



Council – 27 January 2022

Councillors' Questions

Part A – Supplementaries

1 Councillors Cllrs Chris Holley, Jeff Jones & Peter Black

Can the Leader confirm that during the discussions in Cabinet regarding the borrowing of up to £200 million that consideration was given to the Future Generations Act.

Response of the Leader

Yes - we always give consideration to the future Generations act in decision making.

The £200m has been borrowed to build schools and support growth in the economy of Swansea. The borrowing is locked in at the lowest ever rates and at a significantly lower level than borrowing taken out by the Lib Dem - Independent administration. Essentially, the historically low rates mean the council was able to borrow more for less - and fix the low rate for up to 50 years with no risk.

Repayments on borrowing are fully covered for at least the next 8 years and will require no support from council tax.

The borrowing has been prudently used to build the next generation of 21st Century schools for our children, as well as funding the council's contribution to city deal projects which enable us to draw down significant UK and Welsh Government funding on major projects like the Copr Bay Arena and Kingsway Innovation hub. They have had a catalytic effect on drawing in more investment, jobs and regeneration to Swansea.

During this period we have paid off over £40m of very expensive Lib Dem borrowing.

The decision to take out further borrowing was made on the clear advice of the S151 office and was timed to secure the best possible rates and best deal for Swansea taxpayers. The decision to borrow was taken by council not cabinet.

It is hugely disappointing that since the £1.3bn City deal was secured the Lib Dems have consistently opposed actions to deliver the projects. Maybe this is because the City deal is not something they could ever have secured or ever delivered. It also shows how damaging to Swansea their administration was. It was a lost 8 years for Swansea.

Certainly, during their 8 years in power they failed to take the actions necessary to support the economy of Swansea, and to invest sufficiently in Swansea.

	<p>Despite once in a 100 year pandemic and despite the massive challenges of a terrible botched Tory Brexit deal, we are continuing to invest and support the Swansea economy and create a city centre fit for the 21st century.</p>
2	<p>Councillors Cllrs Mike Day, Cheryl Philpott & Susan Jones</p> <p>Can the Cabinet member tell Council whether and how Parkway home is currently being used. What are the plans for this home in the future. What other Council establishments or facilities are being used to support the efforts in dealing with Covid, either directly or indirectly.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Community Health Services</p> <p>The Parkway residential care home has been used at different times to provide additional surge bed capacity supporting both hospital discharge and emergency community placements during the peaks of the pandemic. It may well need to be utilised again for this purpose as a result of the latest wave prompted by the Omicron variant.</p> <p>The Council has adapted use of its other residential care homes in response to the pandemic.</p> <p>Bonymaen House has doubled its capacity to accept hospital discharges and an additional 20 stepdown beds have been created across the remainder of the residential estate alongside providing emergency community placements.</p> <p>The limiting factor with all of the above has been and will continue to be staffing capacity.</p> <p>To facilitate this flexible and expanded use of the residential estate despite significant staff absences has often meant limiting other care provision including planned respite and day services. The Council continues to have to strike a balance between maintaining safe care for individuals in the community whilst supporting pressure in hospitals particularly given capacity issues in domiciliary care.</p> <p>We anticipate that the Omicron variant will have a bigger impact on staffing capacity than any of the previous waves and so the Council's ability to maintain expanded residential care capacity whilst also providing essential care for individuals in their own home may be more limited than during previous waves.</p> <p>The future use of and model for health and care services including Parkway will be reviewed as part of the planned post pandemic review of the health and social care system.</p> <p>Clearly its not only the social services estate that has been repurposed to support the covid effort.</p> <p>There have been many examples of the wider Council estate being repurposed at different times to support testing, vaccination, track and trace, provision of PPE and expanded community support during periods of lock down.</p>

