



City and County of Swansea

Notes of the **Scrutiny Working Group - Local Flood Risk Management**

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Monday, 8 October 2018 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor P K Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

S M Jones
S Pritchard
G D Walker

Councillor(s)

P Lloyd
B J Rowlands

Councillor(s)

I E Mann
M Thomas

Other Attendees

Mark Thomas Cabinet Member - Environment & Infrastructure Management

Officer(s)

Liz Jordan Scrutiny Officer
Mike Sweeney Principal Engineer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): S J Gallagher, C L Philpott and D W W Thomas

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No disclosures of interest were received.

2 Nature Based Solutions to Flood Risk Management

Sion Brackenbury of Coed Cymru attended to present examples of nature based solutions to flood risk management and answer the Working Group's questions.

Discussion points:

- Welsh Government is currently consulting on land management post Brexit. Consultation closes 30 October 2018. Working Group feels The Authority should respond to the consultation.
- Huge opportunity for the Authority to encourage strategic planting in new developments. Welsh Government has legislated. Task is for the Authority to enforce the legislation regarding nature based solutions to flood risk management.
- From January 2019 developers will have to meet Welsh standards for drainage schemes which concern SuDS requirements

- Possible to monitor benefit of natural solutions. Cheltenham has done some excellent work and Port Talbot also has examples which it would be useful to see. Cabinet Member interested in finding out more.
- Working Group feels it is worth investigating if Building Controls can be used to prevent use of non-permeable materials in gardens, such as paving, on existing domestic properties.
- There are opportunities to use nature based solutions in urban environments such as the outskirts of Swansea.

Actions:

- Contact details for Cheltenham and Port Talbot to be provided to Cabinet Member
- Cabinet Member to check if Authority can legislate on use of non- permeable materials in domestic gardens
- Circulate presentation to Working Group members.

3 For Information Reports

Panel members picked up with the Cabinet Member and officer in attendance on issues from the previous meeting in February 2018.

Discussion points:

- Panel was informed in February that new statutory duty was commencing in May 2018 and that there would be a new Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) Approving Body. This has been delayed by Welsh Government until January 2019.
- There are resource implications for delivering SuDS as it is the Authority's responsibility. A report has been drafted proposing 4 new members of staff are employed. Cabinet Member supports this in principle but it is an extra cost and the Authority will have to find innovative way to do it. The Authority will charge for the service so there will be income to support it in 2 to 3 years. Developers not responding well to the change and expecting a surge in applications before January 2019.
- The Flood Risk Leaflet has been reviewed and updated. It is available on line and in hard copy at some community buildings. Panel suggested advice on permeable materials and soak away be included in leaflet. Cabinet Member made alternative suggestion, that a section titled 'Help us prevent flooding' be added to the website, which can include advice on tree planting, use of materials etc.

Actions:

- Section titled 'Help us prevent flooding' to be added to website.

4 Flood Risk Management Progress Report

Mike Sweeney, Principal Engineer went through the update report and answered the Panel's questions. Councillor Mark Thomas also attended and answered questions.

Discussion points:

- The Authority has received £25,000 from Welsh Government for an advanced warning system on a road near Scurlage.
- The Authority has allocated more money to improving gully schemes.
- The maintenance schedule of watercourses has been circulated to councillors. 7 or 8 councillors have responded regarding concerns within their ward. These will be investigated and if applicable added to the list of assets to maintain.
- The Authority should have a consistent approach to maintenance of water course and gullies. Currently different departments are responsible for different areas, for example, on school land; in parks.
- Money is very tight as fewer funding streams available.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

The Working Group discussed progress and came to the following conclusions:

- Pleased that progress has been made on its recommendations from the meeting held in February 2018 including the publication of an updated flood risk leaflet and provision of information on watercourses and gullies to councillors.
- There is a huge opportunity for the Authority to encourage strategic planting in new developments and the Working Group would like to see the Authority take advantage of this.
- Working Group would like to see the Authority use more nature based solutions to flood risk and recommends this opportunity is explored further.
- The Authority should look in to whether it can legislate on use of non-permeable materials in domestic gardens.
- Working Group would like an update at its next meeting on the proposals to employ 4 new members of staff for the delivery of SuDS
- Working Group would like confirmation at its next meeting that a section titled 'Help us prevent flooding' has been added to the webpages.
- Working Group would like to see a consistent approach to maintenance of water courses and gullies across the Authority.
- Working Group will meet again in 4 to 6 months for its annual update on Local Flood Risk Management.

The meeting ended at 11.30 am