

COUNCIL, 26 OCTOBER 2023 : WRITTEN QUESTIONS

CLIMATE CHANGE
(COUNCILLOR CARO WILD)

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| W1 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR DAVIES</u></p> <p>In light of the industrial action affecting the county, will the Council guarantee that added garden waste collections will be put in place to make up for cancelled collections?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>Due to a reduction in resources, there has been no garden waste collection service during the period of strike action. This is to protect the statutory collection of other waste and recycling. Once the strike action has ended, we will undertake collections of garden waste to clear the backlog.</p> <p>As I have outlined in my Council Statement, pallets of garden waste sacks are available at both Lamby Way and Bessemer Close Recycling Centres and Community Hubs (Ely & Caerau Hub, St Mellons Hub, Powerhouse Hub, Central Library Hub, Grangetown Hub, Rhydypennau Hub, Llandaff North & Gabalfa Hub and Penylan Library & Community Centre) to support residents who want to bring garden waste to the recycling centres. These will be issued free of charge, in limited numbers, whilst stocks are available.</p> |
| W2 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR WOOD</u></p> <p>Given the cancelled garden waste collections due to industrial action, can the council confirm it will resume garden waste collections once the current action is resolved to allow the backlog to be cleared and not implement a winter suspension of this service?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>Due to a reduction in resources, there has been no garden waste collection service during the period of strike action. This is to protect the statutory collection of other waste and recycling. Once the strike action has ended, we will undertake collections of garden waste to clear the backlog. The cessation of the service will still take place following this period as resources will be required to deal with the increase in recycled waste over Christmas, and a limited amount of garden waste is presented in January and February.</p> |

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| | <p>As I have outlined in my Council Statement, pallets of garden waste sacks are available at both Lamby Way and Bessemer Close Recycling Centres and Community Hubs (Ely & Caerau Hub, St Mellons Hub, Powerhouse Hub, Central Library Hub, Grangetown Hub, Rhydypennau Hub, Llandaff North & Gabalfa Hub and Penylan Library & Community Centre) to support residents who want to bring garden waste to the recycling centres. These will be issued free of charge, in limited numbers, whilst stocks are available.</p> |
| W3 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR WOOD</u></p> <p>The litter bin on Parkfield Place has disappeared, what has happened to it and when will it be replaced?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>Our records show that a litter bin on Parkfield Place caught fire last month and was damaged. It was therefore removed and replaced; however, unfortunately, it appears that the new bin has now gone missing. Obviously, we do not simply want to replace the bin if this specific location is subject to repeated damage and loss. An officer will be in touch with you to discuss the matter and identify the appropriate next steps.</p> |
| W4 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR HOPKINS</u></p> <p>Can the council confirm that the street cleansing teams have now started the regime for clearing fallen leaves on the city's roads. Given that Rhydypenau Road and Dan Yr Heol have been designated as hotspots subject to a weekly cleansing of the build up of leaves and other debris because of localised flooding, can confirmation be given that the weekly regime is now in place and that it will continue through the autumn and winter?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>The leaf fall schedule started on Monday 16th October. The schedule works on a two-weekly cycle to clear leaves from tree-lined streets in the city. However, since the beginning of October, the service has been working in flood risk areas, including Rhydypenau Road, and with the Highways Drainage team to prevent flooding of properties.</p> |

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| W5 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR</u></p> <p>Officers have repeatedly mentioned an ongoing city wide review of litter bins. Can the council please confirm the purpose of this review and when it is expected to conclude?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>The Cleansing team began a city-wide litter bin review at the start of this month to identify exact locations of the bins, the condition of the bin, bin types and fill levels at each location. It is anticipated that the project will be concluded by the end of November and this will help inform the development of the litter and fly-tipping strategy.</p> |
| W6 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR</u></p> <p>What consideration has been given to increasing the number of visits a resident can make in this current year to a HWRC to reflect the impact of ongoing strike action?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>There is capacity at both recycling centres for visits to be booked on the day or within 24 hours. Residents can book up to 26 visits per year to a recycling centre and need to book a time slot for each visit. If a resident is visiting a recycling centre by car, this allowance can be used flexibly, but they cannot visit more than three times per day. If a resident is using a van or car with a trailer, they can only book one visit per month.</p> |

