



Council – 4 November 2021

Councillors' Questions

Part A – Supplementaries

1 Councillor Will Thomas

A) Does the council have a maintenance plan for Oystermouth castle I understand this is recommended by CADW. If not could the council look into this please.

B) What general maintenance and or improvements are planned at Oystermouth castle over the next 5 years.

C) How does the council view Oystermouth castle in relation to the tourist economy. Is the castle a key part of the council's priorities for heritage.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

A) The project to restore and conserve the Castle was facilitated, with external funding, around 11 years ago. £2.35 million was invested into ensuring Oystermouth Castle was able to fulfil its status as an important heritage and visitor attraction in the City. The Council undertakes a custodianship role of the Castle, in partnership with the Friends of Oystermouth Castle. The arrangement is considered the most sustainable and broadens the opportunity for fundraising and grant applications, which have been extremely successful over recent times. By working in this way, budget has been made available to undertake the necessary and most urgent conservation needs, enabling us to work proactively to ensure that future maintenance and improvement works are planned for and effectively delivered. Most recently, a significant budget of £165k has been made available through the Council's capital programme, to undertake various works. These include to the Castle Chapel and external walls to remove the existing soft capping of turf, repoint loose stone and repair with new soft capping, as advised by CADW. This will slow down water ingress into the wall tops and provide a thermal protection to stabilise the fabric of the building.

B) Along with the items above, general maintenance is undertaken regularly on the existing visitor centre structure, along with grass cutting and attendance to external floodlighting, health and safety and fire regulation matters. A recent assessment of the visitor centre, and its exposed position, indicates the need for a targeted maintenance and repair programme to be created in the immediate future and this will need to be done as part of a conservation plan, prioritising and costing the works needed. The Castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and all works require consent from Cadw, via the S.A.M process, including the use of approved contractors and conservation specialists.

Thanks to fundraising by the Friends, a feasibility study has been commissioned to assess the visitor facilities overall, with the view to understanding what other facilities

can be provided to service the visitor market and create new income streams. A range of options and business models will be developed from this study, along with a fundraising strategy coordinated by the Council's Development Officer for the site, a post also supported through the fundraising efforts of the Friends.

C) Oystermouth Castle plays an important part of the destination's overall cultural offer, sense of place and understanding of the Welsh coastline, and remains an important visitor attraction for Mumbles. It provides the perfect setting for a number of events, including outdoor theatre, cinema and festivals and is a must see on the itinerary for press and media visits, which we arrange for our marketing partners, resulting in national and UK wide coverage. As a valued marketing partner presenting the best of what Swansea has to offer we hope this status will continue in the foreseeable future and for future generations.

2 Councillors Chris Holley, Mary Jones & Susan Jones

Will the Cabinet Member for Children Services make a statement about the Facebook page claiming that children who are living in Dan-y-Coed in West Cross are not receiving the Care and Education they require.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Children Services

Dan-y-Coed is a residential care home and special school supporting children and young people with autism and associated needs. Many of the young people will have severe learning difficulties, additional communication needs (non-verbal) and challenging behaviour. These are some of the most vulnerable members of our community and it is important we are vigilant in monitoring the care and support they receive.

Primary responsibility for registering and inspecting care homes sits with the Care Inspectorate Wales. Estyn has similar duties in terms of school settings.

The care home is registered for up to fifteen children and young people and we understand they presently have twelve living there. Of the twelve children and young people, one is from Swansea. This young person is visited regularly by their social worker and other professionals. The social worker, like the parents, is pleased with the outcomes being achieved by the young person.

Child and Family Services commissioning team also undertake regular monitoring to Dan-y-Coed. They have visited twice over the summer. The setting has an improvement plan in place which they have developed following the most recent inspection by the Care Inspectorate Wales. There are also recommendations for service improvement identified following our last monitoring visit. The commissioning team will be undertaking a joint visit with the social worker in the first week of November. While the focus of the visit will be on the quality of care, we will use this opportunity to discuss what steps can be taken to mitigate any impact the setting may have on the local community.

While there is only one Swansea young person living at the service, there are other Swansea young people who attend the school as day pupils. These placements are led by the Education Department. Having liaised with colleagues in Education, we can confirm that they do not currently have any concerns regarding the quality of education received by their pupils. Moreover, an education colleague joined social services staff in undertaking a joint unannounced monitoring visit in June this year.

