



Council – 4 November 2020

Councillors' Questions

Part A – Supplementaries

1	<p>Councillors Jeff Jones, Mike Day, Mary Jones, Cheryl Philpott & Susan Jones</p> <p>There have been numerous incidents of flooding across the city but, more recently in Killay and Sketty which has affected both residential and business properties alike. Many of the complaints that have been received are about blocked drains. Will the Cabinet Member inform Council:-</p> <p>(a) The normal timescale for routine gully emptying and whether he thinks that the current timescales are sufficient.</p> <p>(b) Whether any improvements works are needed to eradicate flooding problems.</p> <p>(c) How many emergency call outs have there been to empty blocked and/or overflowing gullies and drains in the year 2019/20 and how many since April 2020.</p> <p>(d) Does he think that the drainage department has the capacity to properly assess drainage reports submitted by Developers.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management</p> <p>(a) Each of the 40,000 gullies in Swansea has been assessed and given a frequency according to its relative importance. Schedules are 3 years, 1 year and 6 months. The previous regime was 2 years for all drains and the switch to a prioritised approach is recommended practice. An increase in demand due to weather changes has been recognised and an additional gulley tanker and crew have been funded to deal with reactive reports.</p> <p>(b) Yes it is very clear that improvements are needed to eradicate some of the flooding issues in the Killay and Sketty Wards but to address the flooding issues the Authority needs to gain a full understanding on the cause and impacts of flooding not only in these locations but across the whole of Swansea. Officers are continually investigating areas which have been significantly affected by flooding and in many cases are working with other risk management Authorities such as Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales in order share information and are collaboratively working together to investigate the causes of flooding.</p> <p>In relation to surface water flooding such as that in Killay and Sketty, Welsh Government have made grants available to the Local Lead Flood Authority to investigate/design and build major relief schemes. Consequently, due to the number of flooding incidents on Killay Square which is causing a major concern to the local community the Authority will be applying to access Welsh Government grant funding in order to support a business case to examine the area more closely with a view of mitigating the flood risk and to explore options to protect businesses, residential properties and flooding of Highway.</p>
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I also understand that the Birchtree watercourse is also being examined following concerns raised by the residents living on Derwen Fawr Road and I can confirm that the adequacy of the existing drainage features serving the area are currently being assessed so that a potential solution can be considered once the findings are fully understood.

Whilst I appreciate that there were many other areas affected by flooding, where there are affordable solutions then these will have to be considered within the existing funding streams and against other demands for flood prevention measures in Swansea. This year there is an annual allocation of £400k allocated to highways drainage, and an additional £200k allocated to assist with urgent problems.

(c) Unfortunately, this is impossible to answer as no distinction is made between highway emergency flooding and standard blocked gullies, gullies blocked by leaves. It should be noted that the majority of flooding emergencies are due to pluvial or surface water flooding which are over and above the remit of the highway drainage system.

(d) The drainage responsibilities of the Authority are split into three areas, SAB - sustainable, Highway Drainage and LLFA drainage. All developer submissions are competently reviewed in relation to all three areas. All three areas are under pressure, however and a new SAB officer has just been appointed to support the assessment of the increasing numbers of drainage reports being received by the Authority and a further drainage technician/Inspector post has been approved. The resources are currently being evaluated.

2 Councillors Chris Holley, Mary Jones & Gareth Sullivan

In the local media (8/10/20), there is a very worrying article about the difficulties currently facing traders in Swansea Market regarding their rent. As the market is a vital part of the shopping experience in Swansea, can the Cabinet Member update Council on any proposals that are actively being considered now to help traders again, given that we are promising to invest £439k in the Market.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

As summarised below Swansea Council has provided a strong package of support to Swansea Market traders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 9 March to 28 June 2020 (a period of 16 weeks) – rents were fully waived
- 29 June to 23 August 2020 (a period of 8 weeks) – rents were charged at 35% of the standard rate
- 24 August to 15 November (a period of 12 weeks) – rents are being charged at 70% of the standard rate

This represents financial support from the Council for a total of **£568,941**.

