



Council – 1 December 2022

Councillors' Questions

Part A – Supplementaries

1	<p>Councillors Wendy Lewis, Fiona Gordon, Lesley Walton, Andrew Williams, & Mike Lewis</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation provide an update on temporary and emergency accommodation delivered during and after the pandemic by the council and its partners across Swansea to help prevent homelessness.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation</p> <p>Since the start of the Pandemic, Swansea Council have adopted the 'WG no-one left out approach' and as a result we have ensured that temporary accommodation has been made available to all households that have become homeless. Between 23rd March 2020 - 30th September 2022 the Council has successfully moved 1,094 households from temporary accommodation. There are currently 192 households in temporary accommodation, consisting of 166 single persons and 26 families. Appropriate support is being provided.</p> <p>During the pandemic Swansea Council worked in partnership to successfully bid for additional funding from WG to support the response to addressing homelessness during the pandemic by funding additional units of temporary and permanent accommodation and providing additional resources to support homeless households and individuals.</p> <p>Overall, this has supported additional Council investment of £3.5m and has achieved 52 additional units of temporary and permanent accommodation. In addition to this RSLs were also able to bid for funding, and were able to provide an additional 23 units of accommodation.</p> <p>The cost of living crisis and the war in Ukraine are adding increased pressure on demand for temporary and emergency accommodation; this demand is replicated across Wales.</p> <p>Despite this challenging environment, the Council has been able to increase temporary accommodation stock since the start of the pandemic and is committed to continuing to offer temporary accommodation to those that require it.</p>
2	<p>Councillors Francesca O'Brien, Angela O'Connor & Will Thomas</p> <p>Would the Council consider revising their planning policy, so that those wanting to submit a petition of support in relation to a planning application, is taken into account and given the same consideration as a petition of objections.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Service & Performance</p>

	<p>The Scheme of Delegation for planning decisions was introduced by the Council in response to the Welsh Government’s review of the planning system in Wales. The review identified that planning committees should not be concerned with small scale, none controversial developments but should concentrate on the more sensitive, strategically important schemes.</p> <p>It was recognised however, that some small scale developments can raise concerns locally and the scheme of delegation made provision for members to call in an application to committee where an objection threshold was met. The scheme of delegation only relates to an objection threshold rather than a threshold of support, primarily because there is a right of appeal for an applicant against a refusal whereas there is no equivalent right of appeal for objectors if an application is approved.</p> <p>I will review this aspect of the Scheme of Delegation and consider whether any changes are needed in respect of petitions of support for a development.</p>
3	<p>Councillors Mike Day, Wendy Fitzgerald, Mary Jones & Susan Jones</p> <p>As Councillors we have had complaints from residents about not being able to receive a response when they telephone for service support across all council departments. Will the Leader update Council on what arrangements are in place to ensure that there are no delays in responding to residents’ calls.</p> <p>Will the Leader share with Council the statistics relating to the number of calls received by Council departments, the average time taken to answer calls, the number of uncompleted calls (as a percentage of all calls made), and the number of complaints received from members of the public about calls not being answered.</p> <p>Response of the Leader</p> <p>The Council operates a number of call centres across the organisation and the telephone numbers for these are published on the council’s website, alongside email addresses, and signposting to specific service webpages.</p> <p>Between 1st April and 31st October 2022, 190,672 calls were presented across all call centres. The average speed of answering calls was three minutes and the average call handling time was around five minutes. During this period, on average 31.5% of calls were abandoned. This performance is below the standard our residents should expect, but can be attributed to several factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Residents abandoning calls because the recorded message they received when calling answered their question, or directed them to the website or relevant email addresses ▪ Exceptionally high demand, particularly during periods when the council has been administering thousands of applications for Welsh Government grants (e.g. cost of living and fuel payments) to help with the pandemic and cost of living crisis. ▪ The complexity of some calls leading to much longer call times (the average maximum call handling time is around twenty minutes), reducing capacity to take other calls, particularly in respect of calls relating to revenues and benefits, grants, planning, and social services. ▪ Call centre officers also support residents with online applications over the telephone, which can take significant time to complete, again reducing capacity to take other calls ▪ Some sickness absence within the teams, including COVID, during the period, reducing staff capacity.

	<p>Officers are working on solutions to improve the council's customer service performance to identify ways to reduce the call waiting times and abandonment rates within the resources we have available. We are also reviewing Customer Service standards across all services, to ensure clarity for customers and consistency across the council where possible.</p> <p>Measures taken to improve performance include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross skilling face to face staff in the corporate contact centre to be able to handle calls to help manage peak periods (helping to reduce the corporate call centre abandonment rate to 17% in October 2022, compared with 24% for October last year) • Increasing the accessibility of the Council's website • Publishing and promoting our digital channels on social media. <p>Between 1st April and 31st October the Complaints Team received 17 stage one complaints due to residents being unable to get through to services, this is the same as for the same period in 2021.</p>
4	<p>Councillors Francesca O'Brien, Angela O'Connor & Will Thomas</p> <p>With the money set aside for the skate parks, can the council confirm if they are contributing towards the Mumbles skate park. If not, why not.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>A proposal has been put to the ERF board for a strategic approach to utilising the investment in skate and wheel play facilities. This proposal has been informed by a review of existing facilities and an options appraisal to ensure the greatest impact and best outcomes for as wide a geographical area as possible, within the available finances. This includes improving existing facilities alongside the prospects for additional regional facilities.</p> <p>The Mumbles skate park project is being delivered and funded by Mumbles Community Council under a land lease arrangement from the Council. As part of the business case and funding proposal provided as part of the request for the land, no financial contributions from Council were requested or required to deliver the scheme. The funds available to the City Council will therefore be utilised to increase the quality and distribution of facilities in other areas. The Council has provided a lease of the land at a peppercorn rental under the Community Asset Transfer Policy, which is considered an in kind contribution.</p>
5	<p>Councillors Rebecca Fogarty, Sara Keeton, Mike Lewis, Wendy Lewis & Fiona Gordon</p> <p>Could the Leader update on progress with the Blue Eden tidal lagoon project.</p> <p>Response of the Leader</p> <p>Significant work has continued in relation to Blue Eden Tidal Lagoon and the supporting Integrated renewables project which builds on the project previously developed under the banner of Dragon Energy</p> <p>The project will be an integrated, multi-faceted infrastructure project that would feature many elements, including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lagoon wall and turbines producing at least a minimum of 320MW of renewable energy • An increased battery manufacturing plant producing 15GWh of renewable batteries.

