



Council – 23 January 2020

Councillors' Questions

Part A – Supplementaries

1	<p>Councillors Will Thomas & Lyndon Jones</p> <p>We would like to congratulate the Cabinet Member for what seems to be a very popular Christmas parade.</p> <p>Could we please have the financial cost of the parade to the Council and the cost of last year's parade.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>The costs of the Christmas Parade for 2018 and 2019 are as follows; 2018 the cost was £68,423</p> <p>2019 we were budgeted to spend £60k. We are still awaiting final costs but we anticipate that the event will be on or very close to budget.</p>
2	<p>Councillors Mike Day, Mary Jones & Lynda James</p> <p>When people click on the Council's website, a dialogue box appears which gives viewers information about Advertising settings. The box states "Advertising on this website helps protect the funding of services for our residents by generating income". Viewers are then given the opportunity to see a Vendors list and the Manage settings which includes the phrase "We and select companies may access and use your information for the below purposes". Can the relevant Cabinet Member or Leader tell Council the following information.</p> <p>A. Provide a full list of Vendors.</p> <p>B. State what due diligence process is applied to Vendors on the list for them to be on the list.</p> <p>C. How is revenue collected from the Vendors.</p> <p>D. How much revenue is anticipated for the 2019/20 year and how much has been collected.</p> <p>E. Can the Cabinet Member/Leader give Council a guarantee that all those listed on the Vendors list are engaged in ethically and environmentally acceptable activities.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Leader/Cabinet Member for Delivery & Performance</p>

The Council Advertising Network (CAN) is an external company which provides the advertising service, including the permissions, for the Council. Their website can be viewed on <https://can-digital.net>

Many local councils in the UK use the Council Advertising Network, including Derby, Vale of Glamorgan and Torfaen.

On the external council sites and Staffnet, banner adverts are shown at the top of each page only, although there is an option for adverts to be displayed at the foot of the page and throughout the body of the page. Adverts are not displayed where the service user is communicating with us online through forms.

A. List provided separately at Appendix A.

B. CAN performs comprehensive business and technical checks to ensure each vendor is suitable to deliver brand safe advertising to the council. Business checks include credit history, vendor location and position in the market. Technical checks include where data is stored, checks for virus and malware and what security measures are in place to ensure the safety of the council and its customers.

C. Revenue is collected by CAN either by individual invoice or automatic payment. Payments are received monthly. Once collected a purchase order for the council revenue is forwarded to the Council each quarter so invoice can be raised.

D. £6,243.93 will be collected for 2019/20 via invoices currently being processed.

E. CAN has advised that advertising and services are delivered digitally so has little or no impact on the environment. CAN only signs vendors that deliver honest and ethical advertising. CAN monitors the advertising delivered and if an issue does arise then that vendor will be immediately removed from the ad delivery. Since CAN launched in 2014 they have stated that they have not had any issues of this nature.

3 Councillors Jeff Jones, Chris Holley, Susan Jones

The Council are borrowing £130 million for the City Deal. Will the Leader give a financial breakdown of where this money has been or will be spent.

Response of the Leader

The spending plans were fully set out in the recent FPR7 report to Cabinet in November 2019 which was subject to substantial scrutiny. The nature of the City Deal is that it is true that the Council must borrow the gross cost up front but it then receives a significant proportion back in grant (some £22m). The report also fully set out the use of other potential funding sources including grants, loans and capital receipts to reduce the net cost, and plans to use the Capital Equalisation Reserve to neutralise the short term impact on revenue budgets for at least the next 6 years. It is also anticipated that the developments will create new revenue streams for the taxpayer to assist with future borrowing repayments. Now that the scheme has been fully added to the capital programme it will be subject to the same reporting and monitoring as all other schemes in the capital programme.

