

**Providing Council with Written Responses to Questions at Council –
26 November 2015**

1.	<p>Councillor P M Black Question: <u>Agenda Item 18 “Councillors’ Questions”.</u></p> <p>The response did not fully answer his question as it omitted to address how the children and young people were consulted as part of the assessments.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Education Pupils are able to raise concerns or comment on route to and from to school via an online form. During the next 6-12 months it is proposed that young people be given the opportunity to express their views on their daily journey to school through the Pupils Voice Forum, events such as the Big Conversation and the School Super Survey.</p>
2.	<p>Councillor P M Black Questions: <u>Agenda Item 10 “Houses in Multiple Occupation(HMO) Licensing Policy 2016”.</u></p> <p>a. What consideration had been given in setting the fees to using income to employ sufficient enforcement officers to properly enforce licence conditions.</p> <p>b. What is the relationship between RentSmart Wales and the licensing scheme, how will the Council be using the new register of landlords to identify unlicensed HMO’s and will it enable us to strengthen the existing HMO licensing scheme.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Healthy City</p> <p>a. Enforcement of licence conditions was a consideration in the fee setting process. Fees can only be set on a cost-recovery basis for the licensing process. This includes appropriate enforcement arising from inspections of properties in order to process applications as well as follow-up visits to check compliance with licence conditions and investigation of complaints.</p> <p>b. Whilst there is no direct legal relationship between HMO licensing and the new landlord registration and agent and landlord licensing under Rent Smart Wales, we will be able to use the register of landlords under Rent Smart Wales to compare with our own database and identify any landlords who may be letting HMOs, including any which need to be licensed. The information should improve the data we already hold. Should any landlord fail to register or become licensed, if required, under the Rent Smart Wales scheme that may be considered grounds for them not to be fit and proper to hold an HMO licence. We envisage a close working relationship with Rent Smart Wales and will take action to deal with non-compliant agents and landlords at the appropriate time.</p>

3. **Councillor P N May**

Questions:

Agenda Item 10 "Houses in Multiple Occupation(HMO) Licensing Policy 2016".

- a. How many of the HMO's known to the Authority are licenced?
- b. What are the Authority's proposals to clear the backlog of unlicensed HMO's?
- c. Does the Authority have any plans to use the licence fees to employ extra staff?

Response of the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Healthy City

- a. There were 1,575 licensed HMOs on 31st October 2015. There is no legal requirement for owners of non-licensable HMOs to notify their existence to the Council, but from information held across the Council we estimate there are approximately 1,800 HMOs in Swansea.
- b. There is no backlog of unlicensed HMOs. There are approximately 110 licensing applications which are currently being processed. We have procedures in place to remind licence holders when their licences are expiring and need renewing. We investigate complaints and referrals about possible unlicensed HMOs to ensure that, where necessary, they are licensed and appropriate enforcement sanctions are instigated. Periodic checks are also made of Council Tax records to try and identify any unlicensed HMOs.
- c. There are no plans to employ any extra staff. The fees have been set on a cost-recovery basis and will be used to fund existing staff.