

## COUNCIL, 22 MARCH 2018 : WRITTEN QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS (COUNCILLOR SARAH MERRY)

W1	<table><tr><th>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR</th></tr><tr><td><b><u>McKERLICH</u></b></td></tr><tr><td><p>Does the Council commission regular testing for Radon at our many schools? If so, may I have the most recent date on which Bryn Deri, Radyr Primary and Radyr Comp were tested and may I have the results found and the methodology employed?</p><p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p><p>All schools that are located either in or close to known Radon Areas, as advised by Welsh Government, were tested in 2015. This exercise was replicated across Wales.</p><p>The threshold for measurement, above which action would be required, was 400 Bqm3 of Radon Gas identified. This is a low level and is therefore seen as precautionary due to the young age of occupants within the building.</p><p>The method of measurement advised by Public Health involved the use of small Radon monitors that are placed at ground floor level within the school buildings at equal distances. The monitors were in place for a prescribed period of time, after which they were collected and analysed by a public health laboratory and results provided for each school measured as follows:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Bryn Deri Primary School</b> All monitors collected from the school returned levels below 100 Bqm3.</li><li>• <b>Radyr Primary School</b> All monitors collected from the school returned levels below 100 Bqm3.</li><li>• <b>Radyr Comprehensive School</b> All monitors collected from the school returned levels below 100 Bqm3, apart from one from a ground floor classroom which returned a reading of 110 Bqm3. This was still well below the 400 Bqm3 threshold.</li></ul><p>Based on the measurements undertaken in 2015, there would be no requirement currently to repeat the exercise in these schools.</p></td></tr></table>	WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR	<b><u>McKERLICH</u></b>	<p>Does the Council commission regular testing for Radon at our many schools? If so, may I have the most recent date on which Bryn Deri, Radyr Primary and Radyr Comp were tested and may I have the results found and the methodology employed?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>All schools that are located either in or close to known Radon Areas, as advised by Welsh Government, were tested in 2015. This exercise was replicated across Wales.</p> <p>The threshold for measurement, above which action would be required, was 400 Bqm3 of Radon Gas identified. This is a low level and is therefore seen as precautionary due to the young age of occupants within the building.</p> <p>The method of measurement advised by Public Health involved the use of small Radon monitors that are placed at ground floor level within the school buildings at equal distances. The monitors were in place for a prescribed period of time, after which they were collected and analysed by a public health laboratory and results provided for each school measured as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Bryn Deri Primary School</b> All monitors collected from the school returned levels below 100 Bqm3.</li><li>• <b>Radyr Primary School</b> All monitors collected from the school returned levels below 100 Bqm3.</li><li>• <b>Radyr Comprehensive School</b> All monitors collected from the school returned levels below 100 Bqm3, apart from one from a ground floor classroom which returned a reading of 110 Bqm3. This was still well below the 400 Bqm3 threshold.</li></ul> <p>Based on the measurements undertaken in 2015, there would be no requirement currently to repeat the exercise in these schools.</p>
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W2	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR</u></b></p> <p>In late 2017 the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning said that Band B submissions would only be funded if authorities showed significant ambition for the Welsh language. What implications are there for Cardiff's Band B submission?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>Approval has been given in principle by the Welsh Government for the schemes within our Band B programme, including the enlargement of two existing Welsh-medium primary schools.</p> <p>This month, Welsh Ministers have also approved the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020 setting out the Council's drive to increase pupils within the Welsh-medium sector. This is clear recognition of how Cardiff has demonstrated its ambition and commitment to achieving the growth in Welsh speakers that is targeted in Cymraeg 2050.</p>
W3	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR</u></b></p> <p>When can members expect to be informed of the Council's proposals to reduce class sizes in Cardiff following its bid to the Welsh Governments' Infant Class Size Reduction Fund in 2017?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>In May 2017, Welsh Government wrote to all local authorities in Wales outlining a new grant to further reduce infant class sizes and raise standards. The grant funding to be made available would be a combination of £16 million revenue and £20 million capital funding over the period from April 2017 to March 2021.</p> <p>In the original notice, the Welsh Government outlined that funding would be targeted at classes with 29 or more pupils and that receiving schools should demonstrate at least one or a combination of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant levels of free school meals;</li> <li>• Below average outcomes and where a school is judged to be red or amber;</li> <li>• Significant levels of special educational and additional learning needs;</li> <li>• Significant levels of where Welsh/English is not the first language.</li> </ul>

In the original notice, the Welsh Government also outlined that Cardiff's notional revenue allocation may be as follows:

- 2017/18: £261,970
- 2018/19: £392,956
- 2019/20: £654,926
- 2020/21: £785,912

At the time of making the return to Welsh Government, of the 478 classes in the Infant year groups, 225 contained 28 or less pupils and 253 (52.92%) contained 29 or more pupils.

