

**Providing Council with Written Responses to Questions at Council
28 January 2016**

1.	<p>Mr David Davies At Council on 22 October 2015, I asked that consideration be given so as to allow members of the Public to ask questions of any Councillor during Public Question Time. What progress has been made with this?</p> <p>Response of the Leader I can confirm that the Constitution Working Group at its meeting on 25 November 2015 considered your request that Council Procedure Rule 26 “Public Presentation and Question Time” be amended so as to allow members of the public to ask questions of any Councillor at a Council meeting.</p> <p>The Constitution Working Group felt that the Council Procedure Rule had deliberately been drafted so as to exclude questions to other Councillors in order to ensure the effective and efficient running of business. One of the main responsibilities of Council is to ensure that the Cabinet is held to account. Members of the public are encouraged to take part in this by asking questions of the Cabinet Members, Chairs or Vice Chairs of any Committee or Board of the City and County of Swansea on any matter included on the open part of the agenda. This allows them to participate in holding the Cabinet to account. As such, the Constitution Working Group agreed unanimously that the Council Procedure Rule should remain unchanged.</p> <p>Should members of the public wish to ask questions of other Councillors then they can do so by communicating directly with them or by attending Councillor Surgeries. The contact details for Councillors may be viewed at www.swansea.gov.uk/councillors.</p> <p>Personally I have no issue with any Member being asked or answering a question as part of the democratic processes.</p> <p>We will continue to challenge and review the processes and procedures of the Council and change them if required.</p>
2.	<p>Richard Copp The hedge on Pentyla Road is suggested to be only 20 years old. Where is this information from.</p> <p>I have conclusive evidence that the hedge is much older than this. Residents in my area have lived here for 50 years and say the landscape has not changed. The hedge has always been there. There is even a Swansea Council book named “The Townhill Enclosure Act” that states that the hedge was constructed as a boundary in 1760. I also have photographic evidence obtained from the archives in County Hall. Why are you lying. It’s an ancient hedgerow.</p>

Response of the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Regeneration

I write in response to your question in relation to the hedgerow at the above site following Councillors' Questions at Council on 28th January 2016.

There is certainly no disputing that the alignment of the hedgerow follows a field boundary dating back over 170 years which is shown on the Tythe Map of 1843. However this does not mean that the current hedgerow dates from that time, or even if parts could be demonstrated to be 'ancient', this does not classify it as 'important' under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations.

The importance of the hedgerow is determined by its features such as archaeology, wildlife and woody species. The Council's ecologist who has assessed the hedgerow advises that it does not contain sufficient features to be classified as important.

Regardless of its age and importance the hedgerow could be cut back and re-laid outside the nesting season. Moreover, on the basis that it is not an important hedgerow, it would be possible to dig up and replant it to align with the rear boundaries of the adjoining properties along Pentyla Road.

The hedgerow is not therefore an obstacle to, or reason for refusing, development on this land. However, should planning permission be granted at any future date I would expect it to be a condition of the planning permission that the hedgerow is either retained as far as possible in situ, or repositioned to the rear of the site.

3.

Councillor P May

What is the actual cost to the Tax Payer of Swansea for the repeated resubmission of this planning application? (I would expect full breakdown in this answer e.g.; officer time, printing of papers, councillors' travel expenses, re consultation with statutory bodies etc.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Regeneration

It is not possible to quantify all the costs incurred in the way requested.

Submission of this application fell within the normal day to day duties of an officer in Corporate Property as part of the wider review of all Council assets. As is usual in such cases no time-recording records are kept regarding this case.

The previous application for planning permission submitted dated 31 October 2006 following Cabinet approval cost £1,152 in application fees. An archaeological survey was also commissioned at a cost of £815.00 +VAT.

A Coal Authority report which is required for all planning applications cost £50.00 + VAT.

The application 2015/2432 cost £1,320 in fees. The only statutory consultation in connection with the submission of this application was made to the Coal Authority in order to establish if there are any records of historic mine workings in the area. The copy of this one report was £59.00 plus VAT.

Following refusal contrary to planning officer recommendation this application 2015/2432 was resubmitted within 12 months, no further fee was incurred. That application was subsequently deferred for 6 months 30/01/2016.

Members travel costs are paid at the standard rate of 45p a mile.

The printing costs of the Committee Reports and related documents costs 6 pence per side.