



Council – 3 March 2022

## Councillors' Questions

### Part A – Supplementaries

1 **Councillors Mike Lewis, Mike White, Wendy Lewis, Cyril Anderson and June Burtonshaw**

Many people will be looking forward to getting back to normality this year, and enjoying events again. Will the cabinet member confirm what the people of Swansea can look forward too in the coming year.

**Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism**

2022 promises to deliver one of the biggest event line-ups Swansea has ever seen – with a combination of in-house, partnership, collaboration and enablement /facilitation producing an exciting and diverse calendar.

Croeso kick-starts the season with a celebration of all aspects of Welsh Culture, in the heart of the city centre. Other highlights include at least four major concerts in Singleton Park between June and August and the return of the Wales Airshow in July. In August, we turn to international sport with three brand new major events for Swansea, including an already 'sold out' Ironman 70.3 and the World Para Triathlon events, set against a backdrop of the Welsh Para Festival. We will also be supporting and facilitating a range of third party and collaborative events, including the return of duathlons, half marathons and bike rides. Of course, our events are underpinned by our regular programming at our venues, libraries, galleries and museums, and those of our partners, including concerts at the Swansea.Com stadium and at Swansea Arena, when it opens later this spring. Some special events to look out for are a Gala performance at Swansea Grand, to celebrate its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the return of Swansea Festival to the Brangwyn Hall, where Sir Karl Jenkins will conduct his newest work, in celebration of the Queen's Jubilee year.

As part of our remit in providing advice and guidance, we also anticipate supporting a range of street parties and community events to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee, and the popular circus, food festivals, outdoor cinemas and car shows also make a welcome return. As we head into Autumn/Winter, the 41<sup>st</sup> Swansea Bay 10K, returns, and we host three national cultural programmes that will play out across the city throughout October. The World, Reimagined is a national public arts and education programme, focusing on better understanding our shared histories to make racial justice a reality. The education and community programme will run throughout the summer and result in a spectacular arts trail of globes in key locations, creating a new temporary visitor attraction. This will take place alongside two major projects of Festival 2022 – a UK wide celebration of British creativity. Swansea is host to the Welsh and UK 'winning teams', including the Reading Agency, who will present a walking trail, using augmented and virtual reality, to bring our libraries, reading and storytelling to life, along with a new theatre piece by National Theatre Wales, which

will culminate in an immersive experience in the city centre. The annual Fireworks and Christmas Parade draw the season to a close, providing a much needed boost to the Tourism & Hospitality sector and delivering a on a key aspect of the council's economic recovery plan. Backed by the creative Enjoy Swansea Bay marketing campaign, targeting visitors within and outside of the destination, all this and more can also be found on [www.enjoyswanseabay.com](http://www.enjoyswanseabay.com) – which is regularly updated and which we'd encourage everyone to view and share, boosting Swansea's profile and awareness of what's on, even further.

2 **Councillors Mike White, Wendy Lewis, Cyril Anderson, June Burtonshaw and Mike Lewis**

Can the Leader or Cabinet Member give an update on the progress with Skyline, the river corridor and Penderyn Whisky distillery

**Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism**

**Skyline Current Position**

Excellent progress continues to be made, Draft Heads of terms was signed in 2018, Skyline confirmed their Full Board approval to prepare and submit a business case for the Project in July 2021. Swansea Council and Welsh Government has been undertaking detailed discussions with Skyline and good progress has been made despite the impacts of the Covid pandemic.

The Council is undertaking the necessary land acquisitions and/or Agreements required by the Skyline scheme. There are a number of ownership and interest rights on Kilvey Hill and along the route down of the gondola cable car to Hafod Copper works. The Council is currently in negotiations to acquire these interests.

**Tawe Riverside**

A draft Strategy has been prepared for the river corridor which supplements the Strategic development area policy in the Swansea Local development plan and is used to guide development and regeneration funding.

**Hafod Coperworks**

Swansea Council has recently appointed award-winning regeneration company Urban Splash as its preferred development partner for a number of key sites in the City Centre and in the Tawe Riverside area through the Shaping Swansea initiative.

