

Panel Craffu Perfformiad – Yr Amgylchedd Naturiol

Lleoliad: O bell drwy Microsoft Teams

Dyddiad: Dydd Llun, 14 Rhagfyr 2020

Amser: 3.00 pm

Cynullydd: Y Cynghorydd Peter K Jones

Aelodaeth:

Cynghorwyr: E W Fitzgerald, S J Gallagher, M H Jones, I E Mann, H M Morris, C Richards, B J Rowlands, M Sherwood, W G Thomas a/ac L J Tyler-Lloyd

Agenda

Rhif y Dudalen.

- | | | |
|-----------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb | |
| 2 | Cadarnhau Cynullydd | |
| 3 | Datgeliadau o fuddiannau personol a rhagfarnol
www.abertawe.gov.uk/DatgeliadauBuddiannau | |
| 4 | Gwahardd pleidleisiau chwip a datgan chwipiau'r pleidiau | |
| 5 | Cofnodion
Derbyn nodiadau'r cyfarfod(ydd) blaenorol a chytuno eu bod yn gofnod cywir. | 1 - 4 |
| 6 | Cwestiynau gan y Cyhoedd
Rhaid cyflwyno cwestiynau'n ysgrifenedig, cyn hanner dydd ar y diwrnod gwaith cyn y cyfarfod fan bellaf. Rhaid i gwestiynau ymwneud ag eitemau ar yr agenda. Ymdrinnir â chwestiynau o fewn cyfnod 10 munud. | |
| 7 | Monitro Cyflwyno'r Flaenoriaeth Gorfforaethol - Cynnal a Gwella Adnoddau Naturiol Abertawe | 5 - 32 |
| 8 | Datganiad Argyfwng Hinsawdd - Cynllun Gweithredu'r Cyngor | 33 - 58 |
| 9 | Cynllun Gwaith 2020/21 | 59 - 61 |
| 10 | Llythyrau | 62 - 78 |

Cyfarfod y Panel 1 Medi 2020:

- a) Llythyr at/oddi wrth Aelodau'r Cabinet dros Wella'r Amgylcheda a Rheoli a Chyflwyno Isadeiledd a Gweithrediadau (parthed effeithiau COVID-19, problemau a gwersi amgylcheddol).
- b) Llythyr at Aelod y Cabinet dros Gyflwyno a Gweithrediadau (parthed. Gwaith dilynol - Ymholiad Craffu ar yr Amgylchedd Naturiol).
- c) Llythyr at Aelod y Cabinet dros Wella'r Amgylchedd a Rheoli Isadeiledd (parthed Rheoli Perygl Llifogydd Lleol).

Huw Evans

Huw Evans
Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Democraidd
Dydd Mawrth, 8 Rhagfyr 2020

Cyswllt: Brij Madahar, Swyddog Craffu – Ffôn (01792) 637257

Agenda Item 5



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel - Natural Environment**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 1 September 2020 at 10.30 am

Present: Councillor P K Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
E W Fitzgerald
I E Mann
M Sherwood

Councillor(s)
S J Gallagher
H M Morris
W G Thomas

Councillor(s)
M H Jones
C Richards
L J Tyler-Lloyd

Other Councillor Attendees

Mark Thomas	Cabinet Member – Environment & Infrastructure Management
David Hopkins	Cabinet Member – Delivery & Operations
Paxton Hood-Williams	Minute No. 28 only
Yvonne Jardine	Minute No. 28 only
Jeff Jones	Minute No. 28 only

Officer(s)

Chris Howell	Head of Waste, Cleansing & Parks
Paul Meller	Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager
Deb Hill	Team Leader, Nature Conservation
Bob Fenwick	Group Leader, Highways Maintenance
Mike Sweeney	Team Leader, Highways Maintenance
Brij Madahar	Scrutiny Team Leader

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): B J Rowlands

23 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

24 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips.

In accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, no declarations of Whipped Votes or Party Whips were declared.

25 Minutes.

The minutes of the Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel meeting, held on 16 December 2019, were agreed as an accurate record.

26 Public Questions.

There were no public questions.

27 Discussion on COVID-19 Service Specific Impacts / Environmental Lessons.

The Panel held a discussion on the environmental impacts of the pandemic and any issues and environmental lessons that have arisen during the period of lockdown. The Panel heard from lead Cabinet Members and a number of relevant officers on the experience over the last six months.

The numerous side effects of the pandemic included some positive aspects such as reduced air pollution from less travel and activity, increased use of cycle routes and general benefits to biodiversity and enjoyment of local outdoor space.

The Panel also discussed issues around weed management and how, in the absence of cutting grass verges and parks, an increase in wildlife sightings by the public were reported during lockdown.

Discussion focussed on:

- The importance of local green spaces
- General weed spraying activity, resources and possible alternatives to the use of glyphosate
- Less frequent cutting of grass verges and some meadow areas of parks, to enhance the natural environment, habitats, and biodiversity.
- Public engagement on weed and verge management and possible Community Council involvement
- The Council's wildflower planting programme
- Increased use of cycle routes
- General littering and education surrounding this issue

The Panel also took the opportunity to ask about the recent train derailment at Llangennech and extent of diesel spillage into the Loughor Estuary and environmental / ecological impact. The Panel noted that it was too early to tell as assessments were still being carried out by relevant lead agencies.

The Panel considered the information provided, asked questions, and gave views on the way forward. The Chair thanked all for their input.

AGREED that the Panel write to the Cabinet Members with its views and recommendations.

28 Follow Up - Implementation of Natural Environment Scrutiny Inquiry Recommendations.

The Panel followed up on the implementation of the Natural Environment Scrutiny Inquiry recommendations. The Cabinet Member for Delivery & Operations provided a report to help the Panel assess the impact of the scrutiny inquiry report and show progress against each of the agreed recommendations, since Cabinet decision in July 2019. The Panel also heard from lead officers, Paul Meller, Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager, and Deb Hill, Nature Conservation Team Leader.

The Panel was pleased to note from the Cabinet Member's report specific contributions to change as a direct result of the inquiry, and impact made. For example, there is much sharper focus on the natural environment, resources, and biodiversity and the scrutiny report has been a catalyst for change.

It was noted that the majority of recommendations had been implemented fully and will remain a long-term commitment. Some actions were outstanding and subject to the appointment of specific grant-funded project officers.

Discussion focussed on:

- Progress with the recruitment of a Section 6 Biodiversity Officer and project officers
- The appointment of a part-time temporary Planning Ecologist
- The need for greater collaboration between the Council and Community Councils
- The visibility of the work of the Corporate Biodiversity Working Group
- Our work with schools and training on biodiversity awareness

AGREED that:

1. good progress has been made with the implementation of recommendations, and to conclude formal monitoring of the inquiry report; and
2. the Panel will pick up on any specific issues of concern through the Panel's ongoing monitoring activities.

29 Local Flood Risk Management - Annual Update.

The Panel held a discussion on local flood risk management, which will now be the subject of regular monitoring through this Scrutiny Panel.

The Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management, along with lead officers, reported to the Panel on the experience over the past year, giving examples of significant flooding occurrences, progress with flood risk management, and challenges.

Discussion focussed on:

- The impact of climate change - prevalence of flooding and increase in frequency and severity
- Flood investigations

- The Council's responsibilities in relation to flooding on non-council owned land
- Gully / drain cleansing and frequency – noted purchase of extra gully machine
- Synergy between highways and cleansing operations
- Whether the Council was spending more on reactive emergency responses rather than preventative maintenance
- Communications / public information about flood risk and flooding
- Resources

The Panel considered the information provided, asked questions, and gave views on the way forward. The Chair thanked all for their input.

AGREED that the Panel write to the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management with its views and recommendations on the issue of local flood risk management.

30 Letters.

The Panel received the correspondence sent by the Panel and response received following the meeting of the Panel held on 16 December 2019:

- Letter to / from Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure Management.

The meeting ended at 12.49 pm

Chair

Agenda Item 7



Report of the Convener

Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel – 14 December 2020

Monitoring Delivery of Corporate Priority – Maintaining & Enhancing Swansea's Natural Resources & Biodiversity

Purpose	The Panel has planned a discussion on the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priority and Well-being Objective in relation to Maintaining & Enhancing Swansea's Natural Resources & Biodiversity.
Content	Lead Cabinet Members and Officers will be present to report to the Panel about the objective, key actions, measures of success, and progress. Extract from the following are provided to support discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council's Annual Review of Performance which reports on the Council's corporate priorities.• Council's Annual Performance Monitoring Report which contains an overview of performance, and current performance measures.
Councillors are being asked to	Consider the information provided, ask questions and give views
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Peter Jones (convener)
Lead Officer & Report Author	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel is relatively new and continues to develop its role, and has to date been discussing specific issues of concern relevant to this area of scrutiny.
- 1.2 As a Performance Panel, it is important for the Panel to establish a regular dialogue with Cabinet Members and officers about the Council's overall progress in delivering the corporate priority on maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources & biodiversity, and accounting for performance against targets and other measures identified.

- 1.3 The work plan of the Panel should include such regular performance monitoring in order to provide challenge around corporate activities, achievements and their impact, as well as having space to look at particular issues either arising from this work or important to the natural environment.

2. Performance Monitoring

- 2.1 The Panel will need to consider how best it can monitor performance, looking at the various sources of available data and information that would be relevant to the Panel's remit, and would effectively provide a good picture of how the Council is performing.
- 2.2 The Council publishes an Annual Review of Performance and the report for 2019/20 was published in October 2020. It contains a section on each corporate objective. An extract from this report is **appended**, covering the parts relevant to 'maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources & biodiversity' for discussion.
- 2.3 The Council also publishes quarterly and annual performance monitoring reports. The Council's Annual Performance Monitoring Report, presented to Cabinet in September 2020, shows the performance indicators that measure progress in meeting corporate objectives. The report contains an overview of performance in relation to maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural environment & biodiversity, and current performance measures. This is also **appended**. There may be additional information and data, that could benefit the Panel and support / enrich discussion.
- 2.4 The Panel is keen to hear about the role played by the Corporate Biodiversity Working Group (now known as the Corporate Biodiversity and Climate Change Working Group) in helping to deliver actions and embed biodiversity duties across the Council. The Panel is also keen to hear about the work of the Nature Conservation Team, is supporting and delivering council objectives.