4	<p>Councillors Cheryl Philpott, Wendy Fitzgerald & Jeff Jones</p> <p>A number of planning applications have had a requirement that a proportion of the development be designated as 'affordable' housing. For clarity;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Does the council keep a list of designated properties. 2.How many dwellings have been designated in the last 10 years. 3.How many are still on the list/What has happened to the ones that are no longer on the list. 4.How do people know that there are properties available. 5.Who checks the criteria of applicants. <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Delivery & Performance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council does not hold a list of designated properties but occupation is governed by the requirements of the relevant Section 106 Agreements. The Section 106 (S106) affordable properties are transferred straight from the developer to the Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and the management of the social rented and intermediate affordable properties are the responsibility of the RSL. The RSL designate the intermediate product used, intermediate sale e.g. shared ownership, shared equity, reduced market price or intermediate rent. 2. The LDP states in Policy H2 that the target number of affordable homes to be delivered between 2010 – 2025 (i.e. during the Plan period) is 3,310 and that up until 2017 690 affordable homes had been delivered. 3. The Council does not hold a list of designated properties but occupation is governed by the requirements of the relevant S106 Agreements. 4. The RSLs allocate the social rented housing using their Allocations Policy. For intermediate for sale products the Council holds a register of interest, this register is forwarded to the RSL when a property becomes available. The properties are also advertised online. 5. The RSL checks the applicant meets the criteria, they request and check evidence, financial etc. <p>Note: To date affordable homes provided as part of the planning process via Section 106 agreements have been transferred to Registered Social Landlords. Future agreements will include an option for the Council to acquire the social rented 106 units alongside RSLs.</p>
5	<p>Councillors Cllrs Wendy Fitzgerald, Mike Day & Mary Jones</p> <p>Following the outcomes of the recent Pisa tests, Wales remained the lowest performing country within the UK for all subjects. In reading tests, Wales scored below the average for OECD countries, while England, Scotland and Northern Ireland were all above average. Can the Cabinet Member comment on the fact that Wales, after more than 20 years of a Labour Government, still lags behind the rest of the UK.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills</p>

The question is about Wales as a whole, which is a matter for the WG Minister for Education. However, I can report some more satisfactory achievements for Swansea. In the previous cycle, the 2015 PISA results were published in December 2016. Since then the Lib Dem AM Kirsty Williams has been the Minister responsible for developing Wales's response to those results. As the Minister herself said in a published interview with the BBC on 3 December 2019: 'PISA is just one measure of an education system and cannot possibly tell the full story about our schools.'

The results of the 2018 PISA tests published at the beginning of December 2019 suggest that the mean score in reading (483) in Wales did not differ from the OECD average (487) to a statistically significant degree. Pupils in Wales showed relative strengths in the reading skills of 'locating information' and 'evaluating and reflecting' but performed less well in understanding. This was common across many OECD countries. Headteachers surveyed in Wales reported to the researchers a greater shortage of books and equipment than their counterparts in the rest of the UK. Pupils in Wales are less likely to read books and had more negative attitudes towards reading than pupils across the OECD. There is an issue with boys' reading habits. Whilst the scores for girls in reading increased, the average score for boys in Wales in reading was low when compared with the rest of the UK.

In Swansea and the rest of Wales we need to understand the reasons behind these reading habits, what happens at home in early years and what works in promoting reading especially among boys. Councillors as school governors in both the primary and secondary sectors have an important role in supporting and developing reading. Our Swansea Library service runs events for children supporting reading for pleasure.

What else should Swansea note from the latest PISA results? In Science, Wales's score (488) was close to the OECD average of 489, with girls performing better than boys. Wales's mean score on Maths (487) was similar to the OECD average with a noticeable improvement in girls' performance. The 'disadvantage gap' in Wales was lower than the OECD average. Across Wales it remains the case that pupils eligible for free school meals still score below those not eligible for free school meals. In Swansea schools at Key Stage 4, the average capped nine score for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is nearly five grades higher on average than similar pupils across Wales. The Swansea results reinforce the importance of using deprivation funding well by understanding what works. The Education Policy Development Committee has supported this approach leading to better dissemination of research findings.

Swansea Council Education department does not receive a school by school breakdown of the PISA results. The Council does not nominate the schools or pupils who participate in the PISA tests. PISA provides an All Wales snap-shot, one of many measures we use to consider how to provide the best education for the future of our learners. Prioritising education in Swansea has seen a steady increase in funding per pupil, an increase in training for serving teachers, research sharing and strong school- to-school support. Applications for teaching posts and senior leadership roles are high.

