

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 3A, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA ON
MONDAY, 13 MARCH 2017 AT 4.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M H Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

S E Crouch
T J Hennegan
E J King

Councillor(s)

N J Davies
C A Holley

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
J W Jones

Also Present

Clive Lloyd
Robert Francis-Davies

Cabinet Member for Transformation and Performance
Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development &
Regeneration

Officer(s)

Kate Jones
Brij Madahar
Martin Nicholls
Lee Richards
Debbie Smith
Mark Thomas
Alun Thomas
Vicky Thomas

Democratic Services Officer
Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Director of Place
Lead City Centre Development Surveyor
Interim Deputy Head of Legal & Democratic Services.
Group Leader, Highways and Transportation
Team Leader Site Supervision
Sustainable Swansea Programme Manager

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): U C Clay, C R Evans, F M Gordon and P R Hood-Williams
Independent Member(s): D Anderson-Thomas

159 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL & PREJUDICIAL INTEREST.**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

160 **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.

161 **MINUTES.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 13 February 2017 be approved as a correct record.

162 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME.**

The Committee heard from Mr East who raised questions on the following: -

- Item 6 – Cabinet Member Q & A:
 - Whether the Council was receiving any rent from the Head Leaseholder for the former British Home Stores (BHS) unit
 - Whether in-house officers or consultants are used for valuation of assets prior to disposal and whether the public are getting value for money
- Item 8 – Pre-decision scrutiny of report on Castle Square:
 - What thought given to the loss of parking provision around St Mary's Church as part of the proposed integration of Castle Square with St Mary's Square, as shown in the Appendix, and whether there has been discussion with the Church about development plans
- Item 9 – Pre-decision scrutiny of report on City Centre Regeneration:
 - Anticipated decision on the City Deal as report indicated decision expected by the time of cabinet on 16 March
 - Projected costs of demolition of the Civic Centre
- Item 12 – Oceana Building :
 - Availability of information on Oceana Building to the public given increased costs relating to asbestos removal

The Cabinet Member for Transformation and Performance assured Mr East that the Authority was legally bound to get the best commercial value when disposing of Assets in order to generate the largest capital receipt possible, and would be held to account by auditors.

In respect of the integration of Castle Square and St Mary's Square, the Cabinet Member noted that whilst this was not strictly his domain, the artists impressions were in the very early stages and it was likely that further discussions on parking provision would take place.

The Cabinet Member provided assurance that discussions in respect of the City Deal were at a very advanced stage. It was hoped that the deal would have been announced at the Chancellors budget, but unfortunately, this was not the case. There was significant support from businesses and many had made representations at their disappointment at the lack of announcement. He added that it was unknown whether the deal would now be finalised in time for Cabinet this week, but it was hoped that it would be finalised very soon.

The Cabinet Member would write to Mr East with a full written response in respect of the former BHS unit and the relevant Cabinet Member would provide a written response in respect of the query about demolition costs of the Civic Centre.

The Interim Deputy Head of Legal and Democratic Services clarified the necessity and reasons for Item 12, Oceana Building – Asbestos Survey / Contract Award and Financial Implications being dealt with as a closed item.

Mr East also expressed his concerns generally over the use of abbreviations and jargon in council reports making them difficult to understand.

163 **CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION: CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION & PERFORMANCE (COUNCILLOR CLIVE LLOYD).**

Councillor Clive Lloyd, Cabinet Member for Transformation and Performance, provided a verbal address further to the written report circulated and highlighted the following areas:

- The Sustainable Swansea – Fit for the Future transformation programme:
 - Delivery of Savings
 - Impact and Outcomes of Commissioning Reviews with 12 Commissioning Reviews completed
 - Reflection on the Commissioning Review process and new Cross Cutting Proposals
 - The Development and Success of the Programme which was now becoming embedded in the culture of the Council
 - The valuable contribution made by Scrutiny (e.g. pre-decision scrutiny of commissioning reviews)

- Progress on Digital Strategy (now going into its second year) and ICT
 - ICT had been brought back in-house
 - Savings achieved
 - Infrastructure upgraded to improved resilience
 - Development of a Unified Communication System (collaboration with ABMU Health Board on telephony)
 - Projects such as roll out of Office 365 and Skype for Business
 - Upgrades to systems for services e.g. Development of Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)
 - Increased Support for Agile Working
 - Customer Contact Centre Improvements

Questions and discussions with the Cabinet Member focussed on the following: -

- The need to develop Commissioning Reviews to make them more meaningful with greater external stakeholder input and challenge
- Spending on Corporate ICT improvement and savings made
- Responsibility for the Risk Management Framework
- Accommodation Strategy and interim plans for civic office accommodation whilst development is taking place
- Improving the corporate culture; Improving the workplace in order to recruit and retain staff
- The relationship between cabinet and scrutiny – members noted the Cabinet Member's comments about the crucial role of played by scrutiny, as a critical friend, in improvement, development and transformation
- Training and awareness of safeguarding responsibilities across the Council

- Take up and continuing development of the Councillors Casework System
- Penllergaer Civic Site disposal – whether there had been sufficient return from the site and the merit of potential development of the land for housing.
- Provision and funding of suitable ICT for agile working

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

164 **SUSTAINABLE SWANSEA - CROSS CUTTING PROPOSALS (MARTIN NICHOLLS, DIRECTOR - PLACE).**

A presentation on 'Sustainable Swansea – Cross Cutting Proposals' was provided by Martin Nicholls, Director of Place and Vicky Thomas, Sustainable Swansea Programme Manager.

