

To:
Cllr Robert Francis-Davies
Cabinet Member for Investment,
Regeneration & Tourism

Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:

Overview & Scrutiny

Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:

01792 636292

e-Mail
e-Bost:

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

BY EMAIL

Date
Dyddiad:

23 February 2023

CC: Cabinet Members

Summary: This is a letter from the Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration and Tourism, following the meeting of the Panel on 30 January 2023. It covers the Tourism Destination and Management Plan and the Regeneration Programme / Project Monitoring Report. A response is required by 16 March 2023.

Dear Cllr Francis-Davies,

On the 30 January, the Panel met to consider the Tourism Destination and Management Plan and the Regeneration Programme / Project Monitoring Report. We are grateful to yourself, Steve Hopkins, Head of Property Services, Huw Mowbray Development & Physical Regeneration Strategic Manager and Stephen Crocker, Chair of Tourism Swansea Bay for their attendance and contributions.

Tourism Destination and Management Plan

We heard a detailed presentation from officers on the recent Tourism Destination Plan covering 2017 to the present. We noted the key achievements from the period 2017-2020 and were particularly interested in the STEAM research which found that in 2019 4.8m visitors came to the area creating £477.22m and nearly 6000 jobs in the industry. We also noted the upward trend of visitors to the area since 2008.

The officer demonstrated the many key achievements the Tourism Recovery Plan 2021/22 reached during the Covid pandemic and we recognise how significantly the tourism industry was affected during this time.

We were updated with the progress of the Destination Management Plan 2023-25 with a plan for approval in April. We were really encouraged by the presentation overall.

We asked about using entrances to Swansea Market and gateways into the city to promote tourism and were informed that marketing messages are installed on Fabian

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above



Way, Dyfatty Bridge, Olchfa School and Swansea University as well as information boards around the city.

We raised the issue of current prices rises and suggested marketing Swansea as a value for money attraction. We agree that Swansea holds many “free” attractions with key assets in the natural environment as well as the museums, art galleries and libraries but in addition it will be important to offer opportunities to spend money in the area to increase revenue. We asked whether leaving the EU has had an impact on local tourism and the officer told us that the number of international visitors is stable.

We asked about the promotion of eco-tourism with the specific example of allowing tourists the use of good public transport to get to areas of interest and how tourism fits in with carbon neutral ambitions. We were informed that applications from the Tourism Support Fund that produce ecological and environmental benefits are promoted, for instance installing electric charging points. Other ventures include the promotion of wood fired hot tubs and visits and support from Iolo Williams. In relation to public transport, you raised that cycle and pathways have received investment. In regards to buses you raised issues with accessibility and affordability with the private bus providers, with limited buses at night and to Gower. You also informed us of a pilot using hydrogen buses with Transport for Wales and Welsh Government. In addition the officer informed us that biodiversity is a key part of the beaches management plan and that First Group are a key partner for major events.

We inquired more about journalist’s visits to the area and how these are planned. We were informed this is variable with the aim of giving the journalist an experience relative to the publication and the article.

The officer informed us that target audiences include those around the M4 corridor, south west, Birmingham and wider Wales. We also added that the Heads of Valleys road is becoming an important corridor to the area.

We queried on behalf of those digitally excluded whether leaflets will still be readily available. The officer informed that 200,000 copies of the day visitor guide were produced before Covid and some of these are still in circulation but resources mean no further paper copies of this guide will be produced. Maps of the city are still in demand and likely to still be printed.

We were concerned that holiday lets and second homes have the potential to take housing away from local families but other accommodation is required to meet demand to avoid the take up of residential properties. We were informed that the bed stock survey helped map out the number of smaller lets and Airbnb’s and if introduced,

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

statutory licencing and the tourism levy will level the playing field. Also the 182 day planning rule will mean some businesses which don't operate to this level are selling up or face an increase in business rates. Concern was raised regarding the need for planning to support an increase in regulated accommodation to help meet demand.

We acknowledge that with over 6000 jobs, local tourism is a significant employer, we would be keen to include an update on the Tourism Development Plan annually.

We were interested to receive any survey information that indicate the numbers of caravans to the area which has now been additionally sent to us after the meeting including further information which was gratefully received.

Regeneration Programme / Project Monitoring Report

Copr Bay

We were made aware of a rough sleeping issue in the car park and pleased to hear that issues with the lift and stairs are either completed or will be imminently.

Shaping Swansea

We were disappointed to hear that the city centre Levelling Up Fund bid was unsuccessful but were informed that work is ongoing with Urban Splash to look how the phases of the developments can move forward with a report due in the next month. A move to stage 2 is imminent now that stage 1 is largely complete. The officer also informed us the next round of the Levelling Up Fund is in July 2023.

Swansea Central North

The officer reported that as this is an Urban Splash scheme, this was also part of the unsuccessful Levelling Up Fund Bid and discussions with Urban Splash will include next steps for this development also. In regards to the Public Sector Hub, we were informed of the engagement of the Government Property Agency in regards to rental and market values and growth potential.

Civic Centre Relocation

We were made aware that the Stage 1 report has been drafted and that Swansea has been shortlisted by Welsh Government as an Anchor site for the National Contemporary Art Gallery. We were informed that the relocation of staff from the Civic Centre is linked with the progress of other schemes like the hub and old BHS building and that further information will be given as this develops over the coming months.

TAN15

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

We were pleased to hear that a revised draft is out for consultation with some positive additional improvements included.

Castle Square

The officer informed us that the Quality Audit has been completed and submitted and the Road Safety Audit has been completed and issued to the Highways Department in December 2022 and we became aware during the meeting that the planning decision has been released. The two stage design and build tender process will start in Q1 2023 and will be fully open to all applicants. We asked whether this scheme was privately or Council financed and were informed that this is a Council funded project. In addition there will be four commercial units for letting to private tenants. We would like to request further information on this project including timescales and details of costs.

Community Hub

We were made aware of a delay in this project due to revising the construction programme from Coreus and Kier to try to rationalise some activities within the programme. This has therefore delayed completion until September 2024, at our meeting in January the estimated completion date was reported to be January 2024. The officer reports that over time it is hoped this delay will be reduced.

Powerhouse Redevelopment Hafod Copperworks

We were informed that completion is due end of February and Penderyn will commence their distillery fit out under licence while work is ongoing.

Laboratory Building

The officer informed us that the laboratory building is part of the successful Hafod Levelling Up Fund Bid which will help to protect this building.

Palace Theatre

We were made aware that this has been a difficult project with delays but the work is now due for completion in November 2023. We asked further about lettings in the property and were informed that Tramshed will let the whole property and sublet a serviced space to other companies.

71/72 The Kingsway

We asked for an additional update on this development, particularly on lettings and were informed that one substantial letting has been secured and agents are being engaged to attract further lettings. We were pleased that this build has started to reach ground level. When asking for an update on time scale were told currently October 2023 but with the possibility of delays.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWA

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWA, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk



We asked for an update on the re-tender for the Barclays bank building and were updated that as tender prices were too high this has been put on hold for the time being.

At the end of the meeting we asked some additional questions in closed session regarding a number of projects and were grateful to yourself and the officer for attending.

Your Response

We welcome your comments on any of the issues raised and in this instance a formal response is required by 16 March 2023 to the following –

- Please supply the Scrutiny Panel with all the current information regarding the Castle Square project.

This letter and your response will then be published in the next Panel agenda.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Chris Holley

Convener, Development and Regeneration Performance Panel

✉ cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above