

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

PART A – SUPPLEMENTARIES

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| 1. | <p>Councillors E W Fitzgerald, D G Sullivan, L James, S M Jones, K E Marsh, I M Richard & G D Walker</p> <p>Swansea Air show was a welcome success. However, the only means of obtaining a programme of events was to download it from the Council website for which payment had to be made to Dylan's Bookstore. Could the Cabinet Member inform Council why the decision was taken to use a private firm's bank and Paypal accounts? What controls were in place to ensure all monies owing were paid to Swansea Council?</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Regeneration</p> <p>This is the Council's Paypal account and this was originally set up for the Dylan Thomas online shop as part of the Council's Dylan Thomas and Literature Service. The Council has full control over this account.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Cllrs Chris Holley, Jeff Jones, Cheryl Philpott</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member please tell Council, what the total amount of money raised by Parking Enforcement officers through fines was for the year 2014/2015?</p> <p>Can he also tell us the cost of the Enforcement service in that year?</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport</p> <p>The total income for the year was £1,240,230.</p> <p>(Can he also tell us the cost of the Enforcement service in that year?)</p> <p>The total cost of the service which includes our central establishment costs was £1,172,213.</p> <p>This means we recorded a surplus of £68,017 which will, in accordance with regulation, be put back into local transport schemes.</p> |
| 3. | <p>Councillors E W Fitzgerald, D G Sullivan, L James, S M Jones, K E Marsh, I M Richard & G D Walker</p> <p>Could the Leader comment on the increased level of sick absence of staff during 2014-2015 and the consequent cost to the tax payer? Why does he think that in Swansea the main cause of sick absence is stress, at a high 23%, when nationally it is the third cause?</p> |

Response of the Cabinet Member for Transformation & Performance

Whilst I recognise that sick absence has risen against target, the current 9.56 days average is still significantly less than was the case prior to 2012.

The Council has also introduced a number of pro-active and preventative measures to address this area such as the excellent "Helping Hands" initiative which has been well received within the Council. In addition, investment has been made to provide additional management support and training which should impact in reducing sickness due to stress. The Council is currently undertaking a review of its sick absence policy, and prevention and wellbeing will form a large part of this review.

With regards, to the reasons why stress is the highest cause of sickness compared with National figures, there is inconsistency in the way stress related illness is reported at a national level with various sources claiming different outcomes.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) report of 2014 lists Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD) as the highest cause of sickness with stress being in third place. However, MSD conditions are actually a common mis-diagnosis of stress which can account for the inconsistency in reporting.

For the same time period as the ONS report, the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD), The CBI and other Government Departments have all reported stress as the main reason for sick absence.

Having said that, there are many factors which account for stress being the main reason for sickness absence within the Council and these can include:

1. Stress is a commonly stigmatised condition and is under reported in many less forward thinking organisations. This Council has continued to raise the profile and remove the stigma of stress so we can start tackling the root causes rather than reacting to the symptoms of stress. In the short term, this proactive and preventative approach can lead to an increase in the cases of stress related sickness reported.
2. The uncertainty caused by significant budget reductions from Central Government and the impact this potentially has on Council employees.
3. Analysis highlights general socio-economic factors such as debt and general poverty as contributory factors to stress.

4. Cllrs Chris Holley, Peter Black, Mary Jones

Will the Cabinet Member tell us how much money was raised for the Council through fees that were charged for stall holders during the excellent Air Show this year?

Given that we also charged more for parking around the Guildhall, Civic Centre and the Recreation ground could he please give us the total taken from these car parks and what costs if any did we incur?

