



Council – 7 July 2022

## Councillors' Questions

### Part A – Supplementaries

1	<p><b>Councillors Peter Black, Lynda James &amp; Mary Jones</b></p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on the future deployment of the NEAT Teams.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Members for Community</b></p> <p>The pre-pandemic operations of the NEAT involved offering clients of social services work experience opportunities in partnership with the Council's Cleansing service area. Since pandemic enforced cessation of NEAT processes the Cleansing Service has undergone a significant restructure to ensure it accommodated new ways of working and deliver the additional resources provided by Cabinet. Resumption of NEAT is subject to further planning between Social Services and Cleansing to ensure work experience opportunities are still available however it is of note that the activities previously undertaken by NEAT have continued throughout by way of newly formed Project Teams that deliver an enhanced cleansing service and can receive such requests from Members.</p>
2	<p><b>Councillors Wendy Fitzgerald, Chris Holley &amp; Lynda James</b></p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member update Council on the success of the purpose-built student accommodation in the city centre in terms of its current occupancy rate. Could he also inform Council if these new builds have led to the anticipated reduction in the number of family homes used as HMO's for students in the city centre</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services &amp; Performance</b></p> <p>The Council publishes on its website key facts and statistics relating to the socio-economic profile of the County. This data is regularly updated as appropriate – see <a href="https://www.swansea.gov.uk/keyfacts">https://www.swansea.gov.uk/keyfacts</a> This highlights that Swansea University, University of Wales Trinity St. David and Gower College Swansea together support around 29,000 full-time students (2020-21). The source of these figures is the Higher and Further Education Statistics 2020-21, WG (published February 2022). This represents an increase in full time students from previously published data. The figures have been steadily increasing for a number of years with 27,000 recorded in 2019-20, 26,000 in 2018-19, 25,500 in 2017-18, 24,000 in 2016-17 and 23,500 in 2015-16.</p> <p>The latest LDP Annual Monitoring Report dated October 2021 [see <a href="#">Planning delivery and monitoring - Swansea</a>] includes a measure of the proportion of HMOs within the LDP designated 'HMO Management Area', as a proportion of the overall residential properties. Overall, within the HMO Management Area, HMOs were identified as comprising 23.7% of all residential properties. In the previous year the figure was</p>

calculated as being 23.3% of all residential properties in the HMO Management Area. These results show the proportion of HMOs in the Management Area is relatively stable. The LDP Monitoring Report highlights that the Council's stated target in respect of HMO concentrations – i.e. to ensure the number of HMOs as a proportion of the total number of residential properties within the HMO Management Area does not significantly exceed the identified 25% threshold - has been achieved.

Given that student populations are increasing, it is interesting that concentrations of HMOs are relatively stable in key locations. It is likely that this can be partly explained by the increasing provision of purpose built accommodation. Other reasons may be the incidences of students living within the family home whilst studying at university.

The following provides the latest available record of the development status of purpose-built student accommodation proposals across Swansea. It should be noted that there is no obligation for private developers of these schemes to provide the Council with any data as to their latest occupation rates of rooms, and as such the Council does not retain a database of such statistics.

- Coppergate, 17-18 The Kingsway 307 bedspaces - completed
- Former Oldway Centre, Orchard Street 556 bedspaces - completed
- Mariner Street 780 bedspaces – completed
- Land north of Jockey St Swansea - planning permission (2020/0097/FUL) for a 328 bed high rise purpose built student accommodation approved. Construction on site not yet started.
- Ty Nant 180 High Street - 2021/1415/FUL 370 Bedspaces – construction has commenced
- Plot A1 Kings Road Swansea SA1 8PH - 2018/1023/FUL 645 Bedspaces – construction has commenced and due for completion Sept 2022
- Land At Former Unigate Dairy Site Morfa Road Hafod - 2016/1573 Up to 706 Bedspaces – construction has commenced and due for completion Sept 2022
- Sun Alliance House 166 - 167 St Helens Road Sandfields - 2016/1523 78 Studio Apartments – construction has commenced
- Former Cape Horner Public House Miers Street St Thomas - 2017/1429/FUL 72 Bedspaces – construction has commenced
- Site J Trawler Road Maritime Quarter 287 bedrooms - 2021/2474/S73 2016/1333 – Construction on site not yet started
- Land At New Cut Road/Morfa Road Swansea - 2018/2290/S73 / 2007/2829 245 Bedspaces – completed
- 83 King Edward's Rd former Cricketer's pub - 2017/1819/FUL 15 units – completed
- 2021/0867/FUL – The Strand – 312 Bedspaces – planning permission approved. Construction on site not yet started.

