.5** Further implementation of the Social Services Saving Plan through which we have identified mechanisms for bringing down overall costs.

**2.11.6** On the basis that these are existing agreed actions fully set out in the agreed budget set by Council in March, whilst wholly recognising the ability to progress any of the above have been seriously impacted by Covid 19.

**2.11.7** Continuing the extant spending restrictions which have been agreed as necessary by Corporate Management Team.

**2.11.8** The Interim Director of Corporate Services leading the Recovery Plan implementation as agreed by Cabinet to agree alternative mitigating actions and future steps, taking into account post Covid-19 and Brexit.

**2.12** We now have the provisional settlement for 2023-24 and work is underway to finalise the budget for 2023-24 in March 2023. Clearly, the significant increase in funding and front loading (settlement up from 3.5% to 7.6%) will provide significant flexibility to our budget options for 2023-24. The settlement for 2024-25 is also likely to be slightly higher but the longer-term outlook remains challenging. In all years, including 2023-24, the settlement in cash terms whilst welcome remains undoubtedly below inflation and amounts to ongoing real terms cuts to spending power.

## **RECOVERY PLAN**

**2.13** On 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020, Cabinet approved the new 'From Recovery to Transformation' report detailing the 3 Phases from recovery through to the 'Swansea – Achieving Better Together, Transformation Strategy & Programme Framework 2022 – 2026'.

**2.14** As the Council moves on from Phase 1, 'Re-mobilise', and through Phase 2, 'Refocus', the information herewith highlights the current position of the programme.

**2.15** Phase 2, 'Refocus', supported the Council to deliver its ongoing corporate priorities and plans, whilst adapting to address the impacts coming out of the COVID crisis. The delivery was through a formal process within the following work streams;

- Care Services
- Education and Learning
- Future Workforce and Equalities
- Community Support
- Economy and Environment

**2.16** Refocussing the Council set about creating the foundations to support the longer-term culture change required to reshape the Council, encouraging employees to adopt behaviours and mind-sets that are required to support a sustainable, efficient, and effective future Swansea Council. Examples include:

- A renewed Agile Policy (including staff wellbeing)
- Development of a Coaching Network (including learning & development opportunities)
- Relaunch & re branding of the Leadership hub (Let's Talk)
- Relaunch of the Ideas Hub
- Involvement Workshops
- A flexible working project enabling staff to work from any location, including from home, and exploring hours of work
- Various Network Groups established e.g., Diverse Staff Support Group and a Cross Council Community Response Group
- Staff Story Book launch

**2.17** The next phase of transformation for Swansea Council is looking beyond 2022, it is taking account of the priorities of the new Council, a new Chief Executive and a new corporate plan for the Council.

### **3 REGIONAL WORK**

#### **Swansea Bay City Deal**

**3.1** The Swansea Bay City Deal is an investment of up to £1.3 billion in a portfolio of nine major programmes and projects across the Swansea Bay City region. Of the total £1.3bn funding, £235.7m is from the City Deal, £380.67 is from the public sector and £625.04 from the private sector. The City Deal is expected to give a regional economic boost of at least £1.8bn as well as create over 9,000 jobs.

**3.2** The City Deal will improve people's lives in all parts of South West Wales, both urban and rural, by raising aspirations, improving services, boosting skills, and creating well-paid employment opportunities.

**3.3** Set to align with three core themes – economic acceleration, energy and smart manufacturing, and life science and wellbeing - the Swansea Bay City Deal has already seen significant progress through several of its projects. The opening of Yr Egin, a creative sector hub led by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David in Carmarthen; the Swansea City Centre developments through the opening of Swansea Arena; and the construction of the Bay Technology Centre in Port Talbot. These developments are starting to create long-lasting partnerships with key companies such as S4C in Yr Egin and the Ambassador Theatre Group who run Swansea Arena.