3	<p>Councillors Mike Day, Cheryl Philpott & Jeff Jones</p> <p>Will the Leader or relevant Cabinet Member let Council know if and when the cross - party group to consider the future of Home Farm in Singleton Park will meet. Will the Cabinet Member also confirm whether any action has been taken to develop any schemes for the future use of the site since the last meeting of the cross-party group.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Delivery & Operations</p> <p>I can confirm that no further action has been taken with regards to Home Farm other than the commissioning of a costed conservation survey for the historic buildings on site. Once a detailed report has been received and considered a further cross-party group will be convened.</p>
4	<p>Councillors Cyril Anderson, Wendy Lewis, Mike Lewis & Mike White</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member give an update on the delivery of park and play upgrades across Swansea.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>All Wards received support through the Capital fund to invest within playgrounds that they would like to prioritise within their Ward. In addition, Ward Members were asked to contribute a minimum of 20% from their community budgets towards the total cost to invest within the chosen playground/s/</p> <p>Through the additional £1,000,000 Capital Investment, the Play Capital investment programme was launched for completion by 31st March 2022.</p> <p>In addition, some locations received additional investment from voluntary ward contributions, community groups, Town and Community Councils, Section 106 Agreements and Play Sufficiency Funding.</p> <p>Progress</p> <p>Ward Members were encouraged to submit their expressions of interest by 31st March 2021, whereby there was opportunity to outline the proposal and commit a maximum budget.</p> <p>The programme has been developed to consider several factors, to include, but limited to; <i>ground conditions, scope of works, alternative playgrounds within the vicinity and seasonal destinations.</i></p> <p>Throughout the programme, each scheme has been procured to ensure best value. An allowance of up to twenty four weeks is considered to allow procurement and contract delivery.</p> <p>Sites Completed / In use Victoria Park Playground – Uplands Llansamlet Playground - Llansamlet Three Crosses - Ffairview Dunvant Meadow – Dunvant Dunvant Playground - Dunvant Cwm Playground – Bonymaen</p>

Kingsbridge Playground – Kingsbridge
Parc Williams Playground – Lower Loughor
Llan yr Newydd Playground – Penclawdd
Heol Frank – Penderry
Park Road Playground – Gowerton
Knogle Playground - Mynyddbach
Pollys Playground – St Thomas
Port Tenant Playground – St Thomas
Ravenhill Playground - Cockett
Newton Road Playground – Clydach
Montana Playground – Landore
Golden Grove Playground - Penyrheol
Parc y Helig - Llansamlet

Contract Awarded - Onsite

Singleton Playground (Boating Lake) – Sketty
Bishopston Playground – Bishopston
Weig Fawr Playground - Cockett

Contract Awarded - Onsite October 2021

Llangyfelach Playground – Llangyfelach
Woodcote Playground - Killay

Contract Awarded - Starting Onsite November 2021

Penllergaer Playground – Penllergaer
Morrison Playground – Morrison
Cwmbwrla Playground – Cwmbwrla
Mayhill Playground – Townhill

Contract Awarded - Starting Onsite December 2021 / January 2022

Mawr – Mawr
Melin Mynach – Gorseinon
Loughor Foreshore – Loughor
Rheidol and Hollett Road Playgrounds - Mynyddbach

Contract Pending - Starting Onsite January 2022

Coed Bach Playground – Pontarddulais
Port Eynon *
Limeslade Car Park Playground – Bracelet Bay
Blackpill Lido – Mayals
West Cross (Dick Bartens) – West Cross

Anticipated Investment by 31st March 2022
£2,367,859.14

Whilst there have been challenges in relation to material shortages in the industry coupled with Covid precautions the Council remains on target to deliver by 31st March 2022.

This could not be achieved without the collaborative manner established between the project team, Cabinet members, Ward Members, delivery Team and Contractors. The programme has demonstrated cross-departmental working, listening and delivering the needs of our communities, whilst ensuring all wards are updated throughout the process.

5 **Councillors Cyril Anderson, Wendy Lewis, Mike Lewis & Mike White**

Can the Leader provide an update on the delivery of the recovery fund.

Response of the Leader

The Council in conjunction with Regeneration Swansea partnership has developed an economic recovery plan for Swansea. It specifically references the support for the Tourism, Leisure, Events and Hospitality sectors that have been hit the hardest by the pandemic.

