

Response from the Place Directorate

Find below the responses to the follow up questions sent to the Place Directorate following the Panel meeting with them on the 16 August.

PANEL QUERIES	RESPONSES
<p>a) Sustainability Statement - What form does this take and who puts it together? Is the Council's ecologist/s involved? Can you provide an example of a statement for context?</p>	<p>The example Sustainability Statement (attached) is written by Penny Gruffydd, Sustainable Policy Officer, Nature Conservation Team. It is designed to set out the Council's expectations in achieving high standards of sustainable development and environmental performance for the regeneration work in the Swansea Central Area, reflecting the Swansea Central Regeneration Framework and national and local legislation. The Sustainability Statement is based on the Councils' Wellbeing Objectives, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, Environment (Wales) Act and other relevant legislation. The principles are developed with colleagues from Waste Management, Energy, Procurement, Play, Nature Conservation Team and the Beyond Bricks and Mortar Team. The example Sustainability Statement from early 2020 predates the Council's Zero Carbon target, the Climate Change Charter and the now adopted GI Strategy Swansea Central Area: Regenerating Our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife (mentioned the Statement as a draft). Statements are updated and designed for each regeneration project, so future statements will reflect these and other emerging targets / strategies and policies. The Council's Ecologist has not been involved with advising on individual procurement contracts, however, the Council has recently appointed a Biodiversity Officer to ensure the Council takes fully into account its biodiversity duty in all of its actions.</p>
<p>b) In section 13.6 of the report you mention the current Council pilot project, can you provide us with a little more information on that?</p>	<p>This project seeks to review and renew our focus on social value in line with the review of procurement legislation that is being undertaken by the Welsh and UK governments (where legal changes which allow an enhanced focus on social value are being considered). The Council has already had great success in delivering socially beneficial outcomes, e.g. energy efficient homes and electric vehicles, and so this project looks to build on that success and see how we can further integrate social value criteria in our decision-making and we will review a range of models to see how they can be</p>

	<p>applied in Swansea (e.g the Welsh local government association’s work in this area and its themes and outcomes model). Two pilot projects have been chosen – Bryntawe School and the Mumbles seawall defence renewal, with these projects to be tendered this autumn. The lessons learned from these projects will then be applied to all major procurements going forward.</p>
<p>c) How many local firms have been engaged and how many of those employ local people? Could you include the number of contracts and spend?</p> <p>d) How do we break up projects to ensure fairness and non-preferential treatment? Can you provide a little more information on the pilot project with Welsh Government and what those requirements are?</p>	<p>The most recent data (based on total Council spend in 2020-21) shows some £102m was spent with organisations operating in the Swansea area, and a further £36m in the wider south west wales, and an additional £54m in the rest of Wales (data based on companies with an operating base with staff in these areas, for some 1700 organisations).</p> <p>Fairness and transparency are integral to our procurement process, and as mentioned we openly advertise for new providers. The rationale for this work is to enable smaller companies to bid for packets of work that suit their capacity as they often will not have the resources to take on very large projects. In practical terms this means assessing our forward programme of work and then identifying where it would be beneficial for such activity to take place and then openly tendering accordingly (thus ensuring fairness and non-preferential treatment). The Welsh Government funded project looked at barriers for smaller companies in obtaining public sector contracts and the size of the contract was identified as an issue (with a preference shown for smaller sized contracts by small enterprises, hence our activity in this area).</p>
<p>e) How do we check suitability and risk status of Contractors?</p> <p>f) Do Contractors get an increased credit rating by being on a framework with the Council?</p>	<p>Supplier Suitability is carried out during the procurement stage including financial analysis. We would check both the technical competency of the supplier - so here we might ask for certain industry accreditations and or written responses to show technical knowledge - and also undertake other appropriate due diligence such as ensuring suppliers have appropriate insurance cover.</p> <p>No, contractors would not get an increased credit rating by being on a framework. Credit ratings are calculated by independent companies that assess the financial accounts of suppliers using variables such as profitability, number of years of trading and debt profiles, compared against industry averages, so being on a Council framework would not in itself change that rating.</p>