

**COMMUNITIES, HOMES & REGENERATION SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

TUESDAY, 16 APRIL 2024

PRESENT: Councillor R.E. Evans (Chair)

Councillors (In Person):

B. Davies	T. Davies	H.L. Davies	M. Palfreman
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Councillors (Virtually):

D.M. Cundy	W.R.A. Davies	B.W. Jones	D. Owen
H.B. Shepardson	R. Sparks	M. Thomas	

Also in attendance (In Person):

Councillor L.D. Evans – Cabinet Member for Homes and Deputy Leader
Councillor A. Lenny – Cabinet Member for Resources

Also in attendance (Virtually):

Councillor A. Davies – Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs Community Cohesion and
Planning Policy

Also Present (In Person):

J. Fearn, Head of Housing Property and Strategic Projects
I. Jones, Head of Leisure
J. Morgan, Head of Housing and Public Protection
H. Morgan, Economic Development Manager
A. Williams, Head of Health Related Capital Projects
D. Jones, Group Accountant
R. C. Reynolds, Project Officer
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator
D. Hall-Jones, Member Support Officer
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present (Virtually):

R. Griffiths, Head of Place and Sustainability
M. Runeckles, Members Support Officer

Chamber - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP and remotely - 11.15 am - 12.55 pm

(NOTE: Due to the late return by the Committee from an earlier site visit,
commencement of the meeting was delayed from the scheduled 11.00a.m. start)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor K. Howell.

The Chair welcomed Councillor B. Davies to his first meeting of the committee following his recent period of ill-health.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM

Councillor	Minute No (s)	Nature of Interest
R. Sparks	4 – Pentre Awel Progress Report	Has a swimming business and runs swimming lessons and has dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak and make written representations on leisure matters but not vote
R. Sparks	5 – 2023/24 Quarter 3 – Performance Report (01/04/23- 31/12/23 relevant to this Scrutiny	Has a swimming business and runs swimming lessons and has dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak and make written representations on leisure matters but not vote
R. Sparks	6 – Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report	Has a swimming business and runs swimming lessons and has dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak and make written representations on leisure matters but not vote

There were no declarations of personal interest or of any prohibited party whips.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

4. PENTRE AWEL PROGRESS REPORT

(NOTE: Councillor R Sparks having earlier declared an interest in this item, re-declared the interest and remained in the meeting for its consideration)

The Committee received a progress report providing an update on the Pentre Awel Project and assurance the project was being delivered to target and timescale.

The following questions/issues were raised on the report:

- Reference was made to the revenue implications of the proposed development and the Committee was advised that based upon the business model and full occupancy being achieved, the costs associated

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with the site's operation would be met via rental / service charge income. In that regard, work was also currently being undertaken on reassessing the original Business Plan.

The Head of Health Related Capital Projects confirmed that whilst the development currently had some anchor tenants, agreements had not been reached for full occupancy of the development which was not unusual at this stage in the development of a large site as prospective tenants were more likely to sign intentions to lease when they could physically see the end product they would be signing up to. The Council was working with partners to secure further tenants and was also in the process of engaging a property agent to act attract tenants.

- The Head of leisure referred to a comment on the potential cost impact of the new leisure centre on the leisure services budget and reminded the Committee that currently some parts of the Leisure Services portfolio operated at a profit with that then being used to subsidise other operational areas within the portfolio. In relation to the operation of the new leisure centre, the development provided greater income generating opportunities than that available at the current Llanelli Leisure Centre including, a larger swimming pool, gym, and enhanced catering facilities. It was therefore anticipated the centre would not adversely impact on the leisure budget with the cost thereof having been factored into the budget.
- With regard to the proposed inclusion of a public sector nursing home within the development, the Head of Health Related Capital Projects confirmed there was no legal impediment to a public sector organisation operating a nursing home. While there were no such facilities operating within Wales, there were approximately 40 nursing homes run by English local authorities and discussions were being undertaken with some of those to assess how they were operated. Some feasibility work was being undertaken at a regional level into proposed operating models; there were two options. The first being that the Local Authority would run the home, but the Health Board would employ and retain clinical governance for the nurse. The second option was for the Health Board to delegate authority to the Local Authority to employ and provide the clinical governance for the nurses.
- With regard to the appointment of Community Ambassadors for the development, the Committee was advised there were currently 12 such ambassadors and work was ongoing to increase that number to achieve a wider community involvement and engagement with community groups. The committee was informed that details of the ambassador scheme would be provided to members. However, it should be noted that County Councillors could not be Community Ambassadors.
- Reference was made to the emphasis within the Swansea Bay City Deal for the development to provide community benefits and job creation, and the Committee welcomed the news that, to date, the sum of £70m representing 72% of the total spend, had been allocated to Welsh Companies, 9% of which had spent within the SA postcode Area.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

