



To:
Cllr Rob Stewart
Cabinet Member for Economy,
Finance & Strategy

Cllr Robert Francis-Davies
Cabinet Member for Investment,
Regeneration & Tourism

Cllr David Hopkins
Cabinet Member for Corporate
Services and Performance

BY EMAIL

CC: Cabinet Members

Please ask for:
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Overview & Scrutiny

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1 December 2022

Summary: This is a letter from the Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel, following the meeting of the Panel on 14 November 2022. It covers City Centre Retail and the Regeneration Programme / Project Monitoring Report.

Dear Cllrs Stewart, Francis-Davies and Hopkins,

On the 14th November, the Panel met to consider City Centre Retail and the Regeneration Programme / Project Monitoring Report. The Panel are grateful to yourselves, Paul Relf, Economic Development and External Funding Manager, Russell Greenslade, Chief Executive of Swansea BID and Huw Mowbray, Development and Physical Regeneration Strategic Manager for their attendance and contributions.

City Centre Retail

We understand the challenges city centres have been under in the last few years and were pleased to see the increased footfall in and around Swansea city centre. We were interested to know more about the breakdown of these figures to give an indication as to what is drawing people, for instance how much footfall is attributed to

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those working or living nearby. You shared the available data but should any further data be available (for instance telling us about spending) which can be shared in a public forum, we would be interested to see it.

We were made aware how city centres function differently due to the impact of out of town and online shopping and the need for a mix of retail, accommodation, leisure and dining to create a wider experience beyond just shopping. We understand increasing the number of people who live and work in the city centre will increase retail spend and encourage investment. It is important to get the right mix of student and private accommodation.

We feel the loss of European Funding and are pleased to see you are utilising other funding opportunities where possible. The need for the Local Authority to lead the way in development was stressed to us as this generates a platform for external providers to have interest in further developments in the city.

We asked if Swansea had an increase in out of town visitors and you told us that the arena is a big draw, in fact the arena in general is over performing and we look forward to hearing more about this after March 2023 when it has reached 12 months of trading. You also told us that the Skyline development has potential to bring out of town visitors also, which will have a knock on effect on other businesses.

We were pleased to see some of the recent repurposed developments and encourage this into the mix alongside brand new developments.

Russell Greenslade shared with us that roughly 70 new businesses had opened up in the last 18 months and that city centre spend has been good, we appreciated his input and would be keen to hear from him, yourself and officers on this topic again in around 6 months' time, to assess developments in City Centre Retail.

Copr Bay

In regards to the project monitoring report were told that the Copr Bay area will complete snagging by the end of the year. We were unable to discuss issues with the car park opposite the arena and will therefore hold a closed session at the end of the next meeting to discuss this and other issues.

Swansea Central North

It is pleasing to hear that Swansea Central North is moving into stage 2 and that there is a general positivity around this development moving forward. In regards to the development of office space, we understand that there is a need and this has the potential to attract businesses to Swansea but are also aware that less office space is

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required since working from home was introduced. We will be interested to monitor the ongoing take up of office spaces.

71/72 The Kingsway

We were told that 71/72 the Kingsway will be above ground by the start of 2023 and that plans for the Barclays building are on hold due to tender prices being higher than expected.

TAN15

We were updated on TAN15 and are aware that wording needs to be changed in order to allow for future sustainable developments. We would not want developments to contribute to a flood risk but you assured us that no significant developments would occur along the river frontage and flood protection is provided in those areas.

Castle Square

We were told that Castle Square is now in planning and that it is going out to tender shortly. When we asked who was financing the scheme you told us this would come from the Welsh Government Transforming Town Programme with a top up from the Council.

City Centre Decant

You told us that the new Public Sector Hub in the St David's area being built by Urban Splash will be completed in 2025. The move of library services and archives to the Community Hub is due for completion in 2024.

Skyline

We were told that Skyline is progressing well and that a number of title issues on the land have now been resolved. We asked for further details on this and you told us that all the unregistered land is now with the land registry and any land to be purchased is with legal teams. We asked for details about the purchasing of the land which we plan to cover in the closed session in our next meeting.

Pontoon @ Copperworks

You told us that listed building consent has been approved and lease discussions with the Badminton Estate are ongoing. Again we asked for more details on costing which will be covered in the closed session of the next meeting.

Powerhouse Redevelopment Hafod Copperworks

You told us that the Powerhouse shell and core works are looking to complete in November 2022. We are really pleased with how this is developing. We had some

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concerns about the moving of the park and ride and would like to discuss the options with the highways team.

Your Response

We are interested in any thoughts you may have on the contents of this letter but, in this instance, we require no formal written response.

We intend to focus on the Swansea Bay Strategy (including Foreshore Developments) and the Tourism Destination Management Plan at the next meeting in January. We will also arrange for a closed session to enable fuller discussion of the issues arising from the regeneration programme / project monitoring report.

We will contact you, and relevant officers, in due course regarding arrangements for future meetings.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Chris Holley
Convener, Development and Regeneration Performance Panel
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