

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

*Please ask for:
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Overview & Scrutiny

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23rd August 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 31st July 2019. We met with the Head of Planning and City Regeneration and the Development and Physical Regeneration Strategic Manager. The meeting concerned the Dashboard Update.

Dear Councillor Stewart,

We are grateful to officers for attending the meeting on 31st July 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 we are pleased by the progress on these projects overall but do have some observations we would like to share with you.

Regarding Phase 1, we heard how the business case is moving toward funding and that substantial work has been done to get final prices established. We were told we are still waiting for bids on the hotel. We heard how the company ATG have the final Arena designs ready for sign off and we are in discussion with BT to ensure that a high digital connectivity is in place from day one. We were also pleased to hear there are increased accessible parking spaces for the project. We heard how the Terms and Conditions of the funding should be available imminently and once all of these are satisfied, a Cabinet FPR7 report will be developed with full costings and maintenance. We were told that the funding for the project has been agreed in principle and subject to the terms and conditions being satisfied, the funding should be available in the near future.

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We ask that this FPR7 report comes to a scrutiny panel for pre-decision feedback before any Cabinet decision is made, considering the substantial financial investment and impact this project has. Affordability must be a priority.

Regarding Phase 2, we were told that the team are looking at what can be delivered after Phase 1 (Arena) is complete and that Phase 1 should act as a catalyst for further growth and development within the City Centre. We were told that discussions around 'public hubs' where public sector organisations are housed together have been taking place to make access easier and we would like to hear more about this in future meetings. Some members were concerned that retail in the City Centre has been declining for some time. We were told that the new vision for the City is a food, beverage and leisure destination with a residential and public realm driving investment in the City Centre. This aims to change the footprint, usage and functions of areas and we hope this will encourage people back into the City Centre. We also heard how any new City Centre carparks will be top quality which will help to encourage tourism and events along with an improved parking environment.

Regarding the Kingsway, we were told how work is progressing with the Council keeping the area safe and working on site and the appointment of a new contractor is imminent. We were pleased to hear that although it is more complex with the new contractor having to take on half completed work, the financial impact has been minimised due to the bond agreement which had been put in place with Dawnus. We were told that the original plans are staying and that a completion date can be expected very soon. There are still ongoing issues regarding a lack of space for compounds but everything is being done to minimise impact on people.

Regarding strategic sites, we were told partnerships and marketing opportunities are being looked at to drive regeneration. We also heard how Castle Square and Wind Street proposals are moving forward. Again, we stress as a panel that maintenance costs for projects must be built into budgets. Along with this, the City Centre cleansing budget should increase along with development to ensure that the environment is clean and pleasant.

We were told how Skyline is moving forward and there is a new masterplan for the Copperworks. We would like to see access to footpaths along the Tawe Corridor in place to ensure people can travel around that area safely.

We will await further updates on the Palace Theatre and the Albert Hall to see what can happen with these buildings.

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We also received an update from Councillor Mark Thomas on Transport Strategies and will be writing to him separately.

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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