3. Cabinet Responsibility and Accountability

- 3.1 Although maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources & biodiversity, and issues relating to the natural environment are cross-cutting, a number of cabinet members have a lead role, including:
- Councillor Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service Transformation (Deputy Leader) – Lead on Climate Change Emergency
 - Councillor David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Delivery & Operations (Deputy Leader) – Lead on Environmental Health, Planning Policy, Public Protection, and Sustainable Development (including biodiversity)

- Councillor Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management – Lead on Air Quality & Pollution Incidents, Coastal Defence, Grass Cutting Services, Marina, Foreshore & Beach Maintenance, Parks Maintenance
- Councillor Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism – Lead on Parks Development

3.2 Lead Director / Heads of Service:

- Martin Nicholls – Director of Place
- Stuart Davies – Head of Highways & Transportation
- Phil Holmes – Head of Planning & City Regeneration
- Chris Howell – Head of Waste, Cleansing & Parks.
- Mark Wade – Head of Housing & Public Health

4. Regular Monitoring

- 4.1 The Panel will establish a pattern of regular monitoring. It is suggested that a progress report every six months on the delivery of this corporate objective will be an effective way forward.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Extract from Annual Review of Performance 2019/20, published by Swansea Council

Appendix 2 – Extract from Cabinet Report 17 September 2020: Annual Performance Monitoring Report 2019/20

Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's **Natural Resources and Biodiversity**

1. Why this is a Well-being Objective

- We shall seek across the range of the Council's responsibilities, as appropriate, to maintain and enhance biodiversity, reduce our carbon footprint, and improve our knowledge and understanding of our natural environment, thus benefiting our health and well-being.
- Swansea is one of the most ecologically rich and diverse counties in the UK. Its unique variety of habitats and species and wonderful range of parks, greenspaces, nature reserves, beaches and landscapes needs to be maintained, enhanced and sustainably managed for the benefit of everyone now and into the future.
- Our future survival and quality of life is dependent on a healthy resilient natural environment and the multiple benefits it provides to society.
- Our natural environment and biodiversity is under threat and in decline due to unsustainable human activities. Habitats and species are being lost at an alarming and unsustainable rate.
- We urgently need to tackle climate change by reducing our use of carbon and by maintaining and enhancing resilient ecosystems and a strong green infrastructure network to help us mitigate for and adapt to the pressures of climate change.
- We have a legal duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and under the Well Being of future Generations Act 2015 (Resilient Wales goal) to protect and enhance biodiversity and maintain resilient ecosystems, and to report our progress to Welsh Government.
- Evidence shows that contact with nature has significant benefits for people's physical and mental health.
- Our future prosperity and well -being is dependent on a healthy resilient natural environment.
- We need to work with nature to improve the quality of our air, water and soils.
- We want everyone to understand and appreciate the unique value and fragility of Swansea's outstanding natural environment and to play their part in looking after and enhancing it.
- Our ambition is for everyone in Swansea to have access to and to benefit from an ecologically diverse, attractive, well managed and resilient natural environment.
- We want to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity so that its contribution to Swansea's economic and social well-being is not lost or reduced.
- We aim to create a greener more sustainable, ecologically diverse and resilient county, where its unique natural environment is recognised as one of its most valued and distinctive assets.
- We have a moral responsibility to look after biodiversity for its own intrinsic value.

2. The steps we said that we would take to meet this Well-being Objective.

- Develop, adopt and implement a Corporate Biodiversity (Section 6) Action Plan.
- Work with partners to develop and deliver a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Swansea.
- Develop and adopt a Council tree policy.
- Begin to map existing Green Infrastructure assets and ecosystem service provision, and identify areas, which provide the best opportunities for improvement.
- Undertake a preliminary biodiversity audit of Council owned land and where possible manage our corporate assets for the benefit of biodiversity and natural resources.
- Work with partners to develop and implement opportunities to enhance biodiversity and improve ecological connectivity.
- Work towards creating a low carbon economy, which promotes renewable energy and takes actions to reduce our carbon footprint.
- Continue to participate in and support the Low Carbon Swansea Initiative.
- Support initiatives that will increase Swansea's urban tree cover.

- Improve awareness and understanding of our natural environment through provision of information, training and events.
- Provide opportunities for schoolchildren to access and learn about their natural environment.
- Work towards improving access to and maintaining the quality of our parks and greenspaces.
- Continue to deliver a programme of wildflower planting and management.
- Engage with local communities to encourage volunteering and to support them taking action to enhance and maintain their local greenspaces and wildlife sites.
- Take actions that help to control invasive non-native species
- Undertake (selected or targeted) enhancements to greenspace as part of an environmental works programme to meet our commitment to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.
- Minimise our use of non-recyclable products and materials, and recycle more waste.

3. What success will look like.

- Swansea's outstanding natural assets are recognised as underpinning the health, well-being and success of its citizens. Knowledge and understanding of our natural environment and how we can maintain and enhance it is improved and applied. This helps citizens benefit from ecosystem services and the opportunities of a low carbon economy. Trees and other habitat are valued and supported. Biodiversity is maintained and enhanced, our carbon footprint is reduced and resources are used less and recycled more.

4. Progress taking steps to meet this Well-being Objective – what worked.

A Corporate Biodiversity Action Plan.

- This year has seen the submission of the Council's first Section 6 Monitoring Report to Welsh Government outlining what it has done to comply with the Biodiversity Duty introduced under the provisions of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Since this Act came into force the Council has made significant progress at both a strategic and operational level to maintain and enhance biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems. A three year Action Plan covering 2020 to 2022 is being developed and will include the 17 steps that form part of this well-being objective.
- A corporate Biodiversity Working Group was established in August 2019 to coordinate implement, monitor and review the Action Plan. In order to benefit from greater integration, the Group's remit has been widened to consider climate change and the Council's response to the Climate Emergency. The Group is now known as the corporate Biodiversity and Climate Change Working Group. Over the past year, the number of services actively engaged in in this work has significantly increased with representation from strategic as well as operational services.

Green Infrastructure Strategy

- This year we have consulted on our draft Swansea Central Area Green Infrastructure strategy which identifies the benefits and cost-effectiveness of green infrastructure i.e. reduced flood risk, summer cooling, cleaner air and water, reductions in noise, better mental and physical health, gains in biodiversity, reduced CO2 emissions and energy costs and a strengthened economy. The strategy, which is entitled 'Regenerating our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife', sets out a vision for the central area of Swansea to be much greener, creating green spaces which deliver resilience, prosperity, health and well-being. The intention is to double the amount of green infrastructure (with the exception of open water) within 10 years to create a distinctive destination city with a high quality environment which is more liveable, better adapted to climate change and better for people and wildlife.

- The Strategy also includes a Green Space Factor Tool. This practical tool is designed to increase the quantity and quality of green infrastructure and maximise compliance to the Welsh Government's statutory Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Standard 2019. The tool is not mandatory but developers will be encouraged and expected to use it as part of the pre application planning process for the central area.
- This work is already helping to guide developers on how nature can be integrated into their designs including vertical wall gardens, urban allotments and more trees. Two of the city's main housing associations have pledged to take part with Coastal Group planning a green roof on their office block in the city centre and Pobl providing more greenery in its developments.
- A County wide green infrastructure strategy is also being developed. This wider strategy will be appropriate for adoption by adopted by Public Service Board partners. Both strategies will be supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance which will set standards.

Case Study: Swansea - A National Park City

The draft 'Regenerating our City for Well-being and Wildlife Strategy' includes the desire to work towards National Park City Status". These are cities where people and nature are better connected, are rich in wildlife and where every child and young person benefits from exploring, playing and learning outdoors. They have high-quality green spaces and good air quality. Green cover in the city is currently estimated at 13 per cent but the aim is to increase this to 26 per cent by 2030. Rob Stewart, Leader of Swansea Council said: "Swansea is undergoing a once in a generation regeneration and as the city is rebuilt, we will deliver a greener more beautiful natural environment for everyone to enjoy, but more importantly one that keeps us healthy. New 'green lungs' will be created across Swansea as we work with Natural Resources Wales to create what could be Wales's first national park city with new green public areas, woodlands and other nature supporting spaces. We know there is lots of work to do but we are determined Swansea will lead the way in Wales."

Council Tree Policy

- Trees are managed using nationally and internationally recognised standards and a set of comprehensive guidance is available on the Council's website. The Council aims to fully update and formalise a tree policy, which will maintain and expand tree cover; raise awareness of the value of trees; ensure risks from trees are adequately managed; conserve trees of value and ensure that the Council meets its biodiversity duties in respect of trees. The Council has 900 woodlands and tree groups that contain an estimated 250,000 trees and 38,000 individual trees mapped and surveyed in Parks, Schools, Cemeteries, Housing Land & Highways.
- A recommendation from the Natural Environment Scrutiny Report was agreed this year to 'Develop and adopt a Council tree policy, which encourages planting of native species trees where appropriate'. The consideration of native species where possible is already implemented in practice and will be integrated into the tree policy. It will complement the Draft Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland on Development Sites Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- The Swansea Local Development Plan protects trees and encourages further planting. It explicitly includes the planting of trees in the creation of linkages between existing habitats and in the creation of 'Place' especially where new neighbourhoods are developed. Importantly, in addition to the compliance expected of Council services, the policy also raises awareness of the

rights and responsibilities of the public and encouraging “ownership” of the planting and management of trees.

