

REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 18 JANUARY 2019

City Deal: Project Update

Introduction

1. There is one regional project upon which this Council leads and three local projects. Details are below.

Homes for Power Stations

2. The project is designed to deliver a programme of new build developments, the retro-fitting of existing buildings and local supply chain development support to help tackle fuel poverty; cut carbon emissions and meet the need for more housing. It is the intention to roll out the project across the region in subsequent phases (perhaps under different models)

Progress update

3. This regional project is already underway at a local level. The proposed development in Neath will provide 16 new homes on the site of the former Hafod Care Home: eight 2 and 3 bedroom homes and eight 1 bedroom apartments. Other projects are proceeding under the "Homes" banner.
4. More widely, a business case was submitted to the Welsh Government in August 2018. Initial comments were received in November 2018 and the dialogue is ongoing.

Centre for Next Generation Services (CENGS)

5. The aim of CENGS is to bridge, through data analytics, the gap between research and innovation and the commercialisation of products and services to anchor in the region the next generation of global communication services.

Progress update

6. A Wales European Funding Office (WEFO) grant of circa £3m has been secured to construct the building in Baglan. Work is expected to commence later this year.

7. Slower progress has been made with the revenue side of the business case and options for future developments are being reviewed.

Steel Science/Factory of the Future

8. The Steel Science project will create a new National Steel Innovation Centre, which will provide an open access facility for the steel and metal supply chain. A range of research, testing and simulation activities will be carried out at the Centre with regional companies and global enterprises, helping forge stronger links between industry and academia and safeguard the steel-making sector.
9. The Factory of the Future would be a Centre of Excellence with state-of-the-art equipment, building on the expertise of the College of Engineering at Swansea University. The project will develop, demonstrate and accelerate the uptake of disruptive smart manufacturing technologies.

Progress update

10. These projects are to be co-located and are therefore taken together.
11. Some progress has been made with the University on the business cases, although they are not yet fully funded.
12. The main issue during 2018, however, has been land. The preferred site – adjacent to Amazon on Fabian Way – is owned by the Welsh Government. The Council and University have been in discussion with the Welsh Government about the acquisition of this site since February 2018; but the position remains unresolved.
13. Moreover, the Factory of the Future project is subject to a further review of the anticipated outcomes as part of the Council's contribution to the Joint Committee's internal review.