**3 Councillors Peter May, Allan Jeffery, Sandra Joy & Stuart Rice**

A growing number of councils are facilitating charging points for electric cars on lampposts which are paid for by contactless card. As an example the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham has continued to develop its network of lamppost column charging points, numbering over 650 in 2021, with a further 1,000 planned for delivery this year.

How many lamppost column charging points are there in Swansea and what are the council's proposals for developing the lamppost charging network.

**Response of the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation**

We currently have no lamppost charging points in Swansea. The Council considers the role of EVs as an important part of the decarbonisation agenda and we are committed to ensuring equality of access, along with promoting the use of low-carbon transport, including public transport, walk and cycle. The Council is currently considering the best ways to enable and encourage the provision of EV charging facilities, including for those without private, dedicated off-road parking. To assist us, we have employed specialist consultants to advise on the types of facility available and how these can best be deployed. We anticipate this feeding into the climate change CDC work programme so a policy can be created.

We plan to issue any draft policies for consultation. In the meantime, we are working with existing suppliers to install charging facilities in Council car parks and are applying for grants to extend such facilities to increase coverage. In parallel, privately installed chargers are being provided by employers, retailers and fuel stations and these can be located using various apps available.

**4 Councillors Will Thomas & Francesca O'Brien**

The council has applied to reclassify a large area of land near Bracelet Bay. Whilst we have been told that this is correcting an inaccuracy many people in the area are worried (Please answer the questions below separately).

- a) Could we please have details of how and why this is happening.
- b) Could the leader confirm if there is motivation from the cabinet to develop this site.
- c) Are there any safeguards the council can offer people who are worried about this location being developed.

**Response of the Leader**

- a) This is happening as whilst this area of land has been a registered common since the 1960's there are a number of commercial & recreational uses which have been established on the site for decades. Therefore it is clear that the initial registration was made in error and we are therefore looking to remove the commons status via an application to the Common Registration Authority. The Authority has made the application to correct the register as it is the landowner. The application is likely be passed to Welsh Government for determination. More recently the closure of the Coastguards Station has identified that in order for that building to be sold and not fall into dereliction that this error needs to be remedied.
- b) There is no such motivation, whilst there is reference to closure and sale of the Coastguard station any further development of this site will be controlled through the protection offered by the council retaining the freehold interest.
- c) Beyond the leasehold interests granted and the restrictions currently contained in those documents if there were any aspirations any such proposals would have to go through a rigorous planning process.

