



Council – 10 September 2020

Councillors' Questions

Part A – Supplementaries

1 Councillors Ceri Evans, Yvonne Jardine, Mike White, Mike Durke & Cyril Anderson

Could the Leader confirm if the current capital programme is the biggest ever and can the leader give details of what it will deliver.

Response of the Leader

The capital programme for 2020-21 is the largest Swansea Council has ever forecast for delivery, taking advantage of affordable borrowing at historically low interest rates which allows substantial capital funding compared to the past. This, alongside the revised minimum revenue provision has resulted in more affordable capital spending. The capital budget and programme reported to Council in February 2020 sets out an ambitious plan to deliver key capital schemes which will improve Swansea's economic fortunes for future generations to come. A summary of capital budget and outturn for the five years from 2015-16 to 2019-20, together with the budget for 2020-21 is shown below:

Capital programme summary budget and outturn (2015-16 to 2020-21)				
	Budget	Capital	Underspend	
	£'000	Outturn	C/F to next	
		£'000	year	
			£'000	
2020-21 Budget				
Capital budget General Fund	223,642			
Capital budget HRA	54,166	n/a	n/a	
Total capital budget	277,808			
2019-20				
Capital budget General Fund	102,555	74,720	(27,835)	
Capital budget HRA	53,384	51,839	(1,545)	
Total capital budget	155,939	126,559	(29,380)	
2018-19				
Capital budget General Fund	76,785	53,482	(23,303)	
Capital budget HRA	47,705	43,029	(4,676)	
Total capital budget	124,490	96,511	(27,979)	
2017-18				
Capital budget General Fund	60,347	40,379	(19,968)	
Capital budget HRA	51,886	45,835	(6,051)	
Total capital budget	112,233	86,214	(26,019)	
2016-17				
Capital budget General Fund	63,523	49,783	(13,740)	
Capital budget HRA	54,368	51,953	(2,415)	
Total capital budget	117,891	101,736	(16,155)	
2015-16				
Capital budget General Fund	72,003	47,680	(24,323)	
Capital budget HRA	47,648	41,416	(6,232)	
Total capital budget	119,651	89,096	(30,555)	

Key schemes within the 2020-21 programme include City Deal Phase 1 - the Digital Arena, residential, two car parks, City Park and iconic interlinking bridge / public realm and City Deal Phase 2 – Digital Village (new offices on Kingsway), restoration and conversion of the Palace Theatre into new office accommodation, transformation of the Hafod Copperworks Powerhouse to house Penderyn Whisky and improvements to Wind Street.

The C21st School programme continues a programme of new builds and improvement works across Swansea's school buildings including Tan-y-Lan, Tirdeunaw and Bishopston, with Gorseinon primary school and the new EOTAS schemes scheduled for completion this year.

Social Services are delivering key capital schemes in 2020-21 funded by the Intermediate Care Fund grant to improve planning and provision of services across health, 3rd sector, Social Services and Housing.

	<p>Highways, Corporate Building and Housing (GF) have their usual allocation for 2020-21 to deliver essential maintenance and repairs and to support some of the most vulnerable with DFG grants. In addition Highways have a number of schemes to improve and promote Active Travel routes (walking and cycling), which is particularly relevant during the current pandemic, together with carriageways and footpath improvements and a Capital Community budget enabling Ward Members to develop localised traffic calming solutions.</p> <p>Corporate Buildings have delivered a £20.3m surge hospital at the Bay Studios on behalf of SBUHB in a matter of months to support Health's response to the current crisis. This is on top of its normal programme maintaining Council buildings including School premises.</p> <p>Digital and Transformation capital schemes delivered in recent years have enabled Officers to work in an agile way which has been rolled out further in recent months and will continue throughout 2020-21.</p> <p>Housing continues to work towards achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard with new Kitchens and Bathrooms, window and roof repairs to improve our Housing stock for this and future generations. Our More Homes scheme has ambitious plans to deliver new Council Homes in this and future years.</p>
2	<p>Councillors Steve Gallagher & David Helliwell</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member advise as to the update relating to Home Farm, as there has been no communication since the meeting held in February.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Delivery & Operations</p> <p>As all will be aware recent events have made some activities difficult, if not impossible, to be undertaken as resources have been redirected to key services. However, discussions are now underway to try and re-convene a meeting of the Cross Party Working Group.</p>
3	<p>Councillors Lyndon Jones & Myles Langstone</p> <p>We would like to thank the staff at Swansea Council for the fantastic job they have done for the people of Swansea, since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. Thanks to them, most of our services were kept running.</p> <p>Many were seconded to other jobs to help essential services. Can the Cabinet Member give us an update on how many staff are still seconded from their former jobs and what are the plans to open up those services that were shut down during lockdown, but as yet have not re-started.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Delivery & Operations</p> <p>There are 106 staff currently redeployed into the Test, Trace Protect (TTP) team from across other service areas, pending the ability to return to their substantive roles. The majority of staff will move back to their substantive roles in the coming weeks. There are 4 members of staff who were at risk of redundancy and have been officially redeployed on three month contracts from the 1st September. There are also a number of staff working on TTP from the Grand Theatre who will also continue to be redeployed from the 1st September as there has been no date given as of yet</p>

to when the Grand Theatre will re-open for Business. In addition, staff across the Council have been re-focused on supporting the Covid-19 response in order to protect the most vulnerable and those residents that were shielding.

The re-opening of services are continuing across Directorates. These are taking place in full consideration of the requirements of the service and the health and safety of staff through the completion and implementation of risk assessments and including consultation with trade unions.

