

Council – 14 December 2017

Councillors' Questions

Part A – Supplementaries

1	<p>Clrs Wendy Fitzgerald, Gareth Sullivan & Mary Jones</p> <p>Recent figures from the Office for National Statistics highlight the fact that 16% of all working people in Wales are employed in industries that are in decline. In terms of Swansea this means that 16,770 jobs are under threat. Additionally, specific occupations in almost every sector are also in decline and in Swansea the number affected is over 32,000 or 30% of the working population. Does the Cabinet Member believe the City Deal and the LDP will produce new net jobs for Swansea or merely replace those lost through advances in technology and changes to our industrial base.</p> <p>Response of the Leader/ Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism & Major Projects:</p> <p>To support the preparation of the Local Development Plan, a “Review of the Swansea Local Development Plan Growth Strategy and Evidence Base” was produced by Turley, Amion Consulting & Edge Analytics in July 2017. Experian economic forecasting data for Swansea was commissioned to inform the Review, which predicts that total employment in Swansea will grow by 4,100 between 2015 and 2025.</p> <p>In addition, the Review analysed the impact of the City Deal and the City Centre Regeneration Programme on future employment levels in Swansea (informed by the City Deal Economic Impact Study undertaken by Swansea University and the City Centre Economic Impact Assessment prepared by Amion Consulting). It concluded that the City Deal and City Centre Regeneration Programme will lead to the creation of 4,600 net additional jobs in Swansea between 2015 – 2025.</p>
2	<p>Clrs Will Thomas, Myles Langstone & Lyndon Jones</p> <p>Does the Cabinet Member think that potentially granting planning permission for an LDP deposit housing site, in a Green Wedge outside the City boundary before the LDP review, is democratic.</p> <p>If successful the application would then be removed from the LDP review. The only reason the Summerland Lane, Newton site is being considered is as a rural exception site as part of the LDP, surely it should go through full and fair scrutiny.</p> <p>We ask that this application is not rushed through, but refused permission as a departure from the current plan to allow the LDP to follow the fair and correct procedure.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Commercial Opportunities & Innovation:</p> <p>The City and County of Swansea UDP (adopted 2008) was ‘time expired’ on the 31st December 2016. Whilst the UDP remains the extant development</p>

	<p>plan for the Council, under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), planning decisions must have regard to any other significant material considerations, including where such considerations indicate a departure to an expired Plan is appropriate. Material considerations include circumstances where new robust evidence is available, and/or significant changes in circumstance have arisen, to undermine the basis upon which UDP policy was originally formulated. Therefore, in the case of the planning application for Summerland Lane, whilst the UDP is still the starting point for decision making the Council has a duty to consider the unique circumstances that apply in the case of the proposal. In this case it is significant that Members have previously approved a Developer Guidance document relating to Planning Applications For Non-householder Residential Development in 2015, which confirms the Council's strategy for determining departure applications now that the UDP is time expired. The approved document confirms that the Council will prioritise certain 'departure sites' above others in the interests of addressing the current shortfall in housing land and to assist the Council to meet its aspirations for delivering affordable housing. At Para 3.5, the guidance supports in principle departure applications on sites allocated in the emerging Swansea Local Development Plan (LDP) as H5 'Exception Sites' sites, where such schemes would deliver a majority proportion of affordable housing. The rationale for this approach is to meet the pressing need to deliver affordable housing to address the identified shortfalls in provision, in parts of the County. The application site at Summerland Lane is allocated as a rural exception site under Policy H5 of the Deposit LDP (H5.6). The allocation was made following a detailed assessment process undertaken for the LDP, which determined that the site was in principle acceptable for development, and that on balance an appropriate development would not compromise the fundamental objectives and functions of the countryside/green wedge designation at this location. It is clear therefore that the Council has democratically agreed the mechanism for allowing potential approvals for certain departure applications, in accordance with a fair and correct procedure.</p>
3	<p>Cllrs Mike Day, Chris Holley & Graham Thomas</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member confirm that we have enough gritting materials to take us through the winter period. Is there also a programme of replenishing the grit bins and if so has this been carried out.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment Services</p> <p>Swansea Council has a robust winter maintenance plan in place which includes maintaining a minimum resilience level for salt.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has set a resilience level of 1.5* the average use over the previous 6 years. This equates to a required reserve of 4,200 tonnes.</p> <p>Swansea Council has a storage capacity of 1200 tonnes at its Clydach Highways Depot. In addition a strategic stockpile of up to 4,800 tonnes is maintained at Alamein Road, Landore. This exceeds the minimum levels recommended.</p>

	All 840 grit bins are reviewed and refilled once each year before the start of the gritting season (which has been carried out this year).
4	<p>Cllrs Mary Jones, Jeff Jones & Chris Holley</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member tell Council how many empty shops and commercial premises there are in the City Centre (this figure is to include the Kingsway).</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism & Major Projects:</p> <p>The Council undertakes the quarterly Swansea City Centre Occupancy Survey in January, April, July and October each year. Over 700 properties are surveyed with data collected on occupier, occupancy status, business type and use classification.</p> <p>In the latest survey (undertaken during 24-25 October 2017), 11.7% of ground floor units in the primary and secondary retail areas of the city centre were vacant (43 out of a total of 366 ground floor units).</p> <p>The full survey also includes properties outside the primary and secondary sectors, including the Kingsway and other nearby streets and areas (e.g. Mansel Street, Orchard Street, High Street and Parc Tawe). In the wider survey (October 2017), 127 properties were vacant out of a total of 707 properties surveyed (therefore 18.0% vacant).</p>
5	<p>Cllrs Will Thomas, Myles Langstone & Lyndon Jones</p> <p>The addition of an arena is fantastic news for Swansea. We are really looking forward to seeing the economic impact the venue will bring to the city, creating many jobs and bringing people into the city centre.</p> <p>However, we wonder if the location could have been better. Fabian Way and Oystermouth Road are very busy at rush hour and we fear thousands of extra people visiting the city regularly will grind Oystermouth Road to a halt.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member please give us, and thousands of other people in Gower and Swansea West, the promise that this is the best location for the arena and will not cause regular congestion.</p> <p>Response of the Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism & Major Projects:</p> <p>The siting of the Arena on the existing Leisure Centre car park is aimed to bring additional activity into the City Centre and increase dwell time following the principles set out in Swansea Central Area Regeneration Framework. As part of the planning phase, including the Outline Planning Application, the Council have employed specialist consultants to advise on Highways and Transportation issues who have been working alongside Council officers to ensure that the scheme does not cause any foreseen congestion. A Transport Assessment was submitted as part of the Outline Planning Application which assessed the traffic and pedestrian movements.</p>
	Part B – No Supplementaries