



Council – 6 October 2022

## Councillors' Questions

### Part A – Supplementaries

1	<p><b>Councillors Lyndon Jones, Francesca O'Brien &amp; Will Thomas</b></p> <p>We have received complaints that the automatic telephone system on the main switchboard at the Council does not function properly. Are there plans to improve this.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation</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 ongoing 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 around the routing of calls across the Council's main call centres.</p>
2	<p><b>Councillors Mike Lewis, Wendy Lewis Fiona Gordon, Lesley Walton &amp; Andrew Williams</b></p> <p>In view of the extremely positive outcome of the recent Estyn inspection, can the Cabinet member outline what will be done to highlight and share the good practice identified both in the report itself and in other evidence of the effective work being done in Swansea's schools.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Education &amp; Learning</b></p> <p>A report on the local authority's recent inspection report will be shared at Cabinet on 20 October 2022 and at Council on 3 November 2022. Good practice case studies will be published on Estyn's website during the next few months. The report has been circulated to schools and governors via a newsletter. Following publication of the report on 1 September 2022, other local authorities have made contact seeking to learn from good practice. The scrutiny panel has programmed time to consider the highlights and recommendations of the report. Officers plan to share good practice through networks of professional practice, via headteacher meetings and through the work of school improvement advisers.</p>
3	<p><b>Councillors Mary Jones Lynda James &amp; Chris Holley</b></p> <p>Can the Leader/Cabinet Member inform Council what arrangements are being made to assist staff that are working from home with their heating bills.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services &amp; Performance</b></p>

	<p>Since March 2020 the Council has advised staff to work from home where possible to support the aim of keeping safe and well whilst transmission of Covid was prevalent. As we emerge from the pandemic and consider long term workforce operating models, staff who can work from home have been able to continue to choose this where service requirements support it but have also been able to choose to attend a workplace if this is their preference. We will continue to support employee choice balanced against business need and if employees wish to return to a workplace due to the energy situation then they will be able to do this. There is no plan to provide financial reimbursement for energy bills given that the choice will remain for staff to work from home or a Council workplace over the coming months.</p>
4	<p><b>Councillors Lyndon Jones &amp; Brigitte Rowlands</b></p> <p>It is vital that we encourage recycling, so that we can reduce landfill which is vital for our environment, so 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 Community (Services)</b></p> <p>The Council collects waste for around 1500 customers and there is a contractual requirement for the customer to separate their paper/card, cardboard, cans, glass, and food waste for recycling. Together these customers are recycling around 52% of their waste.</p> <p>New legislation is expected next year which will make it a legal requirement, for businesses producing waste, to separate even more waste streams for recycling.</p> <p>Businesses can also bring a large number of different waste streams to the Baling Plant for recycling.</p>
5	<p><b>Councillors Sam Bennett, Cheryl Philpott &amp; Kevin Griffiths</b></p> <p>What measures have or are the Council putting in place to support families and young people at School with the Cost of Living.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Education &amp; Learning</b></p> <p>The council has implemented the universal free school meal offer for all Reception pupils from the start of term in September 2022 and will roll this out to other primary year groups as soon as is practically possible. At present our rollout programme is ahead of other city councils.</p> <p>Messages have been shared with parents and carers on the importance of continuing to claim for free school meal eligibility, as this will enable parents to claim for school uniform grant (Pupil Development Grant Access). This message has been included in application packs for new starters. Parents and carers are also reminded that free school meal eligibility entitles the child to other school benefits, such as reduced school trip costs.</p> <p>For those that are not entitled to free school meals, we promote the charity GROW that provides good quality recycled uniform from their city centre shop at low cost (usually £1 an item).</p>

	<p>We have had a number of items on the poverty agenda at our meetings with headteachers, including the importance of having an accessible school uniform policy.</p> <p>All secondary schools in Swansea have been supported to take part in the Welsh Government's Year 7 free breakfast pilot from September 2022. All primary schools in Swansea offer free breakfast club provision.</p>
6	<p><b>Councillors Wendy Lewis, Fiona Gordon, Lesley Walton, Andrew Williams &amp; Mike Lewis</b></p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation provide an update as to how many people have been supported during the pandemic in relation to homelessness.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation</b></p> <p>Since the commencement of the pandemic on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 there has been huge pressures within homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 a total of 8,998 homeless presentations were received. This represents an increase of approximately 16% from the 2 years prior to the pandemic.</li> <li>• Between 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 1, 948 households were placed into temporary accommodation.</li> <li>• Between 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 on 1,043 households were successfully moved on from temporary accommodation.</li> </ul> <p>There are still high levels of people presenting as homeless and with issues such the Ukrainian crisis and cost of living crisis it is anticipated that these pressures will continue to grow over the next 12 months and beyond. Currently 178 households are in temporary accommodation, many of whom are being supported by the rapid rehousing support workers.</p>
7	<p><b>Councillors Wendy Fitzgerald, Peter Black &amp; Mark Tribe</b></p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member inform Council what plans there are to install solar panels on the roofs of older Council properties.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Members for Service Transformation</b></p> <p>The Housing Service is planning to integrate the installation of PV solar panels and batteries to store generated energy into its HRA Capital Programme over the next decade to its 13,600 council owned properties.</p> <p>The HRA Capital Programme approved by Council in March 22 includes expenditure of £26m for a variety of renewable schemes over the next 4 years. In this current year's HRA programme, there are 12 pilot schemes where PV and battery are to be programmed as part of wider measures to improve the thermal performance of properties when renewing the external finishes of homes as part of annual planned maintenance programmes.</p> <p>It is anticipated that work to install PV and battery storage will start from about April 2023 to the 12 sites spread across the city.</p>

8	<p><b>Councillors Chris Holley, Jeff Jones &amp; Lynda James</b></p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member or Leader give Council a list of sites which have been transferred through asset management to community groups.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services &amp; Performance</b></p> <p>In total we have transferred 68 assets to community groups by way of either lease or licence which includes playing fields, bowling greens, allotments and the existing community buildings. This is an ongoing process so the number of live Community Asset Transfers applications and transactions is constantly being updated. A full list of all sites and buildings will be provided separately.</p>
	<p><b>Part B – No Supplementaries</b></p>
9	<p><b>Councillors Sam Bennett, Susan Jones &amp; Matthew Bailey</b></p> <p>When do the Council aim to open the Tunnel between Oystermouth Road and Paxton Drive.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration &amp; Tourism</b></p> <p>Works at Paxton Street tunnel are currently ongoing but nearing completion and we anticipate it opening in 3-4 weeks' time.</p>
10	<p><b>Councillors Michael Locke, Nicola Furlong &amp; James McGettrick</b></p> <p>In early January 2022, the South Wales Evening Post reported that the missing or severely corroded railings fronting the Council's playing fields on Mumbles Road would be replaced during 2022. Can the Cabinet Member update the Council on the progress of the work.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration &amp; Tourism</b></p> <p>The article advises that the Council was to undertake a survey to establish what work needs to be done on sections the Council is responsible for.</p> <p>The railings forming a boundary between Mumbles Road and King George V Playing Fields could be affected by improvements into Swansea bay sports park in the area, so it is not considered appropriate to undertake major works on them at present.</p> <p>The railings forming a boundary between Mumbles Road and Singleton Park, immediately east of Sketty Lane are to be considered for refurbishment should funding become available during 23/24, with the railings immediately west of Brynmill Lane requiring further replacement options to be considered.</p> <p>The University have been approached for an update regarding the railing fronting their land and have advised us that monies are allocated for works in this financial year and for each of the following 3 years.</p>