

## COUNCIL, 18 JULY 2019 : WRITTEN QUESTIONS

### CHAIR OF PLANNING COMMITTEE (COUNCILLOR KEITH JONES)

W1	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR WOOD</u></b></p> <p>How many breaches of planning protocol have occurred over the last year in Cardiff?</p> <p>Of these, for how many has it been necessary for further action to be taken against the developer/applicant?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>In 2018, the Planning Enforcement Team investigated 415 cases relating to potential breaches of planning control and 16 Planning Enforcement Notices were issued.</p> <p>Not all cases that are investigated by officers are found to constitute breaches of planning control as works may be 'permitted development' or lawful in planning terms.</p> <p>Where breaches of planning control are identified, a number of methods are used to resolve the breach, which can include, for example, the submission of a planning application in an attempt to regularise development or developers undertaking remedial works following negotiation with officers.</p>
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### CLEAN STREETS, RECYCLING AND ENVIRONMENT (COUNCILLOR MICHAEL MICHAEL)

W2	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR ROBSON</u></b></p> <p>Does Cardiff Council implement fines for funerals which overrun their allocated time at any of its facilities?</p> <p>If so, how many funerals have been fined over the last 12 months and how much did each funeral overrun?</p> <p>What is the fine levied?</p> <p>If not, are there any plans to introduce a fine for overrunning?</p>
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	<p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>Cardiff Council does not implement fines for funerals which overrun their allotted time.</p> <p>We do however offer additional 45 minute service times for a fee of £150 on request, which we advise funeral directors and families to consider if they are expecting a large attendance.</p> <p>Whilst some crematoria do administer fines for lateness or overrunning, particularly those that are privately owned, Cardiff Bereavement Services maintain good working relationships with its key stakeholders such as funeral directors and funeral celebrants and, whilst a service may occasionally arrive late or overrun, invariably due to circumstances beyond the control of the funeral director, it is not deemed fair to levy a fine which, in most cases, would be passed to the grieving family. Instead, it is better to meet and discuss with a particular funeral director if the issue is a regular occurrence.</p> <p>I can confirm that there are no plans to introduce a system of fines at Cardiff's cemeteries or crematorium.</p>
W3	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR NAUGHTON</u></b></p> <p>With extreme weather events more likely due to climate change, has the council undertaken a survey of the number of council-owned properties which are at risk of flooding?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have assessed flood risk based on location and their website provides information on the risk of flooding from main rivers, seas, reservoirs and surface water. The maps that have been produced by NRW are there to provide information on areas that are at risk of flooding, but not to the level of detail for a specific property. However, the category of risk of a property can be assessed by utilising the information provided in the maps.</p>
W4	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR WOOD</u></b></p> <p>In March, Cardiff Council declared a climate emergency. What actions have since been taken to deal with this emergency that would not have been taken anyway?</p>

**Reply**

Since the Council made the Climate Emergency declaration in March 2019, officers have been tasked with developing a strategy to define our response, both to this and the Welsh Government's ambition for us and all other Welsh public sector organisations to become carbon neutral by 2030.

We recognise the need for an acceleration and growth in our direct projects and actions for climate change and carbon reduction, but we also know that there will be a need for us to challenge and re-focus some of our decision making and procurement processes to ensure that all areas of our service delivery are contributing in a fair and proportionate way.

This strategy will take some time to get right and, importantly, will need input from a wide range of stakeholders in the city. We hope to start sharing some of our strategic thinking with partners in the autumn. However, in the meantime, we know we need to press on anyway and it is important to note that we're already supporting a wide range of projects and policy initiatives that support this agenda.

Although they predate the Climate Emergency declaration, projects like Greener Grangetown, the Next Bike project, Lamby Way Solar Farm, our Electric Vehicle Strategy, our Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy and proposals for a District Heat Network are all examples of projects that are beyond the scope of everyday work for the Council and demonstrate our commitment to addressing the Climate Emergency.

**CULTURE AND LEISURE**  
**(COUNCILLOR PETER BRADBURY)**

W5

**WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR SANDREY**

How many trees have been removed in Llanedeyrn and Pentwyn during the last two council terms, and how many have been planted?

