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## CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

**Committee** ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date and Time of Meeting** TUESDAY, 19 MAY 2015, 4.30 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact [scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk)

11 **Correspondence Following the Committee Meeting** *(Pages 1 - 18)*

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Ref: RDB/PM/RP/19.05.15

29<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Councillor Ramesh Patel,  
Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning & Sustainability,  
County Hall,  
Atlantic Wharf,  
Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW.



Dear Councillor Patel,

**Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank the officers for attending the Committee meeting on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015. As you are aware the meeting considered items titled 'Environment & Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transport Directorates – Performance Report Quarter – 2014/15' and 'Greener Grangetown – Final Consultation Phase'. The comments and observations made by Members following this item are set out in this letter.

**Environment & Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transport Directorates – Performance Report Quarter – 2014/15**

- A Member asked for a breakdown of capital expenditure on individual renewable energy schemes and an income rate of return for each of the schemes. I would be grateful if you could arrange for this information to be provided to the Committee.
- The Member for Trowbridge explained that Council funding had been made available for the provision of insulating render for almost every street in Trowbridge with the exception of Cemaes Crescent; this had done nothing to improve his popularity locally. Could you please provide the Committee with detail of the criteria applied for insulating render grants in this area.

- During the meeting you explained that for every £1 million borrowed for projects the Council had to pay back £80,000 per annum in interest. This equates to a figure of 8% which seems high. I would appreciate it if you explain what this £80,000 figure is used to cover, i.e. is it all an interest payment or a combination of interest and capital repayment.
- At the meeting the new powers for the removal of letting boards was raised. It was explained that the new powers would come into force in November or December 2015 which would mean that letting agents would only be able to use compliant to let boards. The Director for Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transport explained that he had a copy of a letter which confirmed the future implementation of these powers. I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with a copy of this letter.
- The Committee has asked for details on the current average time for the planning service to process householder planning applications in Cardiff. I would appreciate it if you could provide the Committee with this information.
- At the meeting Members of the Committee noted that the current bus station will be closing in August 2015 and that work will commence on the new site in September 2015.
- A Member asked for details on the quantity of illegal buildings determined for demolition by planning enforcement and the number that have actually been demolished. I'd be grateful if you could provide data on this for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

### **Greener Grangetown – Final Consultation Phase**

- A Member asked if the Greener Grangetown project represented good value for money for the task payer. The Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water officer explained that the best way to evidence this was the cost benefit analysis exercise conducted by Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water; she offered to share this with the Members. I would appreciate it if you could obtain a copy of this document and share it with the Committee.

- A Member for Grangetown explained that there was a potential empty parking area at the Turner's Mansion site in Grangetown which could be used by the construction workers during the development phase of the project. Use of this site could reduce local parking pressures during the construction phase and prevent construction workers from having to take up resident and other local parking spaces.

I would be grateful if you would consider the above comments and provide a response to the requests made in this letter.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. D. Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Councillor Paul Mitchell  
Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc to:

Andrew Gregory, Director for Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transport

Jane Forshaw, Director for the Environment

Tara King, Assistant Director for the Environment

Ian Titherington, Lead Officer, Drainage

Michelle Russ, Rainscape Regulation, Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water

Martyn Evans, Strategy Advisor, Natural Resources Wales

Paul Keeping, Operational Manager, Scrutiny Services

Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Office Manager

Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee

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Ref: RDB/PM/BD/19.05.15

29<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Councillor Bob Derbyshire,  
Cabinet Member for the Environment,  
County Hall,  
Atlantic Wharf,  
Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW.



Dear Councillor Derbyshire,

**Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank the officers for attending the Committee meeting on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015. As you are aware the meeting considered an item titled 'Environment & Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transport Directorates – Performance Report Quarter 4 - 2014/15'. The comments and observations made by Members following these items are set out in this letter.

During the meeting the Committee noted that the volume of complaints received about the Environment Directorate had reduced from 1461 in Quarter 3 to 759 in Quarter 4; this is a reduction of almost half. In response to this a Member commented that he had received several complaints from residents in recent weeks complaining about the difficulty of getting through to the C2C service to report litter issues. Members, therefore, would ask you to look into how easy it is to report environmental issues through the C2C system. They have suggested that the Council should introduce some type of 'mystery shopper' test to check the effectiveness of the C2C service.

