



Council – 29 August 2019

Councillors' Questions

Part A – Supplementaries

1	<p>Councillors Peter Black, Mary Jones & Susan Jones</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the move to a Housing First model for homeless people?</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy</p> <p>A key objective of the Council's Homelessness Strategy (2018-2022) is to provide a robust response to the need for rough sleeping. The delivery of a high quality Housing First model is a key component of this, providing accommodation for people who are homeless, often with high level and complex needs. A core principle of Housing First is that any person identified for the programme is assisted to move straight into their own self-contained accommodation, and offered intensive support based on their individual needs. The aim is to end the cycle of homelessness, promote the development of independent life skills, build resilience, and help social inclusion.</p> <p>Following a procurement exercise a provider has been appointed for the pilot which seeks to assist up to 20 individuals at any one time. The contract is to run for 3 years until 31st July 2022 and the successful candidate is The Wallich Clifford Community, known as the Wallich.</p> <p>The Wallich are currently commencing the recruitment of suitable candidates to work on the project, to be in post by the end of September/early October.</p>
2	<p>Councillors Chris Holley, Graham Thomas & Peter Black</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member tell Council what is the current number of council properties that are being planned to be built this year. What is the projected cost per property?</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy</p> <p>The approved More Homes Development Plan details the Council's ambitions to increase the much needed supply of the affordable housing in Swansea. This will be achieved by a variety of means including property acquisitions in addition to the construction of new Council homes.</p> <p>There are currently 2 new build schemes scheduled for completion this financial year 2019/20. The Parc yr Helig scheme, which is 16 properties, is due for completion in full this year. Colliers Way phase 2, which is 18</p>

	<p>properties, is progressing with an anticipated completion of 10 properties this year.</p> <p>Therefore, the anticipated number of Council properties completed this financial year is 26.</p> <p>The individual property costs will vary between sites depending on factors such as property sizes, the presence / specification of renewable technologies and site-specific costs.</p> <p>The property costs for Parc Y Helig are as follows:</p> <p>Build cost per unit - £108,483</p> <p>Renewables per unit - £25,981 (Grant Funded)</p> <p>In addition this particular site has above average 'abnormal' costs of £66,418 per unit.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External Works - Significant retaining walls over 5m high - Landscaping - Substantial cut & fill due to sloping site (in excess of 5,000 M³ of soil being displaced) - Diversion and relocation underground of overhead power cables - Attenuation works to surface water drainage <p>The individual property costs for Colliers Way phase 2 are not yet available. These are currently being calculated taking into account site-specific costs.</p> <p>Following completion of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard programme of works to existing Council homes, it is anticipated the More Homes programme will be accelerated into the next decade to meet the ever-growing demand for affordable housing.</p>
3	<p>Councillors Jeff Jones, Mike Day & Cheryl Philpott</p> <p>There is widespread public concern over any plans to develop housing in Home Farm, which is an integral and historical part of Singleton Park. I understand that it has been agreed that a working group be formed to look at possible options. Can the Cabinet Member give some indication as to the makeup of the working group, the meeting timescales and the implication on relocating the services presently using Home Farm?</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Business Transformation & Performance</p> <p>As discussed at Council, the Cabinet Member and Leader have committed to setting up a cross Council working group which will include all parties plus Ward Member representatives. This will be supported by officers from Corporate Property, Planning and Parks. Other attendees may be "co-opted" as necessary. The first meeting will be arranged early in September to</p>