**3.4** The Swansea Bay City Deal is being led by the four regional local authorities, together with the Swansea Bay and Hywel Dda University Health Boards, Swansea University, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, and private sector partners. All nine programme and project business cases are now approved and moving through the delivery phase. These are outlined as follows:

- 3.4.1** The *Skills and Talent* project aims to deliver a regional solution for the identification and delivery of the skills and training requirements for all City Deal projects. Working alongside partners from the private sector, higher and further education, schools and the third sector; establishing the skills and training needed for students, teachers, and lecturers both now and in future.
- 3.4.2** The £55 million *Digital Infrastructure* programme will benefit residents and businesses in all parts of the Swansea Bay City Region. The programme is estimated to be worth £318 million to the regional economy in the next 15 years. This project aims to ensure the region's cities, towns and business parks have:
- Competitive access to full-fibre connectivity
  - Pave the way for the region to benefit from 5G and internet of things innovation
  - Improved access to broadband in the region's rural communities
- 3.4.3** *Yr Egin* is a digital and creative hub at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David in Carmarthen. Anchored by S4C's headquarters, the 3,700 square metre first phase of the development is also home to a range of other companies working within the creative sector.
- 3.4.4** The *Swansea City and Waterfront Digital District* being led by Swansea Council is made up of three elements:
- The 3,500-capacity indoor arena.
  - A state-of-the-art office development on The Kingsway in Swansea city centre. Around 100,000 square feet of flexible office space and amenities will be developed for tech and digital businesses, with conference and meeting facilities.
  - An Innovation Matrix development at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David SA1 for start-up businesses, which will foster entrepreneurship through close links with academia.
- 3.4.5** Under the *Homes as Power Stations* programme, state-of-the-art design and energy efficiency technologies will be introduced to thousands of properties. The pioneering project is aiming to facilitate the adoption of the Homes as Power Stations approach to integrate energy efficiency design and renewable technologies into the development of new build homes and retrofit programmes.
- 3.4.6** The £60 million *Pembroke Dock Marine* programme will place Pembrokeshire at the heart of global zero carbon marine energy



innovation while also helping tackle climate change. Pembroke Dock Marine will deliver the facilities, services and spaces needed to establish a world-class centre for marine engineering.

**3.4.7** *Life Science, Well-being and Sports Campuses*: The Swansea University's Campuses project was the final to be approved by both governments which will promote innovation and business growth in the expanding Medical Technology and Sports Technology sectors. The Life Science, Wellbeing and Sports Campuses project is a phased project based on two sites at Singleton and Morriston. The vision is to integrate life sciences, med tech, sport and well-being to transform services provided from the Morriston and Singleton sites, to drive economic growth and job creation, and to attract significant inward investment into the region.

**3.4.8** The *Pentre Awel* project will feature new business, education and health facilities, along with a state-of-the-art new leisure centre and swimming pool. Outline planning for the site was secured in August 2019, and detailed design work has been undertaken on Zone 1.

**3.4.9** *Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth*: This £58.7 million programme will deliver sustainable jobs and growth in the Swansea Bay City Region to support the creation of a decarbonised and innovative economy, thanks to a partnership between government, academia and industry.

**3.5** In November 2022, Swansea was shortlisted for the 'City of the Year' title at the Estates Gazette 2022 awards, which celebrate the country's best regeneration and development schemes. Developed by Swansea Council and managed by RivingtonHark, Swansea's £135m Copr Bay district was among the schemes that led to the city being recognised.

**3.6** The awards scheme also took notice of other complete, on-going or planned regeneration schemes in Swansea City's £1bn transformation. These include major, multi-million-pound improvements to the look and feel of both Wind Street and The Kingsway. Also being developed by Swansea Council, a major new high-tech office development providing space for 600 jobs in the tech and digital sectors is now being constructed at the city's former Oceana nightclub site. Both Swansea Arena and the new office development are part-funded by the £1.3bn Swansea Bay City Deal.