Cardiff's notional revenue allocation for the current financial year (2017/18) of £261,970.68 is equivalent to the cost of 10.45 teachers (Teachers scale M6 plus on-costs).

Restricting the grant bid with these additional resources to 10 schools was achieved by using the following prioritisation factors:

- School with an E-FSM % in excess of 40%
- School with a class size of 29 or more in the infant age range
- School not carrying forward an excessive revenue balance

A bid was made to Welsh Government on behalf of the following schools:

- Bryn Hafod
- Greenway
- Hywel Dda
- Moorland
- Pencaerau
- Pentrebane
- St Albans
- St Mary the Virgin
- Trelai
- Trowbridge

In February 2018, the Council received confirmation of the approval in principle for this grant funding; however, we are yet to receive the formal award letter from the Welsh Government to enable employment of these additional staff.

In addition to the bid for revenue resources, the Council also made a bid for capital funding for the following three schools:

	<p><b>Oakfield Primary School</b> – the school has two classes of pupils being taught in one open plan space, which continues to be detrimental to the teachers’ ability to teach effectively and for pupils to engage with lessons adequately. This specific project would create additional individual classroom space.</p> <p><b>St Fagan’s Primary School</b> – the school has classes of 30 pupils and above in a number of classes, and has minimal additional or withdrawal space to compliment the classroom accommodation. In order to ensure class numbers can be made smaller additional classroom space is required. Feasibility studies are being undertaken with regards to the site and additional land or the potential to extend upwards in the current building.</p> <p><b>St Francis RC Primary School</b> – as above, the school has classes of over 30 pupils in a number of classes. There is ample external area on which an extension could be built to create additional classroom accommodation.</p> <p>We have yet to receive formal approval of these schemes.</p>
W4	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR</u></b></p> <p>What plans does the council have to increase the number of Welsh medium primary places available in the North of Cardiff?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>The Council has significantly expanded Welsh-medium primary provision in the past six years, by six forms of entry. In the September 2017 intake to Reception year, there were over 120 spare places available spread across 9 schools city-wide.</p> <p>Approval has been given in principle by the Welsh Government for the enlargement of two schools in Band B, and a further 8-9 new primary schools are planned in North East and North West Cardiff, including new English and Welsh-medium primary schools.</p> <p>Cardiff is already well prepared to meet projected parental demand, and to drive the increase in demand for Welsh-medium primary school places.</p>

**FINANCE, MODERNISATION AND PERFORMANCE**  
**(COUNCILLOR CHRIS WEAVER)**

W5	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BERMAN</u></b></p> <p>How many of the savings agreed as part of the council's budget for 2018-19 still lack detailed plans for how they will be delivered, and what percentage of the total number of savings does this constitute?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>The report on the 2018/19 Budget, which was approved by Council on 22 February 2018, identified that 96 saving proposals (87%) were either realised or had detailed plans in place, with 14 (13%) still at general planning stage. The value of saving proposals that were either realised or had detailed plans in place amounted to £12.862 million, compared with £1.434 million at general planning stage. Directorates will continue to review and update the plans as necessary in order to achieve the savings.</p>
W6	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BERMAN</u></b></p> <p>Please provide a full breakdown of the targeted reductions to external spend that have been undertaken in the current financial year to date as a contribution towards the aim of reaching a balanced position against budget by the year end?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>In response to the level of financial pressures identified as part of the budget monitoring process during the year, all directorates put in place management actions to control expenditure, including reviewing non-essential third party spend, temporary staff arrangements and opportunities to maximise income, targeting savings in these areas where possible.</p> <p>No breakdown of the reductions to external spend linked specifically to these actions is available; however, where savings have been achieved, they are reflected in the directorate monitoring positions.</p> <p>What is clear is that despite significant on-going pressures, particularly in Social Services, the overall position in relation to directorate budgets has improved since the Month 4 position that was reported to Cabinet in September 2017. This has enabled balanced positions to be reported for the Council as a whole, both for Month 6 and, more recently, for Month 9. The management actions</p>