Case Study: Penllergaer Tree Felling Prosecution

Seventy trees, including a giant Redwood, were felled on land at Penllergaer, near to a housing development. Following a five-month long investigation, the Council issued a court summons to a number of individuals. The housing developer and a number of individuals were fined a total of £420,000 after being found guilty in August 2019 of breaching tree preservation regulations attached to trees next to the building site. Swansea Council welcomed the sentencing those involved in the felling of a large number of protected trees. Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure Management, said: "The outcome is a reflection of the hard work the Council has undertaken to investigate this environmental crime. In monetary terms, these trees held a significant value but no amount of money or fine can replace the value of the trees in terms of what they mean to the community and Swansea as a whole. I would like to thank all the teams involved including our Tree Officers and our legal team. Hopefully today's outcome will send a strong message out to developers or the public that removing protected trees without permission is something we will follow up strongly and through the courts if necessary." The convictions have been appealed and the case is currently listed for hearing January 2021.

- This year the Council has implemented an Ash dieback management strategy to tackle Ash trees affected by Ash Dieback, a fatal disease threatening the entire species. The fungal disease causes trees to become brittle over time with branches breaking away from the main body of the tree. If they are not identified and dealt with, trees are at risk of collapsing, presenting an immediate danger to the surrounding area. A cross cutting Ash Dieback Action Plan is in place, so far, around 3,000 Ash trees have been surveyed on public land, many of which show varying signs of Ash Dieback. All our resources will be focussed on dealing with diseased trees on public land, by acting now, we reduce the risk that diseased trees will fall on people, property, power lines and roads in future.

Urban Tree Cover Initiatives

- Over the last year, the Council has involved and supported local communities in participating in initiatives that maintain and enhance tree cover. Work has included the Trees for Cities project which included planting over 4000 trees (whips) abutting Mynydd Newydd Playing Fields and tree planting with volunteers at Ravenhill Park and Singleton Park.
- Around the city centre we are creating new parkland, new green areas, planting many more trees and a delivering a huge re-greening programme. The £12 million Kingsway development has resulted in 170 new trees being planted in the adjacent areas. Although around 50 existing trees had to be removed following assessments. By the end of the programme there'll be around 220 trees - an increase of 100%. It will increase biodiversity in the city centre, help combat the Climate Emergency and make Swansea a more pleasant place to live in, work and visit.
- New trees including species such as red maple, London plane, and birch – have been planted close to the Tesco Marina store as part of Wellington Street's development. Unfortunately while it was necessary to remove eight trees to facilitate two way traffic and entranceway trees they have been replaced with 17 semi mature saplings. The Council continues to work closely with partners such as Coeden Fach, a local, not for profit nursery, where volunteers help nurture indigenous trees. It has also supported the planting of trees through partnerships working with

Swansea Community Green Space Project, Swansea Tree Forums, Coed Cymru the Woodland Trust, Trees for Cities and others.

Welsh Housing Quality Standard Green Space Improvements

- A significant investment was made in green space improvements for neighbourhoods where Welsh Quality Housing Standard improvements are also being made until December 2021. Site surveys and preparation of plans for environmental enhancements within Council housing estates have been completed and works undertaken. Swansea Council is introducing the greenery as part of a plan to improve the residential environment. In April 2019, 144 new trees for Penlan were planted by the council's tree services unit on behalf of the housing team. The semi-mature trees standing 10-12 feet tall represented a wide variety of native and ornamental species.

Mapping Ecosystem Services and Green Infrastructure Opportunities

- High level mapping at a macro level has been completed using a Welsh Government grant obtained for initial ecosystem mapping. This starts to identify areas of poorest environmental quality and prioritise areas for enhancement. Improved monitoring evidence and wider public and corporate understanding of the benefits of ecosystem service provision will help to put sustainable development at the heart of Council policies and ensure Swansea's unique natural environment is valued.
- More detailed mapping of existing Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure assets and ecosystem service provision on a ward by ward basis is being planned. This process will involve working with Members to identify areas which provide the best opportunities for improvement and, where appropriate, maximise match funding opportunities afforded by Members' community fund.
- Mapping technologies also helping flood management resilience planning particularly in relation to adverse weather and flooding. The Council continues to work with Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Water and developers, looking to support green solutions to combat flood risk due to local sources, surface water flooding, watercourses and groundwater. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) training opportunities were identified.
- A new key performance indicator has been developed based on the Bathing Water Quality for Swansea Bay linked to the prediction model and public message display. This found that water quality was 'good'.
- The Council has worked throughout the period to be in a position to submit an application to the International Dark Sky Association to gain Gower Dark Sky Community status. A pre-requisite for this is the review of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) relating to lighting within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This has now been incorporated within the latest version of the AONB Design Guide, which is due to be consulted on and adopted by the end of 2020.

Biodiversity Audit of Corporate Assets and Effective Management

- A scheme of work has begun reviewing all council assets in terms of biodiversity. Actions include a review of all Council owned Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), a survey of land identified for disposal, a review of grazing plans and an biodiversity and ecosystem services

audit of all Council owned estates land. We continue to monitor and survey the Council's biodiversity resource to improve our evidence base and understanding of the benefits.

- A Natural Environment Scrutiny Inquiry recommendation in 2019 was to insert a relevant biodiversity clause into service level agreements, licences, etc. which relates to land use and land management ensuring that the importance of these clauses is made clear to the land managers/occupiers. This clause has been already inserted into service level agreements for community groups managing green space and going forward work will take place so more detailed and relevant biodiversity clauses are inserted into all service level agreements, licences, etc. Other examples include contracts relating to grazing sites and those with external event organisers that require Council consent before certain activities (e.g. clearing land, special events, etc.) are undertaken to prevent loss of biodiversity.

Enhancing Biodiversity and Improving Ecological Connectivity

- The Local Biodiversity Action Plan is currently undergoing a review by the Swansea Biodiversity Partnership. This will update actions and incorporate new species and habitats declared of principal importance in Wales by the Welsh Government since the last update in 2005. This document will become the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Swansea.
- Collaborative working with services areas across the Council and with partner organisations is improving the biodiversity ecological connectivity across sites. We have worked with Highways, Parks, Housing, Education, and Corporate Properties to identify and take forward pilot projects such as developing verge habitats, wildlife corridors and habitats to encourage pollinators.
- Work took place on a Development and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), which has been approved for public consultation. This requires the Council to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems. This duty is embedded as an objective in the Local Well Being Plan, is a Priority in the Council's Corporate Plan and incorporated as policy within the Swansea Local Development Plan. The SPG specifically focusses on how the Council will follow a "stepwise approach" to implementing the biodiversity duty through its own planning decision making process. It will integrate greater obligations around biodiversity with some major developments approved subject to Section 106 agreements providing financial contributions towards practical on/off site mitigation and/or compensation measures against biodiversity loss and also in support of maintenance agreements.

Case Study: Swift Bricks for all new Council houses

Thanks to a simple but rather special new initiative, all new council houses being built in Swansea in future will offer swifts the chance to set up their own family homes under the eaves of the buildings. A special 'swift brick' will be included in the design and build of scores of new-build council houses so that the birds can use them as safe nesting places in the years ahead. Cllr Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Housing and Energy, said "Swansea Council will be among the first in the country to fit 'swift bricks' as standard in new council homes to create homes for the birds. She said: "It's a really simple but highly-effective way to make an important contribution to the wildlife communities in our city". For centuries swifts have naturally made their homes in spaces under the roofs of houses, but the modern design of buildings has made it harder for them to find the nooks and corners they need, hence the need for swift bricks. Swift bricks come with the support of the RSPB. They are made of hard plastic and are the size, shape and colour of a standard house brick. A hole allows the swift entry into the space behind the brick so they can nest between the outer wall

and inner-wall of the building without troubling the roof space or the human family they share the house with.

The Climate Emergency

- Swansea Council has recognised the key role we have to play in tackling climate change and passed a Climate Change Emergency notice of motion in June 2019. The motion calls upon both the UK and Welsh Governments to provide us with the necessary powers and resources to ensure that Swansea becomes carbon neutral in 2030 and to promote a greater awareness of climate change amongst the local population. It also acknowledged the importance of working with expert partners to identify how we can build on these actions moving forward.
- We have for some time recognised our role as both a key provider of services and a major employer in the local area and have undertaken a range of activities to promote renewable energy, support a low carbon local economy and reduce our carbon footprint. However, the Council views it essential that the city as a whole plays its part in tackling the challenges of climate change. Synergies with Public Service Board's Working with Nature Group's local area objective have been identified and relationships with expert organisations established. Swansea Environment Forum has accepted the Council's invitation to assist in developing its climate action plan particularly in relation to supporting and facilitating wider stakeholder engagement.
- A Climate Change Charter has been drafted setting out headline commitments that the Council seeks to adopt and which it encourages all organisations within the local authority area to also commit. An appropriate date was being discussed prior to the coronavirus crisis to launch the Climate Change Charter for Swansea with the aim of as many private, public and third sector partners as possible signing up. The planning of engagement work to reach out to citizens was also well underway with a marketplace style event being scheduled to mark Clean Air Day on 22 June 2020. This accessible event was to be an opportunity for citizens to interact with council services and our partners, ask questions and provide feedback and suggestions for future actions.
- Swansea Council is becoming among the most energy-efficient local authorities in Wales. Over the last 10 years the council has reduced its carbon footprint by 30% but has plans to go even further over the coming years. To enable this we are reviewing governance around climate change as a whole-council approach is essential. The Council's Equalities and Future Generations Future Generations Policy Development Committee (PDC) has been charged with a specific remit to cover the response to Climate Change emergency. At a corporate level, the Biodiversity Working Group has been extended to incorporate Climate Change so both related issues can be tackled in an integrated way. Work had begun reviewing relevant Council policies and looking at how they align with tackling climate change or where gaps may exist.

A Low Carbon Economy

- Our Energy Strategy and the City Deal regeneration are key mechanisms by which the Council works towards a low carbon economy. These projects along with sustainable and active travel measures to combat climate change are detailed within the 'Economy and Infrastructure' (although a low carbon approach increasingly proactively underpins all our well-being objectives). Other highlights include:
- We are continuing to seek opportunities to replace our corporate fleet with Ultra low emission vehicles, which is currently the largest in Wales; Electric Vans (40); Electric car (1) and working

with others nationally to urge Welsh Government to develop electric car charging infrastructure. We are also in the process of developing an infrastructure of Electric Charging Points, which will include 32 charge points and associated recharging bays which will be installed in 12 car parks across Swansea. All the electricity supplying the pillars will be 100% sustainably sourced.