Following research of other indoor markets across the UK, a more generous support package has not been found. For example, locally Llanelli and Carmarthen Market has offered the following:

- April to June – rents were fully waived
- July – rents charged at 50%
- August & September – rents charged at 75%

	<p>To qualify for this, traders had to evidence a 50% or more reduction in turnover and complete an application form.</p> <p>Swansea Market traders have all been granted rent concessions without condition. It is also important to note, that whilst the concessionary rent to date has been invoiced, it does not mean that it has been paid by all traders and there is potential for arrears to accrue.</p> <p>Additionally, Swansea Market traders have been eligible for Welsh Government support such as grants and schemes. For example, the vast majority (about 90%) have received the NNDR grant of £10,000. All traders are also eligible for the new 'local lockdown' grants which were due to open on 25 October but has been paused whilst Welsh Government review its support for businesses in light of further measures such as a 'circuit breaker'.</p> <p>Despite the report in the local media (8/10/20), no formal representations regarding further financial support have been made by the Swansea Market Traders' Federation (the body which represents the traders). If a formal proposal was presented, it would be considered.</p> <p>Aside from the support with rents, significant investment continues to be made into the development of Swansea Market. The £439k investment programme which is jointly funded by Welsh Government is well underway including the opening of public toilets and a Changing Places facility last month.</p> <p>The projects which make up this programme respond to priorities that have been driven by traders and the Federation (e.g. toilets, entrance improvements, way-finding) and are designed to ensure that the Market continues to meet customer needs and is fit for the future (e.g. WIFI, the redevelopment of a central communal area).</p> <p>Budget is also being invested in a new multi-media marketing campaign to encourage shoppers and support traders. It will promote how Swansea Market has adapted to the present situation and that by working together with customers, we'll move forward and the Market will continue to be the heart of Swansea.</p> <p>The Council fully recognises the vital role that the Market plays in the City Centre. This is reflected not only in the most recent financial support for traders, but in investments made to continually improve the Market and ensure its sustainability. This includes a £2.2 million refurbishment of the roof in 2014.</p>
3	<p>Councillors Wendy Fitzgerald, Kevin Griffiths & Graham Thomas</p> <p>During the current crisis, litter has become an increasing problem, be it fly tipping, debris left on the beach or rubbish on the streets. What action does the Cabinet Member believe should be taken to ensure that people are fully aware that dropping litter is a criminal offence.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management</p> <p>It is felt that it is well known that fly tipping and dropping litter are criminal offences, and we will continue to both promote this fact and encourage people not to engage in these activities. We have recently a "Don't be a Tosser" Campaign through</p>

	<p>posters and social media, we have supported a national Keep Wales Tidy Anti-Litter Campaign, and continue to publicise any prosecutions where appropriate.</p>
4	<p>Councillors Peter Black, Mary Jones & Jeff Jones</p> <p>What plans are in place to find a permanent solution for those rough sleepers found temporary accommodation under emergency provisions during the pandemic.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service Transformation</p> <p>Since the start of the pandemic, large numbers of single persons have been placed in temporary accommodation. Over 200 individuals have been moved on to more suitable accommodation during this 6 months period, however the number of households becoming homeless continues to grow, so each week new households need to be placed into temporary accommodation.</p> <p>It is important to note that those households occupying temporary accommodation are not only made up of former rough sleepers but also include those leaving prison, hospital, care, parental and relationship breakdown, refugees, no recourse to public funds, victims of domestic abuse and so on. Therefore we need to ensure that we find permanent solutions for all those households that are currently in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>The pandemic continues to provide us with challenges, we are seeing a rise in homeless presentations and people in housing need whilst the number of end of tenancies and new lettings have decreased by about a third since April. In addition we anticipate that evictions from the across the sector will increase when the WG lift the current ban on evictions from private rented and social housing, and there are real concerns about levels of unemployment rising which will impact on the levels of homelessness.</p> <p>In Phase 1, through funding by Welsh Government, there has been a focus on moving people off the streets and into temporary accommodation. Since April 20 we have been working with our RSL partners and the private rented sector team and ensured that prioritisation has been given to those individuals in temporary accommodation and supported accommodation and this will continue to be our priority in the next few months. The Council's Landlord Services are also prioritising the allocation of one bed flats to those people in temporary accommodation. The Ty Tom Jones Project continues to be invaluable in terms of providing a safe and secure option for tackling rough sleeping during the pandemic, and we are currently looking at options to how this project can continue past March 21.</p> <p>Welsh Government has made available Phase 2 funding to local authorities in Wales to be used over the next 6 months, with the express aim to ensure that those housed in temporary accommodation are moved on into permanent accommodation with appropriate support. Swansea has successfully bid for the following amounts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital funding – £5,385,878 • Revenue funding – £247,400 <p>This funding will focus on working with partners to provide intensive support to enable households to rapidly access and sustain long-term accommodation and increase the availability of affordable 1-bedroom properties in Swansea. The</p>

