



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the Scrutiny Performance Panel – Development & Regeneration

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS
Teams

Monday, 20 March 2023 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor C A Holley (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

P M Black
P R Hood-Williams
M W Locke
T M White

Councillor(s)

C M J Evans
L James
W G Thomas

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
J W Jones
M S Tribe

Other Attendees

Cllr Robert Francis-
Davies

Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Tourism

Officer(s)

Phillip Holmes
Huw Mowbray
Paul Relf
Rachel Percival

Head of Planning and City Regeneration
Development & Physical Regeneration Strategic Manager
Economic Development and External Funding Manager
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): D H Jenkins and M H Jones

36 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No interests were disclosed.

37 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None.

38 Minutes

The Panel agreed the minutes from previous meetings.

39 Public Questions

No questions were submitted by members of the public.

40 Audit Wales Report - Town Centre Regeneration

Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Minister for Investment, Regeneration and Tourism and Paul Relf, Economic Development and External Funding Manager attended to discuss this item. The following points were made –

- The Audit Wales report reflects back on a number of decades and captures the changing needs and uses of city centres across Wales. The report doesn't cover anything that was unknown or unfamiliar to Council Members and officers.
- There is positivity with the progress in Swansea City Centre compared to other cities, and there is ambition for Swansea to continue growing and developing.
- There are increasingly more private sector schemes with additional funding to plug the viability gap which can be a mix of loan and grant provision. This helps to reduce risk and enable private sector investments.
- 95% of businesses in Swansea are microbusiness which is defined by those who employ under 250 staff.
- City centre needs change over time and getting the right balance is key. Going forward the city centre will provide a mix of uses with flexible spaces that can be changed as needs change, smaller units have proved popular. Housing above shops has been added forming new communities and increasing trade.
- Communication channels with public bodies are important with dialogue across all sectors taking into account procurement frameworks particularly when resources are scarce. This allows for decisions to be made quickly when needed.
- The city centre and the district centres are eligible for place making grant support and the creation of a Place Plan. Place Plans have an agreed template for formulation which takes an action based approach.
- Swansea is the biggest user in Wales of the Town Centre Loan Fund.
- Enforcement Action Plans are created with the support of Welsh Government, which supports resolution before the point of enforcement.
- The Economic Recovery Fund has also been a helpful source of funding and supports microbusinesses across the county.
- The audit report comments on the Town Centre First Policy not yet being fully embedded. The Council are using Place Plans to pull together all the different strands of this Policy. This is an ongoing journey to keep all these things in balance, listen to what people want and nudge things in the right direction.
- This is an all Wales audit, the first one that's been done for a while for this sector. Comparisons against other Local Authorities in relation to the audit would be useful but are not available.
- Guidance and strategy from Welsh Government's for Local Authorities would be helpful to mitigate the inconstant approach across Wales mentioned in the Audit Report.
- The considerable investment going into Swansea is unique and needs to be treated as such, a big change and money spent is required to achieve this.

41 Regeneration Programme / Project Monitoring Report

The latest regular monitoring report on regeneration programme / projects was presented to the Panel, for any comments / views on progress and achievements.

Huw Mowbray, Development & Physical Regeneration Strategic Manager, provided relevant updates on the following:

Copr Bay:

- Snagging works are being completed at the moment with costs being met by the contractor.
- Ticket sales at the Arena have gone up to over 200,000. Sales are positive with plans to break into the conference market.
- Resolution is ongoing with the North Block regarding the paint on the steelwork.
- Venue capacity is variable depending on a seated or standing set up.
- There have been funding issues with the hotel however it now has a developer. A town centre loan is secure to help deliver the hotel with a report to Cabinet in due course.
- Further hotels in the city will enable future ticket sales at the Arena. The Marriott has also recently refurbished.
- The bridge has just been shortlisted a planning award.
- Maintenance in the play park has been identified and awaiting arrival of parts.

Shaping Swansea:

- As the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid was unsuccessful, discussion with Welsh Government around other funding sources is ongoing. There will also be another round of LUF bidding.

Swansea Central North:

- Talks are taking place with Urban Splash regarding the delivery programme and strategy for the first phase of development.
- Discussions are being held with Welsh Government regarding a small element of gap funding where the majority of funding would be provided by private sector funding via Urban Splash.
- Shared Prosperity Fund and Transforming Towns bids are also in development.

71/72 The Kingsway:

- Construction is advancing. The building is now up to the first floor level.
- 25,000sq foot is currently let, letting and branding agents are currently being procured to market the rest.
- There have been some supply chain issues but the Council have a fixed price contract, compromises with the developer are made when appropriate.

Civic Centre redevelopment:

- Meetings are being held with Cadw regarding the potential listing of the Civic Centre.
- Urban Splash are working on designs.

Tan 15 Development and Flood Risk:

- Welsh Government have gone out for consultation again and the original draft has been suspended.

- There have been some substantial changes in the Welsh Government approach and there is positivity that the new draft will strike a better balance between flood risk and development.
- Tan 15 will affect the many coastal towns and cities in Wales and not just Swansea.
- The Welsh Local Government Association and planning officers have made a number of recommendations.

Skyline:

- The initial public consultation has been completed with a large turnout with overall a positive response. Consultation reports will be submitted as part of the planning application with a submission aim of July 2023.
- As well as a £3 million grant from the Welsh Government, there is an ongoing discussion with Skyline about funding. Skyline are putting in around £36m however in order to meet their internal rate of return (IRR) a further investment may be needed.
- An annual pass for Swansea residents will be available for £40.
- Building works are due to commence around December 2023/January 2024.
- The Highways department are continuing to look at options for the park and ride and continue to have ongoing discussions with the stadium.

Powerhouse Redevelopment Hafod Copperworks:

- Penderyn have taken partial occupation. Fit out started in February.
- An outcome is imminent for further funding to cover additional costs.

The Laboratory Building:

- This is ready for refurbishment. Now the LUF Bid has been confirmed discussions are being held to move this development further on.

Lower Swansea Valley:

- Teams are just starting to be put in place for this development which has an estimated completion date of March 2023.
- Further detail on this development will be provided in due course.

Palace Theatre:

- The estimated completion date in the end of 2023.
- Programme is still in development however completion target is December 23/January 24.
- This development has received positive feedback from the Theatres Trust.
- Tramshed have agreed to lease the building.

Inward Investment:

- The Council hosted a day with the Welsh Government Invest Team highlighting Swansea's offer.

Copperworks Pontoon:

- Side railings are currently being installed. Lighting along part of the footpath will be completed shortly.
- The lease been completed with the Duke of Beaufort's Estate.

- Site investigations are being carried out.
- Survey works have commenced for the Boardwalk towards the Hafod area.
- Three further pontoons are also in development. Urban Splash are developing one on the St Thomas side of the river, and there are an additional two further pontoons at High Street and near the Stadium. There is no current time frame for these and will be part of a later development phase.
- Repairs to the nearby Bascule Bridge are progressing.

42 Work Plan 2022/23

The Panel noted the Work Plan.

The meeting ended at 11.31 am

Chair