- We are continuing to implement agile working so that our workforce can reduce unnecessary travel and plans are underway to vacate the Civic Centre and establish a Central Public Sector hub. This process was accelerated with lockdown. We have been leading the implementation of the One Public Estate programme within Swansea and the South West Wales region. As a result, significant interest from public sector bodies has been established on the proposal to share office accommodation and associated services within a Central Public Sector Hub. The development is a key component of Swansea Central – Phase 2 and is aligned to support the development of an agile work force.

Renewable Energy

- We procure our energy using Crown Commercial Services Framework Agreements via the National Procurement Service (NPS); 100% is from renewable energy sources. We are also exploring the development of Solar Farm Projects in collaboration with the Welsh Government Energy Services. We support community owned renewable energy schemes, like SCEES, to deliver clean energy and benefit local schools and community buildings. During 2019, the SCEES Solar PV project (covering 11 schools and 1 care home) generated 356,000 kWh. Additional Solar PV installations at the Guildhall and four schools generated 89,000kwh. The Council is exploring the potential for a solar farm to generate electricity that will either be sold back to the grid.
- While Swansea's Tidal Lagoon did not meet the necessary value-for-money criteria to secure subsidy support in 2018 - despite the publication of the independent Hendy Review 2017 supporting the project in Swansea – we have remained committed to the building the world's first purpose-built tidal energy lagoon. Through the Swansea Bay City Deal region, we established a Tidal Lagoon Task Force which reviewed the proposal. The re-imagined concept of an Integrated Dragon Island incorporates the development of a Tidal Lagoon and a large floating development of commercial and residential accommodation. It is envisaged that the proposal will be facilitated through the procurement of a private sector partner as a joint venture, which will remove the need for a large government subsidy. It includes public sector Power Purchase agreements and a broader scope including solar, wind and data storage.

Case Study: Earth Hour 2020

The Council was proud to participate in and promote Earth Hour on Saturday 28th March 2020.

Along with our partners and residents, the Council took part in the specular hour long 'lights out' World Wide Fund for Nature event. Cllr Lewis, Cabinet member for Homes and Energy said: "The lights going out at our Civic Centre, at the council offices in the Guildhall, as well as homes across the city, sends a powerful message about just how much we all care about the environment in Swansea. That's why it has become such a special an important event here each year." The annual event celebrates efforts to reduce carbon made to date and raises awareness of the need to do more in future.

- Swansea Council has built up the biggest public sector-operated electric vehicle fleet in Wales. At a major transport conference staged in the city, Swansea Council was being hailed a 'beacon of excellence' by Green Fleet Cymru. So far we have 41 electric vehicles, the biggest public sector

fleet of its kind in Wales. This will help cut our carbon footprint, save money and help reduce air pollution in our city.

- A focus on Corporate Fleet charge-point infrastructure funding remains a priority. Swansea Council has recently been successful with an award of £89,000 WG funding from the Local Transport Fund for the provision of publically accessible, electric vehicle fast charge points in a number of Council-owned parking interchanges across Swansea.

Case Study: Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Swansea Council is bidding for a share of £5 million that has been made available to UK local authorities who are developing electric vehicle charging infrastructure in residential areas. The money Swansea is bidding for will help fund the installation of 26 charging bays in 13 car parks across the city. Each charging point will enable electric vehicles to travel approximately 30 miles from a one hour charge. The Council is hoping the increase in electric charging infrastructure in Swansea will encourage more motorists to go green and use electric cars. The latest bid for funding will also add to Welsh Government transport grant funding (£89k) which was approved earlier in the year and will help fund the installation of electric charging points at the city's two Park and Ride sites. This additional funding bid is key in our efforts to increase the infrastructure in Swansea that is needed to give motorists confidence they can choose electric powered vehicles in the future. Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Homes and Energy, said: "We have made serious commitments to the residents of Swansea to improve our local environment by reducing our carbon footprint. Along with new charging points in our Park and Ride sites, we will now be looking at rolling out even more charging points in car parks close to residential areas all across the city."

Low Carbon Swansea

- We are a founder member of Low Carbon Swansea Bay (LCSB), a network of public, private and voluntary organisations in South West Wales working to reduce our carbon footprint by sharing knowledge, ideas, networks and training opportunities. Low Carbon Swansea Bay is funded through membership subscriptions and sponsorship and is managed by members with support from Swansea Environmental Forum. We are active participants in the Swansea Bay Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle Group; in addition, engagement exploring hydrogen vehicles has taken place with Riversimple and Swansea University. The Council has also supported an annual Clean Air Roadshow and engaged local businesses and partners by hosting the first Green Fleet Wales event in Swansea this year. To achieve an integrated approach, the Council works with others nationally to urge Welsh Government to develop an electric car charging infrastructure.

Information, Training and Events

- This year has seen the publication of our popular annual Environmental Events programme, which provides details of hundreds of free or low cost environmental events taking place around Swansea. In addition awareness raising talks and training, workshops have taken place at venues across Swansea. This includes guided tours of our specialist parks, nature reserves and supported volunteering days. Interpretation boards help visitors appreciate environmental and cultural features at both community green spaces and key visitor attractions.

Opportunities for School Children

- The 'Our Nature our Future' Project funded by NRW has helped to embed the value of outdoor learning and has supported 20 local primary schools to make better use of their local wildlife

sites for learning. It has also helped each school to develop and implement plans to improve their school grounds for biodiversity resulting in wildflower gardens, growing schemes, tree planting, wildlife ponds and habitat creation.

- Collaborative working with the RSPB has helped children to access and learn about their natural environment for the benefit of pupils' health and wellbeing. The programme also connects schools to local Wildlife Sites and introduces pupils to the nature in their local area. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this knowledge may have helped during lockdown as families reconnected with local green spaces as part of their daily exercise.
- Low cost training is delivered at Bishops Wood Local Nature Reserve for schools within Swansea and wider afield. We have supported the international Eco Schools programmes, which encourages schools to promote recycling and reduce energy and water consumption and encouraged our Foundation Phase learning pupils to learn outdoors ensuring a respect for nature, biodiversity and eco-systems. For pupils at Key Stage 4, we have worked in partnerships with our Universities to establish STEM workshops including the impact of climate change.

Improving Access to and Quality of Parks and Greenspace

- The Council has mapped access to green space, including access points, and identified opportunities for improvements. The aim is to ensure that at least 75% of the local population live within 300m (5 minutes' walk) of their nearest area of natural greenspace. Work has started on a green fairness policy. Green fairness is about ensuring high quality green infrastructure and natural greenspace is available in deprived neighbourhoods to help improve resilience to climate change and reduce health inequalities. Nature is widely acknowledged to have helped many people cope and build resilience during the coronavirus crisis.
- The annual programme of wildflower planting and management saw over 41,000 square metres of wild flowers sown at almost 180 sites across the city including roundabouts, roadside verges and parks. The Council recognises that native species particularly benefit pollinators and so the aim is to include more native species where possible and also explore perennial planting.
- Eighteen of Swansea's favourite beauty spots have been awarded prestigious Green Flag or Green Flag Community Award status. Among the 2019 winners are six Swansea Council parks including Clyne Gardens, Victoria Park, Brynmill Park, Cwmdonkin Park, Parc Llewelyn and the Botanical & Ornamental Gardens at Singleton. The Green Flag Award is an international mark of a quality park or green space. It is delivered in Wales by Keep Wales Tidy, with support from the Welsh Government.

Engaging and Supporting Local Community Action

- We have continued to encourage greater community ownership of parks, nature reserves and wildlife sites and have worked with 'friends of parks' organisations to ensure long-term sustainability of parks and public spaces. We currently have more than 30 active Friends of Parks/Open Spaces with several groups undertaking leases and considering a Community Asset Transfer. Financial investment in community centres and parks have been significant over the last two years, due to external funding, Beyond Bricks & Mortar, third party investment and by the groups themselves.

Case Study: Library users are writing their own chapter in environmental activism - by tackling litter on Swansea Beach.

Groups of friends, workmates and relatives are borrowing litter-pick equipment from the city's seafront Central Library and caring for the neighbouring sands. They are also taking the equipment - supplied to the library by charity Keep Wales Tidy - to do litter picks in other areas of the city. The Keep Wales Tidy equipment for adults and children is also available at Townhill and Clydach Libraries. Customers, community groups and businesses can borrow pickers, hoops and high-vis jackets before going out, picking litter and disposing of it responsibly back at the library. In doing so they all play their part in keeping their community a cleaner and safer place to live, play and work. Access to equipment helps new and existing groups become more sustainable and helps them to work independently. Robert Francis-Davies, the Council's Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration and Tourism, said: "I applaud the efforts of library users who go out and care for the environment. It's a Council priority to maintain and enhance Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity and actions such as these by the public are a big help in us achieving that."

- Many of the groups have been successful in obtaining in excess of £300,000 grants as they are able to apply for funding which the Council cannot. A memorandum of understanding has been produced in partnership with the groups, which will assist with funding applications. Buildings have benefited general refurbishment and parks investment has been substantial with new playground equipment, MUGAs, events and family days and planting of new trees and shrubs. The Parks Operations Teams continue to provide ongoing maintenance of all parks, open spaces, green infrastructure and playgrounds. Six Green Flag Awards have been retained this year.
- Several roles across Council services and partner organisations now include volunteer coordination. This involves liaison with all relevant Service Areas, Ward members and external organisations such as Community Councils to encourage and provide volunteering opportunities for adults and children. Co-ordinators also recruit, train and engage with new volunteers, for example, through social prescribing, corporate social responsibility, etc. The Gower Hedgerow Hub project is in its second year of operation having planted 1,500 trees planted in Gower and maintained more than 2.5km of hedgerows. It provides practical opportunities for people to learn about hedges and help look after this important habitat. The Council's Swansea Wildlife Volunteers Group funded by NRW has provided opportunities for local volunteers to help with practical conservation tasks such as sand dune management, tree and wildflower planting, pond creation and woodland management.