	<p>funding will provide an additional 80/90 one bed flats across the City, specifically to offer to those currently in temporary accommodation. These additional properties will be made up of acquisitions and new developments through the Local Authority, Pobl, Coastal and Family Housing. But we will also be working with private landlords to bring a number of empty private rented properties back into stock.</p> <p>One of the Homeless Strategy's key objectives is tackling rough sleeping and prior to the pandemic Swansea was committed to ensuring that no-one needed to sleep rough. We are determined to continue to tackle rough sleeping despite these difficult times, but we mustn't underestimate the challenge ahead. Phase 2 will undoubtedly help with accommodating some of the most vulnerable in our City, but we need to ensure that we are able to continue to provide intensive support on a long term basis. Moreover, we need to ensure that the multi-agency partnership approach that we have taken in the last 6 months continues and that preventing homeless lies at the heart of 'our' approach in Swansea.</p>
5	<p>Councillors Chris Holley, Susan Jones & Jeff Jones</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member confirm the standard the current building programme for council housing in Swansea is being built too as there appears to be confusion on whether they are part of the "homes for power stations" (City Deal) or just energy efficient homes.</p> <p>Response of the Homes, Energy & Service Transformation</p> <p>The Council has developed its own Swansea Standard for its new council homes which are high energy efficient homes constructed significantly above current building regulation whilst also embedding new technology such as ground source heat pumps, Photo Voltaic panels and battery storage. The schemes are fully aligned with the Homes and Power Stations concept but until the full business case has been signed by Welsh and UK government for the regional project no schemes in the region can yet be formally "badged" as HaPS projects.</p> <p>The development at Parc Yr Helig also focussed on significant use of local supply chains with over 90% of spend within Swansea (up to a 15 mile radius) and a further 9.5% within the rest of South Wales. We will continue to utilise the construction of our Council Home developments to support local SMEs and local supply chains and to continue supporting the development of apprenticeships and traineeships in construction which will be vital for the major pipeline of construction that we have in the City and Region.</p>
	<p>Part B – No Supplementaries</p>
6	<p>Councillors Lynda James, Mary Jones & Chris Holley</p> <p>Other councils in Wales are moving to use ZOOM instead of TEAMS so they have immediate Welsh Translation of the meeting. Is Swansea Council considering using ZOOM instead of TEAMS in order to have immediate Welsh Translations to the meetings as other Welsh Councils are doing.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Business Improvement & Performance</p>

	<p>The issue of simultaneous translation is being discussed nationally by IT Managers across Wales and includes Welsh Government. By working together we can have a consistent approach and take advantage of economy of scale and learning.</p> <p>Colleagues in the Welsh Government have compiled a list of what Microsoft could do to increase their provision and support for the Welsh Language and discussions with Microsoft are underway. Moving to an alternative platform is a complicated and costly undertaking for the Council due to the resources required to ensure it is compatible, secure, and fit for purpose for council business. Further analysis is required around what functionality may be coming in Teams before this decision is taken.</p> <p>In addition, the Senedd Culture and Welsh language committee will be conducting an Inquiry into Welsh language and how technology can support use of the language. The Council will keep a watching brief on the outcomes of this inquiry.</p>
7	<p>Councillors Lynda James, Peter Black & Jeff Jones</p> <p>What checks are carried out to ensure that all patients being discharged from hospital to Council Care Homes are tested prior to discharge. Also do all such homes have adequate facilities to isolate residents on their return from hospital.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Community Health Services</p> <p>The Care Home team receive confirmation and copy of the test result before admission and a copy of test result are included as part of the discharge papers.</p> <p>All homes have adequate facilities to isolate residents on their return from hospital. These arrangements are included in the care home's risk assessment.</p>
8	<p>Councillors Wendy Fitzgerald, Gareth Sullivan & Mary Jones</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member tell Council when the promised upgrade for all ticket machines in car parks will be concluded</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management</p> <p>Following a tender advertised on Sell2Wales, a supplier was approved to provide 75 new machines and back office software in Feb 2020 with initial specification works taking place. It was hoped that the install would commence mid-March 2020. Unfortunately due to the Covid Pandemic, a significant amount of key staff from the company and their supply network were furloughed which resulted in delays in the timeline for the install.</p> <p>The first phase of installation of machines commenced on 12th August 2020. However, it quickly became apparent that faults were being identified in the machines. The installation was halted until the company could provide a reliable solution. Fortunately, the faults were identified and solutions developed. However, this took some time, until September 2020. The replacement parts have been fitted and trialled over a three week period to confirm they are working correctly. As such, officers now have the confidence to accept the second batch of machines, which have also received the upgraded components.</p>