The subject of sickness absence was raised during the meeting. Members noted that the sickness rate for Quarter 4 was reported as 15.99 full time equivalent days pro rata across a whole year. This was 2.21 days better than the 2014/15 annual target of 18.2 full time equivalent days. Members are keen to see how these figures are calculated, i.e. are they based on actual hours worked by FTEs or the assumed Welsh Government figure of an average 224 FTE days per annum. The Assistant Director for the Environment

explained that this had been achieved by following the sickness procedure to the letter and that this had resulted in the Council having to get involved in several industrial tribunals. When asked about the outcome of these industrial tribunals she explained that one had been won by the Council and the second lost. I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with general details on the industrial tribunal which was lost by the Council. The details should include the reason why it was lost; what has been learnt from the industrial tribunal; any changes implemented to the Council sickness absence process as a result of the tribunal and the cost of dealing with the industrial tribunal.

A Member asked for details on any existing performance indicators which capture information on the 'Houses of Multiple Occupation Additional Licensing Scheme'. She explained that the scheme had been implemented a year earlier and that some information to highlight the success of the scheme would be useful. I'd be grateful if you could provide the Committee with the information.

The Assistant Director for the Environment explained that work was underway to implement a Customer Relationship Management System to improve the way that waste issues are reported in Cardiff. Members would be grateful if you could confirm a timescale for the implementation of the Customer Relationship Management System, explain in detail how this will improve the reporting of waste issues and comment on how the system will tie in with technology used by, for example, waste collection operatives.

During the meeting there was some debate over the definition of PPN/009 and its relationship with PPN/001(i) and PPN/001(ii). After an explanation Members eventually understood the meaning of the figures, however, felt that the explanation could be improved for future quarterly reports. I'd be grateful if you could ask officers to look into improving the definitions around these performance indicators.

Members asked for an explanation on how incorrectly allocated black bags and fly tipping incidents are recorded by the Council. They were told that



black bags are now recorded as a waste presentation issue and a fly tipping incident. The Assistant Director for the Environment explained that a fly capture report could easily be produced for Cardiff and then confirmed that they could be produced on a ward by ward basis. I'd be grateful if you could provide the Committee with a ward by ward fly capture report for all of Cardiff.

I would be grateful if you would consider the above comments and provide a response to the requests made in this letter.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. D. Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Councillor Paul Mitchell  
Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc to:

Jane Forshaw, Director for the Environment  
Tara King, Assistant Director for the Environment  
Jane Cherrington, Operational Manager – Strategy & Enforcement  
Paul Keeping, Operational Manager, Scrutiny Services  
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Office Manager  
Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee

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**SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET  
CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref : CM31091  
Eich Cyf / Your Ref : RDB/PM/BD/19.05.15  
Dyddiad / Date: 15th September 2015



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Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee  
c/o Scrutiny Services  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
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Annwyl / Dear Chairperson

**Environmental Scrutiny Committee 19 May 2015**

Thank you for your contact of 29 May 2015 following the Environmental Scrutiny Committee on 19 May 2015. I will address each point in turn:-

C2C can handle over 4000 contacts per day and to handle these high call volumes and ensure excellent service standards we provide a dedicated environment service. During the month of July C2C handled 14,235 calls on its dedicated environment line and I can confirm that the average time for calls to be answered was 23 seconds which is within our industry standard target of 30 seconds. I can also reassure you that C2C have not received any complaints regarding prolonged wait times for this service and when we do have busy periods we actively promote the use of emails and online forms to help alleviate even the shortest of wait times for our customers. We encourage Customer Feedback, and carry out monthly Customer Satisfaction Surveys. One of the questions asked is 'How satisfied were you with the time you waited before we answered your call', 89 customers were surveyed in the month of July and the satisfaction rate was 97%.

Local authority performance is measured using two sets of indicators – the National Strategic Indicators (set by Welsh Government) and the Public Accountability Measures (set by local government).

Public Accountability Measures (PAMs) are a small set of "outcome focused" indicators. They reflect those aspects of local authority work which local authorities agree are considered to be important in terms of public accountability.

PPN/009 - The percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards is a national PAM.

This provides the percentage of businesses that have been deemed to comply with food law following an assessment based on the risk rating system set out in Annex 5 of the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales 2008). The assessment of

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any individual premises may or may not have been completed during that reporting year. The descriptions in relation to this indicator cannot therefore be formally changed but further explanation can be given in the reporting arrangements locally.

Indicators reference PPN/001 were removed from the national dataset a few years ago, but remain important as a local performance indicator to monitor in-year progress against the planned inspection programme set out by requirements of the Food Standards Agency (FSA). This information is also collected and published annually by the FSA. The expectation is always that the performance of each local authority is 100%. There is more scope to clarify the descriptions for these indicators locally and further explanation can also be given in the local reporting arrangements.