- A doubling of the proposed floating solar to 144,000 m² which is believed to be the largest floating solar array in the UK, capable of generating up to 10,000 kWp of energy. An array of this size is estimated to avoid over 4,000,000 kg of CO₂ per year.
- A mega data centre operated by 100% renewable energy and incorporating Hydrogen Fuel cells has been added to the power system of the data centre and District Heating system.
- One of the largest battery storage facility within the UK storing up to 1,200 MWh of energy.
- The Hydrogen production facility producing 100 MW of green hydrogen
- Oceanic and climate research centre plus a public park and infrastructure .
- The Blue Eden consortium headed by DST innovations has agreed to work together with the world-leading Siemens plc and the council to provide 400mW of district heating and cooling supplying the Swansea city centre from its hyper-scale data centre and the council and backed up with Hydrogen Fuel Cells which will provide 90MW of heating and cooling.
- Large-scale housing provision 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. .
- A planning pre application is being finalised as the first step towards securing planning permission for all on land facilities and the process to deal with lagoon permissions has also commenced.
- The completion of the detailed work carried out using the Community Regeneration funding bid outlining the economic impact of the development will be completed and submitted to UK Government by December. In addition the CRF has supported the finalisation of a detailed work on a new district heating network utilising the heat generated from the data centre feeding the city centre with positive engagement in relation to funding opportunities.
- Further work is continuing on the additional integrated renewable transport hub further supporting large scale EV and hydrogen usage including public transport with TfW and wider HGV opportunities.
- The submission of a formal levelling up Bid to UK government was submitted in August 2022 for the enabling infrastructure and transport improvement to support the development of the area and a decision is awaited
- Detailed land transactions concluding with agreements in place (subject to due diligence and legal processes) to enable all the land required to be available for the project.

In addition to the Council and DST there are now a significant number of project partners as part of the delivery team and too many to list but some leading project partners include, but are not limited to:

- **HDR** is the master planning and project designer.
- **ENABLE (Formally BCM)** is the electrical installation and infrastructure partner.
- **Ascona** Group is the public facility operation and management.
- designers and providers.
- **TFW** transport electric and hydrogen vehicle operators.
- **Batri** is the EV, Solar, and Battery provider and the Energy and Transport Hub designer.
- **DST Innovations** is the information display, lighting, and CCTV security designer.
- **HSBC** is the leading bank.
- **RC3** is the product pipeline management.
- **BRM** is one of the batteries' electronic control board and cell manufacturers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anditz is the hydro systems provider. • HDR is the civil Engineering Lagoon consultant. • Swansea University and Trinity St David's University. <p>In addition announcements will be made imminently by an industry leader in renewable energy as power company owner-operator contract and by two industry leaders in System Control and IT infrastructure who will be the systems control. The Consortium is also now in the process of contracting local supply chain partners and further partners will be provided as the project progresses.</p> <p>It is envisaged that the above progress together with the detailed next steps will be set out formally to cabinet in December 2022. Work is currently scheduled to commence on site during 2023 subject to planning.</p>
6	<p>Councillors Francesca O'Brien, Angela O'Connor & Will Thomas</p> <p>Can the council confirm when the electric charge points for EV will be ready to use in Mumbles.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation</p> <p>The electric vehicle chargepoints in Mumbles are now fully operational, having been commissioned w/c 31st October.</p>
7	<p>Councillors Peter May, Allan Jeffrey, Sandra Joy & Stuart Rice</p> <p>Please can the Leader/Cabinet Member provide Council with a full update on the potential bid to become a free port. What role has the Council played in any discussions with potential regional partners and in consulting local businesses.</p> <p>Response of the Leader</p> <p>Following discussion at the October Corporate Joint Committee meeting, Swansea has provided in principle support for the joint Neath Port Talbot and Pembrokeshire bid. We believe that this submission, if successful, will have significant economic benefits for the wider region and align to the proposals for the Blue Eden lagoon and mega energy hub in Swansea. The link below provides the CJC report which sets out the rationale behind this approach.</p> <p>freeports - CJC report oct 2022.pdf (npt.gov.uk)</p>
8	<p>Councillors Francesca O'Brien, Angela O'Connor & Will Thomas</p> <p>Can the Council commit to improving the tennis courts in mumbles once the work on the sea defence has finished, as they will be used as a depot.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>It is confirmed that the tennis courts are to be used as one of the compound facilities during the construction phase of the project. It is acknowledged that this will unfortunately have a detrimental impact to the leisure provision within the community for the duration of the works, but without such a facility it is not possible to deliver the scale of works required.</p>