**Reply**

The Council doesn't cut down healthy trees as a matter of policy and is committed to ensuring the vitality and diversity of its tree stock through the Annual Replacement & New Tree Planting Programme.

	<p>161 trees have been felled in the Pentwyn ward during the last two council terms due to them being dead, diseased, dying and/or dangerous. 20 replacement trees have been planted during this period.</p>
W6	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR</u></b></p> <p>Will the council work with ward members to introduce wild flowers to council owned grassed areas in Gabalfa and Mynachdy to promote biodiversity and reduce the need to cut grassed areas?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>The Council would be happy to work with ward members to look at appropriate areas for wild flower and pollinator type planting within Gabalfa. Sites selected for such do require careful consideration in terms of purpose and use, and consultation with user groups is also a critical issue.</p> <p>It is also important to recognise that, while the introduction of such areas result in the reduction of mowing frequencies, there are specific maintenance operations that need to be undertaken, either manually or mechanically, depending on the size of the area in question. These operations include cultivation and sowing / over sowing, which is normally undertaken in April and a ‘cut and clear’, which is typically undertaken in September.</p> <p>As you may be aware, in 2017, wild flower areas were introduced to Maitland Park in the Gabalfa Ward through a partnership project involving the Council’s Parks Service and NewLink Wales, a well-being and training organisation that provides work experience opportunities for individuals with a history of substance misuse, mental illness and long term unemployment.</p>
W7	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR WOOD</u></b></p> <p>Woodland and trees are key to tackling the climate emergency by removing carbon from the atmosphere. Woodland also supports wildlife diversity and are widely believed to positively add to the lived environment in nearby communities. Is the council committed to protecting remaining areas of woodland within the city?</p> <p>Specifically, can the council confirm that the area of woodland at the top of Flaxland Avenue, adjacent to the A48, will remain as woodland in perpetuity for the benefit of the environment and local residents?</p>

**Reply**

The Council recognises the importance of, and is committed to, protecting and enhancing the woodlands that form part of its land holdings, many of which are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). There are also sites with higher designations of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) within our land holdings.

Our woodlands are a valuable resource for biodiversity. They benefit air quality, habitat connectivity and recreation, are home to a wealth of wildlife, including European protected species such as Bats and Dormice, and are increasingly important in the context of climate change.

There are no current plans to make any changes to the tree planting located on an area of highway land that you refer to, which was established following works to the Ystradyfodwg and Pontypridd (Y&P) Trunk Sewer and serves as a buffer between the A48 and residential dwellings.

Designated woodland and individual trees are afforded protection through the planning process. Wider protection of trees is set out in a number of Council policies within the LDP and these are expanded upon within the Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance.

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

W8	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BOYLE</u></b></p> <p>What, in the council's opinion, are the best sources of support available to school governing bodies which aim to develop and improve their performance?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>Support is available through the Council's Governor Services Team. Governing bodies looking to develop and improve their performance should contact the team to enable appropriate support to be brokered, either from within the Council or from the Central South Consortium. A number of support models have been developed or are under development, including whole governing body sessions on key areas such as support and challenge, reviews of governance and self-evaluation.</p> <p>Governing bodies can also access peer support from fellow governing bodies. Two successful Governor Improvement Groups (GIGs) have been established in Cardiff and they recently shared their work with Chairs of Governors at the Strategic Briefing Session provided by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning. GIGs are groups of governors working together on common areas and themes. Governing bodies interested in forming a GIG should contact the Council's Governor Services Team who will facilitate this.</p>
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**FINANCE, MODERNISATION AND PERFORMANCE**  
**(COUNCILLOR CHRIS WEAVER)**

W9	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR SANDREY</u></b></p> <p>The LGA recently published a '21st century councils' toolkit, designed to help councils create policies, procedures, ethos and environment to encourage and empower, women, parents and carers to stand as councillors. Is Cardiff Council using this toolkit, particularly in light of the gender imbalance amongst councillors, and to what effect is it being used?</p>
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**Reply**

I am pleased that the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Cardiff Council are supportive of the aims of the LGA's '21<sup>st</sup> Century Councils' toolkit in encouraging more women, parents and carers to stand as councillors.