Case Study: Coed Gwilym Park set for new lease of life

A much-loved park in Clydach is set for a new lease of life thanks to proposals that will see it being run by the local community council. Coed Gwilym Park is the largest open space in the village and home to a heritage centre, cricket, football bowls and other sports clubs and has two community play areas. A leasing arrangement with Clydach Community Council means volunteers will be taking over day-to-day management of the park on behalf of local people, securing the park's future for the next 125 years. Cllr Robert Francis-Davies said "The benefit for the council is that it retains ownership of the park and reduces its overall costs. The benefits for communities are that they get a much bigger say in how the park is operated and it also opens doors to funding opportunities for improvements that are not available to the Council." Working with the existing friends of the park group, the Community Council will take a phased approach to improving the look, feel and facilities on offer at the park, starting with new signage and footpath repairs within the park.

Controlling Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

- The mapping of Invasive Non Native Species has been completed for the whole of the County and sites treated. Species subject to control included Japanese knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, wild parsnip and hogweed. A Japanese Knotweed advice leaflet has been produced and guidance and advice is provided on the Council's website. Commercial Services are supporting the marketing, promotion and sale of services that tackle invasive species such as the Japanese knotweed control service. Advice is provided to landowners in various formats to raise awareness of the problem to help control the spread of INNS.

Reducing Waste and Increasing Recycling

- The latest data prior to the Coronavirus disruption suggested that Swansea was meeting its reuse and recycling target of 64% for 2019/20. In quarter 3, 67% of waste collected was reused or recycled (67.82%), which was a 5% increase above that achieved the same time the previous year. This was an improvement of the 62% being recycled at the start of the year. Residual waste tonnages at the kerbside reduced by circa 15% in the first 6 months this year which equates to about 3,000 tonnes less waste going to landfill every year This success can be attributed to intensive communications with the public appealing for their help. Campaigns used PR, social media, online platforms, letter drops and radio coverage to increase public support.
- Swansea Council introduced its 'Keep it out' initiative in February in a bid to get non-recyclers on board with other households already doing their bit by using kerbside recycling services. The campaign involved Council recycling officers carrying out on-street surveys of black bag waste to see if recyclable materials were being placed in them. Residents not recycling were then issued with a letter advising they could be at risk of being issued with a fixed penalty notice if they continued not to recycle. The initiative has led to a reduction of around 100 tonnes of black bag waste collected every fortnight and has led to an increase in the amount of recyclable waste collected. The Council is aiming to achieve a 2,600T reduction of the annual amount of black bag (non-recyclable) waste collected from homes in the city and is expected to save more than a quarter of a million pounds in landfill disposal costs as a result.
- This year steps have been taken to increase food recycling by commercial properties with visits carried out to businesses. The focus has also been on promoting recycling in Flats where recycling is often harder due to lack of space and facilities. Seasonal campaigns have included a Halloween reminder to recycle pumpkins as food waste. At the start of the academic year, hundreds of recycling information packs were sent to students explaining how students can help keep their communities clean and free of litter during their stay.
- Swansea Council is working with Welsh Government across Wales on an Absorbent Hygiene Product (AHP) collection and recycling project. The regional Long Term Food Waste Contract (including Bridgend) continues to work well and provide a very cost effective disposal option. To prevent future issues in the long term, responses to new planning applications now encourage better recycling access and amenities.
- We have continued the roll out of reusable pink bags across the city, calling on residents to only put out loose bottles, pots, tubs and trays in the bags. The work undertaken to ensure the quality of plastic improves has led to the Council receiving an income from recycling processors for each tonne collected, rather than having to pay for it to be recycled. The efforts of residents have led to a huge step forward in terms of the quality of plastic we have collected. Our aim is to

ensure that the plastic we collect from the kerb is a high enough quality to be of interest to plastic recycling processors in the UK.

- We have continued to prioritise cleanliness in our communities. Our dedicated fly tipping taskforce provides a responsive and targeted service to fly tipping. We have delivered enforcement training to a number of frontline staff to discourage fly tipping and facilitate an improved response. We have also started to provide training to some of our partners such as Coastal Housing to deter fly tipping at sites they manage.
- The Council is also keen to encourage reuse rather than recycling where possible. As a result our services avoid sourcing virgin materials where possible, reuse parts and offer surplus materials at cost to the public or our partners. Collaborative work has focused on seeking long term recycling improvements and improving the circular economy potential.

5. How this Well-being Objective is contributing to the achievement of the national well-being goals.

- *A Prosperous Wales* - The unique natural environment in Swansea and its Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty supports thousands of jobs in the tourism sector worth £440 million per annum to the local economy.
- *A Resilient Wales* - The resilience of our natural environment is improved by restoring degraded habitats and through habitat creation and improving connectivity.
- *A Healthier Wales* – Trees play an important role in relation to filtering air of harmful particulates reducing respiratory conditions, while natural spaces have a documented beneficial impact on mental health
- *A More Equal Wales* - Involvement in environmental training and volunteering builds skills that are accessible to all.
- *A Wales of Cohesive Communities* – The social benefits that accompany improving the percentage of tree cover and natural open space within Swansea create welcoming communities where people are proud to belong and experience an improved quality of life.
- *A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language* – Accessible, managed green and beach space offers sport and recreational opportunities while Swansea’s physical geography and maritime location have inspired a rich local cultural identity.
- *A Globally Responsible Wales* – Reduces our impact on the planet, moving towards a ‘one planet’ Wales that does not use more than its fair share of resources.

6. Lessons learnt and areas for development

A Corporate Biodiversity Action Plan

- Implementation of the Action Plan will be overseen by the new Scrutiny Panel for Natural Environment and Biodiversity. It provides a more integrated approach that will contribute to the delivery of the other corporate wellbeing goals. The Action Plan also involves collaboration with other Public Service Board (PSB) partners to deliver actions which contribute to achieving the PSB Well-being Plan Working with Nature priority.

Green Infrastructure Strategy for the City Centre

- The Regeneration Team plan to use the Strategy to advise current and future phases of the Swansea Central Area regeneration programme. The Strategy has been aligned to the Swansea Central Area Regeneration Framework (SCARF) to reflect this. The Green Space Factor tool is

being piloted on the Digital Village Scheme. Partners and developers will be encouraged to use the strategy and tool as a simple and effective means of demonstrating compliance with legislation. Following the adoption of the Strategy an action plan will be drawn up and governance and performance measures agreed.

Tree policy

- A Corporate Tree Policy has been drafted with the next step being consultation at the appropriate time in line with other linked activity. However resource issues are and are likely to continue to be challenging due to the onerous demands of the Ash die back situation on internal and external capacity relating to this specialist area.

Urban Tree Cover Initiatives

- In addition to providing a register of tree loss/gain on Council owned land, future work involves the mapping of suitable areas for tree planting on council land and the setting of targets for planting.

Welsh Quality Housing Standard Green space improvements

- Beyond the December 2020 WQHS deadline, a programme of work will continue to improve green spaces on housing estates. While anti-social behaviour has resulted in a small number of saplings being vandalised just months after planting in Penlan. The community's reaction to the vandals has galvanised support for the project locally. The Council's response has resulted in previously disengaged young people having a personal stake in the neighbourhood improvement process which will inform future planting work.

Case Study: Young people help replace vandalised trees

Young people in Swansea have helped to replant trees in a Swansea community after a spate of vandalism resulted in newly planted trees being ripped up. Swansea Council is aiming to make Penlan greener and started a tree planting scheme in 2019 which has seen more than 300 trees were planted on green spaces and in streets in the community. Regrettably, vandals have since ripped up a number of trees along Heol Gwrosydd and Penderry Road. However young people that are part of the Youth Justice Service have since pitched in with the Council's Parks Team to replace the damaged trees. Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Homes and Energy, said: "We want our tenants to live in good quality homes within a safe and secure community - a green environment will help us achieve this. ""It was disappointing to discover the new trees had been targeted so soon after they had been planted. "The young people within the Youth Justice Service have done an excellent job in assisting the Council with the replanting exercise. Hopefully it will send a positive message out to other young people in the city that they can contribute to a greener, improved community environment."

Mapping Ecosystem Services and Green Infrastructure Opportunities

- We plan to take forward the development of ecosystem and biodiversity maps at a ward level in consultation with local residents, Friends of groups and Members and identify opportunities for enhancement. We will continue to work with all service areas and partners to develop a high level map of the County's existing ecosystems services and the potential green infrastructure opportunities, deficiencies and constraints. This will help to inform the development of the County Wide Green Infrastructure Strategy

Biodiversity Audit of Corporate Assets and Effective Management

- The Council is registered with South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) 2019/20 which monitors and holds biodiversity records. This ecological information helps ensure council services carrying out projects do so in line with the Council's Section 6 Biodiversity Duty. A review of how this services is used and funded is planned to maximise effectiveness and share costs across services.

Enhancing biodiversity and improving ecological connectivity.

- The unplanned reduction in cutting of verges due to Coronavirus has unexpectedly accelerated the strategy of reducing mowing. The unintentional results in appropriate locations has resulted in a visible increase in nature. Work will continue to identify those locations in Council ownership which can be given over to self-seeding, less intensive mowing and/or seeding with perennial species mixes.

A Climate Emergency

- Swansea Rural Development Programme has set up a Local Action Group made up of people from the third, private and public sector. It has successfully refreshed its governing document the 'Local Delivery Strategy' (LDS) to incorporate a new approach to the way in which work is delivered in our rural communities. The LDS now incorporates One Planet principles to address climate change, by placing sustainability and community resilience as the fundamental element of our work. This is the first time any local authority LAG has used the One Planet approach in Wales to affect strategy and grant making decisions. It is a new way of working and thinking, which will also be required from those who wish to partner or benefit from the fund it manages with Swansea RDP. This acknowledges Swansea Council's declaration of a climate emergency and the urgent need for everyone to change tack away from 'business as usual' to a way of doing things to protect the lives of future generations.

