

Minutes



Formal Council Questions and Responses

Date: 12 September 2022

1 **Question to the Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Education and Early years: 2022/15
The Impact of the Rising Energy Costs on Educational Settings**

Councillor Lauren James asked:

The cost of living crisis is making daily headlines, and like many other councillors will be I am hearing concerns from residents wondering how they will pay their bills this winter. However the energy price caps do not just affect our residents at home.

Can the Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years confirm the council's assessment of the impact of rising energy costs on our schools, nurseries and other educational settings, and what the council has done and intends to do to support those settings?

Councillor Deb Davies responded:

The Council participates in one of the largest public sector purchasing consortia for its energy needs and buys this in advance each year. To date, a large amount of our energy requirements for 2023/24 has been purchased and it shows a very significant increase from current prices to date; which is not unexpected. We are assessing this as part of a general update to the Council's MTFP and to date, whilst our assessment indicates the increase will be significant, the position is volatile and in particular we will need to consider any initiatives announced by the new Prime Minister to address this crisis and to alleviate the uncertainty felt throughout the country as a consequence of the inaction of the previous national government. This will form part of a wider review of the MTFP and will be considered by Cabinet in due course.

In addition to our financial planning our Carbon Reduction and 21st Century Schools Teams are taking opportunities to make our school buildings more energy efficient through a series of partnership projects with Welsh Government.

New school builds funded by the council will be Carbon Net Zero. This will be evident in the £30 million Bassaleg School expansion which is due for completion next year. Work has also progressed to install low carbon heat pumps which are replacing gas boilers as well as alternative LED lighting and solar panels within our schools estate. This work will reduce energy expenditure and supports our Carbon Net Zero plan which should be realised by 2030.