	<p>The second and final batch of machines are being finalised, tested, with anticipated delivery, installation and commissioning being concluded early November 2020.</p>
9	<p>Councillors Wendy Fitzgerald, Gordon Walker & Jeff Jones</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member inform Council if hard plastic collected from households as recyclable material is being recycled or sent to landfill.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management</p> <p>I can confirm that all plastic bottles, tubs and trays collected from households are recycled.</p>
10	<p>Councillors Mike Day, Peter Black & Lynda James</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member tell Council what the waiting time is for assessments for adaptations and :-</p> <p>(a) What is the average time after that for getting the work completed. (b) How many people are awaiting assessments. (c) Are any of the people on the waiting list having to stay in hospital or residential accommodation while they wait for adaptations to be made.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service Transformation</p> <p>Currently the waiting time for a Housing Renewals and Adaptations in-house Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment is 3 to 4 months. Prior to the Covid pandemic lockdown the waiting list was 3 to 4 weeks. The Covid lockdown and resulting restrictions prevented OTs from carrying out assessments of disabled applicants within their home from the end of March through to middle of July 2020. As a result we now have a significant backlog of adaptations enquiries that require OT assessments.</p> <p>Since July 2020, OTs have recommenced assessments. However, the ongoing restrictions relating to Covid social distancing, hygiene and PPE measures has resulted in OTs not being able to carry out the number of assessments they were previously able to produce. For example, to assist in social distancing and reduce the time within client's homes, OTs are now carrying out a dual assessment of the client with an initial assessment undertaken over the phone followed by an assessment of the person's mobility at their home.</p> <p>The Housing Renewals and Adaptations service are in the process of increasing resources to address the current backlog of assessments.</p> <p>(a) Minor adaptations (grabrails, bath aids, small steps / ramps, keysafes etc) – 3 months - this is an average timescale and includes minor building works and some wet trades. In reality most are delivered in much shorter timeline and we are constantly working on new ways to speed delivery with our partners.</p> <p>Medium sized adaptations (level access shower facilities, ramps etc) – 6 months.</p>

	<p>Large sized adaptations (bedroom / shower room extensions etc) – 13 months</p> <p>(b) There are 120 applicants awaiting an assessment from our OTs.</p> <p>(c) Applicants requiring adaptations to their home to enable discharge from hospital are usually deemed a priority case and dealt with immediately. Typically adaptations needed to enable an applicant to be discharged from hospital are minor in nature and can be undertaken quickly.</p> <p>For private households Western Bay Care and Repair handyman service will undertake the minor adaptations. They also have access to additional health board hospital discharge schemes and funding including the Rapid Response programme.</p> <p>For Council properties, Building Services carry out the minor adaptations to enable hospital discharge.</p>
11	<p>Councillors Mike Day, Jeff Jones & Wendy Fitzgerald</p> <p>What is the normal cycle for mechanical street sweeping of gutters. Can the Cabinet Member provide information on how the mechanical street sweepers have been employed in 2019/20 and since April 2020.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management</p> <p>The majority of road gutters are generally swept 4 times a year, with footways being done about 3 times a year. Busy commercial areas are swept more often with the core city centre being visited every morning. In addition, areas of leaf fall are targeted in the Autumn on a needs basis.</p> <p>Since April 2020, the mechanical brushes were only used for emergency works during the full lockdown, but resumed their normal duties in May.</p> <p>Additional sweeping resources have been allocated to leaf fall this year to further supplement the usual targeting of resources on this issue.</p>
12	<p>Councillor Mike Day</p> <p>Can the appropriate Cabinet Member tell Council what accreditation schemes to be Covid-19 secure are available to businesses in the Tourism and Hospitality sectors in Swansea and</p> <p>(a) How many have applied for accreditation and how many have been successful so far. (b) How many staff are involved in checking that venues are in compliance. (c) Are there any new staff. If so, how many. If not, what other duties are not being undertaken.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>The Council doesn't run any accreditation schemes for businesses, but nationally, the "We're Good To Go" industry standard mark has been designed by</p>

VisitEngland in partnership with the national tourist organisations Tourism Northern Ireland, VisitScotland and Visit Wales. This scheme is a self-assessment tool, to offer a 'ring of confidence' for all sectors of the tourism industry, as well as reassurance to visitors that businesses have clear processes in place and are following industry and Government COVID-19 guidance on cleanliness and social distancing. The scheme is free to join and open to all businesses across the tourism & hospitality industry across the UK. Once the online process has been completed and approved, businesses receive certification and the We're Good To Go branding for display in their premises and online.

The Tourism Team has been actively encouraging local tourism operators to sign up, through regular trade communications and have given prominence to 'Good to Go' businesses on the official destination website www.visitswanseabay.com in order to encourage good practice amongst our tourism industry. Since its launch in July, over 170 Swansea businesses have registered. More information on the scheme can be found at <https://goodtogo.visitbritain.com/>