3	<p>Councillors Cllrs Mike Day, Kevin Griffiths & Jeff Jones</p> <p>Can the Leader inform Council where we are with the current progress in disposing of properties owned by the Council and included in the previously published Capital programme as listed for disposal.</p> <p>Response of the Leader</p> <p>The estimated Capital receipt for 21/22 in last year's Capital budget book was for £6,825,200.</p> <p>However for understandable reasons related to the pandemic, this has created some impacts in disposals.</p> <p>However capital receipts income in this financial year received to date (31 Dec 2021) have still totalled £4,692,317 or around 70% of the anticipated figure.</p> <p>It's unlikely that the anticipated figure will be achieved this year as several of the sites programmed for appropriation to the HRA to support the More Homes project are subject to continued investigation in respect of both value and viability.</p> <p>However the temporary impacts from the pandemic on capital disposals are not expected to impact the delivery of any of the Council's record breaking capital programme.</p>
4	<p>Councillors June Burtonshaw, Cyril Anderson, Mike Lewis, Sam Prichard & Bev Hopkins</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Service Transformation tell us how much has been invested in the WHQS programme to date with a ward by ward breakdown.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Service Transformation</p> <p>WHQS Investment</p> <p>The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) was introduced by the Welsh Government and came into effect in 2003 with the intention of improving the quality of social housing across Wales. The standard is a legal requirement for social landlords and since 2003 has resulted in major investment across Wales, with Swansea Council making one of the largest single contributions.</p> <p>Within the WHQS there are six headings, each with its own requirements for social housing. The following sets out the headings and the types of repairs and improvements undertaken to meet these:</p> <p><u>In a Good State of Repair</u> - Dwellings must be structurally stable; free from damp and disrepair with key building components being in good condition. The Council has delivered improvement to roofs, chimneys and walls through its wind and weatherproofing programmes.</p> <p><u>Safe and Secure</u> – To ensure dwellings are free from risks and secure, investment has delivered electrical rewiring, new smoke alarms, secure doors, fire doors, fire safety improvements, entry systems to communal areas, lockable windows, gas servicing and electrical testing.</p>

Adequately Heated, Fuel Efficient and Well Insulated – Since 2003 the Council has installed energy efficient combi boilers to its homes and insulating walls and attics.

Contain Up to Date Kitchens and Bathrooms – A major kitchen and bathroom programme has ensured these facilities are up to date, well laid out and meet the needs of the household.

Located in Attractive and Safe Environments – The Council's external facilities scheme addresses the garden areas within the curtilage of individual homes, ensuring they are safe and secure. The wider shared environment has received various improvements making sure they are safe and attractive.

Suit the Specific Requirements of the Household - The requirement is that homes meet the needs of their occupants. Each year the council invests in its disabled adaptations programme ensuring access to and from the home and facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms are suitable for individual needs.

As part of the standard, there is the requirement to undertake stock condition surveys. These identify where repairs are needed, the volume and their priority over the short to long term and also identify the investment needed to reach and maintain WHQS compliance.

Investment by Ward Area

Whilst council housing is dispersed across Swansea, it is not present in all wards. The table below sets out only those wards containing council housing.

There are a number of factors that affect how much investment has been delivered in individual wards - these include density of council housing, age of the properties, construction type, house type and historical improvements. Prior to the introduction of the WHQS, the Council had already undertaken repair and improvement programmes to parts of its housing stock with older properties in particular receiving modernisation works in the 1980s and 1990s; these improvement programmes ensured some properties and areas were already compliant across parts of the standard (such as roofs and walls) and therefore required less WHQS investment.

Investment figures set out in this paper cover the period between financial years 2003/04 and 2021/22. They are estimated using typical repair and improvement costs applied to the number of properties completed in each ward.

Because there are cost variations within schemes and some cost information from earlier WHQS schemes is no longer available, the level of investment may therefore be understated in some wards but generally figures provided are an accurate representation of the WHQS investment programme

Conclusion

From 2003, the Council has delivered over £500 million of major repairs and improvements across Swansea raising the quality of its homes and estates as well as providing local jobs, employment opportunities and investing in the local economy.

During this same period, an additional revenue investment programme of over £200 million has been allocated to carry out reactive day to day repairs, void maintenance and planned cyclic maintenance, to help keep properties in good condition.

