

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

PART A - SUPPLEMENTARIES

1.	<p>Councillors C A Holley, J W Jones & M H Jones Considering the adverse comments made by the previous Leader regarding developers will the new Leader tell Council what he is going to do to attract developers into the City Centre.</p> <p>Response of the Leader Swansea is Wales' second city and has a major role and responsibility in improving the economy of the city region. I believe Swansea is well placed to take advantage of the economic recovery that is underway, but we must improve our reputation as a place to do business and develop our offer to future investors - both indigenous and those outside Wales.</p> <p>In relation to the city centre, there are a number of urgent actions that I want us to get on with in the weeks ahead.</p> <p>We will hold the city futures conference next month, capturing international talent and expertise to help finalise the strategy review work which is currently underway. This will give investors confidence that we have a credible, evidence based gameplan for the city centre's regeneration and that we will support them to deliver investment in our city.</p> <p>We also need to get on with delivering the Realising the Potential programme and secure additional funding support from Welsh Government and Europe. I realise that this programme will take many years to deliver, but our urgent priority is to secure a new development partner for the city centre redevelopment. I want us to accelerate the marketing process for key sites such as St David's Car Park. Developer interest is strengthening, and I want this Authority to take advantage of this by securing a credible development partner and fast-track the development process.</p> <p>We will adopt a more positive and pro-active approach to marketing Swansea to developers and inward investors. This will involve targeting key companies and inviting them to Swansea to see, first hand, the scale of the opportunity available. As part of this approach we will prepare a prospectus for the city centre which will clearly set out for residents, businesses and investors our new strategic thinking for the city centre, together with development opportunities. This will then be launched through a city centre event with local businesses, prospective investors and developers being invited.</p> <p>If we are to retain existing businesses and attract vital new investment to our city, we will need to play to our strengths - the international profile from the success of the Swans; the major investments being made by Swansea University; and the award winning environment that is literally on our doorstep. We will adopt a can-do attitude and will engage our local business community, in particular the Business Improvement District, to ensure the local knowledge and views are properly considered.</p>
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	<p>I am committed to working with funding partners, communities, local businesses, inward investors and developers to ensure we achieve a step change in the city centre. By working together, I am confident that Swansea City Centre has a bright future ahead.</p>
2.	<p>Councillors C A Holley, L G Thomas & J Newbury. Some Community 1st areas get additional funding through the Council's Target area policy. Will the Cabinet Member tell Council what is the proposed investment in these areas for the next two years.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Target Areas The Target Areas are: Townhill & Castle 1 & 3 (covered by the West Cluster area) Castle - part of 2 (covered by the South Cluster area) Penderry (the North West cluster area)</p> <p>The Communities First programme has an annual allocation of funding from Welsh Government for each of the Cluster areas. This has been broadly similar each financial year since 2012/13. Additional support is received from Welsh Government's Communities First programme within the East and North West Clusters. The East cluster has an Older Person's officer, and the North West Cluster has the LIFT programme. This is a Department of Work and Pensions programme run in partnership with Job Centre Plus aimed at assisting those who are long term unemployed into learning, training and employment. The LIFT programme is an additional grant for Penderry of approximately £93k. Both of these clusters also have Communities First Engagement Officers supporting residents and particular communities to access activities within the programme.</p> <p>The proposed investment from a Communities First perspective is based on the submission of Cluster Delivery Plans, and Community Involvement plans to Welsh Government in late summer each year. The Council's submissions will have been approved requesting funding for staffing and activities in each of the cluster areas for 2015/16 of: North West Cluster - £812,098 West Cluster - £670,077 South Cluster - £643,244</p> <p>Welsh Government has indicated formally by letter that the Communities First programme will run until 2016/17. Therefore Swansea should be able to apply again in the late summer of 2015/16 for another year's funding. This is likely to be a similar amount again for each area.</p> <p>A number of streets, neighbourhoods and communities within the Target areas have received additional resources outside of the Communities First Programme. These include Education's LIFE programme, access to Promoting Inclusion, a push on Restorative Practice, the Housing Capital refurbishment programme etc. The Council's resources in many of these areas have been spent on areas of need, supporting people who are vulnerable, who have a range of complex needs.</p> <p>The draft Poverty Strategy which is presently out for consultation has a major theme of Targeting resources. This is based on making sure the money and the people that can help are in the right place. This would involve the development of plans to re-focus resources, moving and shifting elements of budgets and required spend into geographical areas, and/or towards specific interest groups and communities.</p>

