

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

PART A - SUPPLEMENTARIES

1.	<p>Councillors E W Fitzgerald, D G Sullivan, L James, S M Jones, K M Marsh, I M Richard & G D Walker.</p> <p>Could the relevant Cabinet Member inform Council how many Houses of Multiple Occupation are registered, ward by ward, in Swansea? How many HMOs are occupied solely by students?</p> <p>Response by Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing</p> <p>As of 10th October 2014, there were 1,499 licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Swansea. Split by ward these are:</p> <table data-bbox="261 719 703 936"><tr><td>Castle</td><td>481</td></tr><tr><td>Landore</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Oystermouth</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>St Thomas</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Sketty</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>Uplands</td><td>996</td></tr></table> <p>Details are not kept about whether occupiers are students as this is a private matter for each landlord.</p>	Castle	481	Landore	1	Oystermouth	2	St Thomas	3	Sketty	16	Uplands	996
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2.	<p>Councillors A M Day, P M Meara & T H Rees.</p> <p>Will the new Cabinet Member for Education tell Council what her priorities are for the service, how she will ensure they are achieved and how she will measure the progress made in achieving those objectives?</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Education</p> <p>Education's challenges and priorities are those of our single integrated plan, <i>One Swansea</i>, and the Corporate Improvement Plan 2013-17, namely to:</p> <ol data-bbox="312 1451 1350 1637" style="list-style-type: none">1. Raise attainment and achievement for all learners 3-192. Improve Attendance levels3. Improve Literacy in English and Welsh to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the curriculum and to reduce the gap between boys and girls. <p>National and local indicators will continue to be monitored closely. The Council is working with its schools to increase the number of 15-16 year olds achieving the GCSE level 2 threshold, including English and / or Welsh first language and maths. From a low of 49.2% in 2009 there has been a year on year increase to 55.3% in 2013 and to 58.8% this year, 2014. Councillors will, I know, be pleased to hear that the percentage of pupils who achieved the GCSE level 2 threshold rose from 59.9% in 2009 to 84% this year. Those who achieved the level 1 threshold rose from 86.1% in 2009 to 94.9% this year.</p> <p>It is very important that we continue with Education's contribution to our Corporate Priority to reduce the impact of poverty and focus on improving attainment and achievement for disadvantaged pupils and learners. At key stage 2, those in receipt of free school meals are making considerable progress. Outcomes at key stages 3 and 4 will be closely monitored for</p>												

	<p>evidence of improvement and for the effective use of the additional funding schools receive.</p> <p>The LA will continue to monitor the percentage of half days missed at both primary and secondary schools. Attendance has been improving: primary schools are now at 94.4% and secondary schools not far behind at 93.3%. To maintain improvement, Education will be working closely with parents / carers and schools to ensure that pupils receive a rich and meaningful curriculum in a safe environment. Support will be offered where problems are identified.</p> <p>Being literate, able to read and write and communicate is an essential skill. There has been a steady improvement from the Foundation Phase upwards. The data will continue to be analysed. Targeted support will be offered including ERW support, Challenge Advisors and through our Hub arrangement with NPTC. Education will continue to develop partnerships with the further & higher education sectors and with work based trainers and employers to increase the literacy and skills of those seeking to improve adult qualification.</p> <p>My priorities of constant improvement will be achieved by using all the data to drill down in detail to identify the specific areas and pupils where improvement is slow. Working with our schools and regional partners, additional support and / or different approaches successfully proven elsewhere will be introduced. Regular monitoring of all indicators local and national will be used to measure progress. Education in the City & County of Swansea will continue to draw on national and international research to inform our use of data and our practice.</p>
3.	<p>Councillors M H Jones, J W Jones & A M Day.</p> <p>Will the new Cabinet Member for Services for Adults and Vulnerable People tell Council what her priorities are for the service in particular Mental Health provision, how she will ensure they are achieved and how she will measure the progress made in achieving those objectives?</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Services for Adults and Vulnerable People</p> <p>The priorities for Mental Health Services are agreed with our partners within ABMU and wider stakeholders including service users and carers In line with Welsh Government requirements these are set out in 'Together for Mental Health' the regional strategic plan for mental health services. The plan is reviewed annually through the Mental Health Partnership Board and informed through 'Have Your Say ' engagement events to include a wider group of stakeholder views The plan reflects the priorities across the ABMU region aligned to the broad themes determined for Mental Health .Services across Wales.</p> <p>Some of the areas we will be thinking about next year and through the Western Bay regional partnership arrangements include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role and function of community mental health teams, • The potential for further integration of services to support better joint working arrangements, • The finance available and the arrangements for commissioning external services • The remodelling of in house mental health services to support a more sustainable model for delivering support for people with mental health issues.