The Hafod Morfa Copper works site is included. Urban Splash will deliver future plans with the support of a range of specialist partners. Urban Splash will focus on the delivery of a heritage led mixed use regeneration programme for Hafod MorfaCopperworks. This will integrate the proposals for Skyline and Penderyn build on the current momentum of regeneration and re use of heritage assets to create a new leisure and residential destination for the lower Swansea Valley complementing the city centre offer.

**Penderyn**

The council refurbishment works on the Power House building will be completed Summer 2022 to be handed over to Penderyn for their fit out which is likely to take around 4 months.

**Laboratory Building**

In very close proximity to the Powerhouse (Penderyn whisky), Porters Lodge and Weighbridge Office. This building has been undergoing emergency stabilisation works for almost a year due to its structurally dangerous condition, but is this is

nearly complete. The building will need to retain its extensive scaffolding until re-development works can be undertaken (shell and core as a minimum). Funding will need to be identified to do so, which is currently being discussed including grant funding opportunities being scrutinised.

#### **Pontoons**

Awaiting on a flood report and will then be submitted for planning. Delivery expected September 2022.

3 **Councillors Cllrs Wendy Lewis, Cyril Anderson, June Burtonshaw, Mike Lewis and Mike White**

Can the Leader give an update on progress with the Blue Eden lagoon project.

#### **Response of the Leader**

The concept for Blue Eden was created by the city region, led by Swansea Council under the banner of Dragon Energy Island which would be an integrated, multi-faceted infrastructure project that would feature many elements, including zero carbon, tidal energy generation.

This integrated renewables project would include

- A lagoon wall and turbines producing 320MW of renewable energy
- A 6.7Gw battery manufacturing plant
- Wind turbines
- 72,000 m2 of Floating solar this will be the largest floating solar array in the UK, capable of generating up to 5,250 kWp of energy. An array of this size is estimated to avoid over 2,000,000 kg of CO2 per year.
- A mega data centre operated by 100% renewable energy
- One of the largest battery storage facility within the UK Storing up to 1,200 MWh of energy
- Hydrogen production
- Oceanic and climate research centre plus a public park and infrastructure
- The Blue Eden consortium has agreed to work together with a leading German company to provide 400mW of district heating and cooling from its hyper-scale data centre.
- Homes for 5000 people with a large proportion being affordable social housing fed by the renewable heat and electricity
- The opportunity to build in appropriate flood defences to protect the development and surrounding land from future flooding risks
- One of DST's subsidiaries, Batri has agreed terms with WG to build the battery manufacturing plant and Batri HQ in Pencoed, which will be the training and production staff feed for the Blue Eden plant. Batri will spend £22m developing the site and its facilities.
- Work continues on the detailed master plan, which will be published in detailed sections over the coming months.

At a projected cost of £1.7 billion, for the main proposals plus the additional housing investment the project would create circa 2500 new direct jobs and a future 16,000 supply chain jobs and create significant inward investment opportunities for Swansea

and the surrounding region. It will also see a significant contribution towards the city's overall ambition to achieve net zero carbon by 2050

A number of high profile partners are now part of the collaboration with details to be announced during the next few months. A planning pre application has been submitted to the council and active discussions continue between DST innovations and other key partners including ABP. The project continues to draw in wider and alignment opportunities to Swansea including the consideration of creating a hydrogen powered ferry service between Swansea and the Devon coast.

**4 Councillors Will Thomas and Steve Gallagher**

Digital connectivity is very important for our communities. What is the take up of IT equipment by the public in each library across Swansea.

**Response of the Cabinet Member for Business Improvement & Performance**

IT use is measured in PC bookings and WiFi use; but the latter cannot be determined by individual site. Overall there were 26,329 hourly Reservations on PC's in libraries between April 2021, and end January 2022; and 23,650 hours of WiFi use measured until end of December '21.

The amount of PC bookings and use is in decline as more people get online at home and move to using handheld mobile phone and tablet technology in the library also. However, demand clearly remains, and anecdotally, is increasingly for the purposes of completing online applications and transactions with organisations who have moved to digital platforms, and in most cases, to benefit from the support of library staff at the same time.