CULTURE, PARKS & EVENTS
(COUNCILLOR JENNIFER BURKE)

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| W7 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR WOOD</u></p> <p>Would the council be willing to place CCTV signage around Maitland Park to help deter ongoing problems with Antisocial behaviour and criminality in the vicinity?</p> |
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Reply

I am aware that officers from the Council's Parks and Community Safety teams, together with South Wales Police, have met with local ward and community members to identify measures that can be reasonably taken to reduce anti-social and criminal activity within Maitland Park. The measure of installing CCTV signage is being progressed.

W8

WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR SHIMMIN

Does the Council strategy on highway maintenance / parks cover the seeding and maintaining of wild flowers on verges, roundabouts, large traffic islands etc?

Other Councils across the UK have done this and found it to save a lot of money and resources which could be used elsewhere in the department. Could the Council identify potential sites and proactively start this?

Reply

The Council fully recognises its responsibilities for, and the importance of, promoting and enhancing biodiversity. We have a well-established strategy and approach, which has seen a year-on-year increase since 2012 in land set aside for the purposes that you have described in your question.

At present, the Council manages an approximate area totalling 115 hectares, covering 117 sites across the city, which is equivalent to over 250 senior football pitches. This includes three sites, which are located within the Penylan ward.

Cardiff's Local Nature Partnership is at the forefront of activity and comprehensive details of the work that the Council continues to undertake with a wide range of partners can be found at: <https://www.outdoorcardiff.com/biodiversity/> This includes a specific webpage, which sets out how the Council is reviewing the way that it manages its grasslands.

I would sound a note of caution on the ability to generate significant savings. Savings can be achieved when moving from intensive, high frequency mowing regimes to low frequency mowing regimes that are associated with wild flower management.

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| | <p>In an urban context within Cardiff, the shift has been made from, in the main, low to medium frequency mowing regimes to regimes of low frequency associated with wild flower management. This position, combined with the fact that some regimes that support wild flower management require the implementation of additional operations, including cultivation, the sowing/over-sowing of seed and collection of arisings, results in only marginal cost savings and, in some instances, an increase in costs.</p> <p>Officers would be more than happy to discuss any ideas that you may have within your locality.</p> |
| W9 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR SHIMMIN</u></p> <p>Could the Council please provide an update of the current situation at St David's Hall in terms of RAAC?</p> <p>How much and how widespread is the issue?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>I would refer you to the report to Cabinet today, which provides a detailed update on the current position in terms of the presence and condition of the Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) at St David's Hall. The results of an intrusive survey of the roof area, which was commissioned by the Council, are appended to the report.</p> |
| W10 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR SHIMMIN</u></p> <p>What are all the options being considered for St David's Hall in light of the RAAC situation and the timescales on getting the venue reopened?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>I would refer you to the report to Cabinet today, which sets out the proposed full replacement of the roof at St David's Hall, which would remove the existing RAAC planks. The report provides details of the anticipated timescales for these works and when the venue is likely to reopen.</p> |