4. **Councillors C A Holley, P M Meara & J Newbury.**

As Swansea was a pilot authority for the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) for Sustainable Development will the Leader tell Council what has happened to the work from this portfolio and who has responsibility for it now he has appointed his new Cabinet?

Response of The Leader

The lead for Sustainable development is now the responsibility of the Transformation and Performance Cabinet Member. However it should be noted that the sustainable development is a key principle which runs through all portfolios and the Sustainable Swansea programme.

As you are aware Swansea Council has been working with the WLGA as their chosen pilot local authority on their Sustainable Development Framework programme. The purpose of this work is to investigate what step changes are required to embed sustainable development as the central organising principle for local government in advance of what is now known as the Well-Being for Future Generations Bill.

Members and officers have worked closely with WLGA consultants for the past two and half years in areas such as leadership development, sustainable development reporting, business plans, foresighting and long term planning. There has been much learning for us as an authority, which has had a direct influence in our approach to governance, and can be clearly seen in our key programmes such as the Sustainable Swansea Fit for the Future.

This learning has also fed into the development of the Future Generations Bill, which is now under scrutiny in the National Assembly for Wales and we are sharing our learning with other local authorities and the national Parks as part of the Early Adopters Programme, the second phase of the WLGA's Sustainable Development programme.

Supplementary Information:

Key learning from the WLGA Sustainable Development Framework programme:

- There is an urgent need for refocusing public service delivery on longer term outcomes with a more streamlined delivery mechanism
- Using sustainable development as a framework for change and transformation has the potential to drive out waste and duplication and encourage a focus on prevention and demand management
- Developing the Leadership capacity for sustainable development and aligning goals vertically and horizontally across an organisation, with other organisations and between levels of government is critical
- Level of current Sustainable Development maturity of an organisation will determine both the level of administrative cost and the potential benefits from implementing the requirements of the Bill
- Current financial and legal systems, cultures of silo thinking and risk averseness act as barriers to embedding sustainable development as the central organising principle
- The presence of high quality internal and external relationships is recognised as being the one of the most important precursors of effective change and the embedding of sustainability principles

5. **Cllrs C A Holley, M H Jones & C L Philpott.**

Will the Leader tell Council what use is being made of consultants in the Council? Whilst recognising that there is commercial sensitivity over individual contracts, could he please give as much information as possible about total spending on consultants in each of the last 3 financial years, and to date for this financial year?

(a) Which departments and sections is the consultancy work being undertaken in?

(b) Will he also tell Council which sections and departments where consultants are being used are staff being reduced through ER/VR and/or compulsory redundancy?

Response of The Leader

In terms of expenditure across financial years the following is the actual expenditure recorded via the Councils General Ledger

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15 YTD
£	£	£	£
2,135,650	1,922,713	1,475,737	388.632

In terms of Departmental split the overall figure is as follows:-

Corporate Services	People	Place
£	£	£
1,372,418	605,177	3,945,137

Although the numbers appear significant, over the period identified the amounts identified include:-

CapGemini Consultancy Costs (ORACLE R12 upgrade and build, Corporate Services) £1,032,000

Consultancy costs relating to Regional Waste Management projects (Kitchen and residual waste, Place) £1,628,339 largely funded by Grant (Regional spend)

Planning and other costs related to planning appeals, Rural Development Plan, etc (Place, £512,000)

This reflects the diverse and specialist nature of services procured. The following attempts a high level analysis between different types of Consultancy as follows:-

'Agency' type (i.e. front facing often on a temporary basis)	One-off or irregular (Would not make sense for CCS to maintain permanent expertise)	Specialist (CCS would never retain expertise)	Other
£	£	£	£
307,078	792,142	4,784,594	38,918

PART B

6. **Councillors A M Day, M H Jones & L G Thomas.**

Can the Cabinet Member for Education tell Council what the current level of surplus places is separately for the primary and secondary sectors, and give comparative figures for each of the last 5 years?

Response of the Cabinet Member for Education

The figures requested are as follows:

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jan '14	13.85%	10.60%	12.48%
Jan '13	15.42%	8.39%	12.47%
Jan '12	17.78%	9.87%	14.42%
Jan '11	17.53%	13.26%	15.65%
Jan '10	19.63%	15.49%	17.79%

These are the unfilled places in Swansea. The increase from January 2013 to January 20'14 for secondary is mainly due to a reduction in pupil numbers (269).