Please see response below on two issues for HRPeople Services. It is however worth giving some context in relation to sickness absence, notably the views of Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee (PRAP) who scrutinised the review of the Attendance and Wellbeing Policy at their meeting on 2 June 2015 -extract below:

*"Overall the Committee considers that the direction of travel of sickness absence is clearly in the right direction, however we feel that there is still some way to go on the journey. We suggest that, to have a more dramatic impact on the figures, greater urgency is required. Members were encouraged to hear that you will continue reviewing the policy, and when sickness absence reaches a plateau you will consider further measures. However it is Members' view that at some point the Council should consider setting harder targets and timescales, and if these are not achieved then the Council should consider revising the policy. Members feel this view is justified given the significant cost of high sickness levels in services where agency staff are brought in to cover. The Committee would urge it is important that the Trade Unions continue to be a part of this journey"*

In response to the two specific points you have asked HR to clarify, please see below:

### **1. Calculation of Sickness**

The report in question was an adhoc report requested from HRPS relating to the Collections area within the Environment Directorate. The report calculates the % days lost (e.g. Collections = 9.45%) and to get the full time equivalent (FTE) days lost the system times this by 224 \* and divides by 100 = 21.18. This is an approximate figure. (\* 224 equates to 365 days minus 104 weekends/8 bank holidays/29 days leave.)

We are exploring options for all data reports to be in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines which is basically FTE days lost divided by average FTE staff numbers..

However, when data is provided in regular reports eg quarterly and annual figures, figures submitted to PRAP, Cabinet etc the Welsh Government guidelines are used. In future, if we are asked to provide these adhoc reports, we will ensure that it is made clear that figures are approximate.

## 2. Employment Tribunal (ET) Issues

*Why it was lost?* - Whilst the Council won part of the case, it lost on two process issues. The case was mainly related to the redeployment process and particularly changes agreed by Cabinet which were to take effect from 1 January 2014. The key change made was that that time available for employees seeking redeployment should be reduced from 6 months to 12 weeks on the register. The timing of the change caused confusion with this particular case and there were delays in putting the individual on the register. There was also no formal dismissal hearing for the employee, although a dismissal letter was generated.

*What has been learnt?* - Whilst the Redeployment Policy has worked successfully since its introduction, it is currently under review in the light of operational experience following the last change which took effect from 1 January 2014. Additionally, learning from this ET case will be used to strengthen the scheme and tighten up some of the procedural issues. Discussions have already been held with the sickness team within HRPS to ensure that a dismissal hearing is held with the relevant Directorate before the person is placed on the redeployment register. We will also be producing a guidance note on statutory dismissals for managers.

*Any changes implemented to the sickness absence process?* - the Attendance and Wellbeing Policy has been reviewed and tightened up with proposed changes agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 11 June 2015. The redeployment policy will be kept under review.

Cost of dealing with the industrial tribunal? the Tribunal awarded the sum of £20,000 which includes both compensation and legal costs.

Please note a confidentiality clause was signed as part of the ET case, therefore, we must ensure that the individual cannot be identified from the information provided.

The Council has 2 Additional Licensing Schemes for Houses in Multiple Occupation in Cardiff.

The Cathays Additional Licensing Scheme 2010 expired on 30 June 2015. The Housing Act 2004 stipulates that schemes shall not last for more than 5 years. We are in the process of re-designating the scheme for a further 5 years. Officers carried out an extensive consultation process throughout April this year with tenants, residents, local businesses, landlords and managing agents. A report will go to Cabinet on 17 September 2015 giving the results of the consultation and making the case for re-declaration for a further 5 years. There must, in law, be a 3 month period between designation and commencement of the scheme, so if Cabinet decides to re-declare the scheme it will go live on 1 January 2016.

The only performance indicator in relation to the scheme has been the number of HMOs licenced compared to the original estimate of 1400 HMOs requiring to be licenced. The final result was 1664 HMOs licensed which, when combined with the 510 HMOs licensed in Cathays under the mandatory HMO licensing provisions (applying to 3 storey HMOs having 5 or more occupiers throughout all England and Wales), gives a total number of HMOs licenced in Cathays of 2,174.

However, the progress of the Cathays scheme has been the subject of intense scrutiny, with much interest from the Cardiff Landlord Forum, and an additional licensing working group chaired by the relevant cabinet member and attended by ward members and operational managers from relevant service areas, particularly Planning and Waste Management. I attach a copy of the evaluation document for the Cathays scheme, which can also be found at <https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/Business/Licences-and-permits/Houses-in-multiple-occupancy/Documents/Evaluati.pdf>

This document gives a lot of detail on the impact of the scheme particularly in relation to the improvement of properties, complimentary initiatives, partnership working and key service delivery improvements made during the course of the scheme.