Table: Invest across Council Wards

Ward	No Properties	Total
Bishopston	10	£375,000
Bonymaen	768	£28,011,000
Castle	705	£29,309,000
Clydach	462	£13,052,000
Cockett	997	£35,127,000
Cwmbwrla	212	£7,151,000
Dunvant	11	£236,000
Fairwood	124	£2,456,000
Gorseinon	120	£3,810,000
Gower	54	£1,249,000
Gowerton	165	£4,151,000
Kingsbridge	65	£2,043,000
Landore	84	£2,162,000
Llangyfelach	17	£1,677,000
Llansamlet	515	£19,525,000
Loughor Upper	53	£1,082,000
Loughor Lower	245	£6,920,000
Mawr	82	£3,086,000
Morrison	858	£30,607,000
Mynyddbach	688	£25,566,000
Penclawdd	95	£2,065,000
Penderry	2,528	£85,902,000
Penllergaer	91	£3,831,000
Penyrheol	351	£16,248,000
Pontardulais	270	£10,666,000
Sketty	695	£43,167,000
St Thomas	313	£10,805,000
Townhill	2,369	£64,722,000
Uplands	37	£1,042,000
West Cross	611	£18,048,000
Adaptations	Across the Housing Stock	£51,300,000
Structural Repairs	Across the Housing Stock	£2,500,000
Wider Environment	Across the Housing Stock	£6,000,000
Total	13,595	£533,891,000

5 Councillors Cllrs Kevin Griffiths, Peter Black & Wendy Fitzgerald

What plans does Swansea council have about future sea wall defences . According to the Welsh news parts of Swansea in the future could be in danger of some serious land flooding by 2050. Would this also affect the proposed barrier that is due to be installed with this rise in sea levels. This is according to the Cop 26 conference.

Response of the Leader / Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management

Although the Authority has 7.8km of hard Sea Defences to maintain which are mainly situated in the Swansea Bay area, the responsibility for managing risk posed by climate change and future sea level rise rests with Natural Resources Wales. Consequently, the Authority will continue to work closely with Welsh Government and NRW in order to seek investment opportunities for coastal protection schemes but the timing of such projects will rely on the latest information available on climate change projections and further understanding on the impacts of flooding which will steer the long-term investment programmes funded by Welsh Government.

The Authority will be producing a Strategic Flood Consequence Assessment this year, which will not only define mitigating measures needed to allow development to proceed, but will help evaluate flood risk to existing communities to inform future investment plans. This complies to the expectation from Welsh Government for LAs to produce SFCAs prior to the implementation of the new TAN 15 policy, which will require consideration to future climate change impacts and the interventions needed to protect development from projected sea level rise and other sources of flood risk.

For example, works are due to commence on the new Mumbles Coastal Defence Scheme in 2022 as part of the National Coastal Risk Management Programme. The funding supported by Welsh Government, which will not only mitigate against risk of future climate change and sea level rise to 2070 but will result in wider benefits to attract visitors and increase tourism to boost the local economy.

6 Councillors Cllrs Peter Black, Mike Day & Graham Thomas

Will the Cabinet Member for Education make a statement with regards to the authority's arrangement for commissioning speech and language therapists.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills

Case law under the SEN legal framework has established that speech and language therapy is regarded as either educational or non-educational provision, or both, depending upon the health or developmental history of each child. It could therefore appear in either Part 3 or Part 6 of the statement of special educational needs or in both. However, since communication is so fundamental in learning and progression, addressing speech and language impairment should normally be recorded as educational provision unless there are exceptional reasons for not doing so.

Prime responsibility for the provision of speech and language therapy services to children rests with the NHS. This applies generally and also to any specification of such services in a statement of special educational needs, whether in Part 3 as educational provision or in Part 6 as non-educational provision, or in both parts.

Health authorities are responsible for purchasing therapy services through the contracts they make with providers of health care (NHS Trusts). The NHS provides a professionally managed speech and language therapy service covering pre-school, school-age and adult age groups, which has close links with the other child health services.