Swansea Council needs to support businesses, support individuals and improve resilience of the local economy in light of the pandemic. A sum up to £20m is set aside for the purposes of the recovery to cover the financial year 21/22 and 22/23 with no long-term resource implications. This enables the initial recovery plans to be fully funded and instigated with immediate effect.

Economic Themes

Each proposal directly deliver one or more of the following Economic Themes.

Local Economy

- o Provide grants to support local business with improvements*
- o Commercial space place making improvements*
- o Targeted transport initiatives*
- o Targeted parking promotions*

Community

- o Deliver additional community greening & improvement schemes*
- o Establish rapid response flood team*
- o Establish street cleaning and task force*
- o Expand free public Wi-Fi in communities*
- o Additional community safety improvements*
- o Transport infrastructure improvements*

Well-being

- o Investment in better sports facilities Parks and play*
- o Sea defence and promenade upgrade programme-including prom lighting scheme*
- o More walking and cycling routes*
- o Reward, recognition and support programme for key workers*

People & Jobs

- o Homeless support, housing support and poverty prevention*
- o Apprenticeships & job opportunities*
- o Create and retain over 10,000 Jobs*
- o Support Employer relocation programme Skills and talent*

Funding Support

Support is provided through either through the provision of a grant or funding and delivery support.

- Grants (Re-greening and Local Businesses)
- Funding and Delivery support

Programme Aims

Each proposal must meet one or more of the following aims.

- Raising Confidence
- Supporting Businesses
- Championing Local Food
 - Supporting Tourism
- Developing Skills & Employability
- A Sustainable Economic Recovery.

Progress

Grants (Re-greening and Local Businesses) expressions

Currently following up expressions of interest. Meetings are being scheduled with Ward Members, sponsoring Cabinet Members and officers with the purpose to identify expressions that are deemed eligible for funding.

Approximately five hundred and Forty-nine expressions of interest to date. A further 200 are expected via Swansea BID in the next few days for the peripheral zones of the City Centre.

The team will be emailing out to businesses with applications and guidance in the next few days. In the larger district centres 'enveloping schemes' will be proposed matching with Welsh Government Placemaking funding to maximise use of available funding and quality of schemes.

Project delivery and funding expressions

Forty-eight applications have been approved for support via the Economic Recovery Fund.

An extract of some of the schemes approved are outlined below;

Theme	Project	Description	2021/22	2022/23
Local Economy - Targeted transport initiatives	Free Bus Service - Summer Sunday Bus Service for Gower	Bus service on Summer Sundays and August Bank Holiday Monday to provide access to Gower for tourists, residents and workers in the hospitality sector to support the local economy.	£5,603	
Local Economy - Targeted parking promotions	Parking	Parking promotions - review all parking promotions for City Centre and those affecting outlying retail areas including Mumbles.	£1,600,000	
Wellbeing	Free use of sports	Health and Wellbeing: Free use of sports, recreation playing fields (non 3G) for a 21/22	£50,000	

Free use of sports

Thirteen local clubs have been successful to gain the maximum grant of £1500 per club. Grants ranged between £300 and £1500 and were awarded to a range of sports clubs, including Football, Cricket and Bowls from all across the city. Total amount granted in tranche 1 was £16,216 and applications are open until the end of October 2021, applications will be welcomed up to this date.

Committed Spend (source ERF Steering Group October 2021)