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| W11 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR SHIMMIN</u></p> <p>How has the RAAC situation affected the proposed takeover of St David's Hall by AMG, who have agreed to carry out repairs on the roof?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>I would refer you to the report to Cabinet today, which confirms that AMG remains committed to entering into the proposed lease of St Davids Hall and to carrying out the required works to maintain and refurbish the building. However, AMG's planned schedule of works to the building will need to change in order to bring forward a full replacement of the roof. Given that the building will need to be closed to undertake these works to the roof, AMG intends to carry out proposed refurbishment works at the same time.</p> |
| W12 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR SHIMMIN</u></p> <p>How have the staff of St David's Hall been looked after with the prolonged closure, and what are the Council's plans for them if this runs on?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>Since the closure of the building on 7th September 2023, a workspace has been established at County Hall for staff displaced from St David's Hall, in particular Box Office staff, who have been very busy dealing with promoters and ticket holders.</p> <p>Those staff who have not been able to continue their duties since the closure of the building have been considered for temporary redeployment into other work activities, with some front of house staff supporting work at Cardiff Castle. The process of temporary redeployment is ongoing.</p> <p>I would refer you to the report to Cabinet today, which sets out details of related engagement with staff and the options available to them.</p> |

DEPUTY LEADER & EDUCATION
(COUNCILLOR SARAH MERRY)

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| W13 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR HOPKINS</u></p> <p>What action is being taken to support those schools that have had to set deficit budgets in the current financial year?</p> <p>What plans are being developed to support these and potentially other schools in the period ahead?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>As I have confirmed previously, there are 39 schools currently operating within a deficit budget position for the 2023/24 financial year. For these schools in deficit, there is an agreed protocol and officers continue to work with each of the schools within that agreement. This includes support from local finance managers who work closely with schools in the management of their budgets. The work on monitoring and support of schools will be stepped up over the forthcoming year where additional support is identified as being needed and also in readiness for the 2024/25 financial year.</p> |
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FINANCE, MODERNISATION & PERFORMANCE
(COUNCILLOR CHRIS WEAVER)

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| W14 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR</u></p> <p>On how many occasions has the council met with Unite representatives to discuss the ongoing strike action?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>The strike action mandate that Unite has relates specifically and only to a nationally negotiated pay award. Therefore, the Council has not met with Unite to discuss the specific mandate for the strike as any discussions regarding this are taking place between all the trade unions covered by the pay award and the National Employers for local government services.</p> <p>However, a number of meetings have taken place with Unite through various forums, both locally and through the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). Specifically, there has been:</p> |
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- at least one meeting with wider Unite officials through the WLGA;
- a joint meeting with elected members and officers and all trade unions;
- a separate meeting with elected members, officers and Unite officials; and
- a meeting with elected members, officers and Unite's sister union officials.

As well as the above meetings, there has been communication with Unite at a local and regional level throughout the period of industrial action. The Council has also met with Unite and other recognised trade unions through its usual Trade Union Partnership arrangements to discuss any matters that Unite wish to raise that are not nationally negotiated.

HOUSING & COMMUNITIES
(COUNCILLOR LYNDA THORNE)

W15

WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR DAVIES

Following data that shows Cardiff has experienced the second highest number of shoplifting reports of all English and Welsh cities since 2012, what action is the Council taking alongside South Wales Police to reduce incidents?

Reply

The Council and South Wales Police are working together to reduce incidents in a number of ways. A close relationship has been established between South Wales Police and Cardiff Council's City Centre Wardens. The local neighbourhood policing team and the wardens are providing increased presence within the city centre and are able to respond more promptly to call outs that relate to shoplifting. The teams have also increased engagement with communities that are more likely to be engaged in shoplifting and have improved means of gaining intelligence to reduce occurrences.

South Wales Police has a number of active operations to specifically target shoplifting and theft, which include an increased police presence within the city centre once a month to deter shoplifting and criminal behaviour.