Historically, to ensure effective collaboration with health Swansea local authority (LA) and the Local Health Board (LHB) developed the Speech, Language and Communication Team (SLCT), which included both specialist speech and language

teachers as well as speech therapists. The level of speech therapy provision has been categorised as Provision 1 (1-2 hours year from SLCT- delivered by specialist teacher), provision 2 (6 hours per year from SLCT- delivered by a specialist teacher) and provision 3 (12 hours per year from SLCT- delivered by a mix of Speech and Language therapists and specialist teachers). This was initially a highly successful model. However, over recent years, the capacity of the LHB speech and language therapists has not kept up with demand. More and more provision has been provided by specialist teachers as opposed to speech therapists and the LA has absorbed this workload.

Swansea LA has worked with the LHB to try to address increased shortfalls and developed an SLA agreement with the LHB where we fund Speech and Language therapist (SALT) provision for pupils attending specialist placements. This is with the exception of the Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties (SLCD) specialist teaching facilities (STF) and Ysgol Crug Glas special school. Because of the high level of speech and language therapy need in specialist settings, it was agreed that this would be provided and funded by the LHB.

Even with the additional funding from the LA, the LHB are under considerable pressure and are struggling to meet their responsibilities in relation to pupils' SALT provision, which is understood to be partly due to difficulties in recruiting/retaining staff.

The introduction of the new ALNET (2018) legislation provides greater clarity on the role of health and the provision of Health Additional Learning Provision (ALP) it notes that:

21.28 Where a matter is referred, the NHS body must consider whether there is a relevant treatment or service that is likely to be of benefit in addressing the child or young person's ALN – i.e. as referred to above, whether there is a treatment or service that it would normally provide (to that child or young person) as part of the comprehensive health service in Wales.

21.29 If the NHS body identifies such a treatment or service it must:

- secure the treatment or service for the child or young person.
- decide whether the treatment or service should be provided to the child or young person in Welsh.
- take all reasonable steps to secure that the treatment or service is provided in Welsh, if it decides that the treatment or service should be provided to the child or young person in Welsh.

The above sections of the Code fully place the responsibility of SALT provision on the LHB. However, we are yet to receive clear information from the LHB on how they plan to deliver this provision going forward and they have in fact been requesting additional funding from the LA. The current position of SALT provision is a huge area of concern.

Education's ALN manager has engaged effectively with SBUHB to discuss the issue of a gap of SALT provision in STFs and there is now **an interim solution of a SALT assistant**, from February 2022 until the vacancy is filled. Full provision will resume by March 2022.

The LHB have agreed to draft a joint letter from LHB/LA for **parents** informing them of the current challenges and the plan to address these.

Part B – No Supplementaries

7 Councillors Cllrs Chris Holley, Mary Jones & Wendy Fitzgerald

Can the Leader confirm that it is the intention to demolish St David's Car park and can he give us the figures for the income and expenditure from 2014.

Response of the Leader

As part of the Swansea Central Development St David's MSCP will be demolished, however closure and demolition will not take place until both new multi storey car parks are open.

Despite the loss of St David's our overall car parking in this location has only been reduced by 15 spaces as a result of the 2 new car parks.

Our car parks expenditure is captured within one budget rather than spit amongst individual car parks making it difficult to differentiate expenditure between car parks. Within the budget expenditure the main budget headings are Employees, Premises and Supplies and Services. On an annual basis the spend on staffing in car parks is £499,500 per year, premises is £146,100 per year and supplies and services £261,200 per year. Any structural repairs are met by the Corporate Asset Management budget.

The table below shows the recorded income for St David's MSCP between 2014 and 2021. In 2020 and 2021 Covid 19 affected income due to the car park being closed and a significant reduction in customers which was largely offset by Welsh Government Covid support.