Existing legislation in Wales and the Council's policies already support these aims, for example, in terms of varying meeting timings to meet the needs of councillors and payment of the Care Allowance. A number of our members also sit on the Diversity in Local Government Working Group that has been set up by the Welsh Government to identify opportunities to encourage a greater diversity of people standing as councillors. We expect the outcomes of this working group to be reflected in future legislation.

I know that the Council's Democratic Services Committee is also keen to promote democracy in the run up to the 2022 Local Government elections in Wales. It is currently developing elected member role descriptions to provide a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities expected of a councillor. I will ensure that the Chair is provided with a copy of the LGA toolkit.

It is important to note that greater diversity in elected representation within local government cannot be achieved in isolation by this Council. A collaborative effort is needed with involvement from the WLGA, councils and political parties to encourage more women and individuals from diverse backgrounds to stand as councillors.

W10

**WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR**

Several residents have complained about the tone of communications from the council (e.g. letters and e-mails). They have been perceived as heavy handed, cold and can be distressing for residents in difficult circumstances. What steps are taken to seek feedback and evaluate correspondence issued to residents?

**Reply**

Officers are currently working on producing a full suite of customer service documents that will support officers in providing excellent customer service throughout many channels, including written responses to customers, whether that be complaints or requests for service or information.

In conjunction with this piece of work, we have recently launched a full customer service training package for all officers at all levels, one of which is focused on effective communication in written form. The training seeks to address the points that you have raised in terms of emphasising the importance of using appropriate tone and plain language. We have already had an excellent response to the courses, with requests for whole teams to attend. There will also be teams for whom it will be mandatory for them to attend due to the nature of their role.

If you have any particular examples of communication from the Council that could be improved, then please feel free to forward them to me or the Council's Corporate Complaints team at: [corp.compteam@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:corp.compteam@cardiff.gov.uk)

I would also be happy to look into providing some dedicated customer service sessions or a workshop on this topic for councillors if there is sufficient interest.

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

W11

### **WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR**

What is the council's view on safe needle exchanges in Cardiff and adopting the approach of Durham Constabulary, targeting organised crime groups and drug dealers rather than individual users?

#### **Reply**

In Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, substance misuse services are provided by a range of organisations, including Cardiff & Vale University Health Board, Cardiff Council, Vale of Glamorgan Council and Third Sector organisations via the Cardiff & Vale Area Planning Board (APB).

In accordance with Welsh Government guidance, the APB's role is to "*improve and strengthen the arrangements for the planning, commissioning, and performance management of substance misuse services in Wales*". In terms of governance, the Cardiff & Vale APB reports to the Cardiff Community Safety Leadership Group, co-chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner and myself, and ultimately to the Cardiff Public Services Board.

As a key partner in the APB, the Council is committed to supporting safe needle and syringe provision in Cardiff as an essential part of reducing the harms associated with injecting drug use for the individual and the community. There are currently 11 needle exchanges across Cardiff.

The APB is currently undertaking a substance misuse recommissioning review and part of this work is looking at system design, financial modelling, outcomes and a commissioning strategy. Included in this process is work to identify areas of good practice and to look at a range of provision across the UK. The Community Safety Leadership Group has considered details of the review and will continue to play a key role in the development of the work, and the ultimate shape of the commissioned services, going forward.

The APB has looked at the drug and alcohol treatment provision that County Durham recommissioned last year and their needle and syringe provision looks very similar to the provision in Cardiff. In terms of the approach of the Durham Constabulary, the Community Safety Leadership Group, with the APB, will explore this further as part of the above review.

All members of the Community Safety Leadership Group recognise that discarded needles continue to be a significant problem that blights communities in Cardiff and also raises real public safety concerns. An analysis of discarded needles across Cardiff has been undertaken and further work is underway to identify service demand and gain a better understanding about those individuals who discard needles.

The Community Safety Leadership Group has agreed to bring together a multi-agency task & finish group, comprised of senior officers, that will consider the data and intelligence gathered to date and look at both current service provision in Cardiff and provision in place elsewhere that has been cited as best practice. The task & finish group will commence its work in the summer and the findings and recommendations will be received by the Community Safety Leadership Group in the autumn.

W12

**WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR**

Will the council consider gating the lane running from Pen y Bryn Road to Heathfield Place following reports of drug paraphernalia being found by parents?