	<b>PC Reservations by library -April to Jan</b>
	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>Bonymaen</b>	0
<b>Brynhyfryd</b>	1,239
<b>Clydach</b>	991
<b>Fforestfach</b>	380
<b>Gorseinon</b>	2,847
<b>Gowerton</b>	744
<b>Killay</b>	642
<b>Llansamlet</b>	330
<b>Morrison</b>	2,996
<b>Oystermouth</b>	1,787
<b>Penlan</b>	876
<b>Pennard</b>	110
<b>Pontarddulais</b>	787
<b>St Thomas</b>	491
<b>Sketty</b>	672

	<b>Sw. Central</b>	9,987	
	<b>Townhill</b>	1,450	
	<b>All sites</b>	<b>26,329</b>	

**5 Councillors Cyril Anderson, June Burtonshaw, Mike Lewis, Mike White, and Wendy Lewis**

Will the Cabinet Member outline plans for smart bins in Swansea.

**Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management**

The Council is looking to increase the funding going into the Cleansing Service, over and above the additional £45K a year currently being invested, to improve the quality of its litter bin infrastructure. This investment includes replacing damaged/life expired litter bins, replacing small dog waste bins with larger litter bins which are also for dog waste, and exploring options for smart bins. The technology being explored uses the retrofitting of level sensors which feedback when a bin needs emptying, which could be particularly useful in the more remote areas.

**6 Councillors Linda Tyler Lloyd and Will Thomas**

It is important to have good working conditions and surroundings for staff at the Guildhall. How much damp and water damage has occurred at the Guildhall since staff there have been working from home.

**Response of the Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Service Transformation**

There has historically been issues with damp walls and water penetration particularly on the ground floor, particularly on the front and north side of the building. This has occurred we believe due to the failure of Damp Proof Course and external pointing. With less use of the rooms, the natural ventilation is reduced as doors are constantly closed and this has resulted in the reduction of air flow. We are constantly working on remedial works at various locations throughout the building, however due to the nature and Grade 1 listing of the building the requirement to get Listed Building Consent means that a fix is not quick or straightforward.

We have recently been made aware of further water ingress into the Brangwyn Hall but remedial work has been taken to address this.

We are monitoring all areas of the Guildhall to seek resolution and it is our intention to carry out some redecoration to affected areas prior to full return to office use.

**7 Councillors June Burtonshaw, Mike Lewis, Mike White, Wendy Lewis and Cyril Anderson**

Will the Leader give an update on the likely impacts of the cost of living crisis for an average family in Swansea.

**Response of the Leader**

Regrettably, the impacts of the Tory cost of living crisis are likely to be substantial for all families and utterly devastating for those on the lowest incomes. The full horror of what this means will not be clear until April or May but we can hazard a guess.

Energy Bills are already going to rise by around £700 and more bad news will come in the autumn when the next price cap review is due with a further likely hike in energy costs.

How can a promise of a £200 loan to people of their own money from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which they then have to pay back over a number of years when their energy bills may be even higher, can be seen as a sensible scheme to deal with a cost of living or energy crisis. It looks like it's been designed by someone who is out of touch and doesn't really understand the issues affecting ordinary families.

On top of this around £650 from interest rate rises just on the last base rate increase alone for anyone on a variable rate and an average mortgage.

Regrettably more increases look inevitable to come throughout 2022. The majority of mortgages are fixed rates so there may be some delay to the pain for most for now.

National Insurance will see around +£250 for those on average wages due to the National Insurance increase which the UK Tory Government have refused to reverse or defer.

And at the pumps petrol and diesel has hit an all time high with petrol costing families in the region of £300 per year more compared to a year ago

There are other stealth taxes which are still to feed through with personal allowance income tax freeze costing £135 per year more.

Food inflation will add around £165 per year due to rising prices and household costs and goods purchases will be around £200 higher if inflation hits 7% as widely expected

So maybe just under £3000 per family worse off under this shambles of a Tory Government which is uncaring, out of touch and out of ideas.

The indifference and incompetence of the government not to do all they can to avoid this crisis is damning. It will be painful for all but the very rich, and devastating for many. It will be Utterly devastating for those on working families on universal credit who've also seen their income cut by £1040 per year - meaning they could be £4000 year worse

Boris negotiated a third rate deal for Britain and now everyone is paying the price. Welcome to 21<sup>st</sup> century post Brexit Britain.

