



To:
Councillor Robert Francis-Davies
Cabinet Member for Investment,
Regeneration and Tourism

Please ask for:
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Overview & Scrutiny

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1st December 2021

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism following the meeting of the Panel on 2nd November 2021. It covers the Project Update Report.

Dear Councillor Francis-Davies,

On the 2nd November, the Panel met to discuss the Project Update Report. The Panel thanked Huw Mowbray, Development and Physical Regeneration Strategic Manager, and Phil Holmes, Head of Planning & City Regeneration, for their attendance and contributions. Discussions focused on the following:

Copr Bay – Phase 1

Officers explained to us that there are currently considerable issues surrounding lack of labour and materials, having significant impact upon the final stages of the project. We also understand that there has been a Covid-19 outbreak on site recently, further affecting project completion.

We heard that funding difficulties are currently being experienced in relation to the Hotel development, and that revised submissions are due to be completed soon.

It was explained to us that Swansea Council's Licensing Committee have now approved the licence for the Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG). It was pleasing to hear that ATG programming is to commence in March, and that the majority of tickets

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on sale have now sold out. Officers explained that early indications show the sales density in Swansea Arena is ahead of other comparable ATG venues across the UK.

We raised concerns over the Arena car park and accessibility off the main road. Officers explained that the two main car parks are designed to pick up traffic flows coming from both directions, minimising the need to cross the road.

Members raised concerns over LED lighting and any impact on Marina residents. Officers confirmed to us that the LED fascia was included in the initial planning consent, and that they significantly fade to the rear of building. Officers explained about the control system allowing lights to be turned off if necessary. We also understand that a screen has been designed by an artist in conjunction with residents.

71/71 The Kingsway

It was explained to us that good progress is being made, contract documents having been agreed by both parties. We also understand that pre-commencement planning conditions have been discharged and that the build programme is to commence at the end of November.

Members queried any change in the specification of the original tender. Officers confirmed that a number of original tenderers' suggestions have been built into the new tender process, now being progressed within budget by the contractor.

Wind Street

We heard that there have been issues with installations of traffic bollards at the top of Wind Street; some services having been identified during excavations, which officers explained were not on original plans.

Shaping Swansea

The Panel were told that this contract has been issued to Urban Splash and that there is already positive interest from leisure operators regarding the Civic sites, encompassing 17 acres of green areas and car parks. Officers highlighted to us that a meeting is scheduled with the Council's planning team and Urban Splash to discuss potential CADW listed status of the Civic Centre.

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Mariner Street

We heard that all residential floors are now complete and handed over for occupation, although outstanding works including ground floor shopfronts, vinyl window treatment, and completion of tower cladding remains ongoing. Officers explained that the practical completion is scheduled for November and that fit-out of retail units is scheduled for December.

Castle Square

We heard that the FPR7 Cabinet Report is being drafted to seek funding to deliver the project and that further meetings are to be held with Highways, Lighting, Parks and Cleansing, City Centre Manager and Events teams.

We sought clarification on the project manager post and potential grant funding, having understood this to have been secured. Officers explained that Swansea Council is the developer, having appointed a professional team. Officers also explained to us that funds have been allocated for work-up costs, although capital costs have not yet been approved.

Community Hub

We understand that there are ongoing issues surrounding the re-location of archives, which are to be addressed with the archive department. Members queried alternative provisions for the archives, and officers explained they currently sit within the basement of the Civic Centre.

We understand current proposals are to move the archives into a new community hub building within the City Centre. The Panel raised some concerns over the suitability of this proposed location, and are aware that the Scrutiny Programme Committee will address this issue in further detail.

Officers explained to us that some enabling works have commenced on site, such as asbestos stripping, to prepare the site for contractors.

Pontoons

It was explained to us that the legal documents are currently being drafted and reviewed, including suggested terms regarding rights and access for the Copper Jack and Rowing Club as prime intended users of the facility.

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Members asked about the Skyline project, which was not included on the project update report. Officers explained that a revised business case has been submitted to Welsh Government for funding discussions. We understand that Skyline have engaged architects on the design, having now changed the restaurant design to be replaced with an area for local food hubs. Officers clarified that Swansea is the only Skyline project currently progressing in Europe.

Members also queried the funding position regarding Penderyn Distillery. Officers explained that this project is moving forward and discussions with the Heritage Lottery fund are ongoing.

Your Response

We are interested in any thoughts you may have on the contents of this letter. We would be grateful if you would please provide a written response to the following points by 22nd December 2021:

- 1) In relation to Castle Square, please clarify whether any private funding source will be allocated to this project.
- 2) Please confirm whether the Arena will host an opening event prior to the first ticketed events in March.
- 3) Please outline car-parking provision at the Arena site, including access points off Oystermouth Road.
- 4) Please confirm if potential parking problems at Swansea Marina have been considered and what plans are in place to mitigate such potential problems.
- 5) We would like to formally note our long-standing concerns regarding the affordability and long-term financial viability of the Arena development as a whole.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Jeff Jones
Convener, Development and Regeneration Performance Panel
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