



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel - Climate Change and Nature**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 19 March 2024 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor S E Keeton (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C M J Evans
W G Thomas
M W Locke

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
O G James
B J Rowlands

Councillor(s)

J A Hale
M H Jones

Other Attendees

David Hopkins
Andrew Stevens

Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance
Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure

Officer(s)

Stuart Davies
Liz Jordan
Carol Morgan
Tom Price
Mike Sweeney
Mark Wade

Head of Highways & Transportation
Scrutiny Officer
Head of Housing & Public Health
Team Leader Pollution Control
Team Leader Highways and Transportation
Director of Place

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No disclosures of interest were received.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

No declarations were made.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

Panel agreed the Minutes of the meeting on 30 January 2024 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

5 Local Flood Risk Management - Annual Update

Andrew Stevens, Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure and relevant officers attended to update the Panel and answer questions. David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance was also present.

Discussion Points:

- Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is currently being produced which will incorporate the Flood Risk Action Plan. This will place an additional financial burden on the Authority and increase workload.
- Construction of flood defence walls at Mumbles is well underway with completion anticipated early 2025. Panel pleased to hear this and praised everyone involved for a really good job.
- Panel queried if the Authority is looking to have such things as catchment tanks in Swansea Valley to prevent flooding. It was confirmed that attenuation features and storage schemes are being used in many schemes to alleviate flooding and all new developments will have attenuation installed.
- Panel feels the way attenuation ponds are constructed on large development sites could be a danger to children, and there needs to be some kind of supplementary planning guidance. Informed there is legislation and standards that the Authority uses to approve such schemes in terms of construction.
- Panel queried when the new TAN 15 will be approved and heard the Welsh Government is currently gathering further evidence and working on the detail, but it is expected to be approved soon.
- Panel believes people should be encouraged to use water butts on the outside of their homes to catch rainwater and to add water tanks into housing so it can be used to flush toilets. Informed there is already a process in place through Planning and the Local Development Plan to encourage use of water butts etc.
- Panel queried if there is a priority list for the capital maintenance drainage budget and if consideration is given to paths that are flooding as well as infrastructure and roads. Heard much of it is reactive work and there is priority given to where highway flooding is a serious concern and risk to highway users or risk to property.
- Panel noted planning consent has been given for Blackpill but expressed concern about issues at the bottom of Mill Lane where there is something happening under the road, possibly a burst pipe or sink hole. Officers asked to meet the relevant Panel Member on site to discuss.
- Panel asked what is being done regarding pollution going directly into the Tawe. Informed Natural Resources Wales is constantly engaged with Welsh Water with the aim of reducing some of the inputs and overflows into the Tawe. In Swansea Bay, the water quality has improved and is currently good.
- Panel queried if there is a way of finding out from the Met Office if total rainfall is rising and heard there is good data on the Met Office website. Link will be shared with the Panel.
- Panel discussed flooding on Mumbles Road whenever there is heavy rain, and asked if anything is being done. Informed there is lots of flooding outside university entrance due to blocked outflow, which has been rectified. Maintenance team currently on-site cleaning gulleys from Brynmill Lane to Blackpill Lido and Department will be checking outflow by Ashley Road to ensure not blocked again.

- Panel feels strongly that relevant staff and councillors need to do SUDS training. Officers happy to arrange another training course for Members if they are interested. Cabinet Member stated all planning officers have had SUDS training and agreed a need for more training, particularly for the Planning Committee on use of SUDS and he is more than happy to facilitate this.
- Panel requested sight of the red list on maintenance of grids, water courses, gully hotspots etc and heard the Department has no issues with sharing it.
- Panel queried if cleansing is carried out more times in the autumn because of leaf fall or if it is throughout the year. Informed it is ongoing but is increased in autumnal months to clear leaf fall.
- Panel discussed coastal flooding and particularly the walkway on Trafalgar Bridge which was closed off due to flooding last winter. Panel asked if anything can be done to alleviate this. Informed study work and investigation is being carried out to identify what is happening in that area, and there could be a localised solution which gets implemented. Also, a strategic flood consequence assessment for that area of Swansea has just been commissioned.
- Panel asked for clarification on what the offer is under Operation Update (paragraph 4) and heard it is a scheme where ward members pay for a gully team to be onsite over weekends where gully attention is needed.
- Panel asked if there is legislation in place stating when people dig up drives and put down artificial hard surfaces that it must be permeable. Cabinet Member agreed to provide a full written response.

Actions:

- Link to Met Office website to be shared with the Panel
- Training on SUDS to be arranged for Planning Committee
- Red list on the maintenance programme to be shared with the Panel
- Information on legislation relating to permeable surfaces to be provided.

6 Air Quality Management

David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance and Tom Price, Team Leader Pollution Control attended to brief the Panel on this issue.

Discussion Points:

- Panel queried if the trend for pollution from motor vehicles is going down and heard there are two main pollutants linked with motor vehicles. Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) is seeing a long-term downward trend in concentration. For particulate, although seeing a slight downward trend, it is too early to state what is driving it.
- Panel commented that buses leave their engines idling outside Bishop Gore School, and asked what can be done about this. Cabinet Member offered to take this back through the procurement chain to ensure it does not happen anymore.
- Panel queried if proximity of residential properties to busy roads should be considered before planning permission is given. Heard it is taken case by

case and applicants are required to submit an air quality assessment for the particular environment.

- Panel queried if research shows whether tree-lined streets make a meaningful difference to air quality and if there is a material difference in air quality between roundabouts and traffic lights. Heard in Swansea it will take time to do monitoring and analyse data to see if there is any impact of green infrastructure. A written response will be provided on whether roundabouts or traffic lights are best in terms of air quality.

Actions:

- Comments on engine idling outside schools to be taken back through procurement chain.
- Information on whether roundabouts or traffic lights are best for air quality to be provided to Panel.

7 Work Plan 2023-24

Panel considered the work plan and noted items for the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.15 am