4 Councillors Wendy Lewis, Paul Lloyd, Mandy Evans, Bev Hopkins & Phil Downing.

Can the Leader provide the current level of inward investment to Swansea and how this compares to other years?

Response of the Cabinet Member for Delivery & Operations

The Council's current PI measure for the value of inward investment related to property-based projects where the authority owns some of or all the land (or adjoining land which facilitates the development) reached a total of £42m in the last financial year, by far the highest it has been over the last 5 years.

However this is only a small part of the overall investment picture. Investments come in varying sizes and needs, and may not always require support from Welsh Government or the Council, instead taking the path to find their property through private landlords.

There were 7 private enquiries for inward investment to the Council last year, all of which are in the discussion / consideration phase, but as with major projects of this nature, timescales for delivery can vary subject to economic conditions and demand led business investment decisions.

The Trade and Invest Wales team reported 6 investments from overseas companies in Swansea, which aim to create 388 new jobs and to safeguard a further 259 existing jobs. Values of the investments are not currently available but are considerable. In addition they have reported a further 5 acquisitions and 1 investment from companies based in England, with 35 jobs directly created from the investment.

In addition the wider inward investment and construction activity in Swansea significantly exceeds this running into many hundreds of millions of pounds whilst creating significant construction and permanent jobs.

Some examples include

Swansea central phase 1 (£135m)

Kingsway infrastructure (£12m)

New student accommodation on Kingsway and Mariner Street (£70m)

The Palace Theatre (£6m),

Hacer Biophilic building (TBC),

Penderyn Distillery and visitor centre (£10m)

Highway infrastructure improvements (final figure TBC)

A range of projects under the Welsh Government's Tri programme/ Town Centre Loan fund (final figure TBC).

	<p>Further schemes are also being progressed at pace to bring them to fruition in this and subsequent years</p> <p>These include (final investment values to confirmed):</p> <p>Swansea Central phase 2 71/72 Kingsway Skyline development Green infrastructure projects Castle Square and Gardens refurbishment Wind Street improvements The wider regeneration of the Hafod copper works historic site The Albert Hall refurbishment The City Deal digital roll out The development of a range of council owned city centre strategic sites for which the procurement is due to commence in the Autumn.</p> <p>Overall these developments represent well in excess of a billion pounds of investment for Swansea.</p>
5	<p>Councillors Robert Smith, June Burtonshaw, Phil Downing, Mike Durke & Christine Richards</p> <p>Can the Leader confirm if any street names, place names or statues have been changed or removed in Swansea?</p> <p>Response of the Leader</p> <p>We are aware that the owners of Picton Arcade removed their signage as a temporary measure at the time of Black Lives Matter protests locally, but this was an independent action of which we have no further information. In terms of the wider work to assess issues raised by the Black Lives Matter campaign, a working group from Cultural Services has been established to review our approach to programming; collections management and commissioning, which will also include our public artworks and monuments, place names and heritage interpretation. We are at present not in a position to recommend any changes, as it is still early days. A key part of this work however is to have the Diversity Pledge for cultural services, which was developed as part of our participation in the Agenda21 Pilot Cities Europe programme for Culture in Sustainable Cities, adopted by the Council.</p>
6	<p>Councillors Lyndon Jones, Myles Langstone & Will Thomas</p> <p>We have had a number of requests to ask if season tickets can be made available at beach car parks, like at Caswell Bay.</p> <p>We appreciate that this is something the Council do not offer at the moment, but as the facility is in place for City Centre car parks and according to our Council website, Langland car park, we have the facility in place to do it, so hope this is something that the Council would consider offering as a matter of urgency, as it would seem easy to achieve.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management</p>

	<p>Historically, local businesses have purchased a limited number of season tickets, to assist their employees to park close to their place of work. The car parks have been Caswell Bay, Langland Bay and Bracelet Bay car parks. However, the priority has always been to ensure available parking for customers and visitors.</p> <p>Information provided by parking services, is that there have been no requests for season tickets in Caswell Bay. The application for season tickets, including car parks not listed, can be made at https://www.swansea.gov.uk/carparkseasonticket.</p> <p>The current cost of a public season ticket, excluding the City Centre, is £550 per annum but this is due to be reviewed.</p> <p>Any member of the public can apply for a season ticket in any car park, subject to availability.</p>
7	<p>Councillors Lyndon Jones & Myles Langstone</p> <p>I would like to congratulate the team at the West Glamorgan Archive, for the interesting posts they put on social media during lockdown. They created a lot of interest, bring the past to life, which were enjoyed by a lot of people.</p> <p>The archive play an important role for the people of Swansea, so wonder if any progress has been made in finding a future home for the service, when it moves from County Hall.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>Thank you for your positive comments, which are gratefully received and endorsed. The Archives team, along with other cultural services, created a significant amount of online content for people to enjoy during lockdown and we hope to see this continue, resources allowing, post easing and reopening. The relocation of Council services from County Hall has been complex for many reasons, and as a joint service with NPT, overseen by Welsh Government the service needs have specific consideration regarding capacity, security, environmental and access conditions, as well as demonstrating efficiency and value for both Councils and their stakeholders. Whilst a clear and complete solution is still to be arrived at, we continue to liaise with colleagues across the Council and national stakeholders to consider options in a complete or phased way if necessary, based on the premise of vacating the Civic Centre. A report is due to be presented to Cabinet for all services in the Autumn and we will be pleased to update as and when a final recommendation is place for WGAS.</p>
	<p>Part B – No Supplementaries</p> <p>None.</p>