

Council – 28 January 2016

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

PART A – SUPPLEMENTARIES

1. Councillor P M May

A planning application to build 8 houses on the Ganges Field has been submitted. Two previous applications have been refused by the planning committee. The most recent application was refused on 17th July 2015. On 26th August 2015, I received a letter from the planning department saying that "we are instructed to re-submit the application". Exactly five months to the day a third application has been submitted again asking the same question.

Who has instructed that the application be resubmitted.

Why has this been done 5 months after the question has already been answered for the second time by the committee refusing both previous applications.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Regeneration

By virtue of a Cabinet Minute (20/01/2015) authority was received to submit a planning application for limited redevelopment of the main road frontage.

The planning application was considered at Planning Committee on the 14th July 2015 and was refused (contrary to Planning Officer recommendation) for the following reasons:-

1. That the proposal to develop the playing field for residential development would involve the loss of designated community recreational land.
2. The proposal would lead to the loss of an important hedgerow and that previously undeveloped land would be brought into use.

The site is located entirely within Townhill Ward. However, due to its proximity to Uplands both Uplands and Townhill Ward Members were advised on the 26th August 2015 that officers were instructed to resubmit the application following consultation with Head of Corporate Building & Property Services/Chief Operations Officer. In this response it confirmed that the loss of community recreational land was only 5.45% of the entire playing fields. Secondly, it was confirmed that following a report prepared by the Council it was confirmed that the hedge referred to was only approximately 20 years old and was only a woody species Hawthorn and has no exceptional features and did not qualify as an important hedge under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations.

It was further confirmed that the reason for persisting in the application was in regard to the fact that planning permission would substantially increase the value of the site at the time when the Council is facing severe budgetary constraints with the essential need to generate significant capital receipt and reduce cost of Council assets.

Townhill Ward Members confirmed that they were content for the application to proceed and no further responses were received within the constitutional requirement of a 10 working day period.

As the planning application was originally refused contrary to Planning Officer recommendations, the application could be re-submitted at nil cost. We can confirm that following further discussion with Planning Officers it has been

	<p>agreed to defer the application subject to re-submission as there are other opportunities to consider in relation to this site. Officers will meet with Councillor May on site to confirm the Council's position and reaffirm the response with regards to the two reasons for refusal at Committee.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Councillors P M Black, M H Jones, P M Meara Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on educational provision for children receiving support at Trehafod.</p> <p>Response of Cabinet Member for Education The majority of children and young people who receive support from the CAMHS Team at Trehafod receive their education through their mainstream school placements. Through their school placements, they also have access to a continuum of educational support which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support provided by schools in the form of pastoral and special educational needs (SEN) staff, many of whom have expertise in autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), as well as access to the Exchange counselling service (Swansea's school-based counselling service); and • access to support from behaviour support teachers, specialist teachers for SLCN (including ASD) and the Educational Psychology Service (four of whom have specialism in ASD and work closely with Health to assess children and young people). <p>A minority of children and young people supported by Trehafod also have access to provision in the form of specialist teaching facilities for pupils with ASD and SLCN as well as specialist expertise in Penybryn Special School.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Councillors E W Fitzgerald, L James, S M Jones, K E Marsh, I M Richard, D G Sullivan and G D Walker Could the Cabinet Member clarify what protocols exist when Members use the emergency 'out of hours' telephone number in relation to an urgent issue in their wards? Are there procedures in place to ensure that Members are regularly updated.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Performance There are no specific procedures for handling out of hour emergency calls from Members. If a Member requires an emergency service then they should contact the Council using the published emergency numbers on the link below: http://www.swansea.gov.uk/emergencycontacts</p> <p>The services listed there are the only ones offered out of hours as an emergency.</p> <p>All calls will be responded to either by our own Security Team within our Public Buildings or as mentioned in question 5 by OCS Security in the depots in relation to Building and Property Services and Highways.</p> <p>Information at the point of call is taken on an incident log and passed on to the appropriate Officer on standby duty. If a Member identifies themselves then they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place an emergency service request • Request that the appropriate standby Officer returns their call if further discussion is required

	<p>In all cases the information would be logged and either passed to the standby officer or allocated for processing the next working day if was not deemed to be an emergency as set by the criteria for each service.</p> <p>There are no procedures in place to regularly update Members regarding issues in their Wards, however, depending on the nature of the issue or emergency, it would be appropriate that they are updated by a senior officer as necessary by phone or email either at the time or the following working day.</p> <p>For emergency matters relating to Housing and Public Protection, if a Member contacts the Council using the 'out of hours' main number i.e. 01792 636000 details will be passed to security who hold relevant emergency standby contact numbers for all service areas and would pass on the matter as required. In the case of Housing issues this would be passed to the Neighbourhood Support Unit to deal with initially and they would contact the standby officer (a senior officer) if it was thought to be necessary. An incident report would be logged and passed to the relevant officer/team the following working day. If the emergency related to Public Protection, then security would follow the same procedure and refer the matter to the relevant standby officer. The Member would be updated by a senior officer as necessary by phone or email.</p>
4.	<p>Councillors P M Black, C A Holley, J W Jones Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on what proportion of the council's social care budget is spent on mental health services.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Services for Adults and Vulnerable People In 2014/15, a total of £3,065,707 was spent on mental health services which equated to 4.71% of the total Adult Services budget. In 2015/16, the projected budget on mental health services is £3,106,400 which is 4.79% of the total Adult Services budget.</p>
5.	<p>Councillors C A Holley, J W Jones, T H Rees Will the Leader/Cabinet Member tell Council what is the expected date for the completion of works on the roof and refurbishment of the Market.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Regeneration The replacement of the Market's iconic barrel roof including the glazing to a higher specification at the northern and southern gable was completed during the autumn with a positive impact on the internal appearance at these elevations plus improved ventilation and luxe levels.</p> <p>The subsequent Phase 1b works of applying a new liquid membrane to the Market's flat roof areas including addressing issues with existing water gully's and installing new, is at an advanced stage; however recent delays have occurred in completing the flat roof works due to the unprecedented weather. Subject to the weather conditions going forward completion of these works is scheduled for the end of the month.</p> <p>These works will protect and benefit the Market as an important feature to the City Centre for many years to come.</p> <p>Roofing works plus cosmetic improvements to the exterior first floor premises of the retail units adjoining the Market were also agreed as a result of the Market</p>