The presentation comprised of the following: -

- Reshaped – Sustainable Swansea Programme
- Commissioning Reviews – Final Phase Lessons Leant
- Why Cross Cutting?
- Cross Cutting Proposals
- What do we need today?
- Next Steps

In developing a new approach there was acknowledgement that some Commissioning Reviews were narrow in focus and prepared in isolation, thereby missing cross-cutting opportunities and linkages with other services. There was also recognition of the need to maximise consultation and engagement with external stakeholders, including service users. This was something highlighted by scrutiny having considered a number of commissioning reviews. The new emphasis on co-production was welcomed, which would enable stakeholders to be involved in shaping future service design and delivery.

The committee was provided with information about potential cross-cutting areas identified for review and initial thinking about those pieces of work.

Questions and discussions focussed on: -

- The draft cross-cutting proposals and scope of each area
- Prioritisation of areas
- Meaning of co-production in the context of cross-cutting reviews
- Delivery of normal business alongside reviews
- Appropriate stages for scrutiny involvement
- Governance arrangements
- The need for get the scope right at the outset
- Outcomes from reviews
- Potential trial run with one review
- Jargon and technical knowledge which restricts understanding and participation

Committee members were invited to comment on the new cross cutting proposals and feedback directly to the Director by the end of March.

Members considered the engagement of scrutiny in the process. The committee confirmed that it would be appropriate for scrutiny to be involved at the initial scoping stage, and then the final reporting stage (for pre-decision scrutiny).

The committee suggested that if councillors are to be invited to workshops, relating to the scoping of cross-cutting proposals, it would be helpful to introduce additional councillor specific sessions to such arrangements. The Director undertook to pilot this approach for the first cross-cutting review.

Members also highlighted the need for information about future cross-cutting reviews to be communicated and explained in a way so that they are easily understood, avoiding the use of acronyms, jargon and complex language which restricts understanding and participation.

RESOLVED that the contents of the presentation be noted

165 **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY: CASTLE SQUARE - DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC REALM OPPORTUNITIES (REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENTERPRISE, DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION).**

Councillor Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Regeneration and Lee Richards, Lead City Centre Development Surveyor were present for the committee's consideration of the cabinet report on 'Castle Square Development & Public Realm Opportunities'.

The Cabinet Member spoke about: -

- The site history, including benefits and issues of the previous green space of Castle Gardens
- Architectural awards won for current Square, but it's now tired and dated appearance (now 25 years old)
- Improvements that could be made to the area, e.g. lighting of prominent / historic buildings, better use of the Castle
- Increase in events held in City Centre to help with regeneration and the economy

The committee considered the proposed recommendations in the report and raised any issues and concerns that should be brought to the attention of Cabinet ahead of its decision on 16 March.

The committee indicated no objection to the recommendation and support for the redevelopment and improvement of Castle Square. However, members asked for their concerns about the following to be shared with Cabinet:

- Securing future public access and extent of public open space
- Potential conflict between the council and businesses on the site over use e.g. licensing issues

- Satisfying those who regard the Square as a place of quiet and rest
- The need for consultations with St Mary's Church relating to the integration of Castle Square and St Mary's Square
- Clarification over the proposed removal of a cycle lane around the site

RESOLVED that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee writes to the Cabinet Member on the views of the Committee, for Cabinet's consideration.

166 **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY: SWANSEA CITY CENTRE REGENERATION - DELIVERY AND FUNDING STRATEGY. (REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENTERPRISE, DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION).**

Councillor Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Regeneration and Lee Richards, Lead City Centre Development Surveyor were present for the committee's consideration of the cabinet report on 'Swansea City Centre Regeneration – Delivery and Funding Strategy'.

The Chair explained to the Cabinet Member that the report had been called for pre-decision scrutiny as it was indicated to the committee that it would contain information on the accommodation strategy, e.g. concerning the relocation of staff from the Civic Centre, and for the Central Library and Archives Service.

The Committee noted very little within the report about the accommodation strategy, except reference to the need (and associated cost) to undertake feasibility and flood mitigation assessment of the Civic Centre site post relocation of the Civic Centre to the City Centre.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that no decisions were being made at this stage on those matters however would be happy for relevant reports to come to the committee for pre-decision scrutiny in the future.

RESOLVED that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee writes to the Cabinet Member on the views of the Committee, for Cabinet's consideration.

167 **DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2016/2017 MUNICIPAL YEAR (ALL AT 4.30 PM).**

The dates and times of future Committee meetings for the 2016/2017 Municipal Year were noted.

168 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC.**

The Committee was requested to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of the items of business identified in the recommendations to the report on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in the exclusion paragraph 14 of 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation)(Wales) Order 2007, relevant to the item of business as set out in the report.

The Committee considered the Public Interest Test in deciding to exclude the public from the meeting for the items of business where the Public Interest Test was relevant, as set out in the report.

It was **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded for the following item of business.

169 **OCEANA BUILDING - ASBESTOS SURVEY / CONTRACT AWARD AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS.**

The Committee discussed issues relating to the asbestos survey / contract award and financial implications regarding the Oceana Building. A number of questions were asked of officers present who responded accordingly.

RESOLVED that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member, reflecting on the discussion and views of the Committee on this matter.

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm

CHAIR