A low carbon economy & carbon reduction

- We have explored approaches and methodologies for measuring Swansea's carbon footprint with Swansea Environmental Forum and the Public Service Board's Working with Nature Group. Swansea Environmental Forum and the Council have also considered a 'One Planet Swansea' approach to measuring the Council's footprint but an application to Big Lottery was unsuccessful. In order to best measure progress towards a carbon neutral in 2030, we have volunteered to participate in a Welsh Government pilot project to develop standard 'scopes' for the public sector in tackling climate change. Working towards decarbonisation will help provide long term sustainable solutions, particularly pertinent during the COVID-19 recovery. We aim to develop a set of net zero commitments/pledges for COP26 in 2021.
- Our Green Fleet policy will be looking at all options to find ways of reducing emission levels from our fleet, including looking into biofuels and hydrogen fuel cells as well as fully-electric methods.

Engaging with and supporting local community action

- The Council works with the local community to help maintain environmental assets. However, active, committed volunteers are only one part of a solution which also requires equipment, supervision, training and transport costs. As a result, while the wider benefits to individuals and

the local community are significant, valuable and the local impacts critical, organisational resources are still needed to maintain the majority of our environmental assets.

Reducing Waste and increasing recycling

- The disposal of waste wood is a problem, which is forecast to increase due to the impact of Ash Die Back. The Council applied for Welsh Government Circular Economy Capital Funding to support the setting up of a Wood Reuse and Recycling Centre. Agile working refurbishment plans for the Guildhall as with previous transformation projects at the Civic Centre will reuse and repurpose furniture contributing to the circular economy. These plans were disrupted by the coronavirus but will be taken forward in an appropriate form. Moving forward the focus will be on increasing the recycling of absorbent hygiene products and exploration of opportunities to recycle textiles.

Part 2: How we have worked when taking steps to meet this Well-being Objective

- This part of the Review will set out how the Council has worked when meeting the steps to deliver its Well-being Objectives in line with the sustainability principles (5 ways of working) set out within the Act.

Addressing long-term challenges

- *Safeguarding People from Harm* - An ageing population represents a significant increase in the demand for health and social care services. We will address this by working towards a financially sustainable position, delivering on agreed savings targets and delivering priorities identified by our established improvement programmes.
- *Improving Education & Skills* - The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Educational Tribunal Wales (ALNET) Act 2018 is just one aspect of an overarching ALN Transformation Programme. At the heart of these reforms is a focus on inclusion; putting children and young people at the centre and ensuring they are supported to reach their full potential in the future.
- *Transforming our Economy & Infrastructure* - A long term approach that considers how Swansea can flex and adapt to an uncertain future is particularly evident in City Deal projects which aim to prepare Swansea by building skills and infrastructure for a successful future. Using future trends to embrace new ways of working from 5G to the internet of things will ensure Swansea's future generations are resilient and able to thrive. This is particularly pertinent while the opportunities and risks associated with Brexit are being understood. Investment in projects such as the Kingsway digital employment district aim to future proof the city centre by acting on identified future trends in technology and behaviours.
- *Tackling Poverty* – Our future well-being is dependent upon tackling the long term causes and impact of poverty. Our Early Years strategy is designed to tackle poverty at an early stage by providing support to parents and families and aiming to ensure that children living in deprived communities reach their developmental milestones, before they start school. Our work in schools supports children and young people living in deprived areas by reducing inequalities in educational attainment and access to further and higher education, training and employment. We continue to support individuals to overcome their barriers to employment through co-ordinated person-centred employability support. Our long term approach to tackling poverty is based on the premise that it is “everyone’s business” and we have a cross-departmental

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Addressing long-term challenges

Our well-being, prosperity, quality of life and future survival is dependent on a healthy resilient natural environment and stable climate. We have started work to better understand our carbon footprint, in line with emerging guidance for public sector greenhouse emissions reporting. Swansea volunteered to take part in a Welsh Government pilot exploring this area. We are starting research and development to scope the implications of introducing decarbonisation policies and strategies to inform future work programmes between 2021 and 2030.

Preventing problems from occurring or getting worse

Our Green Infrastructure Strategy will help the Council take a preventative approach to managing extreme weather events like the high winds and flooding of Storm Dennis responded to by the Council in 2020. A planned approach to wider environmental improvements in neighbourhoods should prevent need for more responsive action by designing out opportunities for anti-social behaviour.

Working in partnership with others

The Council has forged close relationships with both national organisations like Natural resources Wales and the RSPB and also local ones such as Swansea Environmental Forum, the Swansea Biodiversity Partnership and the Swansea Environment Centre. The Council provides supports and works in partnership with several key not for profit organisations. The development of tools and strategic guidance for developers is resulting in closer working with the private sector.

Integration - Joining things up and avoiding conflicts

In order to align biodiversity awareness and decision making across the Council in a virtuous circle, the Nature Conservation Team is liaising with the School and Governor Unit to ensure that all governing bodies appoint an environmental link governor. It is expected that these will primarily be local ward Members given the synergies with activities developing the mapping and identification of environmental opportunities at ward level (these assessments include school sites). It is hoped in the medium term that they can also report back on each school's environmental activities and this can inform the 3 yearly section 6 report to Welsh Government.

Involving people

Over the past eighteen months, hundreds of members of the public have fed into our largest ever engagement with citizens about the natural environment. The overwhelming message from our public engagement was that city nature is important to people; it increases their enjoyment and the time they spend in the city centre. Our actions reflect that finding.

Part 3 - How the Council is changing the way we work: Where the change needs to happen

The Council recognises that we have to work differently if we are to meet challenges in the future. For this change to happen we have to first change the Council-wide systems that support the delivery of specific services.

Corporate Planning

Following the adoption of the Corporate Plan in May 2017, the Corporate Plan was refreshed for 2018/22. This enabled consideration of Swansea Public Services Board's (PSB) Local Well-being Plan, a review of progress and an assessment of the evidence, looking at how we could close any gaps and further maximise our contribution to the National Well-being Goals. The main change following the review was the addition of a sixth well-being objective to the Corporate Plan – 'Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's Natural Resources and Biodiversity'. Minor refreshments of the plan have been made each year since to reflect changing circumstances; for example, the Council's Declaration of a Climate Emergency.

Financial Planning

In January 2019, the City & County of Swansea Pension Fund became one of the first Pension Fund's in the UK to adopt an Environmental, Social & Governance policy which commits the pension fund to reduce its already low exposure to carbon based fossil fuel investments by up to 50% over the next 4 years. This is significant as pension assets are in excess of £2bn. An initial review identified Swansea's investments in carbon based industries were already 9% below average. Since then over £0.5bn of assets have been moved into low carbon index tracking funds which has reduced further what was already a low level of investments in carbon-related industries. Alongside its carbon reduction programme in its listed equity portfolio, the fund also actively seeks to invest in energy-efficient infrastructure projects (renewables, solar, alternative fuels) and clean tech in other parts of its portfolio, always seeking to optimise its return, whilst having a positive environmental impact. In future continued pooling will take place with the Wales Pension Partnership. Our Environmental Social and Governance policy explicitly recognises the duty on protecting future generations around exposure to carbon, climate change emergency, and the government aim of net zero carbon by 2050. In 2020, the Fund was recognised as having the best approach to sustainable investment by the Local Authority Pension Fund Awards best scheme in the UK by the Local Authority Pension Fund Investment Awards.

Performance Management

Since the adoption of a new well-being objective in 2018/19, we have worked to identify appropriate and suitably robust performance indicators to fully and quantitatively measure the Council's contribution to improving environmental well-being through the new Corporate Well-being Objective on Natural Resources and Biodiversity. In future years, this reporting mechanism will also include progress relating to the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency.

Our well-being, prosperity, quality of life and future survival is dependent on a healthy resilient natural environment and stable climate. Significant steps were taken during 19/20 to meet this wellbeing objective:

-The Council's first Section 6 Monitoring Report was submitted to Welsh Government outlining what it has done to comply with its Biodiversity (Section 6) Duty and an Action Plan drafted. A new Corporate Biodiversity Working Group as well as a Scrutiny Panel have been established to oversee delivery of identified actions over the next 3 years. The Group also considers the issue of climate change and the Council's response to Climate Emergency.

-A Policy Development Committee (PDC) has been designated the Equalities and Future Generations Future Generations PDC charged with a specific remit to cover the response to Climate Change emergency. Work has begun reviewing relevant Council policies and looking at how they align with tackling climate change or where gaps may exist.

-A draft Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy has been consulted on which sets out a vision for the central area of Swansea to be much greener, creating green spaces which deliver resilience, prosperity, health and well-being, and will include a target for increasing tree canopy coverage within the public realm. A County-wide GI strategy is also being prepared

-Tree planting targets have been exceeded helped by the £12 million Kingsway development which has resulted in over 200 new trees being planted, and a new City Centre park is in the process of being created.

-A Corporate Tree Policy has been drafted with consultation to follow current consultation on Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) relating to Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows as well SPG relating to Biodiversity. An Ash dieback management strategy has been implemented and an Ash Dieback Action Plan is in place with around 3,000 Ash trees surveyed on public land, many of which show varying signs of dieback.

-High level mapping of biodiversity and GI has been undertaken to identify areas of poorest environmental quality and identify and prioritise areas for GI enhancement over the next 3 years. Work has also begun on a biodiversity review of all Council assets. Clauses are now routinely inserted into new service level agreements, contracts, licences, etc. relating to land use and land management to prevent loss of biodiversity. A service level agreement has been renewed with the local biodiversity records centre to ensure effective management of land/buildings

-Local communities have become routinely involved and supported in participating in initiatives that maintain and enhance tree cover and improve ecological connectivity. Work has included planting over 4000 whips (not included in planting targets) abutting Mynydd Newydd Playing Fields and tree planting with volunteers at Ravenhill Park and Singleton Park. A local not for profit tree nursery has been supported where volunteers help nurture indigenous trees. This is one of several not for profit organisations the Council works in partnership with. The planting of trees has also been supported through partnership working with a variety of community groups

-Collaborative working with services areas across the Council has improved ecological connectivity through developing verge habitats, wildlife corridors and habitats to encourage pollinators. Significant funding is available from a variety of sources for tree planting, identifying sufficient suitable sites on publicly owned land and procuring appropriate species types is proving more problematic.