	taken by directorates have supported this position, with most directorates showing significant improvements over this period.
W7	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BERMAN</u></b></p> <p>Please provide a full list of posts that have been held vacant in the current financial year as part of the action taken towards the aim of delivering a balanced position against budget by the year end, and specify for how long each such post has been (or will be) held vacant?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>As set out in my previous answer, due to the level of financial pressures identified as part of the budget monitoring process during the year, all directorates put in place management actions to control expenditure including reviewing non-essential third party spend, temporary staff arrangements and opportunities to maximise income, targeting savings in these areas where possible.</p> <p>In relation to employee costs, the emphasis was on reviewing agency and other temporary staff arrangements and the careful management of vacancies and appointments during the year. There is therefore no list of posts held vacant linked specifically to these actions.</p> <p>All savings achieved are reflected in the directorate monitoring positions, with most directorates showing improvements compared to the Month 4 position that was reported to Cabinet in September 2017. This has enabled balanced positions to be reported for the Council as a whole, both for Month 6 and, more recently, for Month 9.</p>

**HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**  
**(COUNCILLOR LYNDA THORNE)**

W8

**WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR CARTER**

Over the last 5 years, how much of the Discretionary Housing Payment monies have been returned to government each year unspent?

**Reply**

The Council receives a grant each year from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to fund discretionary payments above Housing Benefit/Universal Credit entitlement; this allows the Council to assist those in exceptional circumstances. Any unspent grant is returned to the DWP.

Year	DWP Contribution	Paid	Returned to DWP
2012/13	£485,508.00	£484,392.26	£1,115.74 (0.2%)
2013/14	£1,252,669.00	£1,507,313.65*	Nil
2014/15	£1,175,868.00	£1,181,416.86	Nil
2015/16	£815,034.00	£1,166,975.64	Nil
2016/17	£1,033,073.00	£1,078,280.54	Nil
2017/18 to date	£1,368,916.00	£1,275,613.69	Nil (estimated)

In 2012/13, late changes to benefit claims resulted in a small underspend.

Since 2013/14, no grant has been returned to the DWP and spend has exceeded the grant each year.

In 2013/14, additional funding was also received from the Welsh Government to add to the grant. All of the money was spent.

**INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**  
**(COUNCILLOR RUSSELL GOODWAY)**

W9	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BOYLE</u></b></p> <p>What is the latest on the process for procuring a contractor to build the new bus station and when can we expect them to start work?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>The Councillor will be aware that the detailed negotiations between the partners involved in the Metro Delivery Partnership are on-going and will be concluded in the very near future. Concurrently, the developer is concluding negotiations with two main contractors and expects to make an announcement in the next 2 weeks.</p>
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**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSPORT**  
**(COUNCILLOR CARO WILD)**

W10	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BERMAN</u></b></p> <p>Residents in Brandreth Road remain perplexed that only the southern section of the road is on the council's gritting route and do not feel it is logical that the northern section of Brandreth Road and neighbouring Birchwood Road are not also routinely gritted given that many side roads also lead off these ungritted sections of road. I share their concern and would therefore ask if this could be reconsidered in order to add the rest of Brandreth Road and Birchwood Road to the regular gritting route in future as part the council's winter maintenance schedule. Can you please advise if this could be done?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>A number of factors are taken into consideration when assessing which roads in the city should be subject to routine salting treatment as part of the Council's winter maintenance service. Due to the ever changing nature of the highway network, routes are reviewed annually over the summer period and any changes are then integrated into the service for the following winter season. I would be happy to ask officers to consider adding the rest of Brandreth Road and Birchwood Road to the regular gritting route as part of the annual review process.</p>
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W11

**WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR**

Ward members were informed in summer 2017 that improved LED lighting would be installed in the underpass on North Road, linking from St Mark's Church to the Mynachdy Estate. This route is heavily used by families taking their children to school. When can this work be expected to be completed, and what other plans does the council have to improve safe routes to school in Gabalfa?

**Reply**

The delivery of the LED lighting tubes was due to take place this week. The underpass in question on North Road is early in the programme of lighting improvements, which encompasses all underpasses across Cardiff and is expected to be delivered over the next two months.

We are currently implementing a strategic 20mph speed limit in the Gabalfa Ward. This work is due to be completed on site by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Slower vehicle speeds will help to create a safer highway environment, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, and will benefit pupils accessing schools within the ward.