Inevitably the UK economy will suffer as prices rise more than wages and people have less money to spend just at the time when businesses need them the most.

8	<p><b>Councillors Chris Holley, Mary Jones and Wendy Fitzgerald</b></p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member tell us what is being done to  (a) address the recommendations in the recent Independent IICSA: child sexual exploitation by organised networks report; and  (b) in the report it is stated that Swansea Council had misinterpreted as a 'national requirement' the outdated Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (SERAF) and had not been following the Welsh Government's more holistic approach. How has that been addressed.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Children Services</b></p> <p>When we provided evidence to the inquiry, we were already developing better ways of safeguarding children and we were making changes to improve the way we work to protect all young people - including boys, young people with disabilities and those from ethnic minority backgrounds.</p> <p>The strategic children missing, exploited and trafficked group (CMET) brings together senior managers from key partner agencies on a monthly basis. They are reviewing their strategic action plan in light of the detail contained in the IICSA report published on 1<sup>st</sup> February. This will provide assurance on the progress of the implementation of the strategic action plan and give an opportunity to reflect on the report's findings and recommendations when updating the local plan.</p> <p>The CMET multi-agency operational panel established last year, led by Swansea Council child and family services in partnership with more than 25 agencies from police and health to the third sector and local business has now actively considered 50 referrals and taken a range of actions from street lighting and help signage to outreach youth work, training in schools, and supporting community groups and businesses to help keep places safe</p> <p>We are not advocating the use of the SERAF, however where this is sometimes used by agencies, decisions are not based on a SERAF scoring. All decisions are based on narrative and circumstances for each individual child. If we have a concern of exploitation then an assessment is used to determine risk and harm supported by information from initial strategy discussions or multi agency working via the operational CMET panel.</p> <p>We use the Welsh Government CSE guidance in multiagency meetings and remind partner agencies that they should use this to consider exploitation risks when making a referral.</p> <p>All our child exploitation/CSE training uses the Welsh Government Guidance to support our current practice. For example, the guidance is used in strategy meetings and considers peer and adult networks. However, Welsh Government has recognised that this guidance needs to be revised and updated and is about to launch a CSE toolkit which we will be adopting.</p>
9	<p><b>Councillors June Burtonshaw, Mike Lewis, Cyril Anderson, Wendy Lewis and Mike White</b></p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member outline the current, and programmed, new Council home build programme.</p>

## Response of the Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Service Transformation

In addition to the completion of the initial pilot phase schemes which resulted in 58 new build and 38 acquisitions which added to the council stock profile, the following schemes are underway, or in the future programme for development.

In programme/Underway			Year
Bryn House, Uplands	4 units	To be used as temp accommodation with handover March 22. The main house conversion to 4 flats has already been completed	2021/22
Hillview & Beaconsview, Clase	25 units	Handover due end of March (22 units) and 3 units in May 22.	2021/22
Ty Fforest, Blaenymaes	3 units	Conversion to 3 homes due for completion Spring 22.	2021/22
Cedar Crescent, West Cross	6 bungalows	Construction to start on site Feb 22	2022
Alexandra road, Gorseinon	2 units	Conversion of a former social services property into 2 x 3 bed houses. Work to start June 22.	2022
Acquisitions	39 units	20 acquisitions completed and 19 under offer.	2021/22
Integrated Care Fund acquisitions	6 units	Funding to acquire 6 properties for adapted or accessible accommodation.	2021/22
Former Penlan DHO	6 units	Conversion of office into flats, including adapted ground floor apartments	2022/23
Creswell road, Clase	9 units	Detailed design being worked up, a mix of bungalows, flats and houses. Demolition of former Clase DHO to start this Spring.	2022/23
Heol Dynys, Fforesthall	20 units	Detailed design being worked up, mix of 1,2,3 and 4 bed homes.	2023/24
Sparks centre, Blaenymaes	3 units	Detailed design being worked up for 1 x 3 bed house and 2 accessible apartments	2022/23
Brondeg House	approx. 14 units	Detailed design being worked up. Demolition of main house to be completed this year.	2023/24
Concept plans developed and pre-apps completed for following sites -			Estimated start date