The Plasnewydd Additional HMO Licensing Scheme commenced on 3 November 2014 so has now been in operation for 9 months. The team is currently dealing with 485 cases. The rate of applications has been slower than experienced than when Cathays was declared.

The team has licensed 130 HMOs and is processing a further 95 applications. The remaining 260 cases represent incomplete applications or cases identified during door to door surveys in the northern part of the Plasnewydd Ward.

It would appear that promotional work and publicity has been of limited success in Plasnewydd Ward. Cathays is predominantly a student area so it is possible the Council's requirements have spread more readily within the student housing market, but Plasnewydd presents a more diverse market that is harder to engage.

The Council has carried out the statutory publicity in 2 local newspapers and advertises the scheme on the Council website. We have written to every Managing and Letting Agent in Cardiff and have engaged fully with the Cardiff Landlord forum. We have issued a recent press release and used the Council's communications team and social media to publicise.

The Student Liaison Officer has issued two issues of Unity News majoring on the Additional Licensing Scheme in Plasnewydd. Unity news is our magazine highlighting the joint work done by the Council, the Universities, the Student Unions and our partners to improve communities and neighbourhoods having large student populations. The magazine is issued in hard copy at PACT meetings and electronically to over 2000 people, including over 1,500 landlords and agents. The newsletters are attached.

The Housing Enforcement team has also attended the Cardiff Met housing fayre to raise awareness of the scheme. Plasnewydd has a high proportion of Cardiff Met students. We have also agreed with Cardiff Met that they will only advertise HMOs on their Housing lists where the landlord has applied for a licence.

These steps have yielded disappointing results, so more formal, concerted effort is required. The Council has recently employed a Licensing Support Officer with the sole brief of chasing incomplete licence applications and identifying unlicensed HMOs. During July 2015, using intelligence gleaned from the Housing Enforcement database and Council Tax records, HMO licensing officers conducted door to door enquires in the streets north of Albany Road spanning from Mackintosh Place to Angus Street. They identified over 150 unlicensed

HMOs, with application packs being sent to each landlord. These will be vigorously pursued by the Licensing Support Officer and subject to prosecution if not received within a reasonable period of time.

The response from Enforcement regarding the fly capture report is attached. This data is broken down by ward and month for the number of queries sent to enforcement which also includes waste presentation matters and also the fly tipping incidents recorded by the teams by load type.

We anticipate the new Customer Relationship Management System to be operational by Christmas. The new system will provide the customer with an end to end self-service experience. They will be able to log issues, such as missed collections or delivery orders, track their query and see when it has been actioned. Providing direct feedback to and from the operatives on the ground will be a later phase of the project. A timeline for this work has yet to be set corporately, although waste management are keen to be front runners in any new system.

Thank you once again for providing your constructive challenges.

Yn gwyir  
Yours sincerely



**Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Bob Derbyshire**  
**Cabinet Member for Environment**  
**Aelod Cabinet Dros Yr Amgylchedd**

**Enc:** Evaluation Document for Cathays  
Unity Newsletters  
Fly Capture Report





My Ref / Fy Ref: CM31125  
Your Ref / Eich Ref: RDB/PM/RP/19.05.15

Date / Dyddiad: 10 July 2015

Chair, Environmental Scrutiny Committee  
Scrutiny Services  
Room 263  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

### **Environmental Scrutiny Committee - 19th May 2015**

Thank you for your correspondence on behalf of the Committee following the meeting held on 19th May 2015 with regards to 'Environment & Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transport Directorates – Performance Report Quarter – 2014/15' and 'Greener Grangetown – Final Consultation Phase'.

I would respond to each of the points raised as follows.

### **Environment & Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transport Directorates – Performance Report Quarter – 2014/15**

*A Member asked for a breakdown of capital expenditure on individual renewable energy schemes and an income rate of return for each of the schemes. I would be grateful if you could arrange for this information to be provided to the Committee.*

We have worked on three major Council funded renewables schemes in the past year. These are:

1. A Solar roof installation at the Lamby Way Depot site. The Capital expenditure was £216k and the gross annual income is expected to be £37k, made up of Feed-in-Tariff receipts, energy savings through direct supply to the buildings, and sell back of excess energy to the grid.
2. The Radyr Weir Hydro Electric Scheme. A contractor is now engaged to deliver this scheme during the current financial year. The Capital cost is expected to be £2.7m, and the anticipated gross annual income is estimated at £340k through feed in tariff and selling energy to the grid..
3. A Solar roof scheme in the Trowbridge housing estate. Solar panels have been installed at 100 residential properties, selected as having a suitable orientation to the sun and no overshadowing by trees etc. The total cost was £500k and gross annual income to the Council is expected to be

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£26.4k - in this case residents benefit directly from the energy produced so the rate of return to the Council is lower.