5	<p><b>Councillors Kevin Griffiths, Wendy Fitzgerald &amp; Mark Tribe</b></p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member update Council on the current position regarding funding for parks that was agreed prior to the election and what is currently being proposed for the playing surface in Pontarddulais.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration &amp; Tourism</b></p> <p>The funding that was agreed prior to the election to upgrade playgrounds from Red and Amber on the Red/Amber/Green list is progressing. There are currently 8 playgrounds that are either being advertised on Sell2Wales or just finished and are being evaluated by the team. The full programme will take 2 years to complete. With regards to the 2G surface at Pontarddulais, we expect to have Sustainable Urban Drainage approval this week, we will then go through the tender and contract award process with an envisaged site start late August.</p>
6	<p><b>Councillors Angela O'Connor, Will Thomas &amp; Francesca O'Brien</b></p> <p>With climate change high on the agenda the Seawall in Mumbles is potentially a great project if dealt with correctly. Please can you give an update when this is due to start. Is there any further consultation needed.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Infrastructure</b></p> <p>Detailed consultation has taken place throughout the development of the project. It is not proposed that further consultation will take place. However, it is acknowledged that a number of proposals were identified during the public engagement exercise that whilst not directly linked to the coastal protection project, may warrant further engagement to support the future ambitions of the community. The scheme design has been completed and planning consent awarded. The authority is currently out to tender for the works which are currently programmed to commence after the summer.</p>
7	<p><b>Councillors Lyndon Jones &amp; Francesca O'Brien</b></p> <p>In answer to a previous question about your policy of wood recycling, which used to be allowed at the Clyne, Gorseinon and Llansamlet Recycling Centres, but is now only allowed at Llansamlet, the former Cabinet Member said that there may be a review of this policy.</p> <p>Has this review taken place or is it planned.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Members for Community</b></p> <p>The operation of our Recycling Centres is under constant review, and it is still considered that our current approach to collecting recyclable materials at each HWRC continues to offer the best mix of service for the public. Since the HWRC changes in 2016, while the HWRC sites get occasional complaints that they don't accept wood, they receive far less complaints about residents not being able to offload material due to skips being full or material not being accepted at the site. The removal of the wood skips has allowed space at the sites to either: provide standby skips to be used when a main skip fills; or for the site to provide additional containers to collect a wider range of recyclable items. While all wood waste is now brought to Llansamlet, the other HWRC improvements has reduced the chance of residents being diverted to another site to dispose of other materials.</p>

	<p>One of the original key reasons for diverting all wood to Llansamlet was the intention of the regulator, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to impose a requirement to separate out hazardous waste wood. The regulators (NRW) have now provided an updated, but interim, position that gives a current definition for hazardous wood with instructions that this material needs to be separately collected and disposed. The interim position runs to 2024 and is subject to annual reviews. Until NRW's review process is concluded it remains possible that the Council would need to reverse any changes to the current arrangement for wood waste.</p>
8	<p><b>Councillors Peter Black, Jeff Jones &amp; Chris Holley</b></p> <p>What discussions have taken place with Swansea's Universities regarding a proposed Aquarium for the City.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration &amp; Tourism</b></p> <p>A number of meetings have been held with the potential Aquarium Company and Swansea University have attended a meeting to discuss the proposal. They were supportive of the proposal and are keen to have a continued involvement in the detailed discussions moving forward.</p>
9	<p><b>Councillors Peter Black, Michael Locke &amp; Graham Thomas</b></p> <p>What plans do the council have to install EV charging points in sheltered housing complexes.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation</b></p> <p>There are no current plans to install EV charging points in sheltered housing complexes (now rebranded as Independent Living Schemes). Only tenants with their own driveways can qualify for an EV charging point. Tenants who do not have their own driveway are directed to communal points provided at Council portals or at other locations such as fuel garages/supermarkets etc.</p> <p>The Housing Service is however fully engaged with the overall strategic approach to EV charging development in Swansea and is open to having Independent Living schemes being the focus of corporate bids to WG for charging points that could act as a resource for the wider community.</p>
	<p><b>Part B – No Supplementaries</b></p>
10	<p><b>Councillors Sam Bennett, Lynda James &amp; James McGettrick</b></p> <p>Is there a mechanism by which residents/businesses are able to comment on any planned road closures that may affect them before the weekly Roadwatch is published.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Infrastructure</b></p>