As a result outcomes in Swansea are strong relative to those in Wales. At Key Stage 4 in the capped nine measure, Swansea pupils achieve 14 points higher than those in Wales on average. This means that, on average, our pupils

	<p>achieve over two higher grades across their best nine GCSE or equivalent vocational qualifications than pupils across Wales as a whole. In the literacy, numeracy and science measures Swansea's pupils achieve higher grades than pupils across Wales. At Key Stage 5, Swansea A-level outcomes have continued to improve in schools and colleges. As the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills I am proud of the support given to schools by our Labour Council.</p>
6	<p>Councillors Linda Tyler-Lloyd & Paxton Hood-Williams</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member please shed some light on issues at Swansea Airport. For much of the year the airport has been flagged up on the National Air Traffic Services noticeboard as having no fuel or being unlicensed. There is also an issue of cattle on the runway, because of the poor state of the boundary fencing.</p> <p>The impact of this chronic and more acute recent progressive deterioration is to deter passing trade from visiting aircraft and also to make the airport unusable for any commercial flights. To make matters worse, I understand that the airport has now had its licence suspended.</p> <p>This is not good news, because this once thriving facility is being progressively managed into dereliction.</p> <p>Swansea is currently developing the City Deal, which will bring huge investment and jobs into the area. However, we are in competition with Cardiff and Bristol for investment, who both have thriving airports, while Swansea Airport is sending a signal out to would be investors who need the use of an airport, that Swansea is closed for business.</p> <p>This is very serious and I would be grateful if you could inform us of what steps the Council has and is taking to put this right.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Delivery & Performance</p> <p>A report will be presented to Cabinet on the 20th February 2020 to address the current activities at Swansea Airport, including the temporary suspension of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) operating licence. The report will provide a number of recommendations to ensure operations can continue at the airport whilst safeguarding the Council from any future corporate liabilities.</p> <p>The reality of the situation is there is very little that can be done to manage the situation more effectively as the Council have no desire to operate the airport themselves. There is limited ability to find another tenant in the event of the current tenancy falling and there are further complications in that the various sub-tenants and licensees/users would have expectations around their continued use. Ultimately, the tenant may decide at some point in the future that it is no longer willing to subsidise the airport and in which case the company could become insolvent. In this scenario, the land would revert to the Council and the cost of decommissioning would be substantial. The chance of finding another tenant would prove very difficult after a period of closure as the CAA would be no doubt be hesitant about issuing a fresh licence without substantial investment.</p>

	<p>Unfortunately, Swansea Airport is only ever likely to be a recreational airport as commercial operations have previously failed despite substantial investment in the facility. Therefore, to compete with the likes of Cardiff and Bristol would prove very challenging, especially given that Cardiff airport is owned by the Welsh Government and recently announced pre-tax losses in the sum of £18.5m so is effectively being subsidised by the public purse.</p>
7.	<p>Councillors Chris Holley, Graham Thomas & Kevin Griffiths</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member inform Council what sanctions are available to pursue anyone damaging the grassed areas on the Kingsway or other areas of the city.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure</p> <p>The issue of verge damage is difficult to enforce. Driving a vehicle off the carriageway is a police matter but has to be witnessed. Parking on the verge is not an offence unless a traffic regulation order applies or the vehicle is causing an obstruction.</p> <p>Damage to the highway is an offence but specific damage needs to be proved, this is very difficult in terms of historic verges and is only generally actionable in terms of specific witnessed event causing damage. This could be particularly challenging to prove that damage had been caused by one particular vehicle.</p> <p>Pursuing any verge/grassed area damage would require witness statements and clear evidence.</p> <p>With reference to the Kingsway, the Traffic regulation Order relates to the entire extent of the adopted highway and as such any vehicle parked on the footway or grassed areas will be subject to enforcement and issue of a Penalty Charge Notice. It is hoped that such action will be unnecessary and that motorists will respect the high quality pedestrian areas. The recent damage on the Kingsway was rectified at the expense of the company which caused the damage.</p>
8.	<p>Councillors Wendy Fitzgerald, Gareth Sullivan & Mary Jones</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member advise whether it is possible for quad bikers who often create a nuisance and risk to walkers and damage the landscape can be legally banned from land in Council ownership.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure Management</p> <p>Where there are opportunities to physically restrict access to Council by scrambling bikes or quad bikes then these measures have been taken, most recently funded via Councillor's Community Budgets. Legal measures to restrict this type of usage are costly and are likely to be ineffectual as they do not act as a deterrent and enforcement is very difficult.</p>
9.	<p>Councillors Chris Holley, Mary Jones & Peter May</p>

