

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

**County Council
18th October 2018**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Phyl Davies, Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick

What do Puffins and Y Gaer Brecon Cultural Hub have in common? They both come with extremely large mysterious bills. (that's not the question)

Last weeks Brecon and Radnor express had a startling front page advising us that Y Gaer (Brecon cultural hub) will be delayed until next year due to issues with Stone and Puffins breeding.

However, a local ornithologist and the RSPB advised me that Puffins only breed in April and May every year and are not native to Powys but can be found in Scandinavia as well as the Isle of man and Yorkshire as well as Skomer island. Roast Puffin pie is of course a delicacy in Jamtland in northern Sweden and I am sure with the award of a Michelin star to Ynshir in Machynlleth will not be long that it may appear in Northern Powys.

Taking into consideration that Puffins will not be benefiting the Powys Pound soon and that it is October and Not April and they are of course not breeding I will now ask the cabinet member the question.

Will the Cabinet member agree the following; that not only is this possibly the most laughable excuse for incompetence since the classic 'the dog ate my homework' and that it is deeply unfair that all council tax payers throughout Powys will have to continue to pay for this farce when there is a likelihood, with budget cuts in 2019 for libraries, museums and other cultural centres, that the building may not even have sufficient resources to actually open?

Response

We were informed by Kier that their subcontractor, Allesco, who are manufacturing the red sandstone panels for the new library building external cladding, had unfortunately not obtained or arranged to be quarried enough of the stone to complete the required number of panels.

The panels use a thin cut piece of stone on a composite backing on a metal frame, for fixing to the building. The stone, which had been approved by all including BBNPA, was quarried in the UK and shipped to the factory in Germany where the panels were made. We understand that the required matching stone is no longer

available from the original quarry, and an alternative source was found near St Bees Head, in Cumbria. The quarry is adjacent to an RSPB sanctuary. We were advised that the stone could not be quarried until September due to the presence of the puffins (breeding or not). There is a 14 to 16 week manufacturing and delivery period from the date of obtaining the stone. As a result Kier have reported that the last elements of cladding will not be complete until early December.