It should be noted that, as with most renewables, actual income is dependent on weather conditions and may vary from year to year.

*The Member for Trowbridge explained that Council funding had been made available for the provision of insulating render for almost every street in Trowbridge with the exception of Cemaes Crescent; this had done nothing to improve his popularity locally. Could you please provide the Committee with detail of the criteria applied for insulating render grants in this area.*

The External Wall Insulation project in Trowbridge is being delivered as a result of a successful grant funding application submitted to Welsh Government under the 'Maximising ECO' initiative for which the Council received funding to improve 247 properties. Applications for this funding stream were assessed against a range of qualifying criteria which sought to:

- Limit applications to a maximum volume of 250 properties
- Maintain a cohesive and logical whole-street approach where possible, and
- Target areas of multiple deprivation drawing on data in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data which identifies Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA).

In responding to these criteria this particular grant bid focussed on specific streets in the southern half of the Trowbridge estate, enabling us to maximise application volume whilst building on work of a similar nature that the Council has completed under previous ARBED schemes.

Basing work on LSOA boundary lines sometimes means that scheme boundaries cut through streets and occasionally even pairs of semi-detached houses. To address this, and to seek to develop in a cohesive and logical whole street manner we have a process of reallocating funds from any properties within the scheme boundary that do not wish to participate. These funds are reallocated accordingly to adjoining streets and we intend to start with Cemaes Crescent and the southern end of Glan-Y-Mor Road due to close proximity to existing works.

Whilst this project is limited in its delivery volumes we are aware that a further c.350 hard-to-treat properties may remain in need of improvement on the Trowbridge estate and we will continue to explore potential funding opportunities to address these as they present themselves.

*During the meeting you explained that for every £1 million borrowed for projects the Council had to pay back £80,000 per annum in interest. This equates to a figure of 8% which seems high. I would appreciate it if you explain what this £80,000 figure is used to cover, i.e. is it all an interest payment or a combination of interest and capital repayment.*

The £80,000 figure is a general rule of thumb figure for the costs of borrowing £1m over a twenty five year period. It covers both interest costs p.a. and principal repayment costs p.a. The actual costs to the Council of any borrowing are

dependant on both the timing of any borrowing, the source and also rates of interest

*At the meeting the new powers for the removal of letting boards was raised. It was explained that the new powers would come into force in November of December 2015 which would mean that letting agents would only be able to use compliant to let boards. The Director for Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transport explained that he had a copy of a letter which confirmed the future implementation of these powers. I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with a copy of this letter.*

Attached is the Welsh Government letter confirming the Letting Boards decision, as requested.

*The Committee has asked for details on the current average time for the planning service to process householder planning applications in Cardiff. I would appreciate it if you could provide the Committee with this information.*

I can confirm that the average time taken is 61.78 days.

*A Member asked for details on the quantity of illegal buildings determined for demolition by planning enforcement and the number that have actually been demolished. I'd be grateful if you could provide data on this for 2013/14 and 2014/15.*

I can confirm that 16 had been determined for demolition, but 7 were subsequently removed. However, cases can cover more than one financial year due to serving of the notice being different to the compliance date.

### **Greener Grangetown – Final Consultation Phase**

*A Member asked if the Greener Grangetown project represented good value for money for the task payer. The Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water officer explained that the best way to evidence this was the cost benefit analysis exercise conducted by Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water; she offered to share this with the Members. I would appreciate it if you could obtain a copy of this document and share it with the Committee.*

The feasibility study gives information about the cost benefit analysis (as attached).

*A Member for Grangetown explained that there was a potential empty parking area at the Turner's Mansion site in Grangetown which could be used by the construction workers during the development phase of the project. Use of this site could reduce local parking pressures during the construction phase and prevent construction workers from having to take up resident and other local parking spaces.*

In terms of using the empty car park, this would be a matter for the landowners and potentially Planning Development to determine if parking would be feasible at this location. In terms of road safety, a Contractor's compound off the highway would be preferable to one on-street.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,  
Yn gwyir,



**Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Ramesh Patel**  
**Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning & Sustainability**  
**Aelod Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth, Cynllunio a Chynladwyedd**

Enclosures

Cc to: Andrew Gregory, Director for Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transport  
Tara King, Assistant Director for the Environment  
Ian Titherington, Lead Officer, Drainage  
Michelle Russ, Rainscape Regulation, Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water  
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