**3.7** These schemes and others have helped attract the private sector to invest in Swansea. This includes the Council's appointment of regeneration specialists Urban Splash (as referenced within Appendix A)

to lead on the £750m transformation of several key sites, including the Civic Centre on the seafront and the Swansea Central development site in the area of the former St David's Shopping Centre.

### **South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan**

- 3.8** As outlined to the Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel in March 2022, the new South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan will replace the 2013 Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy as the Council's economic regeneration policy.
- 3.9** Since the publication of the Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy in 2013, the economic and policy context has changed considerably at the Welsh and UK level since then, particularly in light of the UK's decision to leave the European Union and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the regional landscape is changing with the advent of the new Corporate Joint Committees, and the preparation of new Regional Economic Frameworks by Welsh Government that set out visions and high-level priorities for each region in Wales.
- 3.10** To respond to changing circumstances, the four local authorities in South West Wales, in partnership with Welsh Government, commissioned SQW Ltd to produce a new Regional Economic Delivery Plan (REDP). This will replace the previous Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy.
- 3.11** Unlike the previous Economic Regeneration Strategy, which was predominantly focused on improving productivity, the REDP recognises that 'Transformational' growth opportunities need to be balanced with the conditions for incremental improvements in resilience, capacity and capability across the whole of the economy. This was a key theme that emerged from consultation with regional partners during the preparation of the Plan. While there are distinctive opportunities to pursue at the 'leading edge', long-term employment resilience and wage growth is going to depend on the sustainability, productivity and expansion of the wider stock of regional businesses.
- 3.12** The new Regional Economic Delivery Plan will be owned and overseen by the new South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC). Supporting the CJC, the Regional Regeneration Directors will keep track of progress and will be responsible for developing business cases, securing investment and ensuring delivery on the CJC's behalf.

## **South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC)**

- 3.13** The South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regulations 2021 include the following county and county borough Councils: Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.
- 3.14** The Corporate Joint Committee for South West Wales is one of four now established in Wales, having been introduced by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (the Act). The Act established a framework to support and encourage greater collaboration between local authorities.
- 3.15** Cllr Rob Stewart, as Swansea Council Leader, was elected chair of the Corporate Joint Committee for South West Wales, following its formal constitution in January 2022.
- 3.16** Tasked with preparing transport and strategic development plans for the region, the Corporate Joint Committee can also exercise economic well-being powers. Since January 2022, the Corporate Joint Committee has met to discuss topics, including those outlined below:
- 3.16.1** *South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan (REDP)* - The South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan (REDP) was adopted as the regional strategy for the economic wellbeing strand of the CJC's work programme.
- 3.16.2** *South West Wales Regional Energy Plan* - The South West Wales Regional Energy Strategy will be adopted as the framework for the CJC's work programme with further reports to be brought forward in due course identifying how it is proposed that the strategic intent will be delivered.
- 3.16.3** *Shared Prosperity Fund* - The CJC has noted the UK Government's White Paper 'Levelling Up' and associated pre-launch guidance for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The CJC has noted the consultation and engagement being undertaken by the UK Government with partners including local authorities to develop arrangements that maximise UK Shared Prosperity Fund in each nation.
- 3.16.4** *Transport and Infrastructure Development* – A formal letter, addressed to Welsh Ministers, was sent regarding funding requests and to make a case for the transport work programme to have the appropriate support in place.
- 3.16.5** *Formulation of South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee Corporate Plan* – to discharge the range of public sector duties

imposed on CJs through a 'corporate plan'. The first corporate plan, incorporating the various public sector duties, will need to be published by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. The Plan will need to be subject to public consultation.

**3.16.6** *Investment in Health Estate* – presentation delivered by Hywel Dda University Health Board about the economic benefits of planned investment programmes.

## **4 PROGRESS ON MAJOR PROJECTS**

**4.1** As outlined within the report to Council on 1<sup>st</sup> December entitled 'Policy Commitments - the first 100 days', excellent progress is being made on major regeneration projects throughout Swansea. See **Appendix A**.