-A Climate Change Charter has been drafted setting out headline commitments which the Council seeks to adopt and which it encourages all organisations within the area to commit to. Launch of this Charter has been delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic. Swansea Environment Forum has accepted the Council's invitation to assist in developing a Climate Action Plan particularly in relation to supporting and facilitating wider stakeholder engagement.

- The Council has built up the biggest public sector-operated electric vehicle fleet in Wales, which has been hailed a 'beacon of excellence' by Green Fleet Cymru. This will help cut our carbon footprint, save money and reduce air pollution. An infrastructure of Electric Charging Points is being developed which will be installed in 12 car parks across Swansea. The electricity supply will be 100% sustainably sourced.

-Agile working has reduced unnecessary travel and plans are underway to vacate the Civic Centre and establish a Central Public Sector hub. This process was accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council has been leading the implementation of the One Public Estate programme within Swansea and the South West Wales region. As a result, significant interest from public sector bodies has been established on the proposal to share office accommodation and associated services within a Central Public Sector Hub. The development is a key component of Swansea Central - Phase 2.

-All the Council's energy is procured from 100% renewable energy sources. Community owned renewable energy schemes are supported, with the Swansea Community Energy and Enterprise Scheme Solar PV project delivering clean energy for 11 local schools and a care home during 2019 generating 356,000 kWh.

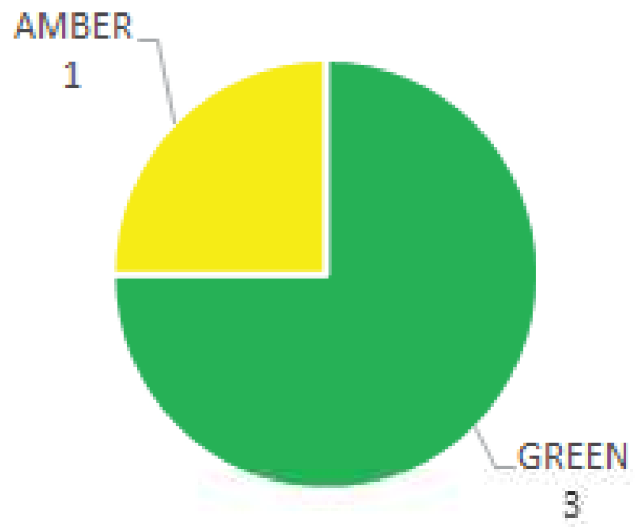
Additional Solar PV installations at the Guildhall and four schools generated 89,000kwh.

- The Council remains committed to the building of the world's first purpose built tidal energy lagoon. Through the Swansea Bay City Deal Region a Tidal Lagoon Task Force their concept plans have been developed for a large floating development of commercial and residential accommodation.
- The Council is a founder member of Low Carbon Swansea Bay (LCSB) -a network of public, private and voluntary organisations in South West Wales working to reduce our carbon footprint by sharing knowledge, ideas, networks and training opportunities. The Council actively participate in the Swansea Bay Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle Group, support a Clean Air Roadshow and have engaged local businesses and partners by hosting the first Green Fleet Wales event in Swansea. Working towards decarbonisation will help provide long term sustainable solutions, particularly pertinent during the Covid-19 pandemic recovery. And the aim is to develop a set of net zero commitments/pledges in 2021.
- Interpretation boards have been installed to help visitors appreciate environmental and cultural features at both community green spaces and key visitor attractions. An Environmental Events programme is published annually which provides details of hundreds of free or low cost local environmental events. Awareness raising talks and training workshops have taken place across Swansea, including guided tours of specialist parks and Nature Reserves and in support of volunteering days. These events were well attended during 19/20 but will be impacted going forward in the short term due to the Covid -19 pandemic
- The 'Our Nature our Future' project has helped to embed the value of outdoor learning and supported 20 local primary schools to make better use of their school grounds for biodiversity. This has been complemented by the 'Giving Nature a Home' project working in collaboration with the RSPB which has helped children to access and learn about their local natural environment. Nature is widely acknowledged to have helped many people cope and build resilience during the coronavirus crisis as families reconnected with local green spaces as part of their daily exercise.
- Training for school children has also been delivered at the Council's Bishops Wood Local Nature Reserve, Caswell, and the international Eco Schools programmes has been supported which encourages schools to promote recycling and reduce energy and water consumption and encouraged Foundation Phase pupils to learn outdoors. There will be limited opportunities for future events until social distancing restrictions are lifted
- Means of access to green space has been mapped, including access points and opportunities for improvements identified. The aim is to ensure that at least 75% of the local population live within 300m (5 minutes' walk) of their nearest area of natural greenspace. Work has started on a Green Fairness Policy. Green Fairness is about ensuring high quality GI and natural greenspace is available in deprived neighbourhoods to help improve resilience to climate change and reduce health inequalities.
- The annual programme of wildflower planting and management saw over 31,000 square metres of wild flowers sown at almost 180 sites across the city including roundabouts, roadside verges and parks. The unplanned recent reduction in cutting of verges has accelerated the strategy of reducing mowing. The unintentional results in appropriate locations has resulted in a visible increase in nature. Work will continue to identify those locations in Council ownership which can be given over to wildflower planting, however the extent of planting will be reduced in 20/21 due the delay start to the programme
- Eighteen locations have been awarded prestigious Green Flag or Green Flag Community Award status. Among the 2019 winners are six Swansea Council parks including Clyne Gardens, Victoria Park, Brynmill Park, Cwmdonkin Park, Parc Llewelyn and the Botanical & Ornamental Gardens at Singleton.
- Greater community ownership of parks, nature reserves and wildlife sites and working with 'Friends of' organisations is helping to ensure long-term sustainability of parks and public spaces. There are more than 30 active 'Friends of' Parks/Open Spaces groups with several undertaking leases and considering a Community Asset Transfer.
- Friends of groups have been able to access grants which the Council cannot - achieving in excess of £300k to support general building refurbishment as well as investment in new playground equipment, MUGAs, planting of new trees and shrubs, etc. A memorandum of understanding has been produced in partnership with the groups which will assist with future funding applications. Several roles across Council services and partner organisations now include volunteer coordination to encourage and provide volunteering opportunities for adults and children to help with practical conservation/maintenance tasks within their neighbourhoods. However organisational resources are still needed for the majority of our environmental assets and service areas have continued to maintain nature reserves and rights of way throughout the COVID-19 pandemic
- The mapping of Invasive Non Native Species has been completed for the whole of the County and long term site treatment is being rolled -out. A Japanese Knotweed advice leaflet has been produced and further guidance is provided on the Council's website.
- A new key performance indicator has been developed based on the Bathing Water Quality for Swansea Bay linked to the prediction model and public message display. Results were fractionally below target but this has been linked to issues with external data feeds.
- Environmental enhancement schemes have been prepared and are in the process of being implemented for Council housing estates as part of the Welsh Housing

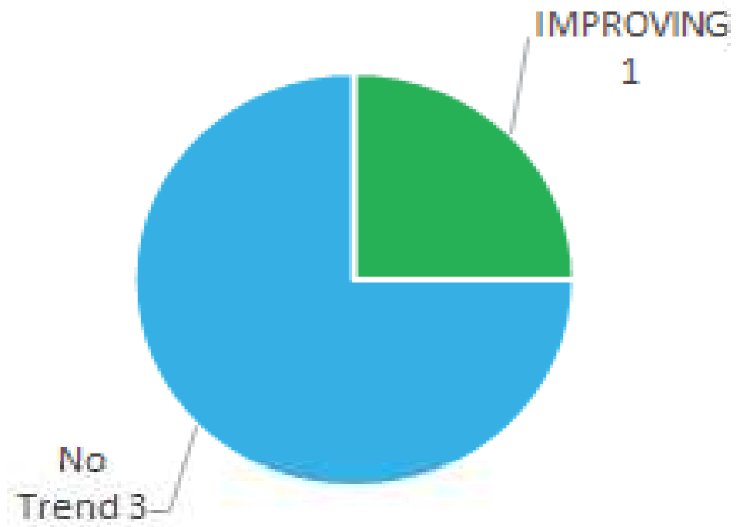
Quality Scheme with hundreds of new trees planted or scheduled to be planted over the next 2 years. Replanting has been required in parts of Penlan due to vandalism



-The Council exceeded its waste reuse and recycling target of 64%, achieving a result of 64.7% which was an increase of 2.43% from last year.