	<p>During the Consultation phase for the Mumbles Coastal protection scheme, a number of wider proposals for the regeneration of Mumbles were identified. This included opportunities for potentially repurposing the tennis courts. It has been confirmed that the Coastal protection project is not able to facilitate any such proposals, based on the nature of the funding and primary focus on coastal defence. However, it was acknowledged that there is strong and varied opinion on the future of the facility. It is therefore proposed that a community consultation exercise is undertaken at the start of next year to gain a better understanding of the community needs and to define future aspirations.</p> <p>No formal commitment can be made on the site until such an exercise is undertaken and in the event that redevelopment proposals are identified, funding sources would need to be determined.</p>
9	<p>Councillors Fiona Gordon, Mike Lewis, Wendy Lewis, Terry Hennegan, Lesley Walton & Sara Keeton</p> <p>Would the Leader confirm the total invested in communities across Swansea from the economic recovery fund and highlight some of the community priorities the ERF has delivered.</p> <p>Response of the Leader</p> <p>The Economic Recovery Fund(ERF) has approved funding to the value of £26,860,163</p> <p>Each proposal is considered against set criteria, that requires applications to outline the associated benefits from one or more of the following themes; Local Economy, Well-being, Community, People and Jobs. A number of the approved projects also satisfy several of Council's Policy Commitments.</p> <p>Some examples include;</p> <p>Local Business Improvement Grants (Theme – Local Economy) (Policy Commitment linked to the Corporate Plan - Transforming our Economy & Infrastructure) Purpose – To enable improvements to business premises to improve visual amenity of retail areas needing support.</p> <p>Essential Playground Works (Theme – Well-being and Community) (Policy Commitment linked to the Corporate Plan - Transforming our Economy & Infrastructure) Purpose – Further to the Capital Play Investment Programme 2021-22, additional investment will address remaining playgrounds currently of a red or amber condition status.</p> <p>Pop up Energy Advice Centre (Theme – Local Economy, Well-being, Community, People and Jobs) Purpose – To reach out to the public and their communities struggling with fuel poverty, increasing energy bills, whilst linked to the Climate Change Agenda.</p> <p>Paid Work Placement and Training Project (Theme – Local Economy, Well-being, Community, People and Jobs) (Policy Commitment linked to the Corporate Plan - Transforming our Economy & Infrastructure) Purpose – To create paid work opportunities with Swansea Council, for those at risk of facing long-term unemployment.</p> <p>First Tier Welfare Rights Support (Theme – Local Economy, Well-being, Community, People and Jobs)</p>

	<p>Purpose – To provide direct welfare benefits advice and guidance to residents. Councillors, together with the Contact Centre will have access to this support also.</p>
10	<p>Councillors Francesca O'Brien & Richard Lewis</p> <p>As each councillor is allocated two days per four weeks of cleansing work, given Gower is a single ward member but attracts tourist in their tens of thousands and the landscape of the ward, would the council consider to increase this.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Community (Services)</p> <p>The level of resource for the Cleansing Ward Operate Teams has been set to provide the allocated two days per four weeks of cleansing work for each Member, so this allocation could not be increased in one area without being reduced in another.</p> <p>Tourist areas which attract high visitor numbers, such as Gower, are catered for through the deployment of increased Cleansing resource at the beaches and foreshores through peak holiday periods.</p>
11	<p>Councillors Wendy Lewis, Fiona Gordon, Lesley Walton, Penny Matthews, and Sara Keeton</p> <p>Would the Leader or Cabinet Member update on how Swansea is assisting the U.K. and Welsh Governments to provide help to people fleeing persecution, conflict, and war.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Well-being</p> <p>People fleeing persecution settle in Swansea through a variety of different schemes/means – UK Resettlement Schemes (UKRS), the Afghan Schemes (ARAP), Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Programmes and through Swansea being an Asylum Dispersal area.</p> <p>Swansea is an Asylum Dispersal Area and is in the top 10 in the UK in terms of numbers of asylum seekers in proportion to population size and has long been recognised as a City of Sanctuary. There are at present approximately 900 Asylum Seekers in the City.</p> <p>Swansea Council has actively offered accommodation and support for families of 163 vulnerable refugees through the UK Government's UKRS (from Syria, Sudan, Palestine, Eritrea), 36 through the ARAP. In addition we have approximately 300 Ukrainians currently residing with sponsors or in alternative accommodation through the Homes 4 Ukraine and WG Super Sponsorship Scheme and another 200 in hotel accommodation across the City.</p> <p>Much of the support for these cohorts is contracted out to EYST (Ethnic Minority & Youth Support Team Wales) who assist with settling into life in Swansea – setting up benefits, bank accounts, social links, GPs, applying for Resident Permits etc.</p> <p>Swansea Council works very closely with external third sector and statutory partners through a variety of multi-agency and focused meetings where a joint approach can be adopted to find the best solutions and support for people seeking sanctuary in Swansea.</p>
12	<p>Councillors James McGettrick, Cheryl Philpott & Jeff Jones</p> <p>Singleton Park has again suffered damage as a result of Special Events. (see attached photos) The combination of damp ground & heavy machinery has – yet again – damaged the grass surface over wide areas and compacted soil over vulnerable tree roots. Can the</p>

Cabinet Member responsible for Special Events please outline why they have again failed to protect Singleton Park.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

This year, Singleton Park has played host to over 100,000 people attending a variety of different events from pop concerts, to sport, to outdoor cinema. These events provide our residents and visitors with a much sought-after opportunity to safely enjoy a variety of different forms of entertainment and also offer a very positive economic return and profile for Swansea.