Will the Cabinet Member confirm that over 1500 lighting columns are to be cut down because of structural problems and can he further confirm when they are going to be to be replaced.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure Management

There are no plans to remove 1500 columns from use. However a number of street lighting columns have been cut down and removed over the last 7 years due to structural concerns or failures. Some have been replaced on a priority basis, however there are a number which have not been replaced. We are continuing to assess the condition of all street lighting columns and equipment across the network in order to develop a robust asset management plan. This plan will inform the funding requirements over future years to enable ongoing maintenance of the lighting network as well as tackling the maintenance backlog.

The asset management plan will be brought forward for consideration in the coming months for consideration by Cabinet.

10. **Councillors Peter Black, Graham Thomas & Cheryl Philpott**

Will the Cabinet Member give an update on the implementation of Housing First.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service Transformation

The Wallich were successful in being awarded the Council's *Housing First* Project which commenced at the end of August 2019. A number of milestones have been achieved since then and implementation is progressing well.

Recruiting the right support staff is crucial to its success and The Wallich have just completed their recruitment process and are now fully staffed. The project has held its first multi-agency steering group meeting in November, and launch event on 28th November which was well supported by a wide number of agencies and services.

The Council's Housing Options staff have been working closely with the Housing First (HF) team and 15 entrenched rough sleepers have been identified who the HF team are now actively supporting. As at Monday 6th January, 2 rough sleepers were moving into their new homes, and a further 2 had been offered accommodation. Support has commenced with the other 11 rough sleepers. Teams are working with some of the most vulnerable and complex people in the City and each case will bring its different challenges; moving from the streets into accommodation will be a huge step for some and therefore some HF clients will take longer to make that transition.

Going forward, the next officer Steering Group is planned for the beginning of February and we are likely see the HF team working with a further 5 rough sleepers over the next couple of months.

	<p>The Housing First project is in addition to provision of wider homelessness prevention services available every night to anyone who may need help, support and accommodation, particularly during the winter months.</p>
	<p>Part B – No Supplementaries</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Councillors Mary Jones, Chris Holley & Jeff Jones</p> <p>Will the Leader explain why there is a difference in the number of jobs that have been quoted for the new Arena. We have been told in Scrutiny meetings and it was shown in the Cabinet papers on the 21st November 2019 that 620 permanent jobs would be created. In a press release in the local media on the 27th November 2019 a Miss Dixon ATG'S UK venue business manager is quoted as saying "it was an exciting prospect and that more than 100 jobs would be created". On the same page at the bottom another quote saying "it is expected to create 600 long term, full time equivalent jobs."</p> <p>Response of the Leader</p> <p>The economic impact for the wider Swansea Central Phase 1 project was forecast independently by Amion Consulting. It is important to note that this is for the wider project, not only the Arena component, which I believe is the reason for any difference in figures. The independent 620 FTE jobs forecast has been derived as follows.</p> <p>Amion reviewed the Arena business plan provided by ATG, which suggested that direct on-site employment will amount to 58 FTE jobs. In addition, there would be an estimated £18.57m of off-site visitor expenditure per annum in the economy, supporting the creation of 344 gross FTE jobs. These figures were updated prior to the Cabinet report to accurately reflect the final scheme contents and the actual job numbers, as stated by ATG in their business plan.</p> <p>The hotel would be expected to generate a further 75 FTE jobs on-site, based on employment density benchmarks, and in addition, an estimated £6.26m of off-site visitor expenditure per annum in the local economy, supporting the creation of 116 FTE jobs.</p> <p>Amion also forecast that the retail units, which will host cafes/restaurants, are expected to generate 27.3 FTE jobs on site based on employment density benchmarks.</p> <p>This brings the total gross employment impact from the entire Swansea Central Phase 1 project to some 620 FTE jobs as reported previously to Cabinet.</p> <p>It is also worth remembering that phase one is a public sector intervention to stimulate the economy. Greater job creation and economic impact is expected from phase 2.</p> <p>Many thousands of public and private sector jobs will be created or based in the city centre as part of phase 2, and further details of phase 2 will be released in the coming weeks.</p>