

Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel Update

1. Remit of the Panel

The overarching remit of the Panel is to be responsible for ongoing monitoring of council performance in relation to development and regeneration, including the 'health' of the city centre, wider economic development across Swansea and discussion about progress on the Swansea Bay City Deal.

2. Introduction

The Panel is focused on contributing to the ongoing development and regeneration of Swansea by acting as a critical friend for the Cabinet, and helping to ensure accountability.

3. Key Activities

The Panel has held four meetings since November 2020, the next being due in May. Panel Members also attended the *Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel* meeting in February to contribute to discussion on budget proposals. Meetings so far have resulted in six Convener's letters sent to the Cabinet Member(s). The issues covered were as follows:

Meeting date	Topics
3 November 2020	Dashboard Project Update
	Transportation Works
12 January 2021	Dashboard Project Update
	Commercial Opportunities in Rural Areas
25 January 2021	Arena Development – Contract with The Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG)
2 March 2021	ATG Arena progress
	Dashboard Project Update

4. Achievements / Impact

The 'Dashboard' Project Update

As a way of providing a regular 'health check' of the development projects, the Panel receives the departmental update report at each meeting. This works well and allows a run through from relevant officers of all of the regeneration projects and provides a quick risk check of each one, highlighting major issues/delays or successes.

Individual Project Updates

In order to provide an in-depth level of scrutiny for the Panel, the second part of each meeting focuses on a specific project in Swansea. The Panel discussed and decided on the topics for the year 2020/21, which range from Swansea Arena to Commercial Opportunities in Rural Areas. This allows for a more intense exploration of a project and strikes the balance between checking progress of development and regeneration in general and contributing in a more detailed manner on a specific project.

Letters

The Panel has written six letters to Cabinet Members this year. A reflection on some of the observations the Panel Members have made as follows:

- *We were concerned that ATG venues around the world were currently closed due to Covid-19 and what possible impact this could have on the Swansea development. We heard that ATG had laid off some staff, (mostly on furlough), across their company. However, officers confirmed that they have protected the core business and received equity investments, and there are no concerns about ATG's Swansea project at this time. It was also explained that ATG are currently looking to recruit a manager for the Swansea Arena.*
- *Active Travel Programme – We asked about the research and evidence that justified some new cycle tracks, and whether demand was high enough to warrant the costs. We discussed the Mayals Road cycle track that is scheduled for construction soon.*
- *The Panel heard that Swansea Rural Development Partnership (RDP) is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) until 2023. It was pleasing to hear that the programme aims to promote strong, sustainable rural economic growth in Wales and encourage greater community-led local development. Members raised concerns over available funding now that the UK has left the European Union. Officers explained that the European funding already secured will be available to spend until 2023. Other funding streams are being explored, namely the 'Shared Prosperity Fund'.*
- *The Panel heard that the Council is looking at the core areas of the city centre to ensure Swansea is moving forward to put the right interventions in place to help recovery, taking into account the difficult economic situation across the UK. A design masterplan remains in the early stages, with more announcements on plans expected over the coming months. The Panel queried if there will be opportunities for member input as it would like involvement in this important work. Officers explained that workshops are likely during this process, although this is time limited and needs to be finished by the end of this financial year. The Panel looks forward to hearing further updates regarding this work.*

Work Programme for remainder of 2020/21

11 May 2021

Swansea Business Improvement District

Update from Russell Greenslade, Chief Executive Swansea BID, regarding City Centre developments

Update on City Centre Travel Plan

Cllr Mark Thomas – Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement and Infrastructure

Stuart Davies – Head of Highways and Transportation

Work planning 2021-22