

**To/
Councillor Mark Thomas
Cabinet Member for Environment
and Infrastructure Management**

*Please ask for:
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Overview & Scrutiny

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28th August 2019

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure Management following the meeting of the Panel on 31st July 2019.

Dear Councillor Thomas,

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 were told how the Local Transport Plan is due to be reviewed over 12 months and that a Transport Strategy is due from Welsh Government. We ask that these be sent to the Panel for information once they are complete.

We heard how active travel will be promoted going forward in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015. This could include cycling routes linking employment and leisure destinations along with effective public transport. This is in line with the recommendation from the tourism scrutiny working group which proposed a leisure cycle route in Gower. You told us how there are active travel grants available from Welsh Government looking at connecting people but grant bids can be time consuming and require resource redirection. We also heard that time limits for spending grant money can be short and unrealistic to deliver. We look forward to seeing how active travel projects progress.

You told us how the strategic transport team model projects and traffic networks, and look at the impact of these projects and networks to make improvements. We also

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heard how telematics improvements are reducing delays but there still needs to be effective timetables for the bus network to maximise the efficient movement of people around Swansea.

We are pleased to hear that you are working closely with the Regeneration department to ensure effective cross departmental outcomes.

We also discussed the potential of the Felindre site rail station and heard that although investment in transport is very welcome, it has to be the correct project with appropriate infrastructure. The Panel welcome a more sustainable way for residents to move around Swansea and the rest of Wales in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 and look forward to forthcoming ideas.

The issue of air pollution has been discussed at various scrutiny meetings so it is very positive to hear that there is now 26-30% less traffic in Hafod due to the distributor road and 20% less carbon monoxide on the old Neath Road, with the Council looking to lower this even more. This links in not only with national legislation but our own Corporate Priorities and Climate Emergency Declaration. We look forward to seeing even more success in this area in the near future.

Following on from the requirement to radically improve air quality you told us that you are looking to enhance the Park and Ride in Swansea and looking at a Swansea Bay metro system. This could encourage people to use public transport rather than use their cars. Some comments were made about electric cars; however, the issue of transport is also about congestion so even with electric cars in use, emissions may be improved but congestion will not be. There has to be a balance between active travel and public transport and access to employment and the City Centre encouraging integration. We will continue to monitor these issues and ideas going forward.

You told us that even though the SWITCH transport project has ended, the 4 authorities (Carmarthenshire County Council, City and County of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Pembrokeshire County Council) still work closely together. You said that although the City Deal focus was around transformational technology, there has been a recognition of the importance of making sustainable transport a priority. The Panel feel this is essential and we will continue to follow this up at future meetings.

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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 "Jeff 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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