	<p>Standard road closures for statutory works are covered by statute and not subject to consultation, however the councils Street Works team oversee the process and ensure the legal obligations are met and that the rights of all users are balanced with the rights of those undertaking the works. Road watch is the mechanism used to inform stake holders, any issues raised are dealt with to minimise inconvenience.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances consultation may be undertaken for works involving complex and long terms closures. These works will be monitored any adjustments made to accommodate all interested parties as is reasonably practicable.</p>
11	<p><b>Councillors Lynda James, Mary Jones &amp; Susan Jones</b></p> <p>Is Swansea Council going to continue to uphold everyone's right to single-sex spaces in council policies, in order to support women's rights and child safeguarding. Is the council going to continue to provide separate public toilet facilities.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Members for Community</b></p> <p>We provide single-sex spaces as appropriate as permitted in the Equality Act 2010 and we are of course committed to upholding and promoting rights for all and ensuring all council services meet the needs of our residents. Although the Council's Public Toilet Provision Strategy is under constant review, any change or addition in toilet provision would be subject to the Council's Integrated Impact Assessment process.</p>
12	<p><b>Councillors Susan Jones, Peter Black &amp; Kevin Griffiths</b></p> <p>There is a lot of confusion around Mobility Scooters in Residential Homes. Can the Cabinet Member update Council on the current policy.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation and Cabinet Members for Community</b></p> <p>The mobility scooter guidance for Independent Living Services (previously Sheltered accommodation) was drafted in September 2011 and is currently being reviewed. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach as each of the 31 schemes has different physical characteristics and there are a variety of factors to take into account including things like fire safety. If a tenant has been assessed as requiring a scooter as a mobility aid they would be permitted to use their scooter within the scheme. For other tenants, consideration would be given to individual requests. Communal storage and charging facilities are also provided in one scheme. In the internal Care Homes, we do have the environment to support if appropriate to the service individual. An assessment for risk would be undertaken considering capacity and safety of the service, individual, other service users and staff, storage and charging etc.</p>
13	<p><b>Councillors Sam Bennett, Cheryl Philpott &amp; Nicola Furlong</b></p> <p>Is the Council able to give any information regarding the future of parks in SA1.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration &amp; Tourism</b></p> <p>The SA1 Masterplan includes three areas of public open space around Prince of Wales Dock. These areas have recently been transferred from Welsh Government to</p>

	<p>the Council, who will be responsible for their design. This work is currently being undertaken by the Council's Landscape Architects who will also be responsible for tendering and delivery.</p> <p>The largest of these sites on the north side of the dock is flanked by two residential plots (D5b and D9b) for which two reserved matters planning applications were submitted in May 2022. The role of the Landscape Architects is to create a strong sense of place that integrates the design of the park with the proposals for these adjacent plots, the waterfront setting of the Prince of Wales Dock and the wider SA1 area.</p> <p>Delivery of all 3 park areas is expected during 2022/23.</p>
14	<p><b>Councillors Peter Black, Jeff Jones &amp; Matthew Bailey</b></p> <p>What KPI's apply to the council's parking enforcement officers.</p> <p><b>Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The only KPI relating to Council Civil Enforcement Officers is the percentage of Penalty Charge Notices overturned due to Officer Error. In financial year 21/22 this figure was 0.51%.</p>
15	<p><b>Councillors Peter May, Allan Jeffery, Sandra Joy &amp; Stuart Rice</b></p> <p>On the 12th of May, Vaughan Gething MS (Minister for the Economy) announced that agreement had been reached between the UK and Welsh Government on a policy for Freeports in Wales. The policy outlined that the UK and Welsh Governments would consider the creation of at least one Freeport in Wales with a minimum non-repayable investment of £26m to the area involved.</p> <p>The UK Government will provide tax incentives for Freeports in Wales in parity with Freeports in other parts of the United Kingdom. The Welsh Government will design tax reliefs from local and devolved taxes (Non-Domestic Rates and Land Transaction Tax) to support the policy aims.</p> <p>These tax incentives will be designed to encourage investment, innovation, and business growth for the Freeport.</p> <p>The UK Government has announced that a Freeport will lead to the creation of thousands of well-paid skilled jobs in an area.</p> <p>Given the support available from the UK and Welsh Government, the opportunity of record levels of investment and well-paid skilled jobs for our area; What preparations has the Council made with regional partners for a potential future application to be a Freeport.</p> <p><a href="#">Written Statement: Update on Freeports policy in Wales (12 May 2022)   GOV.WALES</a></p>



