



Council – 4 March 2021

## Councillors' Questions

### Part A – Supplementaries

1	<p><b>Councillors Linda Tyler-Lloyd &amp; Will Thomas</b></p> <p>In relation to the Active Travel Scheme in Mayals Road, Derwen Fawr as you are aware there are concerns from many residents about the scheme one area of which is the safety of the scheme for all road users including pedestrians, cyclists and pedestrians. Could the Council provide the risk assessment for the scheme for its entire length as there is a variation in the widths of the road and our residents need to know the scheme is safe.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement &amp; Infrastructure Management</b></p> <p>Please find attached at Appended A, a copy of the Road Safety Audit Report undertaken to review the design of the new cycle link. Each comment has been carefully considered by the design team in formulating the final scheme.</p> <p>Item 3.5 identifies an issue in relation to the road width by the retaining wall west of Clyne Chapel. The recommendations made in the report have been considered and included within the works to address this issue.</p>
2	<p><b>Councillors Mike Day, Jeff Jones, Cheryl Philpott &amp; Mary Jones</b></p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member tell Council what advice they have received from Welsh Government over the need to inform and consult with local residents in connection with Active Travel Schemes.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement &amp; Infrastructure Management</b></p> <p>Swansea Council Officers met with Welsh Government (WG) and Transport for Wales (TfW) on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January to discuss current Active Travel schemes. These meetings are scheduled throughout the year to assess progress on the programme as a whole and made no specific reference to the Consultation process. The existing programme has been funded on the basis of Swansea Council having completed the requirements of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, which places a statutory responsibility on each local authority in Wales, to map, plan and make continuous improvements to its active travel (walking and cycling) networks. Swansea Council developed two maps in 2017, as required under the act, an Existing Route Map (ERM) and an Integrated Network Map (INM). The INM produced a comprehensive plan setting out the short, medium and long-term capital infrastructure walking and cycling routes that the local authority will seek to deliver, for the improvement of active travel across the City and County of Swansea.</p>

	<p>The draft INM was published for comment as part of a statutory twelve week public consultation period, as required by the Act. The Consultation ran from 12th June to 8th September 2017, and included online consultation, a series of workshops held at Civic Centre, Clydach and Gorseinon, alongside consultation with a number of schools and stakeholders.</p>
3	<p><b>Councillors Brigitte Rowlands &amp; Myles Langstone</b></p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member please advise how many fly tipping prosecutions there have been during 2019/2020. Also, what is cost of dealing with fly tipping to Swansea Council for this time period.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement &amp; Infrastructure Management</b></p> <p>I can confirm that there weren't any fly tipping prosecutions in 2019/20. The Council introduced an new option to issue fixed penalty notices (Fpn's) instead of going straight to prosecutions. 4 fpn's were issued for fly tipping.</p> <p>Dealing with fly tipping costs the Council approximately £150K per year, mainly made up of 2 dedicated fly tipping teams for a quick response.</p>
4	<p><b>Councillors Mike Day, Cheryl Philpott, Jeff Jones &amp; Mary Jones</b></p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member inform Council what involvement the Council's Biodiversity Champion has had in the Active Travel schemes being implemented.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement &amp; Infrastructure Management</b></p> <p>Whilst the Active Travel programme seeks to develop sustainable transport modes in and around the city, it seeks to do so in conjunction with Welsh Governments Well-Being of Future Generations Act, aimed at improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the communities being served. Discussions have taken place with a number of internal stakeholders to try to introduce active travel routes that can also act as green infrastructure corridors, through the introduction of SUDs drainage and tree planting. These proposals have been developed with the support of the Green Infrastructure Team and a large number of new trees have been planted on the back of the programme. The team has consulted with all relevant internal departments to ensure that the project is compliant, including officers responsible for safeguarding Biodiversity.</p>
5	<p><b>Councillors Susan Jones, Jeff Jones &amp; Peter Black</b></p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member clarify the position with regards to the repayment of the Disabled Facility Grant in respect of recipient dying within the 10 year repayment period.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy &amp; Service Transformation</b></p> <p>Repayment of Disabled Facilities Grants is set out in the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations: Policy to Provide Assistance 2017-</p>

