



Council – 2 September 2021

Councillors' Questions

Part A – Supplementaries

1	<p>Councillors Chris Holley, Jeff Jones & Gareth Sullivan</p> <p>Can the Leader/Cabinet Member tell Council what plots are currently available on the Felindre site.</p> <p>Response of the Leader/Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>Parc Felindre extends to 43 hectares (106 acres) in total. Of this, up to 16 hectares (39.5 acres) of employment land is available in 12 fully serviced plots ranging in size from 0.5 to 2 hectares (1.2 to 4.9 acres). Landscaped to a high standard, ample car parking is directly linked to each plot. Plots are immediately available. The site is flexible with sites being capable of being combined.</p> <p>Three plots have now been occupied by DPP there are currently a number of strong live enquiries currently being investigated.</p>
2	<p>Councillors Wendy Fitzgerald, Mike Day & Mary Jones</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member explain to Council the basis on which catchment areas are determined for schools, primary schools in particular?</p> <p>What emphasis is place on the view that primary schools should be at the heart of a community.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills</p> <p>1. The basis of which catchment areas are determined for schools – particularly primary schools:</p> <p>The City and County of Swansea has designated a catchment area for each Swansea school. This is in keeping with the 1997 Rotherham Judgement and the principle of admission authorities operating catchment areas as part of their oversubscription criteria and thereby giving priority to local children whose parents have expressed a preference for the school when schools are oversubscribed. However, admission authorities should not guarantee places to parents in the local catchment area in case the number of in-catchment applications in any one year cannot be accommodated. Parents are allowed to express a preference for any school and it is this, rather than catchment area, which is the overriding principle</p>

admission authorities must adhere to in accordance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code.

Prior to 2009, the Welsh Government required local authorities to guarantee pupils places at their catchment school. Consequently, any new developments were assigned to a school that was not necessarily the closest or most obvious catchment school, on the basis of being able to accommodate the pupils.

However, in 2009, the Welsh Government required local authorities to remove this guarantee and allocate school places on the basis of their published over subscription criteria. Guidelines were provided by Welsh Government about over subscription criteria and local authorities are required to have in place over subscription criteria that comply with Welsh Government guidelines. Since 2009, the City and County of Swansea has therefore designated new developments to the closest and / or most obvious catchment school. This has the impact of dispersing pupils who live furthest away from the school to another school where schools are over-subscribed.

Due to the change in requirement in 2009, a number of potential anomalies have been raised where an area was assigned to a catchment school that is not the closest school. This has resulted, in some cases, in the local authority having to pick up home to school transport costs if the distance criteria is met (over two miles for primary school-aged pupils and over three miles for secondary school-aged pupils and/or if the route to school is deemed unavailable in accordance with the Learner Travel Operational Guidance (2009).

Since the change in legislation in 2009 the local authority has undertaken reviews of catchment areas where anomalies appear to exist. Most recently this has included the wide ranging changes in Welsh-medium catchment areas.

2. The emphasis on schools being at the heart of a community:

It remains our aspiration that each school within Swansea will be at the heart of a community, however 'community' is most appropriately defined. Indeed, any significant investment in the quality of accommodation and facilities available to pupils provides a vital stimulus to the economic regeneration of the area it serves. It is an integral part of each approved business case for the enhancement of school accommodation and facilities that wherever possible (in terms of safeguarding, health and safety and other such considerations), and where the need exists, such facilities should also be made available for wider community use. Clearly the full additional costs associated with such wider use must be recovered since it is not lawful for a school's delegated budget to be used to subsidise community use.

Governing Bodies are responsible for the use of school sites and facilities and ensuring appropriate health and safety considerations and measures are in place. As such it has to remain the decision of the Governing Body as to any wider use of the site and facilities. Schools have to seriously act on the professional advice received in respect of legal, insurance, health and safety and facilities management considerations in relation to such wider uses.

Facilities Management have over recent years developed and enhanced the available guidance and support for schools in respect of the wider use of assets and facilities. Schools are required to follow this advice to ensure risks are appropriately managed and to utilise the landlord consent process where necessary.

It is important to recognise that re-drawing the catchment area of a school does not seriously address issues of oversubscription or unfilled places where these largely reflect parental preferences. A change in catchment areas in such circumstances simply results in an increasing number of preferred placements which have to be accepted where a school has the capacity to take the pupils. The scale and nature of parental preferences can also shift quite quickly and creates much uncertainty for schools and families.

3 Councillors Lynda James, Susan Jones & Peter Black

How many residents are there in Council owned residential homes. Of these how many have been diagnosed with Covid since March 2020.

Response of the Leader

Our Council run residential care homes have played an essential role in helping maintain a safe and functioning health and care system across Swansea during this extraordinarily difficult period.