Singleton Park is a working park, located close to the city centre and which has, for many years, been developed to become one of the city's leading locations for major outdoor events. Given the variety, seasonality and scale of the events, it is inevitable, despite best efforts to mitigate against this, that some damage will occur. Whilst there has been some damage, it is only a very small area of the Park that has been affected and which will be repaired once conditions allow. Similar park based outdoor event venues throughout the country encounter the same challenges.

The Council's Events Team is relatively small and not all events are directly delivered by the team - some events are delivered by private event promoters. In this latter instance, the Events Team works with the promoter to agree on site and event delivery plans and then they undertake best efforts to oversee such events. This along with a monetary damage bond usually ensures that a good level of care and responsibility follows.

The promoters of the Oktoberfest event, whilst showing significant improvement as compared to 2021, could have done more to protect the Park. As a result, despite the fact that the event was well-received by the attendees, the Events team will be reviewing future applications from this individual promoter.

In addition, weather conditions during October do seem to be deteriorating each year and the Events Team is currently reviewing the level of risk that this entails when considering any events during this period. .

Where resources permit, we will continue to invest in the Park infrastructure to ensure its continued development as a key outdoor events location and in order to minimise any damage.

Where damage occurs, the costs for any repairs are borne by the promoter and not the Council.

13 **Councillors Michael Locke, Kevin Griffiths & Graham Thomas**

Change Machines at the Bus Station toilets are old, unreliable and have inadequate capacity. Will the Council consider upgrading these machines so that reliability and capacity are improved.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Community (Services)

The Change Machines in the Bus Station could be upgraded, however, due to them being located within the open 24/7 area of the bus station there is risk of vandalism and theft.

The current machines are filled with coins from the toilets. When machines are full they hold approximately £100 of ten pence pieces and £200 of twenty pence pieces.

	<p>The machines are filled on a Monday morning and usually by Tuesday they are empty due to high customer demand including use by taxi and bus drivers to obtain change. Unfortunately because the machines are publically accessible there is no ability to control who may choose to use the machines. We are unable to refill the machines daily as the coins held in the toilets is not enough to refill the change machines.</p> <p>In view of the above and in order to provide customers with a variety of payment options efforts are currently being focused on scoping options around provision of contactless card payments in addition to cash. This is viewed as a more sustainable and cost effective long term solution to manage some of the challenges around provision of change.</p>
14	<p>Councillors Mike White, Erika Kirchner, Terry Hennegan, Mike Lewis & Wendy Lewis</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on progress with the roll out of new bus shelters across Swansea.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure</p> <p>The 19 locations across the County due to receive new bus shelters have been agreed, and the order for their supply and installation has been raised with the Council’s preferred supplier. It is anticipated that the new shelters will be installed in the next couple of months.</p> <p>Further locations for either new shelters or upgrade works to existing shelters are being identified across the County.</p>
15	<p>Councillors Mike Day, Lynda James & Mary Jones</p> <p>Understandably, most staff were asked to work from home during the pandemic. As the situation has improved and there are now no requirements for staff to work from home, can the Leader inform Council of what reviews have been undertaken to assess how this system of working has affected the delivery of Council services.</p> <p>Does the Council envisage that staff will be required to return to office based working. How many staff are authorised to adopt a ‘hybrid’ working arrangement (actual numbers and percentage of all employees)? If all staff were to return to office based working, is there sufficient space to accommodate them all.</p> <p>Response of the Leader</p> <p>We are not a work from home organisation, and we are attempting to retain the flexible working model utilised throughout the pandemic to ensure where possible staff work flexibility within business needs. Getting the balance right it good for staff, and our residents. The question as to how the Council would be working post pandemic was the subject of a recent Cabinet report Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 20 October 2022, 10.00 am - Swansea . Managers will now be expected to adopt the following key principles when working on the delivery of their services.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each service will have a written set of operational requirements which reflect when, where, how, and what customers (external (i.e., the public, internal (i.e., other services/partners/members) can expect to access in terms of services, information, advice and/or guidance 2. The council will set out corporate customer contact standards (e.g., response times, contact options including alternative formats to meet our duty under the Equality Act 2010) as part of a customer contact strategy to provide consistency across the organisation