	<p>2022, approved by Council on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017 in exercise of powers within the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 : Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008 Wales. Disabled Facilities Grants have repayment conditions if the grant exceeds £5,000 and the recipient disposes of the property (whether by sale, assignment e.g. will, transfer or otherwise) within 10 years of the certified completion date.</p> <p>Therefore if a sole owner-occupier dies within 10 years of receipt of grant, the Council will look to recover the grant at sale or transfer of the property. If a property is in joint ownership with a surviving partner after death of the grant recipient, with no sale or transfer of the property, there is no requirement to repay the Disabled Facilities Grant.</p> <p>Where the Disabled Facilities Grant is deemed to be repayable, the Council will require repayment of any part of the grant that exceeds £5,000.</p> <p>Under the conditions of the Disabled Facilities Grant, consideration to waiver repayment can be considered if the sale of the property has an impact under the following:  Financial Hardship,  Provision of care,  Disposal to enable the recipient to change location for employment,  Reasons connected with Physical and Mental Health.</p>
	<p><b>Part B – No Supplementaries</b></p>
<p>6</p>	<p><b>Councillors Jeff Jones, Kevin Griffiths &amp; Lynda James</b></p> <p>On 19th March 2020 Cabinet approved a report which amended the Community Budget Scheme to enable Councillors to bid for an additional £30,000 match funding for agreed capital schemes within their wards. Will the Cabinet Member confirm that all of these schemes will be completed by early 2022 and will he give a list of the approved schemes and the wards where these schemes have already commenced or been completed.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Business Improvement &amp; Performance</b></p> <p>The March 2020 report confirmed that Ward Members should confirm the intended capital schemes no later than March 2021 to ensure there was 12 months available for delivery. A reminder with guidance will shortly be issued to all councillors to seek confirmation of schemes by this deadline. It is not possible to give guarantees given recent events and supply chain issues linked to Covid coupled with the need for some schemes to go through a statutory process such as where TROs apply but it is believed this 12 months period is sufficient to complete all schemes.</p> <p>Work has been completed on refurbishment on playground in Three Crosses, low lighting scheme in West Cross, launch ramp in Swansea Canal, resurfacing of playground in Danygraig school. Improvements at Parc Williams are ongoing.</p>

	<p>Highways work has commenced on schemes in the following wards – Cwmbwrla, Dunvant, Killay North, Kingsbridge, Lower Loughor, Penclawdd and Uplands. These schemes are at various stages leading towards completion.</p> <p>I would also confirm that sufficient resources have been made available to enable all schemes to be completed by early 2022.</p>
7	<p><b>Councillors Kevin Griffiths, Wendy Fitzgerald &amp; Graham Thomas</b></p> <p>All Wards have been allocated £30k to improve play/leisure facilities in their wards. Will the Cabinet Member give a list of agreed schemes.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration &amp; Tourism</b></p> <p>As of 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021 Currently of <b>31</b> Play schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Eleven</b> are live on sell2wales (Bonymaen, Clydach, Cockett, Gowerton, Kingsbridge, Landore, Mynyddbach, Penclawdd, Penderry, Sketty and St Thomas)</li> <li>- <b>Two</b> at Contract Award (Dunvant, Lower Loughor)</li> <li>- <b>Eighteen Sites</b> require scheme development</li> </ul> <p>All Wards will have gained an email from the appointed Project Manager on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021, asking them to complete the Scheme Initiation Brief with the request to complete and return by 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 for appraisal by the delivery team. One submission is required per ward. Ward Members will be contacted and asked to authorise the proposal and budget before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 to be included within the Play Scheme 2021-22 investment programme.</p> <p>Wards will be updated as the project progresses.</p>
8	<p><b>Councillors Mike Day, Mary Jones &amp; Gareth Sullivan</b></p> <p>Will the relevant Cabinet Member tell Council what discussions are taking place over the future location of the Dylan Thomas exhibition? What, if any, discussions are taking place over the future of the Dylan Thomas Centre.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration &amp; Tourism</b></p> <p>As part of the Commissioning Reviews during 2015 and 2016, alternative management and governance was explored for the Dylan Thomas Exhibition – Love the Words. Budget cuts around this time meant that the model for a stand-alone visitor offer was unsustainable, but we didn't achieve a viable alternative model. In the last year, mindful of the city regeneration, we commissioned a feasibility report into the options for the Exhibition, which concluded that moving it to Swansea Museum, and developing a comprehensive museum experience in that vicinity, was the best outcome long term. Consultation with stakeholders, via meetings with funders, focus groups and online surveys, has been underway for some time and continues, alongside some early specification outlines to understand costs involved in maintaining and improving the overall quality and accessibility.</p>

