

Report of the Convener

Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel 4th October 2017

Responses to Questions from Previous Meeting

Purpose	This report provides the Panel with responses to questions which were raised at the Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel meeting on 6 th September 2017.
Content	The questions and responses from relevant officers are included.
Panel Members are being asked to	1. Consider the responses
Lead Councillor	Councillor Chris Holley, Convener of The Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel
Lead officer	Bethan Hopkins – Scrutiny Officer Bethan.hopkins@swansea.gov.uk 01792 636292

Introduction

1.1 During the last Panel meeting, various questions were raised and responses required.

1.2 Each relevant department was contacted and asked to provide feedback to the question(s)

1.3 This report contains the questions and responses from those departments.

**(a) The Panel noted in the Capital Projects Spend spreadsheet (pg 5) the following project and costs;
HRA new builds Milford Way and Parc-y-Helig Cost £1,297 (million)
Requested a breakdown of this figure**

The first properties are now complete and arrangement is being made from all members to visit to see the completed homes. The remaining properties are in the final stages and the cabinet member has confirmed that once the scheme is complete which it towards the end of October, I would be happy to share all costs and lessons learnt on the first pilot project, in ready for commencing the second pilot scheme at Park Y Helig

(b) Priority 3 EC3 states that the amount of commercial floor space created within the City Centre to accommodate job creation has increased as a result of additional 'pipeline funding'.

Requested clarification of what the 'pipeline funding' was?

The pipeline funding was an additional allocation of Vibrant & Viable Places (VVP) grant awarded by the Welsh Government. The additional funding was awarded to the properties below which lists the VVP grant allocated and the additional commercial floor space created. These grants were administered through the Property Enhancement Development Grant (PEDG) within the VVP programme.

1. 84 Kingsway - £45,722.25 – 250m²
2. 62 Kingsway - £71,998.20 – 200m²
3. 10-14 Castle Street - £250k – 1258m²
4. 11 The Strand - £60,099.20 – 200m²
5. Welcome Lane - £82,428.57 - 58m²

(c) Priority 3 EC4 refers to the number of new housing units in Swansea City Centre as a result of the Vibrant & Viable Places Funding.

Are the housing units completely brand new or are they a replacement of the previous St. David's dwellings?

These relate to new units.

(d) Priority 3 BBMA3 states there has been an increase in the number of training and employment weeks created by Beyond Bricks and Mortar for unemployed and economically inactive.

Requested confirmation on where this training took place.

The training and employment weeks refers to a number of individuals working on a variety of projects where the training could be as part of an apprenticeship or on the job training or following a specific occupation training course. These figures will also include unemployed gaining work experience as part of a project.

(e) The Panel received a presentation on the Capital Outturn and Financing Report 2016/17. The Panel noted in Appendix B the Capital Projects Spend spreadsheet (with spend in excess of £0.5m) the following projects and costs; City Centre – Vibrant and Viable Places schemes (including Oceana, land assembly, High St Regeneration, grant schemes, Westways gyratory). This had a spend associated of £9,304 (million).

Requested a breakdown of this spend?

Programme	Project Code	Scheme	Actual spend 2016/17
Vibrant & Viable Places	C09604	Property Enhancement & Development Grant (PEDG grants)	1,473
Vibrant & Viable Places	C09601	Housing Above Retail Premises (HAS grants)	997
Viable & Vibrant Places	C09606	Demolition of Oceana	2,435
Viable & Vibrant Places	C09607	Llys Dewi Sant Site	1,215
Vibrant & Viable Places	C09609	Westway & Wellington St Gyratory Ph1	1,680
Vibrant & Viable Places	C09612	Acquisition of 235-237 Oxford St (Peacocks)	1,505
			9,304 Total

(f) The End of Year 2016/17 Performance Monitoring Report noted under Priority 5 PI SUSC10 that the number of services sustained in the community and were previously formally managed by the council has reduced from 50 to 41.

Requested confirmation of what type of service that 50 consisted of.

As a stretch target for Community Action, was not feasible as it relied on service failures and communities with resources and capacity to pick up in the absence of the Authority, for which we neither had the resources to ensure or control.

However, it was in last year's report and the intention was that it could be any Council service – the transfer of which to a community group would save the authority money. In reality – it consisted of sports facility lettings management (eg. To football clubs) and transfer of responsibilities for lettings, utilities and maintenance for football and rugby pitches; tennis courts; bowling greens; sports clubs and community centres. We remain on hand to provide expert advice and compliance management but the services such as grass cutting for the Greens are reimbursed by the clubs.

(g) The Panel noted in the Capital and Budget Monitoring 1st Quarter 2017/18 Report (pg 4) that within the contingency fund for 2017/18 £500k has been allocated to Corporate Building Services – Additional Back-pay.

Requested information on the reason for the figure and a breakdown.

The back pay to employees in other areas of the Authority was funded Corporately with no cost being passed on to individual service areas, due to delays in the process and ongoing discussions with HR in relation to the requirement or not for back pay for our trade employees by the time a decision had been made and legal advice provided there was nothing left Corporately to fund the back pay so the costs were allocated directly to Corporate Building Services.

As we could not cover a £500,000 charge to our service area we asked that this be funded Corporately as it has been for all others and this was subsequently approved by Ben Smith.

Within the Capital Budget Monitoring 1st Quarter 2017/18 Report (pg 3) – the Panel noticed that £136k of the contingency fund has been allocated to pathologists.

Requested clarification on the reason for the spend, and the spend breakdown.

A/W Response

Background papers: Agenda of Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel dated 6th September 2017

Appendences: None