roof project at the landlord's expense. Whilst the latter, which has included cleaning of the exterior glass canopy, has been completed; similar delays to the roofing aspect of the planned works have occurred because of the weather.

In regards to further refurbishment works to the Market, whilst some residual budget is expected to remain, this will not be enough to complete any substantive improvements and hence future plans will be subject to securing the necessary grant funding.

6. **Councillors A M Day, C A Holley, C L Philpott**
How many surplus places do we currently have in both Primary and Secondary schools and how many are predicted for the next 2 years.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Education

The table below provides the information that has been requested.

Primary

	Actual NOR	Projected NOR		
		September 2015	September 2016	September 2017
Total primary	18320	18467	18614	18691
Capacity	20478	20478	20478	20478
Unfilled places	2158	2011	1864	1787
% Unfilled places	10.54%	9.82%	9.10%	8.73%

Secondary

	Actual NOR	Projected NOR		
		September 2015	September 2016	September 2017
Total secondary	13392	13583	13560	13710
Capacity	15186	15186	15186	15186
Unfilled places	1794	1603	1626	1476
% Unfilled places	11.81%	10.56%	10.71%	9.72%

Please note: Projected Number on Roll (NOR) based on most recent pupil projections – September 2015. Numbers exclude Nursery and STF.
Capacity info as at September 2015.

7. **Councillors J W Jones, M H Jones, L G Thomas**
Following problems encountered by some Councillors recently accessing Officers, will the Cabinet Members clarify who is dealing with enquiries when contacting:

- (a) Trading Standards/Public Protection;
- (b) Highways (when the Help Desk is closed);
- (c) Any other department that is not manned by CCOS staff.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Performance

(a) Trading Standards/Public Protection

An email was sent to all Councillors on 11 January 2015 outlining the appropriate contact details for Councillors to use.

(b) Highways (when the Help Desk is closed)

For emergency matters relating to Highways, should a Member contact the Council using the 'out of hours' Highways number i.e. 01792 841657 Security at Clydach Depot will respond. They will take the information and pass it on to the standby manager (a senior officer) if it was thought to be necessary. An incident report would be logged and the officer would take the appropriate action to remedy the situation.

(c) Any other department that is not manned by CCOS staff?

The corporate contract for security is provided by OCS Security. It was previously handled by PSM Security but a new contract at a reduced cost was awarded on 1st November 2015 and this has resulted in a recent change in staff covering a number of areas. As with any new contract, it is taking time to bed in but is being monitored and reviewed as appropriate. The out of hours number in relation to Corporate Building and Property Services which includes emergency Housing Repairs is 01792 521500. These calls are also handled by the security contract mentioned above, with the calls being diverted by the guard at Heol Y Gors to the relevant standby operative or escalated to the on call manager.

Apart from the security contract as mentioned above, all other lines are answered by employees of CCoS with Security within our Public Buildings undertaking the Out of Hours service provision.

The Out of Hours contact handling provision will be reviewed in due course as part of the Council's Customer Contact Strategy, which is currently in its early stages of implementation.

Within office hours, all officers can be contactable via the Switchboard. If there is no response then the caller will be advised accordingly. We do not currently have a voicemail provision on every extension number however Officers should use the technology we have to divert their calls to other members of the team to answer on their behalf, as per link below:

<http://www.swansea.gov.uk/staffnet/telephonefacilities>

Officers should ensure that they that they make appropriate provision to enable their calls to be answered when they are not available.

With further implementation of Corporate Customer Services, as more services migrate into the Contact Centre a 'single point of contact' for the Authority is being created to ensure that all calls are answered irrespective of whether Officers are in or out on site and the appropriate messages relayed.

8. Councillors E W Fitzgerald, L James, S M Jones, K E Marsh, I M Richard, D G Sullivan and G D Walker

Could the Leader provide information on the assessment undertaken by the University on the effectiveness of Local Area Coordinators. If a report has been completed can this be made available, in full, to all Members.

Response of the Leader

The first phase evaluation report has been completed by Swansea University. This evaluates activity up until 30th September 2015. This report is publically available and can be made available to Members. It provides a positive assessment of activity to date, demonstrating the benefit of Local Area

	<p>Coordination and the positive connections that are being made in the 3 initial areas. Swansea University have now been commissioned to undertake the next phase of the evaluation and this phase will evaluate activity up until 31st December 2015. It is anticipated that this report will be publicly available in the Spring.</p>
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PART B - None