

Council – 28 July 2016

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

PART A – SUPPLEMENTARIES

1.	<p>Councillors Chris Holley, Mary Jones, Graham Thomas</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member tell Council what the current position is in relation to the demolition of the former Oceana building on the Kingsway and the plans for the future.</p> <p>Response of the Leader</p> <p>The City Centre Framework review identified the need to create more employment opportunities within the City Centre in order to stimulate regeneration & economic growth. It specifically identified the Kingsway as an opportunity to kick start this regeneration via the creation of a new business district, maximising the opportunity presented to support and grow Swansea's existing Tech industry sector. To realise the aspiration of creating a new business district the Council prepared a masterplan and acquired a number of properties on Kingsway and Oxford Street, including the former Oceana building. The purchases and demolition costs to date have largely been funded by the Welsh Government's Vibrant programme that was awarded in June, 2014, together with Council funding.</p> <p>Demolition of the former Oceana nightclub building on Kingsway is on-going and due to unforeseen additional asbestos found in the building, the project is taking longer than expected. All asbestos is being removed by expert contractors under strict health and safety monitoring. The structural demolition will commence when the asbestos material has been removed.</p> <p>Work is also underway to secure funding to deliver public realm enhancements and a new office development on the Oceana site as part of the masterplan vision for the Kingsway.</p>
2.	<p>Councillors Chris Holley, Mike Day, Mary Jones</p> <p>We are grateful that the briefing prepared by PWC on the implications for local government of Brexit was circulated to Councillors. Can the Leader give us any more specific information about the implications of the vote for Swansea.</p> <p>Response of the Leader</p> <p>The announcement of the referendum result is likely to start the process of withdrawal of the UK from the European Union which can only start when the Government serves a specific notice under Article 50 of the EU constitution formally signifying its intention to withdraw. The timing of that notice will not be before mid-September 2016.</p>

However, there are a number of issues that the Council will have to consider going forward including:-

- a) The impact of market and currency volatility on assets primarily held by the Pension Fund
- b) The potential impacts on the loss of EU grant funding as a source of Capital and/or revenue income, and the extent to which that source of funding is made up by the UK Government and other sources.
- c) The impact on regulatory and enforcement activity given that much of the law in these areas is driven by regulations passed by the EU, although most have been formally adopted into UK equivalent legislation
- d) The impact that perceived changes to the wider economic outlook might have on commercial investment in the area, particularly where returns are dependent on ongoing planned levels of economic activity and income.
- e) The effect on Swansea's migrant workforce across all sectors of the City economy both now and going forward, and the need to retain a committed, motivated and trained workforce to continue to deliver core services of which migrant workers are an integral and valued part.

It is impossible at this stage to look at long term impacts as it is unknown what alternative to full Membership might be negotiated as part of the exit arrangements.

However, Council staff, working alongside other agencies up to and including Welsh Government, will continue to monitor developments and through the appropriate Cabinet Member will report further as developments and impacts become more clear.

The Chief Executive and I have made clear statements outlining the value that this City puts on the contribution of migrant workers and the fact that they are and will remain trusted and valued members of our Community.

In the meanwhile I intend to write to the UK Government seeking assurance that withdrawal from the EU will not result in any loss of resources for this Council.

3. Councillors Mary Jones, John Newbury, Huw Rees

Will the Cabinet Member tell Council what is the current position of the bowls clubs and if any have taken over the maintenance of their greens.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing & Healthy City

From 1st April 2016 all responsibility for bowls greens has been devolved to either community bowls associations, individual clubs or Community Councils, who have responsibility for maintenance of the green.

- 8 greens are maintained by the club or association themselves or by way of an external contractor
- 8 greens are maintained by Parks to a specification agreed with the leaseholders, who are charged for the maintenance arrangements.
- 6 greens are not in use and are subject to minimal maintenance and 1 green has been turned into a play area.

4.	<p>Councillors E W Fitzgerald, D G Sullivan, L James, S M Jones, K M Marsh, I M Richard & G D Walker</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member inform Council how many apprentices are employed in the Parks Department and how frequently recruitment takes place.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Transformation & Performance</p> <p>There are currently no apprentices employed within the Parks Department. However a report is currently being prepared for cabinet to consider a whole authority Apprentice and Traineeship Scheme and it is hoped that all areas of the council will be able to consider such opportunities in the near future.</p>
5.	<p>Councillors Mike Day, Cheryl Philpott, Paul Meara</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member tell Council what percentage of the Education Budget is now devolved to schools.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Education</p> <p>The Council Budget approved in February 2016 set out a continuing 'one education budget strategy' which includes optimising the level of delegation of funding and responsibilities to schools to allow the greatest flexibility in the use of the available resources.</p> <p>Working in partnership with our schools through the School Budget Forum, the Education Budget for 2016-2017 included further significant additional delegation to schools, amounting to more than £2.3m. However, the impact on the delegation rate has been offset to some extent by changes in specific grants.</p> <p>Nevertheless, it is anticipated that the delegation rate for Swansea when published by the Welsh Government will be very close to 85% (our provisional estimate is 84.8%). The Welsh Government's statistical bulletin is likely to be published very shortly and will confirm the actual figure and provide a comparison with other local authorities across Wales.</p>
6.	<p>Councillors Graham Thomas, Peter Black, Jeff Jones</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member please tell Council how many houses have been brought up to the Welsh Housing Standard.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services</p> <p>The policy for measuring and reporting the extent to which the Council's housing stock complies with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) was</p>

