

# Communities, Homes and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

16<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**Subject:**

Pentre Awel Progress Report

**Purpose:**

To provide an update surrounding progress of the project.

**THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IS ASKED TO:-**

Review and assess the information contained in the report and provide any recommendations, comments, or advice to the Cabinet Member.

**Reason(s)**

To ensure that the Pentre Awel Project is being delivered to timescale and target.

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-**

Cllr Hazel Evans, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Leisure, Culture and Tourism

**Directorate****Name of Head of Service:**

Alex Williams

**Report Author:**

Alex Williams

**Designations:**

Head of Health-Related Capital  
Projects

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**Communities, Homes and Regeneration Scrutiny**  
**Committee**  
**16<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

**Subject: Pentre Awel Progress Report**

**1. BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT.**

The report provides a summary of progress to date with the Pentre Awel project, and seeks to provide assurance to Carmarthenshire County Council that the project is being delivered to target and timescale.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES**

# IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

Signed: Alex Williams

Head of Health-Related Capital Projects

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets	Bio-diversity & Climate Change
<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

## 1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

Pentre Awel is a key regeneration project for Carmarthenshire and provides one of the 4 opportunities identified in the Council's Innovation Strategy, *Exploring the Innovation Prospects for Carmarthenshire*. This will entail the development of a living laboratory to create a real world test-bed to develop and test innovative products and technologies in the field of life sciences.

## 2. Finance

The contract sum for the construction of Zone 1 is £84m with an overall scheme cost of £96m. The additional sum over and above the current contract covers pre-construction costs, professional fees, contingency and an additional sum for fit out costs which sits outside of the current contract. Construction costs are being monitored closely and are currently within budget.

The revenue implications of operating the site are being evaluated and will be incorporated into future years' revenue budgets.

The financial profile for subsequent zones will be developed as those zones develop. These zones will require private sector investment and will therefore need to be sustainable in their own right. As the proposals develop the business plan will be completed.

## 4. ICT

As a development it is intended that Pentre Awel will be fully ICT enabled, and maximise the opportunities that develop through the innovation of 5G technologies across the City Region.

## **5. Risk Management Issues**

A risk register is in place for Pentre Awel which is regularly reviewed. Risks above a score of 12 are escalated to the Project Steering Group and Board.

The key risk relates to securing sufficient tenancies to generate sufficient revenue to run the facility. However, it is not unusual for tenancies to not all be filled at this stage in the construction process. Prospective tenants are more likely to sign intentions to lease when they can physically see the end product that they are signing up to. The detailed report sets out the range of mitigating activity that is being undertaken to secure prospective tenants.

Another risk relates to the construction contract being delivered to timescale. At the time of writing the report, the construction programme was projected to be 2 weeks over timescale. This was in the main due to the significant adverse weather that we have experienced over winter. The contractor is however subject to financial penalties if they go over timescale, so every effort is being made to bring the programme back on track. It should be noted that the Health Board Clinical Delivery Unit will go over timescale, due to their request for significant change in design to their space. It is therefore envisaged that Zone 1 will open on a phased approach.

There is a risk attached to delivery of the City Deal outputs, as set out in the original business case as these were quite ambitious at the outset of the programme. However, these will be delivered over the lifetime of the project, rather than just linked to the construction phase. This means that we have until 2032 to deliver them. We are in the process of refreshing the business case, and as part of this refresh we will be re-evaluating the original outputs to ensure that they are achievable and deliverable within this timescale as well as identifying new benefits that have emerged since the original business case was drafted.

Finally, there is a risk linked to the financial viability and deliverability of future zones. However, these will not progress until a viable business case is secured and there is confidence that they are deliverable and affordable.

## **6. Physical Assets**

The development of Pentre Awel will inevitably create significant physical assets which will need to be operationally managed from a facilities and grounds maintenance perspective. An Operational Group has been established, chaired by the Head of Health-Related Capital Projects, to focus on these aspects and ensure that everything is in place to support opening. This group is focussing on Zone 1 at this stage, but the remit of the group will expand as future zones develop and as appropriate.

## **7. Staffing Implications**

There may be increased staffing implications for Carmarthenshire County Council associated with the opening of Zone 1, particularly in relation to facilities management, grounds maintenance and the enhanced Leisure offer. Every opportunity is being made, however, to relocate existing teams to Pentre Awel to provide the necessary functions, so any investment in additional staff will be kept to a minimum. The tenancy agreement and service charges agreement will be the key source of funding for the facilities management. These implications are currently being scoped through, and budgets identified with a view to supporting any recruitment required prior to opening.

Current staff employed at Llanelli Leisure Centre will also be affected, and be relocating as part of the opening of the new Leisure offer. Usual HR processes will be followed in line with a relocation of base for those staff affected. The funding of the current leisure centre will follow to the new facility.

## **8. Biodiversity and Climate Change**

The project has the benefit of an outline planning consent which is supported by a comprehensive Environmental Statement with Ecology and Biodiversity at the heart of its proposals. As part of the Zone 1 construction works, a comprehensive landscaping scheme to both the extents of the Dafen lake and external areas to the primary building on site has been developed and was approved via a reserved matters consent for the Zone 1 contracted works in June 2022. Construction works have progressed to these areas with a new shared footway/cycleway also being constructed. Landscaping works to the lake edge will progress over the coming month with habitat improvements for both water vole, otter and reptiles forming the main focus of proposals. Rain gardens, sensory gardens and other complementary landscaping works to the south of the lake, within and around the building footprint, will also be implemented in line with the construction programme.

During the construction period, principal contractor Bouygues has adopted sustainable methods of construction, including the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) for plant/machinery, solar panel powered site offices and cabins and recycling of excavated material/soil to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. Bouygues has committed to diverting 98% of waste from landfill.

Active travel will also be promoted to the site in line with the planning conditions. Ensuring that Pentre Awel is well linked to the town centre is essential to make the development a success. To this end, there will be a circular bus route which connects the town centre to Prince Phillip Hospital, Trostre Retail Park and Pentre Awel and the bus will stop at Pentre Awel 7 times per day.

<b>CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED</b> YES	<b>Include any observations here: NONE</b>
<b>Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:</b>  NONE	