	<p>3. Each service will ensure all job roles fulfil the service’s operational requirements and clarify whether they are available for agile working driven by the service’s operational requirements</p> <p>4. Each service will ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to supervise and performance manage employees in line with corporate policies, their job roles and their terms and conditions of employment</p> <p>5. Each service will seek to minimise the accommodation space each service requires and will aim for a maximum staff:desk ratio of 2:1</p> <p>6. During the cost-of-living crisis agile employees will be supported to work from their assigned work base or another public sector building, if they choose</p> <p>7. Each service will ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to support the health, safety, and wellbeing of employees wherever they are working from (including regular 121s, formal supervision or team meetings as appropriate, regular in-person team contact, ergonomic workstations and clear work / home life boundaries and recognition of caring responsibilities, housing issues and risks of domestic violence/coercive control)</p> <p>8. The council will ensure the workforce and digital strategies provide employees with the training and development they need to work in an agile environment</p> <p>9. The council will work with Public Service Board partners and other local authorities to identify physical locations in and outside the county from which employees can work on a hot desk basis.</p> <p>10. Directors and Heads of Service to determine definition of services for the purpose of applying working model principles; Leadership (i.e., Corporate Management Team and Heads of Service) to be included as a distinct group to define the model to be used to meet the council’s democratic / Members’ needs</p> <p>11. Hot desking is when multiple workers use a single physical workstation during different time periods. Employees will also be encouraged to use the Welsh Government’s Local Remote Working hubs.</p>
16	<p>Councillors Lesley Walton Fiona Gordon Mike White, Mike Lewis, Wendy Lewis & Rebecca Fogarty</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on the smart bin trial and the roll out of multi-use bins.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Community (Services)</p> <p>There are two pilots underway, one in Swansea Marina and another at Three Crosses. Surveys have been completed and the Landlord’s consent has been gained for the installation of the communication gateways for both trials. The installation of the first gateway is planned for the Marina this month. There is a delay in the supply of the sensors going into the bins. There are general global supply issues for certain hardware components at the moment and therefore there is no estimated timescale available.</p> <p>The roll out of the new multipurpose litter bins to replace existing dog bins and life expired litter bins commenced in October and 35 replacement bins were installed in the first 4 weeks. It is planned to install 300 replacement bins by the end of March and Ward Members are being consulted with regards to proposed replacements in their Wards following bin condition surveys.</p>
17	<p>Councillors James McGettrick, Sam Bennett & Peter Black</p> <p>Can the responsible member please confirm that the promised Hydrogen Ferry will include contractual obligations to use Green Hydrogen as the fuel source as opposed to other</p>

hydrogen sources such as Blue Hydrogen, which may actually increase Greenhouse gas emissions over the full life-cycle.

Response of the Leader

Final decisions regarding any specific fuel type for the proposed Bristol Channel ferry service have not yet been reached. Following the most recent meeting of the associated Stakeholder Group, a Working Group has been established. Amongst the variety of elements this expert led group will look at will include the terminal requirements, the type of vessel and how this could be powered.

It is recognised that in pursuing any future proposal, a ferry service needs to be sustainable, both in terms of its operation and environmentally. Furthermore it is acknowledged that the source of power will need to compliment the local Net Zero target. Contractual considerations are a future stage; the focus at present is working to ensure that appropriate evidence is gathered and therefore that informed judgements can be made.

Part B – No Supplementaries

18 **Councillor Chris Evans**

After Audit Wales' recent report on Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030, could we please confirm using examples where we currently stand against the five actions outlined within the report, namely

1. Strengthening leadership and demonstrating collective responsibility through effective collaboration.
2. Clarifying strategic direction and increasing pace of implementation.
3. Getting to grips with finances required.
4. Identifying our skills gaps and increasing capacity
5. Improving data quality and monitoring to support decision making.

and in particular confirm how we will be measuring our net zero plans"

Response of the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation

Please see response prepared for Audit Wales below:

Audit Wales Report - Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030 Swansea Council Response - August 2022

Background

The Auditor General has committed to an ongoing programme of work on climate change. Their report 'Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030' is their first piece of work looking at decarbonisation in 48 larger public sector bodies.

Swansea Council responded to a call for evidence to inform the report in November 2021. Lead officers also met in person to discuss some subjects in more detail, prior to the report being published in July 2022.

Audit Wales concluded that there is “uncertainty that the ambition for a net zero public sector will be met.” and the report calls for “stronger public sector leadership on reducing carbon emissions in Wales”

Considerable activity is taking place to reduce carbon emissions. However, public bodies need to increase their pace of activity amid clear uncertainty about whether they will achieve the collective ambition to have net zero carbon emissions by 2030. There are real barriers that public bodies need to address, and decarbonisation needs to be put at the heart of their day-to-day activities.

In the report, the Auditor General makes the following five calls for action from public bodies:

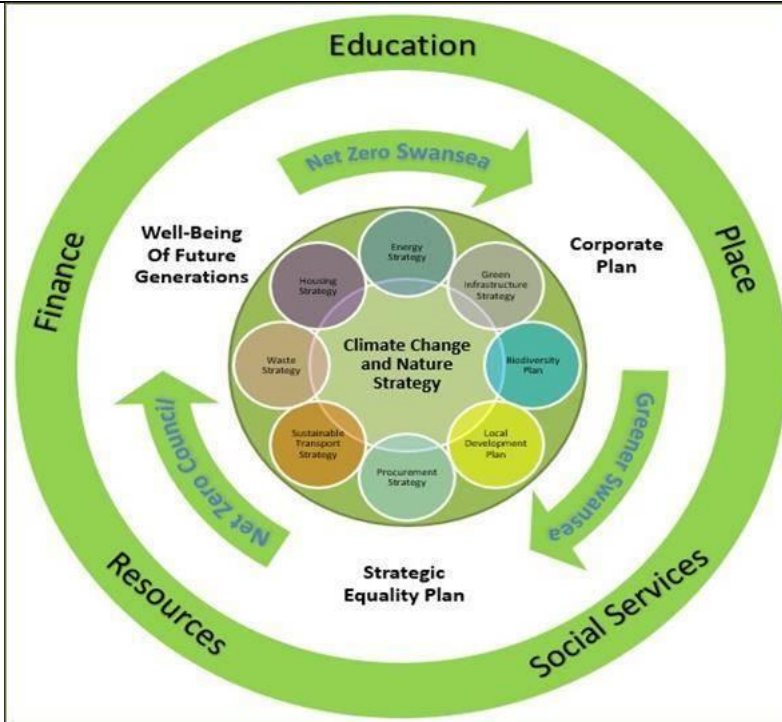
- Strengthen your leadership and demonstrate your collective responsibility through effective collaboration
- The Cabinet Member for Service Transformation and the Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance (our two Deputy Leaders) both chair the Climate Change and Nature Recovery Steering Group.
- Clarify your strategic direction and increase your pace of implementation.
- Get to grips with the finances you need.
- Know your skills gaps and increase your capacity; and
- Improve data quality and monitoring to support your decision making.