2021/22

£7,355,603

	<p>2022/23 £2,817,700</p>
6	<p>Councillors Kevin Griffiths, Gareth Sullivan & Wendy Fitzgerald</p> <p>When will the work start on the promised 2g pitch in Pontarddulais given that I have contributed some of my Community Budget towards it and is it likely to be completed before the election next May.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills</p> <p>The final design for the 2G was agreed 24/8/2021 following numerous revisions, electrical elements provided by Electrical in preparation for the tender (All plans and BOQ for this part of the scheme ready to go to tender)</p> <p>During this phase it became clear the scheme exceeded the threshold requiring a sustainable Drainage System. As of 7th January 2019, all construction work in Wales with drainage implications, of 100m² or more, is now required to have Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage on-site surface water (whether they require planning permission or not). These SuDS must be designed and constructed in accordance with the Welsh Government Standards for Sustainable Drainage. This requirement unfortunately adds significant time and cost due to the designs needing to be undertaken by a qualified drainage designer, this also impacts on the planning application being submitted due to the main planning application needing to be supplemented with a SuDS application.</p> <p>In addition the scheme requires ground investigation and this work has been commissioned alongside the drainage designs by external specialist consultants with the expectation that this work will be completed by the end of December</p> <p>Once this detail is received and tenders returned the council will also be able to finalise the planning application and tender and confirm a start and completion date subject to the tender returns.</p>
7	<p>Councillors Cyril Anderson, Wendy Lewis, Mike Lewis & Mike White</p> <p>Can the Leader/Cabinet Member give an update on the Tidal Lagoon.</p> <p>Response of the Leader</p> <p>The Council with previous support from WG has continued to progress the project which until now has been entitled Dragon Energy Island. This is more than a tidal lagoon which was rejected for support by UK Government as it creates an integrated renewable project embedding new technology and additional income generating strands to make it financially viable without the need for a public subsidy, and the council continues to engage with both Welsh and UK Government to seek funding support to move the project to the next stage of seeking developer partner</p> <p>Parallel to this the council has been working with a private consortium led by DST Innovations based in Bridgend who have been in constructive talks with ABP to deliver their own solution which builds on the Dragon Energy concept under the brand name of Blue Eden. This project delivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A 9.5km tidal lagoon wall harnessing 320MW of renewable energy, · a 6.7GW, 60,000m² battery manufacturing plant created under the brand name of Batri,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · a 94,000m2 data centre being the first off grid data centre in the UK and entirely powered by an uninterruptable renewable energy supply with 1,200 MW Batri back-up storage, · a bespoke on and floating Oceanic and climate change centre linking in with research and university sector, · a new public park and public realm · 1000's of eco homes with a mix of affordable and also an element of floating residential powered by the renewable energy and surplus heat produced via a district heating network · 72,000m2 of floating solar, the largest in the UK which is estimated to avoid over 2,000,000 kg of CO2 per year. <p>The project would deliver some 2500 direct jobs in addition to over 10,000 supply chain posts plus the significant construction relates employment over a 11 year period with phase one of the battery manufacturing plant and data storage being completed within 4 to 5 years and can be delivered without any public subsidy.</p> <p>The project still has a long way to go with a range of rights and permissions to be secured but the fact the DST have chosen Swansea to develop their £1.7billion investment is a huge accolade and recognition to our regeneration and climate and nature ambitions. This investment would be a significant game changer not just for our city but for the regional, the UK and potentially worldwide and act as a catalyse to start realising the ambition of a nett carbon zero world by investing in renewable technology at a scale never been seen before</p>
	<p>Part B – No Supplementaries</p>
8	<p>Councillors Lynda James, Jeff Jones & Mary Jones</p> <p>What is Swansea Council's strategy for the airport for the future. How does the council foresee the use of the airfield being used for the benefit of the ratepayers of Swansea.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Delivery & Operations</p> <p>A report to Cabinet is proposed for November to update on the present position and future strategy for Swansea airport.</p>
9	<p>Councillors Mike Day, Jeff Jones & Cheryl Philpott</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member please inform Council what calculations were undertaken to assess the benefits to the environment of providing a Shared Use Path through Clyne Valley, and what calculations were made over the environmental damage caused by laying tarmacadam based paths through the natural environment of Clyne Valley, including some ancient woodland. Can the Cabinet Member also tell Council how this scheme supports this administration's environmental policy.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management</p>

The scheme was delivered as part of the Welsh Governments Active Travel programme, with bids developed in-line with their pre-defined application process. All scheme applications required a series of assessments to be conducted to identify the long term benefits of the enhanced infrastructure.

The Cabinet report prepared in August 2020 confirmed that the development of the new route formed part of a broader programme for enhancements under a package entitled Sketty and Mayals network links and would provide enhanced connectivity for 8,120 properties to within 500m of an active travel route, whilst improving the strategic network to support modal shift and a reduction in vehicles numbers on the highway network. An assessment was undertaken to define the short and long term benefit of providing enhanced active travel infrastructure. This identified the potential areas served by the route and population, then assessed current transport data to identify the possible benefits. The assessment criteria is standardised by Welsh Government and is used within the funding bid application. This typically defines the need to assess the Strategic Case, with reference to the need for change and a definition to how the proposal fits within the grant objective. There is a review of the Transport Case, with consideration via an impact assessment. An infrastructure audit is conducted along with systems for monitoring and evaluation. The scheme development and design is structured in-line with the Future Generations Framework to ensure that all aspects are considered as part of the design process.