**Reply**

I am sorry to hear of the issues associated with this lane and I can understand the concerns raised by local residents.

The main section of this lane was gated in 2014, as part of an area-based alley gating scheme in Gabalfa. During our investigation at that time (and in consultation with local councillors), it was determined that the section of lane linking Pen-Y-Bryn Road to Heathfield Place served as a well-used route by pedestrians and cyclists and provided a useful link to facilities on Whitchurch Road. It was therefore decided to proceed with the partial gating proposal, leaving this section of lane unrestricted.

Following receipt of a resident petition in November 2017 to gate this section of lane, it was added to the list of gating requests.

In March 2019, the list was reviewed to identify priority lanes for the current 2-year alley gating programme (2019-2021). However, the lane was not identified as one of the highest priorities in terms of levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental conditions.

The lane will remain on our list of requests, and should additional funding be identified following the completion of the current programme, we will review our records to identify further priority schemes.

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

W13

**WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BOYLE**

The space in front of the new BBC building features hardly any soft landscaping, grass or foliage. Does this not represent a missed opportunity?

**Reply**

I can confirm that, at the original design stage, consideration was given to the possibility of providing a grassed area with more trees as part of the scheme for the public realm at Central Square.

However, surveys of footfall on event days and non-event days and an analysis of the projected footfall associated with the bus interchange confirmed the requirement for a hard landscaping scheme. The level of crowd management required at certain times in the area also constrained the potential for tree planting in the area.

In addition, it is intended that the square will be used for BBC outside broadcasts and other events at appropriate times of the year. A hard landscaping scheme will minimise the need for post-event reinstatement.

Finally, there is a requirement for vehicles to be able to drive across the square to service the buildings in the area.

The scheme design was developed with significant input from a range of stakeholders and disability groups, including representatives for blind and partially sighted people.

W14

**WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR WOOD**

Regarding the community asset transfer process, is there any appeal procedure for applicants once a decision has been reached?

Furthermore, does the decision receive any political approval (e.g. by cabinet, a cabinet member or full council) before implementation?

**Reply**

The Council's published "Stepping Up" toolkit sets out the process that has been approved by the Cabinet for dealing with Community Asset Transfer applications. It lists the steps, which applicants should take in support of their application, including the preparation of a business case. It also sets out the process that officers follow in assessing applications and coming to a decision.

The relevant Cabinet member and local members are consulted on the principle of the proposed transfer at the commencement of the process. More recently, the presumption has been in favour of granting full repairing leases following due diligence of the organisation's ability to assume full responsibility of the buildings.

The process is designed to ensure transparency and fairness. It also seeks to ensure that an applicant fully understands what is involved in managing and sustaining a community asset.

Once the selection process has been carried out in accordance with the toolkit, it would be unfair to the successful applicant to depart from that process.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSPORT**  
**(COUNCILLOR CARO WILD)**

W15	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR NAUGHTON</u></b></p> <p>Can you give an update on the number cases in the past 12 months where it has taken more than 28 days, from an initial report, for the council to undertake highway or pavement repairs?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>In the last 12 months, 17,476 28-day work orders have been raised, of which 93% have been completed in time.</p>
W16	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR SANDREY</u></b></p> <p>How effective does the council believe car parking capacity road signs are at keeping traffic moving, and what role if any do they have in reducing car usage in the city centre?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>Electronic capacity road signs or variable messaging signs (VMS) are used as part of a broader approach to network management, which aims to provide advance travel information for motorists and direct them to the nearest available parking spaces on the route that they are travelling. This helps to reduce the time that traffic is on the network trying to find a parking space. Without this information, it is likely that there would be more congestion on the network due to traffic travelling further to find somewhere to park and also for a longer period of time.</p> <p>Signage is also provided on strategic routes into the city which directs traffic to use park and ride facilities at Cardiff West in Leckwith and Cardiff East on the A48 Eastern Avenue. The park and ride sites also help to reduce congestion on the network by reducing the number of cars that need to enter the City Centre.</p>