	<p>ensure maximum representation with the intention that the group will conclude prior to the end of the calendar year.</p>
4	<p>Councillors Chris Holley, Mary Jones & Jeff Jones</p> <p>What is the time scale for the work on the Kingsway to be finished, and what are the additional costs incurred with the appointment of a new contractor.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure Management</p> <p>Considerable efforts have been made to ensure that work has continued on the Kingsway site, despite the original contractor, Dawnus going into administration. The Swansea Highway Partnership, has been used to progress the works, whilst discussions are ongoing with the contractor, placed second in the original contract tender process.</p> <p>A completion date for the project can only be developed once the contractor's original tender programme has been altered to reflect the works already undertaken by Dawnus, agreed remedial works, progress to date made by the Swansea Highways Partnership, any potential compensation events and revised supply chain implications.</p> <p>As you will appreciate this is a rather complex situation to resolve, good progress has been made to date and I will advise further on completion of the review and negotiation.</p> <p>At present, our best indications are that the amount paid to Dawnus, SHP, together with the revised tender sum from the proposed new contractor does not exceed the approved budget. However, this does not reflect any potential Compensation Events that may arise as the works progress.</p> <p>The cost of correcting any defective works, undertaken by Dawnus will eventually be claimed against the bond that was taken out at the start of the scheme.</p> <p>A key priority of the phasing for the remaining works is to ensure that Kingsway is available for the Christmas parade and we are confident that this will be achieved.</p>
	<p>Part B – No Supplementaries</p>
5	<p>Councillors Irene Mann & Peter May</p> <p>There has been a documented admission that there has been a mistake in applying the Council's new policy H9 on HMOs.</p> <p>The application in question was: "2019/0474/FUL, Change of use from residential (Class C3) to a 3 bedroom HMO for 3 people (Class C4), 35 Crymlyn Street Port Tennant Swansea SA1 8NX."</p>

The error was that the Planning Department's calculation had produced an incorrect concentration percentage which was below the allowable threshold. The result was wrongly granted permission was given to create an HMO from a family home.

- a. Was legal advice sought to reverse the decision and if so, what was it
- b. Is the Council open to challenge as a result of this error
- c. How is public confidence going to be restored that any future decisions by the Planning Department will be based on robust and defensible calculations

Response of the Cabinet Member for Delivery

5a: Yes, legal advice was sought but the contents of any legal advice is privileged and so cannot be in the public domain.

5b: This has been the subject of confidential legal advice.

5c: Each application is determined on the basis of the published information available at the time. The Council is in the process of preparing Supplementary Planning Guidance which will provide further clarification on the interpretation of Policy H9 of the Local Development Plan.

6 Councillors Jeff Jones, Susan Jones & Chris Holley

With regards to the announcement that funding for the City Deal has been agreed in principal and subject to terms and conditions, can the Leader give some indication of the level and timescale for the funding and the implications this will have for the proposed sums the Authority will have to borrow in order to take the City Deal forward.

Response of the Leader

As I referred to at last Council, it is indeed very pleasing to receive such positive news that our city centre projects are making the fastest progress under the City Deal.

The timing of the terms and conditions and release of grant rests with Ministers and then the Joint Committee but I continue to press for early release of funding for advanced schemes like ours . The overall scale of ambition and broad funding package was set out fully in the report to Cabinet last November.

A revised and fully updated report is due to come back to Cabinet within the next month or so. This will address the latest on the overall likely capital cost, future capital receipts, revenue costs and income, capital grant terms and conditions and how the always planned significant borrowing will be ultimately afforded.

Following the decision to change the MRP policy at Council last December I do expect the overall package to be materially cheaper to afford than previously reported.

7	<p>Councillors Mary Jones, Lynda James & Jeff Jones</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member tell Council how many Pay and Display machines are currently not working to their full capacity (eg only accept coins not cards and vice versa) and what is the timescale for any repairs.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure Management</p> <p>The Council currently has 77 Pay and Display Machines installed throughout its car parks. All of these machines accept coins and 33 have card readers, however at present 21 of these card readers are not working.</p> <p>We are unable to repair the card readers as the manufacturer no longer supports these and spare parts are no longer available. The Council has looked into replacing the card readers on all its machines but due to the cost of carrying out this work and the fact that the five year lease on the machines has now expired we have gone out to tender to replace the 75 of the older leased machines with new.</p> <p>These new machines will all be fitted with the latest card readers (which will have maintenance support) and contactless card readers. Once we have the tenders returned Officers will evaluate the cost difference between taking a new five year lease of new equipment or purchasing the existing machines out of the lease and upgrading the card readers. It is anticipated that all the machines will either be replaced or have the new card payment equipment installed by the end of the year.</p>
8	<p>Councillors Mary Jones, Susan Jones & Mike Day</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member confirm if there is any costs to schools that have been involved in the Rights Respecting Schools Award scheme.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills</p> <p>Previously schools have paid for Rights Respecting Schools Assessments. Swansea Council currently has a service level agreement with UNICEF whereby the Life Stages Team pay £6,000 annually for UNICEF to train, shadow and verify our assessments. Currently this removes the charge for assessment to schools as they are carried out by Council staff and a number of head teachers. Discussions are on-going on a future sustainable model.</p>