As with any “all Wales” audit report the overall position and recommendations do not reflect the Councils specific position which is already strong with clear commitments to address the challenge. However, it is accepted more needs to be done and the following sets out the Council’s response to each of the recommendations.

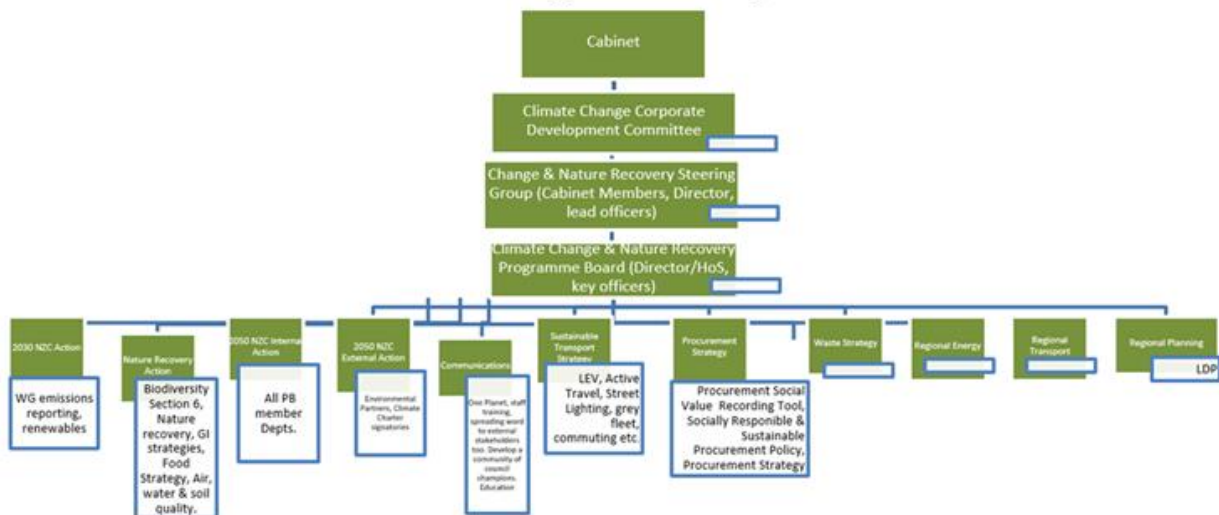
Response

Strengthen your leadership and demonstrate your collective responsibility through effective collaboration.

- Climate change and nature emergency already declared and action in train
- New Well-being objective already created in the corporate plan for 22/23 – Delivering on Nature Recovery and Climate Change and aligned corporate priorities demonstrates full commitment to the subject.
- Leader/Cabinet member WLGA Climate leadership training. Geoff Bacon Head of Property Services and Jane Richmond Strategic Climate Change Project Manager attending.
- New Climate Change Corporate Delivery Committee established to focus on new strategy and policy with work programme for the coming year already agreed.
- Nature Recovery and Climate Change governance reflected below.



Climate Change & Nature Recovery Governance



November 2022

- South West Wales Economic Delivery Plan reflects collaboration on this agenda.
- Regional energy strategy agreed and included in the corporate joint committee work programme and governance even though not required by statute
- Regional support and funding for resourcing via the Earth Programme
- WLGA supporting masterclasses to share good practice across all Welsh public bodies.
- Swansea Council already has a dozen signatories to the Climate Charter who will help develop the Net zero Swansea strategy/agenda, these include health board, fire, police services, universities, NRW, etc.
- Working with the PSB and the Working with Nature group to collaboratively drive the Swansea Net Zero 2050 agenda.
- Working with BID and the economics delivery team to support small businesses.
- Working with schools on this agenda can we elaborate e.g., energy sparks.
- Recently established a new Environmental partner procurement framework with council funding to procure support.

- Working with The Swansea Environment Centre to run an Energy Awareness Hub to help citizens during the energy crisis recently extended for another 6 months, through to March 2023.

Clarify your strategic direction and increase your pace of implementation

- Three years of emissions data now submitted to Welsh Government.
- An options report will be presented to Cabinet with proposals as to how Swansea Council could achieve net zero by 2030. Once options have been agreed and respective funding identified a full delivery plan can be formalise, once policy clashes and funding determined.
- Collaborate with climate signatories to develop action towards delivering the Swansea wide 2050 target.
- Utilise new environmental partners to undertake groundwork in 22-23, establish clear picture of what's happening across Swansea from a community perspective.
- Climate Pledge wall introduced with 144 amounts signed up.
- Citizen survey undertaken March 21 with over 1000 responses, intention is to undertake face to face consultation to follow up and gain more current views on our progress- The main message received was to go faster and go further, which continues to be our ambition.