	<p>The move remains a proposal until all costs, implications and agreements are understood. The council's accommodation strategy will need to review and take into account the future use and purpose of the Dylan Thomas Centre should the proposal be implemented.</p>
9	<p><b>Councillors Chris Holley, Peter Black &amp; Gordon Walker</b></p> <p>Councillors receive many complaints about fly tipping. Will the Cabinet Member tell Council how many people have been successfully prosecuted for this offence from 2017 to date.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement &amp; Infrastructure Management</b></p> <p>I can confirm that there have been 8 prosecutions and 8 fixed penalty notices (Fpn's) for fly tipping since 2017. Enforcement was temporarily put on hold for most of 20/21 due to Covid.</p>
10	<p><b>Councillors Kevin Griffiths. Chris Holley &amp; Mary Jones</b></p> <p>The closure of a major anchor tenant and other stores in our city centre is very worrying. Will the Leader/Cabinet Member tell Council what plans there are for</p> <p>(a) attracting new tenants to these stores and</p> <p>(b) what consideration will be given to any changes to our transport system eg car parking and bus transport in anticipation of any loss to the footfall.</p> <p><b>Response of the Leader</b></p> <p>(a) The Council is currently delivering its strategic city centre regeneration capital programme, including major investments at Copr Bay and Kingsway. These will have a significant impact on the city's recovery post Covid. In addition, the "Shaping Swansea" procurement exercise is on target to secure a major developer/investor partner to continue our regeneration investment and momentum.</p> <p>Throughout the Covid crisis we have delivered significant and ongoing financial support for businesses. A post-Covid economic recovery action plan has also been prepared with partners, and a new regional economic regeneration plan is being led by Swansea to guide future regional investment in the Swansea Bay City Region.</p> <p>The Council has also commenced a detailed feasibility study to explore options to revitalise the city centre, post Covid. This work includes a commercial/architectural review of the city centre to create a strategy for key interventions which will propose new and alternative uses for key buildings, suggest strategic acquisitions, identify meanwhile uses that can be put in place quickly, identify support packages for existing occupiers and encourage new start-ups with flexible terms. This will look at short, medium and long term interventions. Consultation is also taking place with existing and potential occupiers to establish their requirements going forward. Following production of this repurposing report, funding applications will be made for works and occupier support packages to support the city centre's recovery. The Council is also considering further measures to support recovery as part of the forthcoming budget.</p> <p>(b) The majority of bus services in Swansea are operated without Council funding and the level of services provided are decided by the bus operators on a</p>

commercial basis. During the Pandemic bus services have been considerably reduced and are currently operating at about 50%. This has been because of travel restrictions and social distancing requirements which have had a massive impact on the revenue taken through the farebox. The Welsh Government has supported the bus industry through the provision of Bus Emergency and Hardship funding to ensure that a basic network has continued for key workers, shopping, medical and educational purposes and so that when we come out of the pandemic there will still be public transport operators to provide the bus services we need. The Council has also continued to fund the operation of essential subsidised local bus services at a reduced frequency. The Welsh Government is currently working with Local Authorities, Transport for Wales and Bus Operators to agree arrangements for the Bus Emergency Scheme 2 which will be implemented from 1 April 2021. This will support the reintroduction of bus services to pre Covid levels and work towards the implementation of a supported bus network across Wales.

The council is currently considering options with regard to the provision of car parking and associated tariffs to understand how best to support local businesses through this most challenging time.

11 **Councillors Chris Holley, Lynda James & Kevin Griffiths**

Will the Leader please tell Council how many external consultants have been employed by this Authority from June 2012 to the end of December 2020 and what has been the cost.

**Response of the Leader**

Professional and external fees are an essential part of extending technical advice within the Place Directorate. Austerity has seen core in-house council services across the U.K. reduced significantly, much more in England than in Wales, but Wales is not immune.

The types of services procured externally include architectural design, engineering services, structural design, surveyors, quantity surveying, environmental expertise, project management and other specialist disciplines including property consultants and land agents.

Whilst the council employs resources in many of these areas, resources remain limited, and it has been a consistent policy for many years to maintain a “core in house” resource and employ additional capacity and “top up” where the need arises and meet fluctuations within the capital programme. Where we can use in house resources only we do.

It must be noted that we have the biggest capital programme the authority has ever undertaken with significant investment to significantly reduce the £300m of backlog repairs and maintenance left by the previous Lib Dem administration in 2012.

We are investing over £150m in creating new and better schools which is the biggest ever schools investment programme in Swansea.

We are investing over £400m in new and better homes and housing across Swansea, which the previous administration failed to do, instead leaving many millions sitting in the HRA bank account, rather than investing it for the benefits of our housing tenants.

We are also investing a substantial part of the £1.3bn City Deal to create jobs and opportunities and create a revitalised city centre which will help reverse damage done to the Kingsway, High Street and other areas of city centre due to neglect and terrible decisions made by the previous Liberal Democrat independent administration .

On top of this there has been ongoing significant investment in highways and community enhancement schemes including the largest ever investment of safe walking and cycling routes, and play equipment.

Therefore it is not a straightforward task to establish the figure for an eight year period covering such a varied range of projects and priorities. Furthermore many of the schemes are funded by complex arrangements including contributions by Welsh or Welsh and U.K. Government or other 3rd parties. Intervention rates differ significantly.

This complexity is further compounded by the fact that significant system changes have taken place over the last 8 years and a number of lead officers have departed and manual checks of project files have not been possible due to the inability of staff to interrogate historic documents during Covid.

However as a guide typically we would expect external special fees would be around 10% for projects and capital schemes. I would repeats that as a principle we only use external resources when we either don't have the skills in house or we have insufficient spare capacity in house.