[Written Statement: Update on Freeports policy in Wales](#)

I am pleased to announce that Welsh Government has reached agreement with the UK Government on the establishment of a Freeports policy in Wales.  
[gov.wales](http://gov.wales)

[Freeports: What will they bring to Wales? - BBC News](#)



[Freeports: What will they bring to Wales? - BBC News](#)

Freeport status allows firms to import goods and then export them outside normal tax and customs rules.  
[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

**Response of the Leader**

Whilst Welsh Government have announced the agreement with UK government as to the freeport intentions in Wales the guidance has not yet been issued nor any process for making such application.

However, we have recently been advised that both governments are now working together to develop a prospectus and have arranged a webinar on the 1<sup>st</sup> July with its primary purpose for initial stakeholder engagement, ahead of the development and publication of the prospectus. This will provide opportunity for stakeholders to highlight the benefits and potential challenges in establishing a Freeport Programme in Wales.

As such whilst initial discussion have taken place with regional partners and with Associated British Ports and detailed discussion and preparation can only be progress once the process is formally launched

However, it has previously been suggested that a single freeport in Wales is not an acceptable solution. Wales requires and deserves more than one Freeport and their locations and size will need to be carefully considered to avoid economic damage to those areas outside of the Freeport zones

**16 Councillors Peter May, Allan Jeffery, Sandra Joy & Stuart Rice**

This season sees an unwelcome absence of first class cricket in Swansea. St Helens ground in the Uplands ward has a rich history, notably on 31st August 1968 when Sir Garfield Sobers became the first batsman ever to hit six sixes in a single over of six consecutive balls in first-class cricket there.

What is the council doing to secure the reinstatement of first class cricket in Swansea for next season.



## **Response of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism**

In order for St Helens to host first class cricket, it is required to meet the new England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) regulations. Surveys undertaken in 2018 and 2019, including for the specific requirements for the playing surface, supporting facilities and infrastructure, revealed the need for widespread improvements to satisfy even the minimum standards, including for toilet provision; disabled access/ facilities/ viewing platforms; diverse food and beverage offer; family facilities; multi-faith quiet space; Umpire and staff changing/ welfare/ dining facilities; medical facilities; control room and cctv/ security provisions.

A number of recommendations were also put forward in order to retain first class cricket, including the need for us to:

- Dig up and re-lay 3 pitches on the square to improve/ maintain adequate standards;
- Address the boundary heights at the Mumbles Road East End, as it does not meet the minimum size to host white ball matches. The effect is that Glamorgan CC have not played 'one day' (white ball) matches for a number of years as 35 sixes were struck in the last 50 over match, with many landing outside the ground, presenting some near misses for the adjacent highways.

In view of the scale of improvements needed, the stakeholders have had to weigh up the cost of delivering these against the benefits to be gained, given 'first class cricket' only takes place for around 4 or 5 days a year. Alternatives have been explored include prioritising some criteria over others, with gaps addressed by temporary infrastructure, but these also proved not to be cost effective. As a result of consideration of all the factors, dwindling spectator numbers and sales, Glamorgan CCC regrettably decided not to include St Helen's in its 2022 schedule. Whilst disappointing, all parties understood this decision as being site related only. We understand Glamorgan CCC intends to secure a centre of cricket excellence in West Wales, which meets all the above requirements in a sustainable way and we are actively engaged in discussions, along with Swansea University, to explore this, and other stakeholder/ clubs' requirements in the area as part of our commitment to world class sports facilities and a wider masterplan for Swansea Bay. Whilst this means there is no return planned for the immediate future, we are not ruling out a return of first class cricket to Swansea in future.