Financial Year	Totals
2014	£251,035.00
2015	£288,356.00
2016	£304,017.00
2017	£349,104.00
2018	£242,832.00
2019	£166,749.44
2020	£33,223.75
2021	£84,630.00
	£1,719,947.19

8 Councillors Cllrs Mike Day, Gareth Sullivan & Lynda James

We understand that repairs to some streetlights are possibly being held up due to faults in the power network which Western Power Distribution are responsible for fixing. Can the Cabinet Member tell Council how many streetlight and street furniture repairs are being delayed by this issue and what action has he taken to ensure that repairs are affected as soon as possible.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management

	<p>Western Power Distribution had a large amount of faults to properties due to the high winds early in December, this caused a slight delay with them repairing the street lighting faults by a few days. There are no known outstanding section faults with Western Power at present.</p>
9	<p>Councillor Cllrs Mary Jones, Mike Day & Jeff Jones</p> <p>After visiting the Brangwyn Hall recently, we noticed that a large number of Brangwyn Panels are covered with polythene sheeting. Will the Leader/Cabinet Member give the reason for this.</p> <p>Response of the Leader / Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>The roof to the Brangwyn Hall has started to fail allowing water ingress and in order to ensure the panels are not damaged the decision was taken to cover them as a precautionary measure.</p> <p>A budget of £325,000 has been allocated from this year's Capital Maintenance budget to replace the roof covering with the works designed and procured and work is due to start later this month.</p>
10	<p>Councillors Cllrs Peter Black, Mike Day & Mary Jones</p> <p>Can the Leader inform Council of how many works of art, sculptures, collections of precious metals, historical artefacts, and other items of value which have been removed from public buildings and/or removed from public display in Swansea Museum, the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery and other council buildings. Can he tell Council what the total value of these items are. What are his administration's plans to either dispose of them or to put them back on public display.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>Our Galleries and Museums have thousands of artworks, artefacts and items of historic interest in their collections. These are rigorously conserved, monitored and curated to provide a diverse programme in our venues, or in some cases, reproduced for other displays, such as in public buildings /council offices. By necessity, the venues (Museum, Dylan Thomas Centre, Glynn Vivian Art Gallery) rotate their displays in order to showcase as many items as possible, many of which otherwise would not be viewed by the public. With regard to works of art etc which are on display in other Council buildings, with one or two exceptions (such as the permanent Brangwyn Panels, which are part of the GVAG collection) these will either be reproductions, or on loan temporarily, and will be returned to the relevant venue, or parent institution e.g. Museums Wales, for various reasons. Examples include the temporary removal of artworks in the Guildhall corridors when it's in use for filming. In all cases, items are never removed from public display for sale or for disposal, but are instead returned to specialist storage in the Museum or Gallery.</p> <p>The governance and care of our collections forms part of the necessary accreditation that all museums and galleries must achieve in order to operate within the sector. Accountability for the items in our care includes all new acquisitions being 'accessioned' into the collection; fully catalogued; assigned a unique identification (accession) number, photographed, measured, condition checked, labelled/marked, and assigned a permanent base location. This information, plus all other known</p>

details about the artworks we hold are recorded on MODES, a collections database, and whenever items are moved from one location to another (within the premises, or out on loan), the updated locations are recorded on the database so we have an up-to-date record of where everything is. This is checked by the Auditors and insurers annually. Details of our collections are also regularly sent to an independent valuer in order to provide insurance valuations for any new acquisitions, before the end of each financial year – their report is then sent to the Insurance Department, and the values are added to the Council's Heritage Assets Register.

Occasionally works are loaned to other institutions across the UK, and we may reciprocally receive a loan for specific exhibitions. In this instance a rigorous process of ensuring the safe transport, display and return of the work will be carried out. This includes making sure that the receiving institution is accredited and that security, transportation and environmental conditions are satisfactory.

As a result, there is no record of the values of artworks or items that have been removed, as we do not carry out sales or disposals in this way. As above, we may loan, permanently or temporarily an item if it is in the public interest for it to be displayed elsewhere. For example an item of agricultural machinery, or vehicle, that originates from elsewhere in the UK and which better tells the story of that area's history by being presented in its local museum. The only other exception may be the removal or donation of library collections, for reasons of relevance, duplication etc. but these are also offered to 'book collection' organisations, other cultural or education institutions wherever possible, before being considered for storage/ alternatives, subject to approval by the Head of Service and Cabinet Member.