Get to grips with the finances you need

- The ability and the costs of being able to deliver NZ will be set out in a report to Cabinet towards to the end of 2022, once the WG emissions data collection is clarified and updated information has been returned
- The Council continues to challenge WG on the stance taken on renewables within WG guidance which discounts the use of renewable energy from the calculations which the council believe is a fundamental flaw in the data collection process. If WG do not change this stance then it is expected that to meet the requirements as currently set out will be likely unachievable and almost certainly unaffordable without significant additional Welsh Government funding. There is a need for further dialogue with WG regarding delivery timeframe and how the public sector will be funded to reach the standard we all need to achieve as the council does not have headroom within existing finances.

Know your skills gaps and increase your capacity

- Skills gaps have mainly been identified in operational and technical fields. Examples include technical design, drainage, ecologists, trades (new technologies), and carbon reduction.
- Alongside continuing to recruit externally in a very limited, competitive market, strategies are also in place to 'grow our own' and work more closely with the local universities to try and bridge the skills gaps.
- There is undoubtedly a lack of available talent which has led to an overly competitive market where the public sector is chasing a limited affordable supply.
- Teams will seek opportunity of recent funding – 'SBCD skills and talent'
- There has be Welsh Government support to drive regional working.
- The council will also explore the opportunity for funding via the CJC mechanism as part of the delivery of the regional energy strategy.

Improve data quality and monitoring to support your decision making

- Currently operational officers are working as a team to collate all required WG reporting data which whilst onerous has worked extremely well to date. However, recognising we will need to drill down to the finer detail going forward the Council is in the process of recruiting a Carbon Reduction Project Manager to work alongside officers to analyse and monitor our data going forward.

- Swansea will be using 'Team Sigma' to start collating data electronically offering monitoring and reporting facilities. It is considered that a consistent national standard on-line reporting format would help improve consistency.

Conclusion

Swansea Council has made a commitment to delivering on nature recovery and climate change as per the new corporate plan wellbeing objective 2022-2027. It has already made significant progress in advance of the audit Wales report but accepts that the challenges now is to ensure adequate skilled resource and funds are sourced from Welsh and UK governments to ensure effective delivery.

To note a report is due to be presented for approval at December Cabinet on a proposed delivery plan for achieving net zero Swansea Council by 2030.

19 **Councillors Peter May, Allan Jeffrey, Sandra Joy & Stuart Rice**

Given the Administration's election promises to provide more bins in Swansea, please can the Cabinet member provide council with a full and specific breakdown of the following by electoral ward since 1st January 2022 please.

- a) The number of litter bins removed and not replaced.
- b) The number of new additional litter bins introduced.
- c) The number of dog waste bins removed and not replaced with a dog waste bin.
- d) The number of bins replaced or introduced at the new replacement bus stops.
- e) The number of bins removed and not replaced in parks and green spaces.
- f) The number of new bins that cater for separated recyclables.

In addition to this information, please can the cabinet member inform Council of the additional staffing resources that have been invested in collecting and emptying litter and dog waste bins? As in past the Council clearly struggled to empty certain bins on a regular enough basis

Response of the Cabinet Member for Community (Services)

The number of litter bins known to have been removed and not replaced since 1 January 2022 are:

- 1 – Sketty
- 1 – Cwmbwrwla
- 1 – Fforestfach
- 1 – Morryston

Litter bins can be removed for a number of reasons, including being inappropriately used to dispose of household waste, which prevents it being used for litter and results in overspill of litter and bags of waste being deposited around the bin. The Cleansing Service consults with Ward Members prior to the removal of litter bins unless removal is urgent due to damage.

There have 8 no. additional litter bins installed as part of project work since 1 January 2022. Dog waste bins are now being replaced with multi-purpose litter bins unless the location does not have the space for the litter bins.

Bins are not generally being introduced at any new replacement bus stops.

	<p>I am not aware of any bins recently being removed and not replaced in parks and green spaces. The Cleansing Service consults with Ward Members prior to the removal of litter bins unless removal is urgent due to damage.</p> <p>Whilst the city centre and some other areas of high footfall do have litter bins with recycling facilities, the ongoing bin replacement programme uses single compartment litter bins. Recycling litter bins suffer from very high levels of contamination and result in very poor quantities of recycling.</p> <p>The Council has funded an additional 2no. Operative Cleansing Team to focus on bin emptying at peak times, bin cleaning, repairs, and replacements.</p>
20	<p>Councillors Peter May, Allan Jeffrey, Sandra Joy & Stuart Rice</p> <p>The council has now failed to provide a firework display on bonfire night for the past 2 years.</p> <p>In 2021, the council press released stated: <i>“High tides mean that a show on November 5 isn't possible for this location, so the best alternative date - Friday, November 12 - is when the show will take place. Low tide that evening will means maximum space for spectators.</i></p> <p><i>”The press release added: “It's the first time the show hasn't taken place on November 5.” Finally in the release the cabinet member stated. “We really wanted to hold the event on November 5 as usual - but the tide just wasn't with us this year.”. “We considered other locations such as St Helen's sports ground and Singleton Park for November 5 but, for a number of reasons, they wouldn't have been as good as the bay.”</i></p> <p>In 2022, the event was cancelled altogether with the council giving the following reason. <i>“Due to high tides on the night of November 5, it was planned that the fireworks would be launched from a seaborne barge. However, the council's experienced Swansea-based marine supplier said high winds expected in the area now means the show can't go ahead”</i></p> <p>We sympathise with the aspiration to provide the spectacular but, would the cabinet member please now give an assurance that the 2023 event will return to the tried, tested and traditional St Helen's to maximise the chance of it actually happening on 5th November.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>2019 saw the celebration of Swansea's city status and as part of those celebrations, a number of the Council's annual events were enhanced to ensure that they were accessible to as wide an audience as possible. This included, for the first time, a free fireworks display in the bay. The event was a great success attended by over 30,000 people - three times more people than would traditionally have enjoyed a ground-based display at St Helen's.</p> <p>Similarly, the 2021 display was among one of the first major events to take place following the pandemic. At this time, with some restrictions and social distancing guidance still in place, it wouldn't have been feasible to host the display within the confines of the St Helen's. Therefore, to enable as many people as possible to enjoy the display with family and friends, in a safe, large, outdoor space (something many had not been able to do for quite some time), a free display was successfully held in the bay. Like the 2019 event, the display was very well received and attracted a significant audience.</p> <p>It was unfortunate that safety considerations forced the cancellation of this year's event, which would have again offered thousands of our citizens and visitors the chance to enjoy a safe and free public display. The decision to cancel such a major event was not taken</p>

