



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

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Overview & Scrutiny

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30 September 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 7 September 2021. It covers the Project Update Report.

Dear Councillor Francis-Davies,

On the 7th September, 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.

The Panel also thanked Professor Steve Wilks and Professor Keith Lloyd, who attended on behalf of Swansea University to provide an update on City Deal projects. Discussions focused on the following:

Swansea University

The Panel heard about City Deal developments, in the context of Swansea University and their partnership with Swansea Council and the Local Health Board. The Panel heard about the aspirations for investment in the *MedTech* and *SportsTech* sector, aiming to provide opportunities for companies to collaborate with Swansea University.

Under proposals for the Sketty and Morriston University sites, we heard that the Swansea University developments are expected to foster a group of up to 300 firms,

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and circa 1000 jobs, creating a space for companies to work alongside clinicians, advancing new treatments and technology. We understand that Swansea University will also work with the Local Health Board and Swansea Council to improve road access and infrastructure around the Morriston site.

The Panel queried the total amount of City Deal funding being allocated to Swansea University and, separately, Trinity Saint David (UWTSD). Officers undertook to provide further clarification on this breakdown, which has now been received with thanks. Members also noted that the UWTSD original 'Box Village' scheme will now not proceed and will be replaced with a new scheme.

Panel Members discussed the information shared and thanked Swansea University for the interesting and informative update.

Project Update Report

Huw Mowbray, Development and Physical Regeneration Strategic Manager, updated the Panel on the regeneration projects in Swansea. Discussions focused on the following:

We heard that work continues to progress well on the **Copr Bay Phase 1** project, despite challenges faced by Covid cases on-site. Officers explained that LED Panels are nearing the completion stage and that façade testing is to commence shortly.

Officers explained to us that parkland / landscaping work continues and that temporary commercial units will be added within the park area.

We questioned the progress of the Hotel development. Officers explained that finance and funding discussions are on-going, and that the Council is considering other alternative options that may become necessary.

Officers explained that the Government Property Agency (GPA) is considering proposals for the **Swansea Central North** site, highlighting to us the positive response from a recent Ministerial site visit.

The Panel understand that works are nearing completion on the **Kingsway** project and that the final pedestrian crossing treatment is pending. Officers explained that final costs, taking account of bonds, are yet to be confirmed on this project.

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The Panel heard that a contractor has been selected for the **71/72 The Kingsway** project, and contract discussions ongoing. We understand that the reduced supply of materials is an on-going and significant aspect of all construction projects presently, having regard to on-going effects of the pandemic.

Members raised queries over the impacts on costs of such supply issues. Officers explained that fixed-price contracts will not be affected, and as such this project will remain unaffected in that respect.

It was pleasing to hear that good progress is being made with the production of a fly-through of the **Wind Street** project, with completion anticipated for November. The Panel heard that three Rainbow Crossings have been proposed to Cabinet, encompassing a pedestrian crossing with rainbow road markings.

Members queried whether improvements have been made to building facades along **Wind Street** and the improvement in street furniture layout. Officers explained that grants may be available to occupiers through other schemes, to improve façades, and that consultation was underway as to street furniture layout.

The Panel questioned whether there would be visible security presence on **Wind Street**. Officers confirmed that the possibility of employing extra City Centre Rangers was being considered by the Council. Officers also reiterated that the Wales Extremism and Counter Terrorism Unit (WECTU) had been consulted in project designs.

The Panel heard that landscaping proposals are underway for **Castle Square**, including some suggested designs to incorporate interchangeable fountains and water features, enabling space to be utilised for other purposes when water supply is turned off.

Members raised queries over possible archaeological interests at the **Castle Square** site. Officers explained that most archaeology was removed during the Victorian era, however, there will be a requirement for a watching brief during initial ground work stages.

The Panel were interested to hear about the long-term project **Shaping Swansea**, which we were informed will comprise seven initial main sites. Officers explained to us that they anticipate significant progress will be made within the next twelve months.

We heard that, under the **City Deal**, Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) have made a change request regarding their Innovation Matrix project in the SA1 area. Their second project,

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the Innovation Precinct, is proposed to move into the City Centre. Members queried where in the City Centre this will be based and officers explained this is yet to be confirmed.

Panel Members also queried the sum of £15M for the Swansea University Health project, and its inclusion in the original City Deal allocation. Officers explained that the Health project was allocated a similar, but separate, figure to Trinity St David.

We heard that an extension of time request has been received from the Contractor on the **Powerhouse** site, but that the team are moving forward as quickly as possible alongside Covid restrictions.

The Panel noted that there has been a significant increase in interest surrounding the vacant **Felindre** site. Officers explained that they are hopeful for further news on this over coming months.

Your Response

We are interested in any thoughts you may have on the contents of this letter but, in this instance, we require no formal written response.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Jeff Jones
Convener, Development and Regeneration Performance Panel
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