

**Council – 25 February 2016**

**COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS**

**PART A – SUPPLEMENTARIES**

1.	<p><b>Councillor P N May</b></p> <p>What progress has been made to stop caravan holidaymakers using the Rec next summer. Also can confirmation be given that the water tap on the Rec has been disabled to stop them using it the council taxpayers' expense. How much did it cost Swansea council taxpayers to clear the site and jet wash the faecal matter left by last years' holiday makers.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development &amp; Regeneration</b></p> <p>Steel covers, or 'shrouds' were placed over the locks on the barriers leading onto the grass area to try and prevent the locks from being cut off from future attempts to access the area.</p> <p>Cost of this work was £879.42</p> <p>At the time of occupation of the site, the water was shut off, but was reinstated as young children were on the site.</p> <p>Cleaning of the area was undertaken after it was vacated. A cleansing crew cleared and power washed the area which took 5 hours, and charged at £80 per hour.</p> <p>Cost of this work was £400.</p>
2.	<p><b>Councillors A M Day, J W Jones, P M Black</b></p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member indicate what the latest survey of road conditions are in Swansea, how much has been spent by ward on highways maintenance and repairs, and remind council of the Highways Asset Management Programme for each year for the last 3 complete years, for the current year and the planned expenditure for the next 3 years.</p> <p><b>Response of Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Transport</b></p> <p>The latest survey of road condition was completed in March 2015 for 2014/15. The annual survey is undertaken on behalf of the Authority/Welsh Government and results are as follows:</p> <p>THS/012 The percentage of principal (A) roads, non-principal (B) roads and non-principal (C) roads that are in overall poor condition, result 4.8% compared to 13/14 performance of 6.7% placing Swansea 3<sup>rd</sup> in Wales.</p> <p>No overall figure can be provided on a ward by ward basis however planned maintenance schemes are identified by ward in the Highways Forward Works Programme (formerly the Highways Asset Management Programme). These schemes are prioritised on an engineering basis.</p>

The full programme of works for 2016-20 can be found here <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/6851/Road-and-footpath-maintenance>.

The 5 year programme is based on current Capital funding which includes £1.1m for carriageway resurfacing and £0.65m for footways. In 14/15 there has been an additional spend to save investment of £1m funded from the insurance budget. Full details of current spending levels can be found in the Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Cabinet – 18th June 2015.

**3. Councillors J W Jones, A M Day, M H Jones**

Can the Leader remind council of how much the Council has put aside in each of the last three financial years as a provision for claims for injuries and/or damage related to footpaths and/or highways.

**Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport**

The Authority is responsible for an extensive highway and footpath network, as such it implements an appropriate inspection and maintenance regime with which to maintain the highway to a legally acceptable standard.

The attached schedule shows the statistics for claims received, successfully defended, settled and which are still outstanding.

The Council has one of the most successful repudiation rates within the country as a result of the inspection and maintenance regime, robust claims handling and litigation which in turn results in lower insurance costs for the Authority.

Year	Claim Numbers					Settlements paid and provisions for open claims	
	Received	Settled	Claims successfully defended	Still open	paid	provision for open claims	
2012-13	326	31	270	25	£475,690	£779,476	
2013-14	349	39	281	29	£378,116	£242,968	
2014-15	245	23	164	58	£201,080	£341,767	

**4. Councillors C A Holley, A M Day, C L Philpott**

Can the Cabinet Member indicate how many claims have been made for injuries arising from

(a) trips and falls on footpaths, what percentage of these claims have resulted in a settlement, what percentage have yet to be determined, the average time taken to determine these claims and how much has been paid out in each of the last three financial years and

(b) indicate how many claims have been made for damage alleged to have been caused by poorly maintained highways, what percentage of these claims have resulted in a settlement, what percentage have yet to be determined, the average time taken to determine these claims and how much has been paid out in each of the last three financial years.

## Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport

I reiterate my response to the previous question :

The Authority is responsible for an extensive highway and footpath network, as such it implements an appropriate inspection and maintenance regime with which to maintain the highway to a legally acceptable standard.

The attached schedule shows the statistics for claims received, successfully defended, settled and which are still outstanding.

The Council has one of the most successful repudiation rates within the country as a result of the inspection and maintenance regime, robust claims handling and litigation which in turn results in lower insurance costs for the Authority

		Claims Received	Claims Successfully Defended		Claims Settled		Claims Outstanding		Average time taken from receipt of claim to resolution (in days *)	Total Cost of Settlement and / or provision for outstanding claims	
			%	No.	%	No.	%	No.		settled	outstanding claims
(a)	Footpath - trips and falls										
	2012-13	94	77.7%	74	8.5	8	12.8	12	337	£204,439	£237,441
	2013-14	101	82.2%	79	6.9	7	14.9	15	350	£257,879	£141,363
	2014-15	86	54.7%	47	9.3	8	36.0	31	259	£118,029	£195,225
(b)	Highways - damage to vehicles										
	2012-13	166	94.0%	156	6.0	10	0.0	0	168	£5,462	£0
	2013-14	185	88.1%	163	10.8	20	1.1	2	141	£9,525	£1,849
	2014-15	96	85.4%	82	9.4	9	5.2	5	105	£3,283	£5,225

*\* The average time taken is from the first notification, irrespective of there being sufficient information to investigate, full investigation, request for other records (medical etc), processing of payments, appeal processes.  
For litigated claims, this will include detailed communication between solicitors, and often, long time delays in being listed for court hearing.*

## PART B

### 5. Councillors A M Day, P M Meara, R J Stanton

Can the Cabinet member tell Council how many street lamps are regularly turned off to save money. Can the cabinet member also tell Council in which areas the lights are turned off, whether they are turned off permanently and whether there is a rota for lights to be turned off.

**Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport**

Of the 27,000 lanterns on the network, 1720 are currently turned off. This figure includes 1468 that have been turned off for the purpose of energy savings and 252 due to the columns being cut down as they have been tested and found to be structurally unsound.

Lights turned off for energy savings are those on main roads throughout the Authority, such as the A4067 and Pentrechwyth Bypass. It is not policy to turn off lights in residential areas other than those on a main road.

6. **Councillors M H Jones, C L Philpott, T H Rees**

We welcome the erection of signs in certain parts of the City saying 'Welcome to ...' and including the name of the district or ward. Can the Cabinet Member list all the areas where such signs have been erected, what criteria have been used to determine where these signs should be erected, what budget (s) was/were used to cover the costs, whether there is a planned programme to erect such signs in all wards/districts and how councillors can request such signage where it does not currently exist.

**Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport**

There is no policy for providing settlement signs or budget for such. Should a request be received a site inspection would be undertaken to ensure placing the signs will not present a safety hazard or undue clutter on the highway.

Permission or refusal would be follow subject to the findings.

The cost to provide and erect these signs could be 100% private funding or if requested by a Member, they could utilise their allocation or subsidise this with private funding.

An example is the Sandfields scheme which was funded by lottery heritage money.

The last signage of this nature was implemented in December 2015 where a Ward Member and local Historical Society shared the cost of implementing'.