**4.2** *Swansea Central Phase 1*: Developed by Swansea Council and overseen by development managers RivingtonHark, Copr Bay also includes the 1.1-acre coastal park, the new bridge over Oystermouth Road, new car parking, new apartments and new spaces for food and drink businesses. This has led to the Council's beyond bricks and mortar team beating off competition from the rest of the country to win the social value category at the GO Awards Wales, which celebrate the very best procurement achievements from public, private and third sector organisations. A Swansea Council regeneration and procurement policy, beyond bricks and mortar ensures community benefits are embedded in all major contracts. The team represented Wales in the social value category at the UK-wide Go Awards and gained a Highly Commended accolade.

**4.3** *Bridge Link to City*: This serves as both a statement bridge and a striking visual representation of the work Swansea Council is carrying out to create an urban destination that brings together the best of city living and access to nature. Designed by local artist Marc Rees and award-winning architectural practice ACME. Part-funded by the Welsh Government's Access to Travel grant, the bridge provides seamless access between Swansea city centre and the new arena in the leisure-led first phase of the Copr Bay project.

**4.4** *Digital Square*: A digital square featuring digital artworks and ultra-fast internet connection speeds is open for outside the arena and is part of the City Deal delivery.

**4.5** *Rooftop Park*: This is the first new urban park to be developed in Swansea for a century. The coastal park, located on the rooftop of the new arena car park, also features a selection of new trees, including cherries and pines. They are among more than 70 new trees being introduced as part of the Copr Bay Phase 1 district. The Countess of Wessex had also visited the park in March 2022 to plant a Jubilee tree at

the new coastal park, in recognition of the City's status as a Queen's Green Canopy Champion City.

- 4.6** *Swansea Central North Project:* The Swansea Central North development site is in the area of the former St David's Shopping Centre. The Stage 1 review is now complete and the external report assessing stage 1 documentation has been received, supporting the recommendation to approve stage 1 and allow commencement of stage 2. Milligan is now working closely with Swansea Council Corporate Property Department to define Council requirements and specifications.
- 4.7** *Residential Units:* The residential section is now complete and Pobl tenants have taken immediate occupation of the Copr Bay apartments. The 33-apartment block being run by Pobl Group forms part of the £135m Copr Bay district developed by Swansea Council. Located on the city centre side of the new bridge over Oystermouth Road, the apartment complex overlooks Swansea Arena and the 1.1-acre coastal park. Some of the apartments benefit from views of Swansea Bay and the coastline.
- 4.8** *Civic Centre Relocation:* This development is working towards completion in Spring 2025. Due to staffing increases made over the last 2 years, we will require an additional 2,000sqm of space at the new Swansea Central North building. It is envisaged that the Civic Centre will not be demolished, and re-design will be based on an existing development in Portsmouth called 'Royal William Yard'. The site will be mixed use, including hotels, retail, residential and leisure.
- 4.9** *Swansea Market:* The market has and will continue to play an important role in the pandemic-recovery efforts of the City Centre. Initiatives designed to maximize the economic value of market trading and attract new traders and entrepreneurs has delivered positive results - bucking national trends with an occupancy rate of 93% and receiving national recognition from the likes of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) and National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA).
- 4.10** *277-278 Oxford Street (former BHS building):* A £2m grant from the Welsh Government has been provided - and a further £3.5m is available to the Council to develop the former BHS store as a public focal point. The funding is being provided under the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns initiative that provides support to improve town centres across Wales. The Council has acquired the former BHS building for a multi-purpose community hub. The tender process is now complete, with four tenders received back, reviewed by the project team against quality and cost criteria. Following final interviews, Kier have been appointed as the main contractor.
- 4.11** *71/72 Kingsway:* Due for completion in 2023, the 71/72 Kingsway development will provide space for 600 jobs in sectors like tech, digital and the creative industries. Swansea Council is developing the office building, with Bouygues UK as its main contractor. Construction of the

new building has now started, following-on from the completion of foundation works. The development, once complete, will be carbon zero in operation and worth £32.6m a year to Swansea's economy. Set over five levels, it will include 114,000 square feet of commercial floor space featuring flexible co-working and networking opportunities.

