

5.1 QUESTION BY A. DAVIES TO COUNCILLOR EMLYN DOLE – LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

“For several months, me and my friends have been struggling to get to school after our school bus was removed.

We have been relying on our parents to drive us to school, as the paths to school are not suitable.

The school bus being removed is having a big impact on my friends’ families with parents being late for work, issues with the service bus and the weather has been horrendous.

I am concerned that the number of people being dropped off by a car is harming our environment.

People keep passing the blame so my question is when will we have our school buses back?”

Response by Councillor Dole

Thank you for your question concerning school transport. I understand your concerns, as you will have enjoyed the opportunity to travel to school on a bus that was provided by the local bus operator. The bus operator charged pupils a fare to travel each day, the County Council did not pay for the service.

The national United Kingdom Government introduced some changes last year which caused a problem whereby the bus operator could no longer provide the service. The service became unaffordable for the operator to continue.

The Council provides free home to school transport for secondary school pupils who live over three miles from the school, this is in accordance with the requirements set out in the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure. The Council does not receive funding to provide transport for pupils who live within three miles of a school. There are two walking routes to school that have been assessed as safe walking routes for pupils to walk or cycle to school. The Council is required to undertake an assessment of the walking route in accordance with guidance provided from the Learner Travel Wales Measure which it has done. The route meets the required criteria to be designated a safe and available route.

The Council has written to the United Kingdom Government to seek a restoration of rules which may assist the local bus operator. Unfortunately, there have been no changes made to enable the operator to reinstate services. I am aware that there is currently a scheduled service bus that provides an option for pupils to travel to school.

I am also pleased to advise that the Council will also be making further improvements to the walking route to school this year which I hope will help with encouraging pupils to take the journey to school by more sustainable means of travel.

5.2 QUESTION BY S. BERE TO COUNCILLOR EMLYN DOLE – LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

“Urban green spaces, such as Jackson’s Lane in the centre of Carmarthen town, are playing an increasingly important role as part of our urban infrastructure, not least because of their potential to absorb excess rainwater as part of sustainable urban drainage systems, and the ability of their plants and trees to act as natural air conditioning during heatwaves or dry spells. Local authorities have long recognised that its green spaces provide a range of benefits beyond their recreational value, including natural or ‘ecosystem’ services such as flood regulation, water quality regulation, noise absorption, carbon storage, wild species diversity, etc. Green spaces are often accurately referred to as the green lungs of a town or city, so in the light of this and the Council’s own green credentials will Cllr. Dole initiate an immediate review of the decision to regenerate Jackson’s Lane, to satisfy himself that the Council is doing all it can to adhere to its green credentials, whilst ensuring that the health & wellbeing benefits of our town centres are maximised.?”

Response by Councillor Dole

The points raised by Ms Bere are very relevant in current times and public spaces like Jacksons Lane will play an important role for people’s health and wellbeing as we emerge from the Covid – 19 lockdown. I can advise Ms Bere that the Jackson’s Lane redevelopment project will be progressed taking into account the Council’s commitment to improving its green credentials. As we emerge from the pandemic, consideration will also be given to the revised scheme’s ability to meet the objectives of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in delivering economic resilience and prosperity, whilst protecting our culture; our welsh language; our residents health; the environment and promoting equality and cohesiveness.

5.4 QUESTION BY J. HEATH TO COUNCILLOR CEFIN CAMPBELL – EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

“In light of the County Council’s commendable decision to declare a climate emergency at the beginning of 2019, followed by its decision to request the Dyfed Pension fund to look at divesting in fossil fuels, followed by its decision in February 2020 to call on the Welsh and Westminster governments to follow its own lead by bringing forward their net-zero carbon targets from 2050 to 2030, will Cllr. Campbell, as the Council’s lead on the environment, request an immediate review of the decision to regenerate the Jackson’s Lane area of Carmarthen town, to satisfy himself that the proposals for Jackson’s Lane are not contrary to the Council’s commendable environment agenda?”

Response by Councillor Campbell

The points raised by Mr Heath are very relevant in current times and public spaces like Jacksons Lane will play an important role for people’s health and wellbeing as we emerge from the Covid – 19 lockdown. I can advise Mr Heath that the Jackson’s Lane redevelopment project will be progressed taking into account the Council’s commitment to improving its green credentials. As we emerge from the pandemic, consideration will also be given to the revised scheme’s ability to meet the objectives

of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in delivering economic resilience and prosperity, whilst protecting our culture; our welsh language; our residents health; the environment and promoting equality and cohesiveness.