

Councillor Mary Jones  
Chair  
Scrutiny Programme Committee

**BY EMAIL**

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*Date:* 6th November 2018

Dear Councillor Jones

**CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION – 10<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**

Thank you for your letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018 which you sent following my attendance at the September Scrutiny Programme Committee. My responses to your questions are as follows:

**All Councillors Accessing the Corporate Risk Register:**

Cabinet members and Audit Committee Members have access to the corporate risk register but unfortunately there are ICT limitations that would make it difficult to share access more widely with Members using the current system.

However, the Council is working on developing a new ICT solution that would enable all Members to have access to the Corporate Risk Register.

In the interim, Members will still be able to view the Corporate Risk Register, which is publically available and published in the Audit Committee Public Reports Pack.

**Exact length of Lease for Civic Centre Office Space that has been given to Partners:**

The lease Swansea University of part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the Civic Centre runs until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

## **Savings Realised from ICT Modernisation / Digital Investment and Future Projections:**

A full review of benefits and savings is currently underway as part of the revised Digital Strategy, which will be presented to Cabinet in the New Year. This will include the new forward plan and will prioritise those digital developments that will deliver savings in the MTFP across all Directorates over the next four years and beyond.

Examples of savings and efficiencies already delivered include:

- Oracle Order Management for Fleet Wheel service: The Oracle Team built an application which enabled the Fleet Wheel Service to save £50k
- Accounts Payable Recovery Audit: Digital Services built a solution which will enable the business to recoup funds on late payment recovery. It is expecting to achieve refunds between £10k to £80k. This will be confirmed following data analysis
- Late Settlement Payments: This solution identifies late payments to remove late payment penalties. This enables efficiencies for the team with reduced resources
- Retrospective Purchase Orders: In 2016 an internal invoice processing analysis reported that retrospective purchase orders increase the cost of invoice processing. A new digital solution is now in place to monitor and drive down the cost of invoice processing
- Database Administration Management Changes within ICT: A new digital process has been developed which provides a saving of 2.5 days per system clone. This is equivalent to 70 days of officer times saving per year
- Domiciliary Care: A solution has been developed to enable automated checking of care home invoices to take validation from less than 1% of all received invoices to 100%
- Skype for Business (SFB): Rollout formed part of the agile working programme and enables staff and Councillors to use instant messaging, internet voice calls, video conferencing and virtual meetings. This new technology has enabled the Council to improve efficiency and effectiveness and will reduce travel time and expense claims, supporting the Transportation Service in their delivery of reducing both in and out of county travel claims
- Customer Relationship Management System (CRM): Digital Services developed a new system to replace the previous solution provided by Cardiff Council. This has realised a £70,000 savings per annum
- Linking and integrating of Systems: By integrating the council's environmental web forms directly into the back office system, almost 2000 service requests per month are being automatically logged in the system. Previously this was a manual exercise that could take as long as 2 minutes to enter per form. This has saved almost 70 hours of labour, two weeks' worth of effort per month
- Building Control: The Digital Services team has been responsible for data cleansing and migration of all existing building control data to the new system. The project has provided the service with the ability to make software licence savings from the old system
- Free Child Care – Child Provider Invoicing: The team developed a new secure web site which enables all child providers currently involved in the scheme to submit their invoices. The solution drastically reduces processing time from the current effort of two to three weeks per month, to one day.

## **What revenue has been received from sale of surplus land following the universal review of all Council land:**

The Disposal programme is a four year rolling programme which identifies potential Council owned land that provides property disposal opportunities. The aim is to ensure maximum capital receipts in the shortest timescale. There are various strands to the programme which include the Universal Review i.e. smaller sites that have previously been identified as part of a portfolio wide review of the Council's property ownership which could provide opportunities to generate capital receipt. We are currently awaiting planning advice prior to bringing sites forward for disposal, which could be by auction. Whilst these have not been progressed as a priority due to the relatively low sums involved, a number of small sites are still actioned for disposal. Since April 2016 in excess of 40 small plots have been sold generating circa £300,000 of capital receipts.

## **The Current Status of the Swansea Bay City Deal Business Cases / Receipt of Grant Funding:**

Although the report to the SPC stated that the City Deal Business Cases had been signed off by UK and Welsh Government, this was based on an optimistic view on my part that this would be completed by the time of my attendance. Although, the business case is still being assessed and no grant has yet been received from UK/Welsh Government, I am still optimistic that this will be completed over the coming weeks. I do apologise for this.

## **What Technical Developments have been proposed by CIPFA in relation to the development of Capital Strategy?**

The Authority is already required to produce, consider and approve at Council:

- Revenue budget
- HRA Revenue budget
- Capital budget
- Medium term financial plan
- Treasury Management Investment Strategy and MRP Policy Statement

In formulating the above, the Authority must give due regard to The CIPFA Prudential Code which was developed by CIPFA (following the Introduction of the Prudential Framework in the Local Government Finance Act 2003) to provide a clear framework to support local authority decision making in relation to capital investment plans to ensure those plans are affordable, sustainable and prudent.

Following a revision of the Prudential Code in 2017, local authorities are now required to produce a 'Capital Strategy'. The purpose of the Capital Strategy is to firmly place decisions around borrowing in their context of the overall longer-term financial position of the authority and to provide improved links between the revenue and capital budgets. It seeks to tell a story that gives a clear and concise view of how a local authority determines its priorities for capital investment, decides how much it can afford and sets out its risk appetite, making clear links with its corporate plans and priorities and informed by its medium and long term funding position. It is recognised that no two authorities' capital strategies shall be alike. Council shall have the opportunity to

consider and debate this strategy alongside the other papers in its annual budget cycle deliberations.

## **Employment Contracts**

The Council has no employees who are on zero-hour contracts. There are employees with casual/ relief contracts and they are covered by the Council's HR policy. This was discussed with the Transformation & Future Council Policy Development Committee (PDC) on 25<sup>th</sup> September where the following definitions on contractors was presented;

### **Definitions**

- "Permanent";
  - employed as a permanent employee of the Authority
- "Temporary";
  - Employed for a fixed period of time
- "Relief/ Casual"
  - The Council's Casual Relief Employment Policy defines the relationship between the Authority and the individual and details the responsibilities of both parties upon entering into this contractual relationship.
  - It ensures there is an equitable and harmonised process in place to employ casual/relief staff
  - It enables individuals who are unable to commit to fixed or regular hours to undertake working arrangements which suit their personal circumstances and provides the Authority with an additional resource in order to react to organisational demands.
  - There is no obligation for employers to offer work, or for employees to accept it.
  - A Casual/Relief contract will give employment status for the duration of the assignment. And will have the same employment rights as regular employees, although they may have breaks in their contracts, which affect rights that accrue over time.

In respect of annualised contracts we currently have one employee on this type of contract working in our outdoor centres.

I am not in a position to comment on the employment status of our current or prospective partners but can advise that in relation to our agency workers, our corporate provider, Staffline advise that all their workers "are engaged on a contract for service, which means they have access to all available assignments they are suitable for. As an example, if we cannot provide enough hours on a particular assignment, workers will be offered assignments in other departments or organisations. Occasionally some workers only want the work allocated in certain environments and we will always prioritise what the worker wants, if it is available".

An E-learning Module on Ethical Employment in Supply Chains has been circulated for completion to selected staff which covers fair employment practices which complies with the Welsh Government Code of Practice in relation to “Unfair use of umbrella schemes and zero hours.

Yours sincerely



**COUNCILLOR CLIVE LLOYD DEPUTY LEADER & CABINET MEMBER FOR  
BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION & PERFORMANCE**