**4.11.1** A new link between Oxford Street and The Kingsway will also be constructed. The development is being part-funded by the £1.3 billion Swansea Bay City Deal and supported by the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government.

**4.11.2** Also due for completion by the end of 2023, the 'living building' scheme led by Hacer Developments will be among the UK's first schemes of its kind. Made up of the former Woolworths unit and a new adjoining 13-storey structure, the scheme will include green walls and green roofs, an educational facility, retail, offices, a landscaped courtyard, rooftop solar panels, battery storage and gardens. Pobl Group will manage 50 affordable apartments forming part of the scheme.

**4.12** *Castle Square Gardens:* A revitalised public space with new uses will bring Castle Square in line with the wider programme of regeneration already taking place in Swansea, reinforcing the aim of making it an attractive city to live, work and visit. The RIBA Stage 3 design is underway, and a planning application has been submitted. It is anticipated that work will start on site during Q4 of 2022/23.

**4.13** *Palace Theatre:* This historic flat iron building had fallen into disrepair before being acquired by Swansea Council. Tramshed Tech has signed a heads of terms agreement with Swansea Council for the development of the 133-year-old building. Planned to open in 2023, the influence of Tramshed Tech will see the creation of a modern workspace for young and growing businesses, especially those in the tech, digital and creative sectors.

**4.14** *Albert Hall:* The aim is to restore the 157-year-old venue to its original splendour, creating a development that'll include 800-capacity music and entertainment venue plus new spaces for lifestyle businesses and offices. This historic Swansea music hall had fallen into disrepair and has now been acquired by a private sector partner. Work has commenced to convert this building into a music venue, with completion anticipated by October 2023.

**4.15** *Pontoon @ Copperworks:* Tender documents have been prepared for the procurement of the supply and installation of the pontoon, which is expected to be delivered by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 . Appointment of a supplier will be subject to planning consent being issued, and planning is yet to be determined by the planning committee.

- 4.16** *Hafod Copperworks:* The scheme, that's due to see Welsh distillery Penderyn open an attraction in the site's disused powerhouse next year, will also help the Council redevelop other under-used areas of the Lower Swansea Valley. The powerhouse scheme's latest grants are from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (£250,000) and the Welsh Government's Regional Capital Stimulus Funding Programme (£500,000). The scheme is part of the first phase of development of the 12-acre site on the west bank of the River Tawe, encompassing long term ambitions to create a destination to capitalise on the site's extraordinary heritage.
- 4.17** *Blue Eden:* The consortium of firms are working on the Blue Eden proposal at SA1, which aims in the long term to deliver an electric battery manufacturing plant and battery storage facility, hundreds of waterfront homes, a tidal energy lagoon and floating solar farm within it, a data storage centre, a green hydrogen production facility, and an oceanic and climate change research centre. The project is being put together by Bridgend-based Batri Ltd and DST Innovations, with support from Swansea Council. The UK Government has provided a £200,000 grant via its community renewal fund and names announced as being on board are engineering and construction firm HDR, infrastructure group Enable, hydropower specialists Anditz, and HSBC bank and Siemens.

## **5 Integrated Impact Assessment Implications**

- 5.1** The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
  - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
  - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
  - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 5.2** The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

**5.3** Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

**5.4** This is a 'for information' report that provides an overview of progress meeting the responsibilities of the Economic, Finance & Strategy Cabinet portfolio, so there is no direct impact on people or communities.

## **6 Financial Implications**

**6.1** There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **7 Legal Implications**

**7.1** There are no legal implications associated with this report

**Background Papers:** None

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – 'Policy Commitments - The First 100 Days'

Appendix B – IIA screening form