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| | <p>The Business Crime Reduction Board, managed by FOR Cardiff, is attended by police and appropriate council officers who use the forum to identify trends in current crime and anti-social behaviour issues and to work in a multi-agency partnership manner to determine the best reactive and preventative measures to reducing theft and other crimes.</p> <p>CCTV in and around business areas has recently been improved and is utilised by the Council and South Wales Police to better identify and respond to criminal incidents.</p> |
| W16 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR DAVIES</u></p> <p>How many people are on the Council's housing waiting list and how many social/council homes have been built in the last three years?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>As at 1st October 2023, there were 8,085 households on Cardiff's common housing waiting list. Over the past three years from April 2020 to March 2023, 1,543 units of accommodation have been delivered by the Council and Registered Social Landlords (housing associations) in Cardiff. This includes social rented homes (905); supported accommodation (291); intermediate rented homes, which will still be within Local Housing Allowance rent levels (240), and Low Cost Home Ownership (107).</p> |

INVESTMENT & DEVELOPMENT
(COUNCILLOR RUSSELL GOODWAY)

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| W17 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR McEVOY</u></p> <p>On what date was the lease for the Fairwater Bowling Green site granted to Fairwater Sports Trust?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>The Council entered into a building agreement with the Trustees of the Fairwater Sports Trust. This agreement provided for the Trustees to undertake works subject to grant funding for the changing rooms and tennis courts area and for a lease be granted for a period of 25 years from May 2001.</p> |
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| W18 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR McEVOY</u></p> <p>What date was Fairwater Sports Trust's lease surrendered or terminated?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>There has been no formal termination of the lease. The lease is due to expire on 30 April 2026.</p> |
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TACKLING POVERTY, EQUALITY & PUBLIC HEALTH (JOB SHARE)
(COUNCILLORS JULIE SANGANI & PETER BRADBURY)

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| W19 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR McEVOY</u></p> <p>What was the all cause mortality rate per month in Cardiff in 2016, 2021 and 2022?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>This information is not currently held by the Council or the Local Public Health Team within Cardiff & Vale University Health Board. The information that is available on all-cause mortality counts is published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and can be accessed at: Deaths registered monthly in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)</p> |
| W20 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR McEVOY</u></p> <p>How many people without any underlying health conditions died of Covid-19 in 2021 & 2022 in Cardiff?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>This information is not currently held by the Council or the Local Public Health Team within Cardiff & Vale University Health Board.</p> |

TRANSPORT & STRATEGIC PLANNING
(COUNCILLOR DAN DE'ATH)

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| W21 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR DAVIES</u></p> <p>What measures is the Council taking to improve visibility on the Taff Trail, particularly north of the A48, and would it consider looking at best practice from other countries where path material glows in the dark?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>Officers have previously considered products with luminous properties as possible solutions for use on unlit routes, such as solar studs and luminous macadam products. The products concerned do not broadcast light in the same way as conventional lighting solutions and cannot be considered a substitute for such lighting. Whilst they may enhance the presence and legibility of pathways, this is very much dependent on the surrounding environment.</p> <p>As you will be aware, large sections of the Taff Trail north of the A48 pass through park and woodland areas heavily populated with broad-leaved trees. Whilst the Council makes every effort to clear leaf debris during and after the autumn leaf fall period, it is highly likely that the properties of a luminous macadam or solar studs would be seriously compromised by leaf and other debris. Any non-standard surface or installation would, of course, bring with it additional challenges and costs in terms of ongoing maintenance. For these reasons, the use of such luminous products is not considered appropriate for the Taff Trail or other similar off-road routes in Cardiff.</p> |
| W22 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR DAVIES</u></p> <p>Why will the Council not incorporate a policy impact assessment for relevant decisions on the finances and operations of Cardiff Bus, a Council asset?</p> |

