

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

PART A - SUPPLEMENTARIES

1. **Councillors P R Hood-Williams, A C S Colburn, M Thomas and L J Tyler-Lloyd**

The 2014/15 budget proposed £1M savings during the year, by increasing charges for services provided for residents. In March, the Cabinet approved policy in this respect.

Can the Cabinet member for Finance, now indicate those service charges, which will be set on the basis of full cost recovery, and indicate the percentage rise in the cost for each of those services.

Can he also indicate which other service charges will be increased and by what percentage.

Can he also indicate the savings, per financial month, that will derive from the increased charges in 2014/15.

The budget settlement required £1M to be saved in the current financial year. Can the Cabinet member confirm that these levels of savings will be achieved

Response by The Leader

A dedicated Commercial Team was established in May and they have made great strides in establishing all charging opportunities and, at the time of writing, over 1600 items have been identified. As the questioner will appreciate, this is an extremely complex piece of work which, whilst being coordinated extremely well, is still very much a work in progress.

The first stage of this work was to identify all opportunities and then benchmark actual or potential charges with other Councils. When this work is complete, the Council will have a full list of approved charges which will then be subject to an annual review and increase in line with the RPI. It is not possible at present to indicate a percentage rise in the cost for the services because, whilst there are some charges which are well established, officers are still assessing charging opportunities and full cost recovery has to be analysed.

Unfortunately, the Council is unlikely to achieve the £1m target set by the budget. The reason for this is purely due to the complexity and volume of the work. However, there is no reason to believe that once all of the charges are set the £1m target would be eminently achievable in future years and this is reflected in the report due to be considered by Cabinet on the 16th of December. Current projections show potential income as follows for:

2015/2016 is £1,147,000

2016/2017 - £2,205,627.

The Council is now in a much better place in terms of having a centralised resource to oversee its income and commercial portfolio. The foundations are now in place to transform the way we deliver services to our residents.

2.	<p>Councillors C A Holley, M H Jones and P B Black</p> <p>In response to a question put to the Leader at Council 2nd December he stated both verbally and in writing that no decision had been made over the future of the Civic Centre and that everything would be considered as part of the Budget process. Will the Leader tell Council and the public why 2 days later there was a very prominent article in the local paper stating that the Civic Centre would be sold in January 2015 to help fund a new school building programme?</p> <p>Response by the Leader</p> <p>The two statements are correct. I have said on numerous occasions that everything would be considered as part of our budget review process. The future use of the Civic Centre site is not currently defined and it will be for developers to bring forward proposals as part of their response to the development brief. This may or may not include the re-use or demolition of the current Civic Centre building. The Civic Centre site will be marketed along with other strategic sites in the new year. This will be the next stage of our ambitious plans for the redevelopment of the city centre. The people of Swansea have waited far too long for the redevelopment of their city centre and the sale of the Civic Centre site will help provide a contribution to the funding of this and other initiatives.</p>
3.	<p>Councillors P B Black, Mike Day, P M Meara and R J Stanton</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on any plans to sell off land at Parklands School?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Education</p> <p>The Capital Budget & Programme 2014/15 – 2017/18 approved by Council on the 18th February 2014 clearly sets out the basis of the programme of school building improvements and the financing strategy to meet the required local contribution.</p> <p>Work is continuing to identify potential parcels of surplus land as part of a Council wide strategy to review all assets. At the Council Meeting held on 28 February 2011, land at Parklands Primary School was identified as surplus to educational requirements.</p> <p>The views of the school and governors will continue to be considered. No decision has been taken but a report will shortly be presented to Cabinet.</p>
4.	<p>Councillors P M Meara, C A Holley, and J W Jones</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member inform Council :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) How many s106 Agreements have been reached with Developers since May 2008. (b) How much money are these Agreements worth. (c) How many of these Agreements have been fully delivered. (d) Will he give a breakdown on what the money has been spent on.

Response by the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Regeneration

Planning Services are currently in the process of populating a data base to facilitate the monitoring of S106 Agreements. The information held on this database is in the process of being verified, however, on the basis of the information held to-date, since May 2008 a total of 50 S106 Agreements have been signed. It should be recognised that the majority (27) of these S106 Agreements do not relate to financial contributions. Those that do involve a total contribution of some £ 4,697,780.

Development has not commenced on 9 of these schemes or all the relevant trigger points have not been reached on those that have commenced. A total of 10 agreements have been fully complied with by the developer with regard payment of contributions.

Historically financial contributions are requested by the relevant Service Area normally Highways, Education, Housing or Parks and negotiated as part of the planning application process in line with the Authority's UDP policies and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance on "Planning Obligations". Subsequent financial contributions are received by Legal Services, deposited with Finance and "drawn down" by the relevant Service Area. The spend is under the control of the respective Service Area and is set aside to cover the terms of the relevant agreement. Of the total contribution £4.7 million £252,645 is for education, £3,305,980 for affordable housing, £244,960 for public realm works, £628,345 for highways, £220,000 for parks, £43,350 for environmental works and £2500 for common land

5. **Councillors M H Jones, A M Day and C L Philpott**

Will the Cabinet Member tell Council what steps she is taking to ensure that any future maintenance of new school buildings and those that have had significant investment in them is monitored and carried out

Response by the Cabinet Member for Education

As part of the extremely rigorous process required by the Welsh Government to gain approval to the business case for capital investment in new school buildings, the Authority is required to demonstrate that there will be robust arrangements to ensure that new facilities will be maintained appropriately.

These arrangements will be overseen and supported as part of the wider and developing Facilities Management arrangements across all school assets.

PART B – NO SUPPLEMENTRIES

6. **Councillors A M Day, T H Rees and R J Stanton**

Can the Cabinet Member tell Council what is the value of the financial contribution (including cash as well as goods and services in kind) made to mount the Winter Wonderland, any income the Council receives and therefore the net cost to the Council? Can the Cabinet Member also tell Council which budget any net cost comes from?

Response by the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Regeneration

Waterfront Winterland runs from 14th November to 4th January and is located on Museum Park. The event is run by the Council's Special Events Team which sits within the Place Department.

The direct costs of the Waterfront Winterland are budgeted as £293,400 in 2014/15. The income target is £300,700 and is derived from sponsorship, concessions, ticketing and advertising revenue. The small surplus made by the event is treated as a contribution towards the cost of the Events Team's overheads.

An independent Economic Impact Assessment of the event using the STEAM model (the same nationally recognised economic model used to measure the volume and value of Tourism) indicates that Waterfront Winterland generates £7.5m to the local economy.