	<p>adopted by the Council at its meeting on the 25th February 2016. The policy is in keeping with the Welsh Government's approach to measuring compliance which is calculated on the basis of a wide range of individual WHQS elements.</p> <p>Compliance data is reported annually to the Welsh Government in the August of each year and is expressed in terms of the number of properties compliant with the required element and as a percentage of the whole Council stock. The most recent submission was made in August 2015 and is set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roofs and Associated Components: 11,128 (85% compliance) • Windows: 13,418 (99.3% compliance) • Doors: 13,217 (98% compliance) • Kitchens: 7,071 (58% compliance) • Bathrooms: 2,927 (22% compliance) • Central Heating: 11,216 (93% compliance) • Gardens, external storage and boundaries: 3,108 (23% compliance) <p>Data for 2016 is currently being prepared for submission which is anticipated to show an increase in compliance as a result of the continuing investment in repairs and improvements to Council housing, and ensure full WHQS compliance across all elements by the statutory deadline of 2020.</p>
7.	<p>Councillors Chris Holley, Mary Jones, June Stanton</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member tell Council what if any action is to be taken about the on-going issues surrounding the parking at the Civic Centre.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Transformation & Performance</p> <p>Following reports to Cabinet on the 21st April 2016, it was agreed that in order to resolve the misuse of the visitor parking arrangements in the Civic Centre that a Pay and Display System would be implemented.</p> <p>This is now the subject of further work by officers with regards to the creation of a Traffic Regulation Order, however, due to the consultation timescales involved it is unlikely that this will be achieved until early 2017.</p> <p>With regards to car parking permit arrangements for staff, these have now been reassigned to fit into the appropriate mobile, flexible and static working arrangements. These arrangements now appear to be working well.</p>
8.	<p>Councillors E W Fitzgerald, D G Sullivan, L James, S M Jones, K M Marsh, I M Richard & G D Walker</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member inform Council what arrangements are in place for Council staff, who are also school governors, to have time off to attend meetings.</p>

	<p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Transformation & Performance</p> <p>The Extraneous Duties Policy affords employees who are members of a Primary or Secondary School Governing Body to unpaid leave of up to a maximum of eight half days per annum.</p>
9.	<p>Councillors Peter Black, Mary Jones, Graham Thomas</p> <p>There has been a lot of bad press recently regarding the arrangements for taxi / private hire cabs picking up after concerts at the Liberty Stadium. Will the Cabinet Member tell Council what has gone wrong.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport</p> <p>The Council's Special Events Team was commissioned by the Stadium Management Company to undertake the traffic management for the two concerts that the Stadium hosted this year. Normandy Way was assessed as the optimum drop off/collection point.</p> <p>The information was distributed to taxi companies a full week before the event, with some direct advice offered, along with leaflets for the taxi companies on the day. Information was also widely communicated on social media platforms. Signage and stewards were provided along with loud hailer to direct people for taxis, park & ride and shuttle services.</p> <p>Hackney Cabs were set up on the bridge over the river Tawe and whilst this worked in principle, it was very slow with several hundred waiting for taxis and a limited numbers of taxis available. It therefore took around 2 hours to clear the queue. A significant number of private hire taxis did not follow the advice given and tried to pick up off Neath Road or by the Coopers Arms, with many indiscriminately dropping passengers off at any point - on roundabouts, on the inside lanes of the dual carriageway, across traffic lights etc. which all added to the management issues.</p> <p>Officers from Special Events, Licensing and Highways will be meeting to de-brief the transportation arrangements very soon and will be arranging a meeting with the representatives of the taxi trade.</p>
10.	<p>Councillors E W Fitzgerald, D G Sullivan, L James, S M Jones, K M Marsh, I M Richard & G D Walker</p> <p>Could the Leader comment on the outcome of the EU referendum in respect of both the City and County of Swansea and the UK as a whole.</p> <p>Response of the Leader</p> <p>Given the overwhelming Support expressed at the Council meeting on 19th May 2016 for the UK to remain a Member of the European Union the result of the referendum on 23rd June was clearly unwelcome.</p> <p>However, this Council recognises the outcome of the democratic process and will work tirelessly to ensure that the Council's position is protected both from</p>

	<p>short term volatility in financial and currency markets and in the longer term in respect of strategic funding and support for businesses and employment in this area.</p> <p>Equally importantly, both I and the Chief Executive have made clear public statements in respect of Community Cohesion, recognising the value that Swansea puts on the contribution of the migrant community across all aspects of the economy and culture of this City.</p> <p>We will continue to lobby both the Welsh and Westminster Governments to ensure that this City is not disadvantaged financially or culturally by any BREXIT negotiations. We will also closely monitor all developments in relation to the future direction of travel and will seek to keep all Members informed of issues that could directly or indirectly affect the City.</p>
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	<p>PART B</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Councillors Mike Day, Mary Jones, Jeff Jones</p> <p>Can the relevant Cabinet Member tell Councillors what this year's highways and foot paths weed spraying schedule is. Is it possible for him to tell us which highways and footpaths have been treated and which will be treated by the end of September.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport The weed spraying schedule indicates that areas will be treated in the following sequence;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Castle Uplands Sketty Mayals West Cross Oystermouth Newton St Thomas Bonymaen LLansamlet Clydach Morrison Mynyddbach Landore Penderry Cwmbwrla Townhill Killay South Killay North Dunvant Cockett

Gowerton
Kingsbridge
Lower Loughor
Upper Loughor
Penyrheol
Gorseinon
Penllergaer
Llangyfelach
Pontarddulais
Mawr
Penclawdd
Fairwood
Pennard
Gower

No areas have been treated as yet due to poor weather delaying the start of the weed spraying treatment. It was anticipated that the weed spraying would commence at the beginning of June but this has been delayed. The contractor will be starting imminently subject to the weather improving and one cycle of weed spraying treatment is likely to take approximately 8 weeks. It is anticipated that all of the network will have been treated by the end of September. The contractor will need to carry out further weed spraying in order to meet the requirements of the contract which is to have a minimal presence of weeds.