W17	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR SANDREY</u></b></p> <p>Have plans for managing adverse weather impacts such as snow been equality impact assessed, given that women are more likely to be public transport users and pedestrians, and are therefore less well served by a 'roads first' approach?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>The winter service is provided in the Council's capacity as the Highway Authority and to discharge the statutory duties placed upon it by the Highways Act. Part of this is ensuring public safety and access for emergency services. As such, any 'roads first' approach is not a policy with a great deal of flexibility or political direction. Hence, a specific Equality Impact Assessment has not previously been undertaken.</p> <p>It is worth noting that bus routes are the main focus of attention, which I believe is a positive in respect to your question.</p>
W18	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR SANDREY</u></b></p> <p>What is the council doing to promote 'Catch the Bus' week, both externally and internally, in order to encourage and enable behaviour change around transport choices?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>Our communications department were in regular contact with bus operators and supported the promotional campaign. All social media put out by bus operators was re-tweeted by the Council; however, Cardiff Bus was the only company that proactively released information about 'Catch the Bus' week. Information was also provided to staff via the usual communication channels to encourage them to get involved and to travel to/from work by bus.</p>
W19	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BOYLE</u></b></p> <p>A recent accident at the junction of Blenheim Road and Kimberley Road gained media coverage and highlighted the dangers of this junction. Is the Council now minded to accelerate proposals to introduce enhanced safety measures at this location?</p>

**Reply**

We are currently progressing proposals to deliver a new 20mph speed limit scheme in Penylan as part of our city-wide strategy to reduce speed limits in residential areas. The new speed limit area will include Blenheim Road and Kimberley Terrace. As part of this scheme, we shall look to access funding, which may become available later in the year, to deliver the physical traffic calming measures at this junction.

The Council has investigated road safety concerns at this junction and there is justification to introduce a tabled junction, which will reduce vehicle speeds, improve pedestrian crossing facilities and create a safer highway environment.

W20

**WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR BOYLE**

Has the council considered the use of "implied zebras" as part of its active travel strategy and will it join the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in recommending regulatory changes to authorise the use of side road zebra crossings without the need for beacons or zigzag lines?

**Reply**

The Council has not considered the use of "implied zebras" in Cardiff. Currently, Department for Transport (DfT) guidelines do not permit zebra crossings to be constructed without belisha beacons or zigzag lines.

Former Olympic track cycling gold medallist and Tour de France stage winner and yellow jersey holder, Chris Boardman MBE, who has led campaigning on this, is right in saying that these crossings would simply enforce a basic rule of the Highway Code – namely, that if a pedestrian has already started to cross the side road into which you are turning from a main road, you must give way to them.

Recent press coverage of this issue has made reference to the trial of implied zebra crossings commissioned by Transport for Greater Manchester. I will be very interested to see the findings of this work. If the trial shows that there are no actual problems with the safety of these crossings, the case to change to current DfT regulations would be compelling and I would be very happy to get behind it.

	<p>We already take steps to improve pedestrian safety at side roads through the schemes that we implement on the highway. Side road entry treatment can include raising and narrowing the mouth of the junction to make it easier and safer for pedestrians to cross the side road by reducing the speeds of turning vehicles, shortening the length of the crossing and providing a level route. The side road entry treatment also encourages drivers to give way to pedestrians who have started to cross.</p> <p>Implied zebra crossings, if proven to work, could help to further enhance pedestrian safety and encourage active travel.</p>
W21	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR</u></b></p> <p>When will new LED lighting be installed in the underpass on North Road (linking to Meridian Court) having been told this would be done in 2017?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>It was originally envisaged that subway lighting tubes would be upgraded as a latter part of the LED Strategic Route Street Lighting upgrade. Unfortunately, on investigation, it was found that the majority of the fittings were in a poor condition and, therefore, complete replacement was deemed to be necessary. However, I am pleased to confirm that subway lighting improvement funding has been established for the 2019/20 financial year and the Meridian Court subway will therefore be addressed in due course.</p>
W22	<p><b><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR WOOD</u></b></p> <p>What is the average time taken for the implementation of a disabled persons parking space in Cardiff, from submission of the application to painting of the bay?</p> <p><b><u>Reply</u></b></p> <p>The time taken for the implementation of a disabled persons' parking space in Cardiff, from the submission of a successful application to the painting of the bay, is typically 6-9 months. There are, as you will appreciate, many variables that can delay the process, including if any objections are received as part of the TRO consultation process, the grounds of which are then considered carefully before being addressed by officers.</p>