

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

1.	<p>Lis Davies Asked the Leader of the Council questions in relation to Minute 30 “Councillors Allowances & Expenses 2015-2016”.</p> <p>ICT Allowance. Following the 2012 election all Councillors received £1,008 to purchase IT equipment and a further £800 over the remaining term of office, if needed. This is in excess of £130,000.</p> <p>Will this ICT policy still be in place following the May 2017 election</p> <p>Response of the Leader The Democratic Services Committee has commenced the review of the Provision of ICT to Councillors for May 2017 onwards. Indeed the Committee discussed the issue at their meeting on 28 June 2016. When they have completed their review, they are likely to make a recommendation to Council. Council in turn will make a recommendation to Cabinet as the final decision rests with the Cabinet.</p> <p>The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) states in its Annual Report of February 2016 that Councillors should have electronic access to appropriate information via an internet connection. This links with the Authority’s drive towards paperless working and without electronic access a Councillor would be significantly limited in their ability to discharge their duties. In order to comply with this requirement, the Authority ensures that Councillors are provided with financial support to carry out their duties. As part of this support, Councillors are reminded that an element of the finance is to be used to fund their own support package as it will not be provided by the Authority.</p> <p>Moving forward from May 2017 it is the intention to roll out self-service to Councillors and encourage use of Modern.gov with the aim of going paperless. The Chair and Members of the Democratic Services Committee were supportive of the approach.</p> <p>The use of ICT allows constituents to contact a Councillor at any time and for the Councillor to respond directly. Technology is likely to lead to savings over time as more and more processes are carried out electronically without the need for paper. Councillors are also being provided with more self-service tools to enable them carry out their Council duties more efficiently and effectively as part of the Digital Strategy. This will contribute to the overall Council savings that are required.</p>
2.	<p>Lis Davies Asked in relation to Minute 32 “Councillors’ Questions”.</p> <p>“Page 58. Question 7. As of April 2016 there are 128 vacant properties in the City Centre of which 33 are retail or restaurant premises in the prime and secondary retail areas (excluding the Kingsway).</p> <p>How many vacant retail properties were there during 2011-2012 and the sequential periods between 2012 & 2016?”</p>

Response of the Leader

Officers have searched our records but unfortunately the data available does not exist in the format requested. We can provide the total number of vacant units in the city centre, rather than retail properties, as follows subject to the caveats below

January 2011	152
January 2012	160
January 2013	152
January 2014	144
January 2015	131
January 2016	129

Please note these are snapshot estimates for the month of January and not a yearly estimate. In addition the methodology for obtaining this data changed during the 2014 and 2015 years and the figures compiled for the later years relate to a different geographical area to those up until 2014 therefore direct comparisons cannot be made. Also all of the figures are estimates for internal purposes and therefore cannot be definitive.

Many of the vacant units are of course owned by the private sector and therefore the Council has no control or any influence over leasing arrangements but I would emphasise the figures do show the number of vacant units have fallen between the years. I understand this is consistent with an increase in sales.

Should further analysis of the data be possible then it is likely this would take a significant amount of officers time in terms of searching our archived records and the Council would need to consider charging for this. In any event it would not be possible to compare the latest information with earlier years unfortunately.

However I hope the information provided is of some assistance.

3.

Councillor J W Jones

In relation to Councillor Question 2.

“When will the priority process commence for moving the solar powered Speed Indicator Display (SID) Signs to mains electric and will Councillors be involved in the process?”

Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

Where solar powered Speed Indicator Display signs (SIDs) are identified as consistently failing due to insufficient power then consideration will be given to providing a permanent power supply to these installations, provided that the SID is still deemed to be effective in reducing vehicle speeds.

Ward members will be included within these deliberations, with the most effective SIDs being awarded the highest priority.

Further to my previous response, the process of upgrading power supplies is an ongoing process and will progress subject to funding being available.