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| | <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Regeneration</p> <p>The income from Traders at the 2015 Wales National Airshow 2015 was £12,408.</p> <p>Gross income from car parking at the 2015 Wales National Airshow 2015 = £27,385 Less car park staffing costs = £5,740 Net car parking income = £21,645 Existing Special Events signage was utilised.</p> |
| 5. | <p>Cllrs Mary Jones, Chris Holley, Mike Day</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member inform Council what checks have been done in regard to the decision to remove the escorts from school transport especially in respect of Safeguarding?</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Education</p> <p>Risk assessments have been undertaken on all school routes with passenger assistants as agreed in the Home to School Transport Policy. Officers are currently considering feedback from parents and schools before determining the next steps with the budget proposal. All safeguarding concerns have been taken into consideration as part of the risk assessments.</p> |
| 6. | <p>Councillors E W Fitzgerald, D G Sullivan, L James, S M Jones, K E Marsh, I M Richard & G D Walker</p> <p>Councillors are elected to represent the residents in their wards. Does the Leader therefore consider it appropriate that a councillor should be required to seek special dispensation to speak out on issues of concern to his/her electors?</p> <p>Response of the Leader</p> <p>It is important that public statements by members do not call into question their preformed views when sitting on the planning committee. In addition it is also important that members involvement in outside bodies is consistent with the rules governing council decision making. The rules around dispensation in the constitution are clear.</p> |
| 7. | <p>Cllrs Chris Holley, Jeff Jones, Graham Thomas</p> <p>In a recent written response to a Council question the reason for the highest proportion of staff taking sick leave is due to stress. Can the Cabinet Member confirm what percentage of absence is in relation to work related stress?</p> |

Response of the Cabinet Member for Transformation & Performance

Prior to 2013/14, I would not have been able to answer this question as the systems were not in place to allow quality analysis as to the reasons why Council employees are taking sick leave. Fortunately this was rectified in 2013/14 and I can advise that in 2014/15, stress is recorded as the highest % of sick absence at 23.68%. Of that %, 24.48% was work related stress and 75.52% non-work related stress.

PART B

1. Cllrs Mike Day Chris Holley, Cheryl Philpott

In Swansea tourism plays a major part in our economy. Can the Cabinet Member tell Council who was responsible for the branding, what consultation took place and how much did it cost?

Response of the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Regeneration

In 2010 the Council's Tourism Section was responsible for creating the design criteria and specification for the development of a fresh and innovative brand to take the Visit Swansea Bay destination concept to the next level; in response to market trends and the development of online platforms. The former destination brand had existed for many years and was now finding itself in an extremely competitive market place.

In line with procurement procedures, the Tourism Section invited creative design companies to make a bid, with a creative response to the brief and a formal quotation. The responses were scored according to a set criteria and the successful company was owned and based locally.

Following the development of a bilingual brand and associated graphic elements and messages; the Tourism Section consulted with Tourism Swansea Bay, the local tourism trade association (representing Swansea, Mumbles, Gower, Afan & the Vale of Neath) to ascertain feedback from the industry's key stakeholders and partners involved in promoting and delivering the visitor experience. There were no significant changes and therefore a comprehensive set of brand guidelines was developed to ensure consistent delivery of our brand message across all platforms both on and offline.

The cost of this contract was £5,500 in total.

As the marketplace has evolved and the demands and expectations of customers changed, the Tourism Section, has in turn progressed the Visit Swansea Bay brand (utilising expertise within the Section) to meet the challenges presented by migrating much of our marketing activity online.

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| | <p>Very recently, Cultural Services reviewed the various brands in existence and has launched the 'Enjoy Swansea Bay' brand to replace a number of former brands (Breathe, Discover etc.). Enjoy has become part of the Swansea Bay brand family, taking the customer on a multi-platformed journey (on and offline) from their initial encounter with the brand (outside of the destination), research of their holiday/short-break, booking their accommodation/attraction/activity with local operators, to seeing the 'Enjoy' brand in-destination and at major events.</p> <p>Enjoy also serves as fun overarching events and activities brand for residents and the day visitor market.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Cllrs Jeff Jones, Mary Jones, Chris Holley</p> <p>When public consultation takes place are all submissions included and taken into account?</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Transformation & Performance</p> <p>All submissions are collected and considered as part of the overall consultation process.</p> |