- It was confirmed links and engagement were in place with Llesiant Delta Wellbeing on its involvement with the site's development relevant to its operational remit.
- It was confirmed all efforts were being made to limit the development's carbon impact and encouraging its ongoing environmental sustainability.
- With regard to a question on the operation of the swimming pool at the new leisure centre for canoeing and sub aqua opportunities and the wider sport provision within Llanelli coastal area, the Head of Leisure advised that a new Carmarthenshire Sport Network had recently been established involving national and local organisations and the authority had a good relationship with that Network. On the specific aspect relating to the pool's use for canoeing etc, that would be dependent upon a number of factors including demand. Discussions could also be undertaken for their provision at alternative venues including North Dock, Delta Lake and Swiss Valley.
- In relation to access to the development by non car owners, the committee was advised that agreement had been reached with a private bus operator to provide a circular bus route connecting the town centre to Prince Phillip Hospital, Trostre Retail Park and Pentre Awel, stopping at Pentre Awel 7 times a day.
- It was confirmed that while no provision had been made within the development for a pedestrian crossing at the site entrance to Pentre Awel, a Road Traffic Order was being processed to reduce traffic speeds in the area from 40mph to 30mph to improve pedestrian safety.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the progress report be received.

**5. 2023/24 QUARTER 3 - PERFORMANCE REPORT (01/04/23-31/12/23)
RELEVANT TO THIS SCRUTINY**

(NOTE: Councillor R Sparks having earlier declared an interest in this item, re-declared the interest and remained in the meeting for its consideration)

The Committee received the 2023/24 Quarter 3 Performance Report for the period 1st April to 31st December 2023 in respect of the areas falling within its remit detailing the progress made against the actions and measures within the Corporate Strategy and on the delivery of the Well-Being Objectives.

The following questions / issues were raised on the report:

- Reference was made to action 16546 within the report relating to improving the customer experience of the planning application register. It was confirmed whilst tweaks were undertaken thereto, delays had been encountered in its improvement due to competing priorities and resource allocation.
- Reference was made to current statutory provision for the Council to advise local residents of planning applications within their locality/neighbourhood and to whether the council could go beyond that requirement to be more inclusive.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

The Committee was reminded that part of the existing planning process required applicants to erect site notices and to provide proof of their posting to the planning department prior to an application's consideration. With regard to extending that provision to possibly including a postal drop to the nearest properties, the Committee was advised that would have resource implications for the department with staff being taken away from their principal duty of considering planning applications.

The Committee was also reminded the Council operated a pre-planning application service whereby potential developers could obtain advice from the planning department (for a fee) on the processes, obligations and requirements placed on them in seeking planning consent. It was also confirmed the Council held 'Developer Days' throughout the year to advise on the planning process.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

6. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2023/24

(NOTE: Councillor R Sparks having earlier declared an interest in this item, re-declared the interest and remained in the meeting for its consideration)

The Committee considered the 2023/24 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring reports for the Housing, Regeneration and Property, Place and Sustainability and Leisure and Recreation Services for the period up to the 31st December, 2023. It noted the revenue budget was forecasting a £306k underspend, the capital budget a £48,489k underspend, whilst the Housing Revenue Account was forecasting a £84k overspend.

The following questions/issues were raised on the report:

- In response to a query on the budget setting process for 2025/26, it was confirmed preparatory work had already commenced thereon. However, its progression could be impacted by the timing of the Chancellor's Autumn budget statement, should a general election be called which, in turn, would impact the timing of the Welsh Government's announcement on the settlement for local authorities.
- Reference was made to the redevelopment of the Station Road / Tyisha area of Llanelli and the Head of Housing Property and Strategic Projects advised that tender documents would be issued shortly for the appointment of a developer, with the budget having been re-profiled to reflect spend would be undertaken in later years.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report be received.

7. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORTS.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

The Committee received an explanation for the non-submission of the following scrutiny reports

- Alternative Town Centre Usage
- Major Regeneration Projects Update
- Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Local Development Plan

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the explanation for the non-submissions be noted.

8. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 7TH MARCH 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 7th March, 2024 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.