



**To/
Councillor Rob Stewart
Cabinet Member for Economy and
Strategy**

*Please ask for:
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Overview & Scrutiny

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24th April 2019

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Strategy following the meeting of the Panel on 11th April 2019. We met with the Head of Planning and City Regeneration, the Development and Physical Regeneration Strategic Manager and the Section 151 and Chief Finance Officer. The meeting concerned the Dashboard Update and some discussions on the Business Case.

Dear Councillor Stewart,

We are grateful to officers for attending the meeting on 11th April 2019. The Panel received in depth updates and asked questions which the officers responded to.

We had the usual monitoring update in relation to the Dashboard Report and received a more in depth look at the Business Case and its progress.

We are pleased by the progress on these projects overall but do have some observations we would like to share with you.

We heard how progress on Phase 1 (the Arena and associated area) are moving along well with Buckingham having been appointed. We heard how the 'meet the buyer' event was very successful. As a Council we are keen to have the local supply chain involved to boost local economies, benefit from local knowledge and encourage local procurement of services. We were pleased to hear that quality apprenticeships are planned as this fits in with the some of aims of the long-term well-being objectives of the Council. Following on from this, we are encouraged that green infrastructure consultants are considering 'green walls' in the City Centre. Again this links in with well-being goals

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and the new natural environment corporate priority and will create a more desirable and eco-friendly place to live and work.

Ongoing 'right to light' issues relating to the Arenas location were highlighted which we hope will be resolved shortly, along with the issue of relocating the church hall. Regarding the housing aspect, we heard how Pobl will be creating 33 properties with a mix of tenure to encourage people to live and work within the City Centre.

We were told that shortlisting bidders for the hotel build is currently taking place and that digital options were being discussed with various providers to ensure Swansea is 5G ready. The 'resources' of the department have been flagged as a risk recently so we are happy that new staff should be starting imminently to fill the gaps in resources on the team.

Regarding the Kingsway, we were told how the site is being made safe by the Council since work by Dawnus ceased and there are discussions with a new body to take over the contract with all due diligence in place. We must commend the Director of Place and his teams for their hard work over this difficult period and we are told that the completion date of late November 2019, subject to discussions, is still the target.

We were told that the designs for the Digital Village on the Kingsway are hoping to be submitted this year. This hi-tech digital space will create somewhere for businesses to grow into, and encourage students to stay in Swansea and build their businesses creating a vibrant work centre. The issue of linking St Thomas and the new SA1 development was raised, as the residents there would benefit from improved connectivity. If you took a helicopter view of the ward you would see it is now cut off by road and river from the rest of Swansea. Officers said this is being considered as part of wider strategies and they will update us at future meetings.

We had updates on the strategic sites (Castle Square, Felindre, Swansea Vale etc) and were told that all of these were moving forward and discussions with Skyline regarding the Kilvey Hill scheme are still ongoing.

We heard how an FPR7 report will be coming to Cabinet in the summer with firm capital costs around the City Deal and a full income and expenditure report will be included. There will be scrutiny of any FPR7 report that coincides with the city deal.

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We are concerned that the Business Case has still not been signed off as monies cannot be released until this has been done. We look forward to hearing the Business Case has been signed off and the money released imminently.

There is no requirement for you to respond to this letter but any thoughts you have are welcome.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Jones', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Jeff Jones
Convener, Development and Regeneration Performance Panel
✉ cllr.jeff.jones@swansea.gov.uk

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