Due to the commitment, resilience and flexibility of Council staff that ordinarily work in the homes and volunteers from elsewhere across social services, we were able to adjust and expand our usual offer in response to the pressures across the wider health and care system arising from the pandemic. This meant that over the year, we provided many more emergency, short term and reablement placements than would usually be the case.

Since March 2020, we have provided 522 placements in Council run residential care homes. Of those 552 individuals, 44 tested positive for covid during either the first or second waves of the pandemic.

Close working between the managers of homes, our local environmental health colleagues, health and safety colleagues, the health board and Public Health Wales meant that when, despite the proper use of PPE, good infection control measures and routine testing, there were outbreaks in our homes they were able to be brought under control very quickly.

We currently have 122 occupants in our residential care homes and thankfully the success of the regional roll out of the vaccination programme has meant that any recent incidents where staff have tested positive have been confined to one or two individuals and haven't led to the outbreaks experienced during the first and second waves.

However there is no room for complacency and our managers, staff and other colleagues continue to operate with the utmost professionalism and all our infection control measures remain in place.

The impact of covid on those living within care homes, their families and our staff can never be understated.

Nor can the debt we owe our staff for the extraordinary efforts they continue to make to ensure that the most vulnerable residents of Swansea remain safe and well.

4	<p>Councillors Lynda James, Chris Holley & Kevin Griffiths</p> <p>The Local Government Association has a Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG), which is working with Local Councils to advance aviation policy. Considering Swansea Airport is not being utilised to its potential, is Swansea Council one of the bodies working with this group to formulate future aviation policy</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>The Council is aware of the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) but is not currently party to the group as the forum is very much focussed on policy, business planning and operational issues. As Swansea airport is currently leased to a third party, these wider management/operational issues are the responsibility of the tenant and therefore not something the authority has direct control of. Nevertheless, due to the ongoing HSE & CAA notices, the Council is currently working closely with its tenant in order to resolve these issues so statutory compliance & licensing can be achieved. A specialist consultant (Ospreys Aviation) has been appointed by Swansea Airport Limited to act as advisor to guide them through the relicensing process and their feedback to date has been positive. A full CAA audit is expected within the coming weeks.</p> <p>To ensure the airport continues to improve, the Council is now party to the airport's quarterly H & S meetings and has also recently hosted a working group with the representatives of Swansea Airport Alliance Group – originally set up to give of individuals/business 'one voice' and give them a direct line into the authority which all parties have welcomed. It is clear from the outcomes of these meetings that significant progress has been made to date although it's clearly taken longer than originally expected, primarily due to financial investment required and the ongoing COVID epidemic which has strained the supply chain. The Council has been in contact with WG officers to identify whether any funding/support may be available to support its tenant in order for further improvements to be carried out at the facility.</p>
	<p>Part B – No Supplementaries</p>
5	<p>Councillors Chris Holley & Mary Jones</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member/ Leader tell Council why our IT system cannot feedback to a sender when a wrong email address or a dormant email is sent out through our server.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Business Improvement & Performance</p> <p>Failure messages are received if the email address used is not valid or is incorrect. If failure messages are not immediately seen in the inbox they may be in the junk folder, which is determined by an individual's email set up and not controlled by Swansea Council.</p> <p>Example of the type of failure email that senders would receive are as follows:-</p> <p>Delivery has failed to these recipients or groups:</p> <p>Joe.Blogg@swansea.gov.uk (Joe.Blogg@swansea.gov.uk) The email address you entered couldn't be found. Please check the recipient's email</p>

	<p>address and try to resend the message. If the problem continues, please contact your email admin.</p> <p>Dormant emails will still work if the account has not been deleted.</p>
6	<p>Councillors Jeff Jones, Chris Holley & Wendy Fitzgerald</p> <p>Can the Leader/Cabinet Member explain to Members what process has been used to pick a developer for the site around the city centre and what was the criteria used for the selection.</p> <p>Response of the Leader/Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>Any site disposed by the council is done so within the Constitution of the council. The usual process is through open marketing with responses approved either by Cabinet or through a Director delegated authority report where prior authorisation is in place. The criteria set are based on a site by site basis depending on the required outputs from the site split between quality and value. All disposals are subject to best Consideration being achieved in line with the Local Government Act and council constitution.</p>
7	<p>Councillors Chris Holley, Kevin Griffiths & Graham Thomas</p> <p>We are currently developing a plan for the city centre what are the plans for the other town centres and local shopping areas.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>As part of the Council's Economic Recovery Action Plan, the regeneration programme is extending to all towns, districts and local centres, funded through the Council's own Economic Recovery funding and Welsh Government Transforming Towns Placemaking Grant. Over 350 expressions of interest have been received via ward members from across the county for enhancements to business premises in towns, districts and local centres. Cabinet Members and officers are now in the process of meeting all local ward members to discuss the priorities for each ward and agree the programme of work, to include opportunities for greening. Alongside this the Shop Local campaign is being rolled out to all district centres to support local businesses.</p>