11 **Councillors Cllrs Mike Day, Jeff Jones, Peter Black & Chris Holley**

Can the Leader tell Council how the effectiveness and performance of the Policy Development Committees have been assessed and by whom. In particular, will he tell Council the total number of meetings of all the Policy Development Committees held since 2017. Can he indicate the total length of all the meetings held? Can he tell Council the total cost of these meetings, separating out the total cost of responsibility allowances paid and a calculation of the cost of officer support. Can he give a full list of all policies that have been presented to Cabinet for approval since 2017.

Response of the Leader

How the effectiveness and performance of the Policy Development Committees have been assessed and by whom.

It is hugely disappointing that the Liberal Democrats Group has refused to appoint Liberal Democrat councillors to the Policy Development Committees and have therefore not participated in the work of the policy development committees over the last 5 years. In essence they have refused to undertake the work for which they are elected. All while continuing to draw their full allowances, which are funded by taxpayers.

All other political parties have participated fully in the work of PDC.

I'm sure the public will be surprised to find that Liberal Democrats group of councillors can just decide not to participate in the work of key committees and not to do the work they are elected to do.

The PDC's have been extremely effective in ensuring the policy commitments of council have been progressed and delivered. The policy commitments were formed following the election of the new administration in 2017, and are drawn from the manifesto commitments made in 2017. At present nearly every commitment has been delivered.

Cabinet Members regularly meet with chairs and vice chairs of the PDC's and ensure progress continues on the agreed work programme.

Total number of meetings of the Policy Development Committees held since 2017, Including Total length of all the meetings held & Number of Swansea Council Officers supporting.

Had the Liberal Democrats group appointed to the PDC's and participated in the PDC's, they would already know the number of meetings held. However the Liberal Democrat councillor formal attendance at PDC's over the whole 5 year term is zero. This is despite the Liberal Democrat councillors continuing to draw the full taxpayer funded allowance. **Appendix A** sets out the figures for the PDCs from May 2017 – 31 December 2021.

Total cost of these meetings, separating out the total cost of responsibility allowances paid and a calculation of the cost of officer support.

A Senior Salary, set by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) is paid to each of the five (5) Chairs of the PDCs.

The Senior Salaries originally covered a Municipal Year period; however, in recent years the IRPW amended them to run for a Financial Year period.

A calculation of the cost of Officer Support has not been provided as no records are kept of how long an Officer would have been present during a meeting; however, **Appendix A**, sets out the numbers of Officers involved.

Every Liberal Democrat Councillor has continued to draw the full allowance despite the Liberal Democrat group refusing to appoint and therefore participate in any formal PDC meeting over the last 5 years.

List of all policies that have been presented to Cabinet for approval since 2017.

The work of the PDC's is varied and includes policy enhancements or amendments that Cabinet can consider plus new policies that council can adopt. A list of adopted policies are included below.

Economy, Environment & Infrastructure PDC	Cabinet
Re-imagining Wind Street	18.07.2019
Regenerating Our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife – The Draft Swansea Central Area Green Infrastructure Strategy	17.10.2019
Swansea Council Tree Management Strategy. Referred on 16.12.2021	17.02.2022

Education & Skills PDC	Cabinet
City Deal Skills	17.12.2017
City Deal Skills	21.06.2018
Pupil Development Grant	16.05.2019
Implications and Preparation for the New Curriculum in Swansea Schools	17.09.2020
Supporting Education Recovery	17.06.2021
People PDC	Cabinet
Adverse Childhood Experiences	17.01.2019
Supported Living	16.05.2019
Poverty Reduction PDC	Cabinet
Exploration of the Childcare Offer for 3 and 4 Year Olds	15.03.2018
Promoting Affordable Credit Policy. Referred on 20.12.2021	17.02.2022
Safeguarding PDC	Cabinet
Joining Up Services Around Children	17.05.2018