	<p>The approach overall to the Council's spend over the next two years will be set in the normal way through the budget setting process. There are existing funding commitments, such as grant programmes in areas such as Housing and Highways.</p>
3.	<p>Councillors E W Fitzgerald, D G Sullivan, L James, S M Jones, K M Marsh, I M Richard & G D Walker</p> <p>In view of the enthusiasm among some councillors for renewable energy will the appropriate Cabinet Member inform Members if there are any plans for Swansea to follow the example of Bradford Council and lend money to schools to place solar PV panels on their roofs?</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Sustainability</p> <p>At this time there are currently no specific plans for the Council to lend money to schools for installing Solar PV systems.</p> <p>Alternative solutions within the City & County of Swansea (CCoS) will promote the installation of Solar Photovoltaic (PV) systems on Council facilities via the following arrangements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Welsh Purchasing Consortium (WPC) Solar PV framework 2. The Community Renewable Energy & Enterprise Scheme <p><u>1. Welsh Purchasing Consortium (WPC) Solar PV framework</u></p> <p>A WPC Solar PV framework is currently being developed to select specialist Solar PV installers to supply systems within the 19 Local Authorities in Wales.</p> <p>This contract will include Solar PV systems on both domestic and non-domestic buildings, including schools, as well as an option for Ground mounted Solar PV systems on Council owned land.</p> <p>The WPC framework will enable the supply and installation of Solar PV systems which are paid directly by a School or the alternative option where the Solar PV system is installed "free of charge" by a third party. For these contracts, commonly known as "Rent-a-Roof", the company funding the Solar PV scheme will collect the Feed-In-Tariff, with the school receiving free electricity from the Solar PV system.</p> <p>Torfaen CBC are leading the procurement process with CCoS co-ordinating the Technical support work. Timescales for completing the tender process are late 2014 with a view to commencing Solar PV installations in Spring /Summer 2015.</p> <p><u>2. Community Renewable Energy & Enterprise Scheme (CREES)</u></p> <p>The CREES scheme is to develop Community renewable energy projects in the Priority One Target Areas, where local people benefit from the renewable energy produced. The project aims to act as a platform to help build capacity, credibility and confidence to the point where the community are able to develop further schemes to address their local needs by enabling them to generate an income out of their environmental assets as well as promote economic growth and job creation.</p> <p>An initial high level scoping exercise identified Solar PV as offering the best potential for meeting the initial CREES objectives. A detailed feasibility study confirmed that a community Solar PV scheme is viable within the Target Areas.</p>

	<p>Phase 1 of CREES is to develop a community Solar PV scheme on CCoS non-domestic properties in the Target Areas, including schools. Key actions and timescales have been identified to establish the project delivery mechanism along with the costs, associated benefits and the risk factors involved.</p> <p><u>Suitable Schools</u> All Schools within CCoS have been mapped for their potential suitability within the WPC framework or CREES. Suitable schools were classed as those with South, South West or South East facing roofs, which will provide a reasonable return on investment. The final selection of school buildings will be subject to further detailed structural and electrical surveys.</p>
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PART B

1.	<p>Councillors A M Day, C L Philpott & P M Meara. Will the Cabinet Member tell Council when we are going to see the proposals for next phase of school rebuilding?</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for ?? The Capital Budget Report to Council on the 18th February 2014 clearly set out the challenging financial and budget outlook, the agreed funding strategy, and the consequent need to consider carefully future phases of the programme. At the current time considerable work is being undertaken to continue to progress the phase 1 schemes identified and further schemes will be brought forward as funding is confirmed.</p>
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