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| | <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>As you will know as a Council appointed Director of Cardiff City Transport Services Limited (Cardiff Bus), the company is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Council, but is a separate corporate entity that operates on a commercial basis at arms-length from the Council. The Council meets regularly with all commercial bus operators, including Cardiff Bus, and undertakes consultation on all transport policy matters and schemes that may impact on bus services in the city. Council representatives are also available to meet with commercial bus operators to discuss any operational issues.</p> |
| W23 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR WOOD</u></p> <p>Has the council conducted any monitoring of the new cycleway on Allensbank Road to assess usage and, if so, does this meet any anticipated/estimated level of use when the scheme was planned?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>No, as the new cycleway scheme has only recently been completed. Any such monitoring usually takes place post-completion and following a further 'bedding in' period.</p> |
| W24 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR WOOD</u></p> <p>When the council introduced the electronic MiPermit system, was an equality impact assessment undertaken and, if so, what was the assessment of the expected impact on the elderly and, if considered, individuals without digital literacy?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>I can confirm that an Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken when the proposal to introduce a digital residents parking permit option was considered and agreed in 2021. This identified some potential challenges for a minority of people; however, it also confirmed that alternative methods would be made available by the Council for those users who needed them.</p> |
| W25 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR McEVOY</u></p> <p>Are taxi fares set by the Council inclusive of VAT and, if so, does the Council possess any documentary evidence proving that its fares have been calculated to be inclusive of VAT?</p> |

Reply

The Council may fix or vary the rate of fare for the hire of a hackney carriage under powers contained in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1976. This power only applies to fares for hackney carriages where the journey starts and ends within the city. It has no power to set fares for private hire operators or those incurred through use of private hire vehicles using ride hailing apps.

The maximum permitted fares have been fixed by the Council, taking into consideration the directions of HM Revenue and Customs (in VAT Notice 700/25 relating to Value Added Tax for Taxis and Hire cars). The fares are therefore treated as VAT inclusive and no additional charge may be made on top to the customer.

In considering a request to amend the hackney carriage fare, the Council does take account of gross costs incurred by drivers where VAT is an element (e.g. fuel duty). The fare was last reviewed and changes agreed by Cabinet in June 2022. The factors considered when setting a fare were set out in the report to Cabinet.

Whether a driver will be liable to pay VAT will depend on whether they are VAT registered and whether they pass the threshold set by HM Revenue and Customs (currently £85,000).

W26

WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR HOPKINS

Lake Roads West and East have been designated as potential schemes in the council's Active Travel Plan and these included the installation of pedestrian crossings. What timescales are envisaged for consultation on these schemes and can priority be given to installing pedestrian crossings on these roads as soon as possible?

Reply

As noted in your question, both Lake Road East and Lake Road West are designated as future walking and cycling routes, which could potentially incorporate new crossing facilities. Officers are currently formulating proposals for the Roath Park Cycleway project, which will be delivered in phases.

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| | <p>Public engagement will be undertaken as each phase is developed to help inform the different technical options for establishing the route through this corridor, which is shown on the cycleway map on the Council's website. Lake Road West forms part of Phase 3 and Phase 4 of the wider Roath Park Cycle Route and it is anticipated that public engagement will take place in 2024, with discussions with the relevant ward councillors expected to take place prior to wider public engagement.</p> |
| W27 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR</u></p> <p>What plans does the council have to improve pedestrian safety and address significant surface water flooding at the junction of Crown Way and Whitchurch Road?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>Surface water flooding at the junction of Crown Way and Whitchurch Road is being investigated by the Council's Flood and Coastal Risk Management Team. Inspections during both dry and inclement weather have already taken place and the highway drainage system requires further investigation. This location has now been added to the list of areas across the city requiring further surveys by an external contractor. Properties at risk of internal flooding are prioritised for the use of budgets and/or external grant funding; however, as soon as the necessary money becomes available, the additional surveys will be undertaken.</p> |
| W28 | <p><u>WRITTEN QUESTION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TAYLOR</u></p> <p>Can the council confirm the plans for pavement resurfacing in Gabalfa ward for the current financial year?</p> <p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>A footway micro asphalt contract is planned for March 2024 (weather dependent) and a number of identified footways in Gabalfa have been passed to our micro asphalt contractor to determine suitability for this treatment. These include Longspears Avenue, Flaxland Avenue, Laytonia Avenue and Clodien Avenue. We expect to receive confirmation of the suitable footways in mid to late November and confirmation will be sent to ward members in due course.</p> |