	Scurlage, Gower	30-35 units	Concept plans being developed.	2024/25
	Skomer & westdale (Penderry)	12 units	Concept plans being developed	2024/25
	Penrhos Place, Gendros	34 units	Concept plans being developed	2024/25
	Tanycoed Road, Clydach	13-15 units	Concept plans being developed	2025/26
	Heol Gwyrosydd, Penlan	15-25 units	Concept plans being developed	2025/26
	Ty Draw, Bonymaen	TBC	Concept plans being developed	2025/26
	Gorseinon Business park	Demolition to be completed before site surveys etc.		2024/25
	Gower road	Concept plans being developed		2024/25
	Midland place	Concept plans being developed		2026/27
	<b>4 x Brokesby Road sites</b> - appointment of consultants to develop masterplan for 4 sites. This will take the scheme to RIBA stage 4, including obtaining planning permission and costing the scheme ready for tender.			2024/25
	<b>2 HRA sites at Milford way</b> to be developed in partnership as part of the Penderry regen framework - potentially 70+ units across 2 sites, with a partner. Procurement exercise to appoint a partner/s to take place during 2022.			2024/25

10	<p><b>Councillors Brigitte Rowlands and David Helliwell</b></p> <p>Is the automatic telephone system on the main switchboard at the Council Office fit for purpose.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Business Improvement &amp; Performance</b></p> <p>Performance of the automatic telephone system is continually reviewed and monitored. Discussions with the supplier indicate performance is close to what would be expected, and is close to that of other Councils that have implemented the same system. In addition, work is underway to review each call to ensure the automated system recognises the full range of phonetics and dialects, i.e. how each word sounds. A separate exercise is also being undertaken to reflect hybrid working, as Officers out in services may be based at different locations on a given day.</p>
11	<p><b>Councillors Wendy Fitzgerald, Kevin Griffiths and Gareth Sullivan</b></p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member comment on the greening of the city centre.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration &amp; Tourism</b></p> <p>The Council have adopted a Green Infrastructure document which means that all current and future scheme will include the need for greening which is measured through a green infrastructure tool. The Green Artery policy in the Swansea Central</p>

	<p>Area Regeneration Framework also sets out the need for greening in the City Centre, this document is in delivery with significant progress being made on greening the city greening through the work already undertaken on the Kingsway and Wind Street, the first new park in Swansea for 70 years is being delivered at the Arena together with green walls and additional greening on the boulevard. In addition the recent proposals for Castle Square increase greening in that area from 21 to 41 %.</p>
12	<p><b>Councillors Lyndon Jones and Myles Langstone</b></p> <p>We recognise how important recycling is, so that we can reduce landfill and is vital for our environment. What is the position of recycling from businesses across Swansea and what percentage of their waste is recycled.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement &amp; Infrastructure Management</b></p> <p>“The Council’s Commercial Waste Collection Service which is available to businesses across the Authority promotes recycling to all its customers. The Council has a statutory requirement to make this service available, however businesses have a choice whether they use the Council or a private waste contractor. Currently recycling collections are available for food, glass, cans, paper, cardboard, and plastic bottles tubs and trays.</p> <p>The Council’s Waste Strategy includes a desire to reduce the non-recyclable waste received from businesses. In 2019/20 we recycled 58.3% of commercial waste, an increase on previous years which averaged around 46%. The prediction for this year is over 60%”</p>
	<p><b>Part B – No Supplementaries</b></p>
13	<p><b>Councillors Jeff Jones, Chris Holley and Peter Black</b></p> <p>Considering that we have been informed that the seating capacity of the Arena is 2420, can the Leader clarify the circumstances where the capacity is increased to 3500.</p> <p><b>Response of the Leader</b></p> <p>The arena will operate at full capacity without using the retractable seating for music concerts and any events where the full arena floor can be used. This will be for concerts and other suitable events where the additional retractable seating is not required.</p>
14	<p><b>Councillors Peter Black, Graham Thomas and Gordon Walker</b></p> <p>Will the Council consider waiving the charge for street closures for those holding parties celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June this year.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement &amp; Infrastructure Management</b></p>

The Council is waiving all charges for street parties in connection with Jubilee, applications will require formal approval through the Streetworks team. Please refer to <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/organisestreetparty> for guidance on applications.