

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

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

Overview & Scrutiny

01792 636292

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

29th May 2018

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 meetings of the Panel throughout the year 2017/18.

Dear Councillor Stewart,

The Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel has been meeting throughout this year to establish the progress with the development projects in Swansea.

We have met four times and had variety of officers attend to provide information with the purpose of the panel establishing the current position. Phil Holmes came initially to give an overview of the City Deal and the intended work around it.

We then had Martin Nicholls and Ben Smith attend to give information on the financial and strategic aims of the project.

At the last two meetings we spoke to Huw Mowbray and Clare James who gave us updates on the intended work due to take place during the City Deal development and they also ran through of the business case which has been submitted.

The Panel are pleased to hear that good progress is being made in relation to City Deal developments. The projects are exciting and should reinvigorate the City Centre and hopefully increase footfall and drive economic growth.

Whilst the Panel are grateful for the information and attendance from officers, we have found it difficult to get substantial information in a timely fashion. We know that the

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staff are under pressure due to the rate and range of regeneration in Swansea but Scrutiny is an important factor in the work of the Council and should be regarded as such.

The Panel appreciates that this is a developing area of work which is dependent on time scales and financial settlements, however, it is important to engage with Scrutiny to ensure there is transparency and sufficient input from Councillors.

From the information we have received we do have concerns around the affordability of the City Deal projects. It requires a substantial investment and we are concerned that the project will not recoup these costs in a reasonable time frame.

It was explained that the new arena will not impact on the income of the Grand Theatre. We heard that different types of acts will play at each venue. We are unsure about this. We feel that a new performance space in Swansea will overshadow The Grand and take away its ability to host larger performers and therefore make money.

As you are aware we are not only concentrating on City Deal and we will be providing feedback on a range of developments in Swansea and have a work plan which reflects this including but not limited to Enterprise Zones and Business Parks, SA1 and planning and student accommodation.

The Panel looks forward to monitoring the progress of the many developments in the coming year and providing feedback. We will be inviting you to speak to the Panel in the coming months.

We would welcome a response to this letter by Tuesday 19th June 2018.

Yours sincerely,

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

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