



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration and Tourism

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 17 August 2021

### Business and City Promotion

<b>Purpose</b>	To brief the Scrutiny Committee on the work being undertaken on business and city promotion in Swansea
<b>Content</b>	The report sets out the activities being undertaken to support business and city promotion.
<b>Councillors are being asked to</b>	Consider the information provided and give views.
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Councillor Robert Francis- Davies, Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration and Tourism
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#### 1. Overview

- 1.1 The ultimate goal is to make Swansea a vibrant and exciting place to live, work, visit and study. To achieve this it needs thriving businesses, offering good quality jobs for its citizens in addition to a range of leisure pursuits for residents and visitors. To achieve this we need to:
- Engage with business to better understand their needs in order to provide support and opportunities for them to grow and create quality jobs.
  - Create an interest in new business coming to Swansea by promoting its advantages to Wales and the wider UK/global audience.
- 1.2 The Planning & City Regeneration Service is primarily responsible for business and city promotion, working closely with the Communications and Marketing Team. It is delivered through the Economic Development and External Funding team who undertake business engagement and inward investment and the Development and Physical Regeneration team, dealing with business investment and city promotion within the scope of large development schemes. There is also significant tourism marketing and business engagement with the tourism and

hospitality sector carried out by the Tourism and Marketing team, although that does not fall within the scope of this report.

## 2. Key Areas of Work

2.1 A broad range of activities that support business and city promotion are currently being delivered:

### Business Engagement:

- Launch of new Business Swansea business support service, which has made great strides since its inception in April 2021.
- Making contact with existing business in Swansea, gathering information, making them aware of the support available to them to help them grow. This includes signposting to other Council areas (e.g. rates, planning, environmental health), connecting them with partners (e.g. Business Wales, Development Bank of Wales, BID) or financial support.
- Fortnightly Business Swansea business information newsletter and monthly “business hour” information/advice sessions for existing business and Enterprise Club for new business start-ups commenced in July.
- Pre start-up business sessions to explore the basics of running a business, including real business case experience.
- Business Swansea Start-up and young business small grants.

### Inward Investment:

- Providing a seamless end-to-end service for inward investors who are considering relocating in Swansea. This includes, amongst other things, providing advice and support on funding availability, assistance with identifying sites & premises, facilitating contact with other areas of the Council, including planning policy for pre-application advice and scheme design, links with Universities, Welsh Government, and labour market/skills availability etc.
- Liaising with Invest Wales and UK on business enquiries for Swansea
- Producing information on the benefits of relocating to Swansea
- Working with Welsh Government to support business relocating to Swansea
- Gathering information on local business supply chains.

### Food Businesses:

- Working with local food producers to improve their business model
- Swansea Food Partnership formed to develop local food innovations, networking and supply chain solution
- Working with Farmers to develop and diversify primary products/land offer
- Supporting rural food businesses to develop funding applications
- Promotion of local food businesses and the use of local produce
- Supporting food projects through Rural Development Partnership to facilitate pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chain

### City Promotion

- High profile marketing of the Copr Bay development, including the new Digital Arena, by the Development and Physical Regeneration team to a UK/global audience: [www.coprbayswansea.com](http://www.coprbayswansea.com)
- Annual promotion of Swansea and initiatives through Estates Gazette which gives Swansea access to the EG online database and universal coverage.
- Working with Welsh Government and wider to promote Swansea at international events such as MIPIM.
- #Brand Swansea highlighting the best of Swansea in community, health, business, arts etc. in order to change negative perceptions of the city.
- Swansea Business Guide ([www.swansea.gov.uk/businessguide](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/businessguide)) produced biannually showcases what Swansea has to offer as a business location and includes an online business directory – [www.itslocalSwansea.co.uk](http://www.itslocalSwansea.co.uk) – to promote local businesses
- Business promotion – new Business Swansea service – supporting local businesses
- Shop Local campaigns, initially piloted in Morriston but now extended to all other district centres – Gorseinon, Pontarddulais, Uplands, Mumbles, Clydach, Sketty, Killay and Gowerton.
- Ongoing City promotion through the Council's Communications and Marketing Team, linking in with the work of the Economic Development and External Funding Team and Development and Physical Regeneration Team.
- Promotion of Swansea as an inward investment location through the Council website

### **3. Management and Resources**

- 3.1 As outlined above, business and city promotion activities are primarily delivered through the Planning and City Regeneration Service area's Economic Development and External Funding team and Development and Physical Regeneration team, which is part of the Place Directorate. Governance is through the City Regeneration Programme Board and the City Regeneration Member Steering Group.
- 3.2 The focus on working closely with business in the City & County is increasing, and the business resource has increased to include an Inward Investment Officer in July 2019 and since April 2021, two new Economic Development Officers focusing on Business Engagement. This has expanded the work carried out by the team and means that, going forward, the Council will have a better insight into the needs of its businesses. The Development and Physical Regeneration team and Inward Investment Officer work closely together in providing solutions to business wishing to move to Swansea. The teams link with others within and outside the Council, such as Business Wales to add value to the Council's offer by utilising the resources of others.
- 3.3 Through the Regeneration Swansea Partnership the Council works closely with senior representatives from other public, private and third sector organisations including Welsh Government, Universities, Coastal Housing, Pobl, Family Housing, Natural Resources Wales, Jobcentre Plus, Swansea Council for Voluntary Services, Swansea BID, not for profit businesses and others, to

support economic regeneration across the city and county. Regeneration Swansea has established a branding sub-group (comprising the Council's Tourism/Marketing, Communications & Marketing and Economic Development teams along with Universities and private sector) to develop an overarching brand that represents Swansea. The #Brand Swansea project is the first phase of this.

### **4. Activities During the Covid-19 Pandemic**

- 4.1 Over the past year the Economic Development and External Funding team has played a key role in supporting local businesses. This has included administering Welsh Government covid-19 grants to businesses (and the team is still involved in issuing WG discretionary grants), dealing with general enquiries from business regarding grant assistance and liaising with other areas of the Council (regarding Rates related grants) and Welsh Government, Business Wales on their behalf. 48 covid-19 business newsletters were issued during 2020-21 to keep local businesses informed of the support that was available. In addition, an online list of local food businesses and other essential suppliers was produced at the time when shops were closed to the public.

### **5. Improvements and Impact**

- 5.1 An overall health assessment of the business offering in previous years concluded that, although we were able to signpost to our partners in Business Wales, we did not have the resources, providing a real challenge to make those vital links with business.
- 5.2 Subsequently, an Inward Investment role was created, dealing with enquiries from outside the County and in 2021 the creation of Business Engagement officers to deal directly with business and offering a dedicated business resource for Swansea.
- 5.3 The support now offered is comparable with that of other local authorities in the region, alongside the additional areas of support described earlier. In this short time direct support and contact with business has increased immeasurably, providing greater business support at a time when it is needed most.
- 5.4 To further support business engagement, a corporate business CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system is now under development. Currently a number of areas of the Council hold details on businesses, which they use to contact them for their varying services. A Swansea Business Account (based on the residents My Swansea account) is being developed so that businesses will be able to sign up once and be linked to Council information and services.

### **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**7. Finance Implications**

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**Appendices:** None