The question implies that the scheme was delivered at direct compromise to the quality of the local environment, although numerous statements and evidenced delivery has confirmed that not to be the case. The fundamental objective of the project is to support commuters to have alternative and more sustainable modes of transport. The surface treatment was specified with due consideration to a number of factors, which included the local environment, the need to support all user groups and to provide a surface that is durable and fit for purpose. This was to ensure that users will consider the route to be a long term viable alternative to their current mode of transport. Sections of the route were already surfaced with tarmac, but covered with vegetation overgrowth. The Active Travel programme fully aligns with the Councils Environmental Policy in that it supports a shift to sustainable transport alternatives such as walking and cycling, which not only benefit the local communities currently impacted by vehicle emissions, but offers significant direct health benefits to those seeking to use the infrastructure. The works were developed in conjunction with an independent ecologist to ensure that both the specification and method of construction avoid detrimental impact to the ecology.

10 **Councillor Mike Day**

1. It is pleasing to know that the Beach Huts at Langland have been as popular as ever, or more so during the last year. Can the Cabinet Member:
2. confirm that the previous arrangement of 10year leases are not continuing and that people whose lease has come to an end or is coming to an end, will not be able to renew;
3. tell Council, how many huts were available in each of the different categories for renting;
4. how many applications were made for huts in the 2021/22 season in each of the categories;
5. how many huts in each category were let;
6. how much was raised in rent (or anticipated by the end of January 2022), and how much has been, or will be, spent on repairing and/or maintaining the huts;

7. when will the public be notified of the date for submitting applications for the 2022/23 season;
8. how is the draw for allocations undertaken and who does it.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

1. All 10 year rentals will be returned by 2023 as per previous decision made regarding expiring leases. There are no current plans to renew the leasing scheme and no automatic rights of renewal.

2. 30 were available for 10 months, 29 available for each 3 months term and 29 available for 4 months (winter)

3. 10 Months 160,
 April/May/June 70,
 July/August/September 153,
 Winter 33,

This is on the basis that this was applicants first choice and acknowledging that the Council did accept multiple options from the same applicant, but only one period granted per customer.

4. All available Huts stated above were let

5. Total amount income target within our budgets for licenced Huts is circa £80,000 inclusive of VAT. The cost of repairs is difficult to predict, as the huts are extremely exposed the cost can change year on year. On average around £10,000 is spent maintaining the huts but this can increase to include ongoing repairs throughout the year. As a result of the pandemic, new locks were installed on each Hut to remove the need to collect/ return keys to council staff, at a cost of circa £3,000 including VAT. The Council is also liable for all Rates associated with the licences (seasonal) huts

6. Total amount income target within our budgets for licenced Huts is circa £80,000 inclusive of VAT.

The cost of repairs is difficult to predict, as the huts are extremely exposed the cost can change year on year. On average around £10,000 is spent maintaining the huts but this can increase to include ongoing repairs throughout the year. As a result of the pandemic, new locks were installed on each Hut to remove the need to collect/ return keys to council staff, at a cost of circa £3,000 including VAT. The Council is also liable for all Rates associated with the licences (seasonal) huts.

7. The applications will be open on the 1st of January 2022 via the councils 'Langland Bay Huts' webpage. All applications are made electronically. This is promoted via the Councils main social media platform. The draw then closes the first week in February with applicants notified whether or not they were successful by the first week in march. The first letting period begins by 1st April or earlier to coincide with Easter weekend if possible.

8. The draw is undertaken via an online number generator allocated to each application to ensure it fairly drawn and is appropriately adjudicated. All application numbers are submitted and then the winning numbers are produced for the periods that are applied for. This year three members of the team undertook this task and it was carried out online due to Covid 19 restrictions at the time. The draw was coordinated by the Destination Development Coordinator and supported by 2 x Assistant Staff from within Cultural Services.

11 Councillors Jeff Jones, Chris Holley & Graham Thomas

Will the Cabinet Member tell Council what would be the annual financial cost of borrowing £750m over a period of 40 years.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy

There are no plans to borrow £750m.

If the questioners have assumed that the £750m potential investment from the Urban Splash strategic collaboration is funded by local authority borrowing then they are entirely incorrect.

Entirely theoretically, if the Council were to borrow an additional £750m it would need to make minimum revenue provision (MRP) of 2.5% (assuming assets financed with it had a suitably long life to justify that timeframe) and interest rates at prevailing rates.

