



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Development & Regeneration**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 3 November 2020 at 10.00 am

**Present:** Councillor J W Jones (Chair) Presided

### **Councillor(s)**

P M Black  
S J Gallagher  
P R Hood-Williams  
P K Jones  
T Hennegan

### **Councillor(s)**

E W Fitzgerald  
D W Helliwell  
L James  
T M White  
W Thomas

### **Councillor(s)**

S M Jones  
C A Holley  
M H Jones  
P Downing

### **Cabinet Members**

Robert Francis-Davies  
Rob Stewart

Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism  
Cabinet Member - Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)

### **Officer(s)**

Huw Mowbray  
Phil Holmes  
Liz Jordan  
Emily Davies

Property Development Manager  
Head of Planning & City Regeneration  
Scrutiny Officer  
Scrutiny Officer

### **Apologies for Absence**

Martin Nicholls

### **Confirmation of Convener**

The Panel agreed that Cllr Jeff Jones would be re-appointed as Convener.

### **Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

No disclosures of interest were made.

### **2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips**

No declarations were made.

### **3 Minutes of previous meeting(s)**

The Panel considered letters and minutes from previous meetings and agreed the minutes of the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020 as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **4 Public Question Time**

No questions were submitted by members of the public.

#### **5 Project Update Report**

Huw Mowbray, Property Development Manager, updated the Panel on the regeneration projects in Swansea. The Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy (Leader), and the Head of Planning and City Regeneration also attended for this item.

##### Swansea Central Phase 1

- The Panel was informed that there had been confirmed cases of Covid-19 on the Arena site, however, work was continuing to progress well in the circumstances. As per national guidance, contractors are sent home to self-isolate for fourteen days.
- Arena roof is now complete and the external cladding has also been completed meaning the Arena is now watertight.
- The Panel queried how many contractors and apprentices were local and how many from further afield.
- Drone footage of the Arena is to be provided, as a site visit is not currently feasible.
- Officers described plans for the 'Pause Point' area and the anticipated digital furniture being installed shortly, including digital goggles to view the developments and information about the history of the area.
- The Panel expressed some concerns over the Wellington Street developments in terms of tree planting and consultation with the Swansea Tree Forum. Officers informed the Panel that there had been sufficient consultation with all appropriate bodies in terms of tree planting.
- The residential block is now complete in terms of its height, and agreements with Pobl are also complete. The fitting out of this structure will now take place.
- ATG have had to make some redundancies across their company, however, have protected the core business and received equity investments. Officers confirmed that the core business is sound and there are no concerns about ATG's Swansea project at this time.
- ATG are currently looking to recruit a manager for the Swansea Arena.

##### Swansea Central North

- Discussions are ongoing in terms of potential occupiers.
- The Panel requested further information in the form of schematics to better inform people about the Swansea North development.  
Agreed a short presentation on these images would be provided at the next meeting in January 2021.

##### Kingsway

- Panel queried whether pavement design in the Kingsway conformed to the Active Travel Design Guide (Welsh Government 2014) in order to properly segregate cyclists and pedestrians. Officers explained that extensive consultation had taken place with cycle groups and mobility groups, leading to a balanced design that took account of a range of features.
- The Panel asked whether bus stops along the Kingsway were being closed or relocated in order to avoid traffic build-ups when a bus was stationary at a designated stop. Works were currently being undertaken to remedy any defects whilst traffic flow was at its lowest, however, bus stop locations remained unchanged.
- Regarding Picton Yard, works had been completed to link lower Oxford Street with this area, however, construction works continue and this area therefore remains closed. An East-West link is also an aspiration and delivery of this project is being explored, although no concrete funding as yet.

#### 71/72 Kingsway

- New hoardings graphics are due to be erected this week, following delays due to inclement weather.
- Concern expressed surrounding the return to offices and commercial units following the Covid-19 pandemic. Panel queried what the minimum percentage of occupancy should be in order to justify the expenditure on this development. Informed good demand from, in particular, 'Tech' businesses who value a collaborative and flexible office space.
- Officers undertook to provide further information on the budget of this development, and the impacts of Covid-19 on that budget, once these figures were duly available.
- The Panel asked about the success rate of the Zone Residential Grants (in the context of the Kingsway). Informed exceptionally successful programme and there remained a backlog of other projects awaiting funding. Officers undertook to provide a further report on these figures at the next meeting.

#### Wind Street

- The Panel queried why trees had been felled in Wind Street. Officers explained that minimal tree removal has been undertaken, following consultation groups.
- The Panel expressed concern over the general tree felling policy across the City. Officers stated that as many mature trees as possible are protected. Across the County the figures are net positive in terms of tree planting, the aim always to be planting more trees than removed.
- Concerns were raised over the impact of Covid-19 on Wind Street as both a night time and day time economy, and plans to help support recovery of business here. Officers informed the Panel that the Council have provided grants in excess of £1m to businesses to enable them to expand into areas of open space.

### City Centre Marketing of Strategic Sites

- Officers outlined the huge response to this process in terms of the marketing launch, having over 2000 views nationally.
- Officers commented on the high quality of submissions.
- The process is ongoing and the shortlisting has been signed off to notify parties.

### Strategic Sites and Project Overview

- Concerns raised over the Skyline project, as the time frame for this is set as 2026, and whether the operations team were likely to withdraw from this project. Officers reassured the panel that a number of conference calls with Skyline in New Zealand had taken place recently and they were therefore optimistic.
- The professional team appointed for Castle Square are at the stage of completing feasibility studies with a view to presenting a detailed scheme to move forward. Council has not yet committed capital to be allocated to funding the Castle Square development. The Panel is keen to see final plans for this project to ensure the objective is met for greener area.

### Transpiration & Highways

- Questioned whether plans are being pushed forward under the metro scheme for Landore; in particular, to accommodate access to Morfa retail park, the Stadium and the newly developed distillery. The Panel were told that the Metro system is still being worked on as an idea.
- The Panel requested an update on the Fabian Way Innovation Corridor land negotiations.
- Concerns were raised over the research and evidence that justified some new cycle tracks, and whether demand was high enough to warrant the costs.
- Discussed the Mayals Road cycle track that is scheduled for construction soon and queried whether this had gone to tender. Officers suggested that further information could be sought from the Head of Highways and Transportation.

## **7. Draft Work Plan**

The Panel discussed the draft work plan and agreed the following:

- The additional item of 'Foreshore' developments is to be added.
- 'The Impact of Brexit on Commercial Opportunities in Rural areas' be discussed at the January meeting if possible and appropriate.

**Actions:**

- Figures requested for the number of contractors (and apprentices) employed on the Arena site (local separately to external) during the start of the contract and also at this current time.
- Schematics / images of Swansea Central North requested for the next meeting on 12th January 2021 (*now acknowledged as having been received following this meeting*).
- Information requested on the number of trees, and species, being displaced under the Wellington Street developments.
- 71/72 The Kingsway: further information requested on the budget of this development, and the impacts of Covid-19 on that budget
- Zone Residential Grants: Officers undertook to provide a further report on these figures at the next meeting

The meeting ended at 11.58am