	<p>lightly. Unlike smaller community displays which can be set up in a matter of hours, the city's free display takes several days to set up and relies on the support of several external contractors. This year, as a result of high tides, the fireworks were going to be set off from a barge tendered in the bay. Torrential rain and high winds experienced during the week of the 5th along with further high winds forecast on the 5th itself meant that the company providing the barge took the decision, on health and safety grounds to advise the council that they could no longer supply it. The display, which was specifically designed for this location, could therefore no longer go ahead.</p> <p>Whilst, not a regular occurrence the display has, as a result of weather been both cancelled and held on alternative dates.</p> <p>As with all events, the plans for the 2023 annual fireworks display will be fully reviewed with all options considered.</p>
21	<p>Councillors Peter May, Allan Jeffrey, Sandra Joy & Stuart Rice</p> <p>In July, the council issued a press release saying <i>“Join our cleansing team and help keep Swansea tidy. Swansea Council is launching a major recruitment campaign that'll boost its front-line cleansing teams and make sure every ward gets the chance for a spruce-up. Seventeen street cleansing team jobs are up for grabs at the council as part of a clampdown on littering that will help keep communities cleaner than ever.”</i> This release gives the firm impression that 17 new jobs were to be created.</p> <p>Last month the council issued a further gave this impression with press release saying: <i>“New city clean-up teams deployed to communities in Swansea. A brand new team of cleansing staff are making their way around Swansea, tackling a wide range of issues to help smarten up communities.”</i></p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member confirm that the total workforce in Waste, Parks and Cleansing has in fact increased by 17 full time employees since September please.</p> <p>If not where are the staff coming from for the new Community Ward Operative Teams (CWOT) coming from.</p> <p>Response of the Community (Services)</p> <p>A very successful recruitment campaign was run for the Cleansing Ward Operative Teams. Due to the well-publicised financial uncertainties nationally, it was decided, as an interim position, to fill the 17 positions with 9 new employees and 8 existing employees redeployed from Cleansing project teams.</p> <p>Since the commencement of the scheme, there has been a high level of engagement with Ward Members and the works undertaken by the Teams have been extremely well received.</p>
22	<p>Councillors Mike Day, Susan Jones & Mark Tribe</p> <p>How much revenue is being generated from the Council selling advertising space, either via websites and social media, or physically via advertising on Council vehicles and on hoardings and banners. How much does it cost the Council to undertake such advertising on behalf of customers. Is there scope for increasing the net revenue from such sources and what plans does the Council have for doing so.</p>

Response of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Service & Performance

The Council generates in excess of £400,000 net income p.a. from parties advertising and sponsoring the Council's assets and the costs for generating such income equate to approximately 30% of the cost of the opportunity. The Council is working to increase such revenue following pandemic disruption, with a number of initiatives under consideration: the Council is reviewing the potential of expanding digital advertising, so considering a movement from vinyl / static adverts to digital screens where possible and financially advantageous. We have a small digital base installed within some car parks for example in the new Copr Bay facility. Outdoor advertising is considered a robust and growing market as advertisers seek new ways of engaging with their target audiences as the use of traditional media, such as TV, is under review due to audiences increasingly turning to streaming services. The work is on-going and is subject to receiving the appropriate permissions, e.g. planning consents, and will also consider new opportunities for additional fixed / traditional advertising. The Council has aligned resources into one team to focus on supporting interested commercial partners and the Council also considers other value-added opportunities through this work - the digital advertising installed allows the Council to display its own public service messaging at no additional cost with that benefit 'in-kind' worth thousands of pounds to the Council at market rates / if we were to pay external companies for such a service. Linked work that the Council also undertakes includes ensuring that when the Council is required to advertise itself - such as for the publication of its statutory notices - that it does so in a co-ordinated manner and benefits from economies-of-scale in pricing, so achieving best value.

23 **Councillors Mary Jones, Jeff Jones & Chris Holley**

As this council is promoting walking and cycling with many shared use paths can the Cabinet Member tell us what steps are being taken to ensure the safety of both walkers and cyclists on these paths.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure

In developing Shared Use Paths designers follow the best practice set out in Welsh Governments Active Travel Guidance. Designers seek to create an environment where all road users are aware of the presence of other users and guided along the route using the appropriate signing, lining and different pavement types to relay messages on how facility should be used.

To ensure that this is carried out appropriately, schemes are Safety Audited at various stages through the design, construction and operational phase. With amendments to the design being made to support the safe operation of the facility as required.