Rates are most likely to be those obtained from new PWLB maturity loans (principal repaid in full at end from MRP set aside) over a period of 40-50 years. Interest rates currently are around 2% and are slightly higher than they have been recently as market expectations are of UK interest rates rising sooner over the medium term. £750m would cost £33.75m a year, or £1.35billion over 40 years in interest and full debt repayment

Council will be aware a £200m borrowing envelope was committed to previously and I am pleased to advise that the S151 officer and his excellent Treasury Management team has already completed all such borrowing, achieving some of it at the lowest ever rates achieved by this council of under 2%.

It is also worth noting that our prudent revised MRP arrangements ensure such debt is provided for full repayment over 40 years, not on the never never, like the old reducing balance methodology.

However, while I have been clear we have no plans to borrow £750m, if the questioners themselves have plans to borrow that amount they at least now know the potential costs.

12 Councillors Jeff Jones, Chris Holley & Peter Black

Given the impending risk of higher inflation of 4% in the coming year and the eightfold increase in energy prices, what would this result in as a financial burden to the authority.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Service Transformation

In order to protect the its position the Council buys its energy from the Crown Commercial Service 12 months in advance with the purchase for April 22 to March 2023 already secured

- Energy markets have been rising since last November, with contracts for April 22 annual delivery now up around 90% in cost since then. The pre purchase has protected the Council in this regard with Crown Commercial Service forward purchases completed earlier in the summer protecting budgets from the recent jump in delivery prices.
- Crown Commercial Service will commence purchasing for Apr 23 delivery contracts after 1st April 2022.
- Prices for 22/23next year expected to be up to 40% higher than current prices for all customers who have not pre purchased. However, Crown Commercial

Services have advised this is a worst case scenario; actual costs will be available early in the New Year.

- All customers including Swansea Council will therefore need to consider materially reviewing all energy budgets costs for the following financial year for 23/24 if prices remain high.
- There is current concern regarding a significant number of smaller suppliers generally providing energy to domestic markets.
- The current underlying energy suppliers for both the Council's electricity (EDF Energy) and gas (Total Gas and Power) contracts are very large suppliers ranked in the 'top 6'. The Crown Commercial Service will continue to monitor the situation closely.
- The Crown Commercial Service Supply of Energy Framework already provides for 'reserve' supplies. If either of our current suppliers were to fail then the Crown Commercial Service would appoint a reserve. As the Energy has been purchased by Swansea Council there would be no change to the energy costs. There may be an increase in non-energy costs (environmental taxes, wholesale distribution and transmission costs which would apply in normal events.

Total gas and electricity costs for 19/20 amounted to circa £5.2M, with roughly 50% of that cost attributable to schools. Expected variations to any forward purchase contract negotiated by Crown Commercial Services will be known in the New Year.

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

There are growing concerns about the proliferation of properties being used as airbnb's which is resulting in less accommodation for local families. Will the Cabinet Member agree to investigate this matter to see if any licensing could be required.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Delivery & Operations

Welsh Government officials have indicated that the Welsh Government will be looking at whether there needs to be any change to planning legislation to deal with this issue. However, at present there are no specific planning controls that prevent a homeowner renting out their property.

Our officers have been informed that the Welsh Government is looking into establishing a statutory registration or licensing scheme for holiday accommodation operators in Wales. They have commissioned an independent Cardiff-based research agency to interview stakeholders with a view to exploring:

- Whether developing a registration scheme or licensing scheme would be appropriate in Wales
- The options for how a scheme would be operated and delivered at national and/or local level
- Resources required for each of the best options
- How a scheme would support wider areas of Welsh Government policy such as housing and taxation
- Whether a scheme should merge or align with the existing Visit Wales grading scheme or follow the Rent Smart Wales model.

Researchers will be speaking to stakeholders in Welsh Government, local authorities and trade associations in Wales, as well as also researching best practice in other countries.

Welsh Government feels that there are significant potential benefits of the scheme, including a level playing field for professional and amateur accommodation operators and a much better oversight of the sector to inform decision-making in tourism, housing, environmental health and taxation. They also recognise there are wider views and considerations that need to be explored.

Officers are waiting to be contacted by the researchers for a focus group meeting on the proposals. It is expected that Welsh Government will make their findings available once all the research has been completed.

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