5
Performance against Target
2019/2020



Performance compared to same Period of previous
year
2019/2020



Performance Indicator	KEY	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	Comment-2019/2020
NAT001  Numbers of trees planted by Parks during the year NO GRAPH DISPLAYED FIRST YEAR OF FULL REPORTING	RAG			GREEN	
	Result			414	
	Target			283	
	Trend			No Data	
	Num			414	
	Den				
NAT002  Area of Wildflowers sown during the year (sq.m.) NO GRAPH DISPLAYED FIRST YEAR OF FULL REPORTING	RAG			GREEN	It should be noted that the area of wildflowers sown for 2020/21 will be significantly reduced due to a delay in starting works due to Covid-19
	Result			31041	
	Target			31000	
	Trend			No Data	
	Num			31041	
	Den				

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Performance Indicator	KEY	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	Comment-2019/2020
NAT003 ↑ Percentage of Bathing Water Quality Predictions displayed on public electronic sign. NO GRAPH DISPLAYED FIRST YEAR OF FULL REPORTING	RAG			AMBER	First year for the PI. Some issues with external data feeds leading to more than forecasted 'No Prediction Available' messages.
	Result			89.7%	
	Target			90.00%	
	Trend			No Data	
	Num			1497	
	Den			1668	
WMT009b (PAM030) ↑ The percentage of municipal waste collected by local authorities and prepared for reuse and/or recycled, including source segregated biowastes that are composted or treated biologically in another way	RAG	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	
	Result	64.01%	62.54%	64.97%	
	Target	60.00%	62.50%	64.00%	
	Trend	IMPROVING	DECLINING	IMPROVING	
	Num	71123.12	68965.80	71110.61	
	Den	111103.85	110267.00	109447.63	

Agenda Item 8



Report of the Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy and Service Transformation

Council – 3 December 2020

Climate Emergency Declaration Policy Review and Proposed Action

Purpose:	The report presents a policy review and proposed action following the Notice of Motion on Climate Change Emergency presented to Council on 27 th June 2019.
Report Author:	Martin Nicholls
Finance Officer:	Ben Smith
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar
For Information	

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Following the Notice of Motion on Climate Change Emergency presented to Council on 27th June 2019, the Authority was committed to:

1. *Call upon the UK and Welsh governments to provide us with the necessary powers and resources to ensure Swansea becomes carbon neutral by 2030.*
2. *Publicise climate emergency and promote a greater awareness of the truth of climate change amongst the local population.*
3. *Work with relevant experts in research and development to:*
 - a. *Review our current strategies and action plans for addressing climate change.*
 - b. *Identify any further policy changes or actions which we could undertake, within the scope of our powers and resources, to meet the challenge of climate emergency.*

c. *Seek the help of local partners such as Swansea University and other research bodies to, within one year, produce a report to share with the community, explaining work already underway and achievements already made, as well as targets for the future.*

4. *Update on further work undertaken by the Council in this area on an annual basis through the Council Annual Review of Performance Report section on corporate objective - Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity. (See Appendix 1 – Notice of Motion)*

1.2 Initial progress over the first few months following the Notice of Motion was positive although it is safe to say that since the start of the Covid pandemic this progress stalled but actions have continued wherever it has been possible.

1.3 This report sets out the progress made and recommendations to take the work programme forward in a timely manner. In reviewing progress to date it seems logical to split the activity into two distinct work streams as outlined below.

1.4 As a result of work to date it is recommended that the commitment to addressing climate change is broken down into two clearly defined work streams.

Work stream 1. Swansea Council striving for net zero carbon by 2030 on its own in scope emissions.

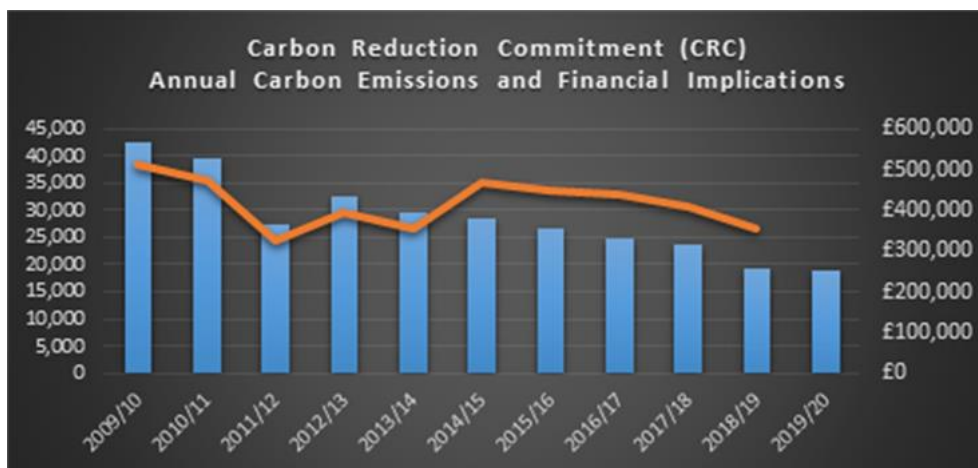
Work stream 2. How the City and County of Swansea, its major employers, its citizens and businesses can achieve net zero carbon by 2050.

Since the notice of motion work has continued on both these work streams although greater progress has been made on the “internal” emissions due to the challenges and logistics of public and stakeholder engagement over the last few months. However this does allow the Council to set the standard and lead by example and not ask others to do something that it isn’t already undertaking. Further detailed work with partners, major employers and Public Service Board will follow the approval of this report by Cabinet.

2.0 Progress to Date - Reducing our impact on Climate Change since 2010.

2.1 It is worth stating that the Council has always taken climate change and the reduction of emission seriously and acted accordingly. There is no better way to display that than to refer to the fact that since 2009/10 (baseline year – 42,532 t/CO₂), the Council has been a participant under the mandatory UK-wide Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy

Efficiency Scheme. This Scheme was abolished following the 2018/19 compliance year, however the CRC cost will not disappear as the Climate Change Levy will be raised to compensate. Welsh Government is to consult on options for a successor to the CRC Scheme (Policy 19, 'Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales'). 2019/20 carbon emissions was 18,757 t/CO₂, a carbon reduction of 23,775 t/CO₂ against the baseline year (reduction of 55.9%). This is a considerable achievement but further reduction become increasing difficult to achieve.



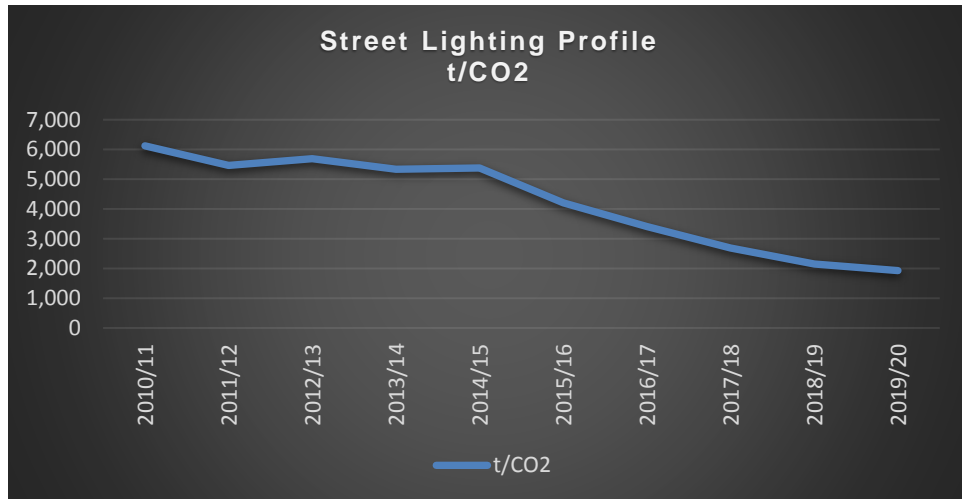
Work has continued on a range of key strands with some examples as follows:

- 2.1.1 The City & County of Swansea Pension Fund is one of the first Pension Fund's in the UK to adopt an Environmental, Social & Governance policy which commits the pension fund to reduce its already low exposure to carbon based fossil fuel investments by up to 50% over the next 4 years. In doing so, it accepts that investing in new green energy, infrastructure and socially responsible investments offers the best sustainable financial return for members of the pension fund over the long term. Progress is reported on an annual basis and a further report will be presented to Council on the 3rd December.
- 2.1.2 The Council has made representation to Welsh Government on various themes including decarbonisation of housing stock, the delivery of Dragon Energy Island renewables project, the use of green energy provision of electric vehicle charge points and in doing so has set out its ambitions for net carbon zero. In addition it has also written to UK government where these powers or possible funding reside nationally such as Dragon Energy Island.
- 2.1.3 The Council continues to deliver insulation and energy efficiency measures to benefit council housing tenants.
- 2.1.4 Promoting Welsh & UK Government campaigns and programmes to increase energy efficiency amongst private tenants and home owners, reducing fuel poverty and reducing emissions.

- 2.1.5 Progressing work towards a world-leading Tidal Lagoon, supporting community owned renewable energy schemes, like SCEES, to deliver clean energy and benefit local schools and community buildings.
- 2.1.6 Working with others nationally to urge Welsh Government to develop electric car charging infrastructure.
- 2.1.7 Being leaders of good practice in Wales through having Sustainable Development policies and approaches pre-dating the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.
- 2.1.8 Building the first council housing in a generation here in Swansea to Passivhaus standard, and begun building new council housing to a super-energy-efficient “Swansea Standard” that will enable all components to be procured locally and reducing emissions using solar battery storage and air source heat pumps.
- 2.1.9 Using innovation in construction for flagship projects such as Pentrehafod School, showcasing waste minimisation and sustainability.
- 2.1.10 Winning investment for innovative green technology, such as “Homes as Power Stations”, as part of the City Region Deal.
- 2.1.11 Securing funding for a vast increase in Active Travel (walking and cycling) routes throughout the county and supported Swansea University’s community cycle scheme.
- 2.1.12 Implementing agile working so that the workforce may reduce unnecessary travel.
- 2.1.13 Developing local procurement practices to reduce carbon footprint.
- 2.1.14 In Education, Swansea is an early joiner of the international EcoSchools programmes which encourages schools to promote recycling and reduce energy and water consumption.
- 2.1.15 Encouragement of Foundation Phase pupils to learn outdoors ensuring a respect for nature, biodiversity and eco-systems.
- 2.1.16 At KS4, developing partnerships with Universities to establish STEM workshops including the impact of climate change.
- 2.1.17 Recently incorporating care for the natural environment into the corporate plan as a new priority, recognising the hugely important contribution made by the extensive work of our Nature Conservation Team.
- 2.1.18 Working with Swansea Public Services Board to improve local services. The four statutory members of the Board are Swansea Bay University Health Board, Natural Resources Wales, the Fire and Rescue Service

and the council who will continue to work collectively to improve local social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. For this part the focus will be on a Greener Wales.

- 2.1.19 Street lighting have upgraded 21,053 street lights to LED, along with the installation of City Touch, Central Management System commissioned to control the street light output around Swansea ring road (financial and carbon savings) has reduced street lighting carbon emissions since 2010/11 by 4,194 t/CO2.



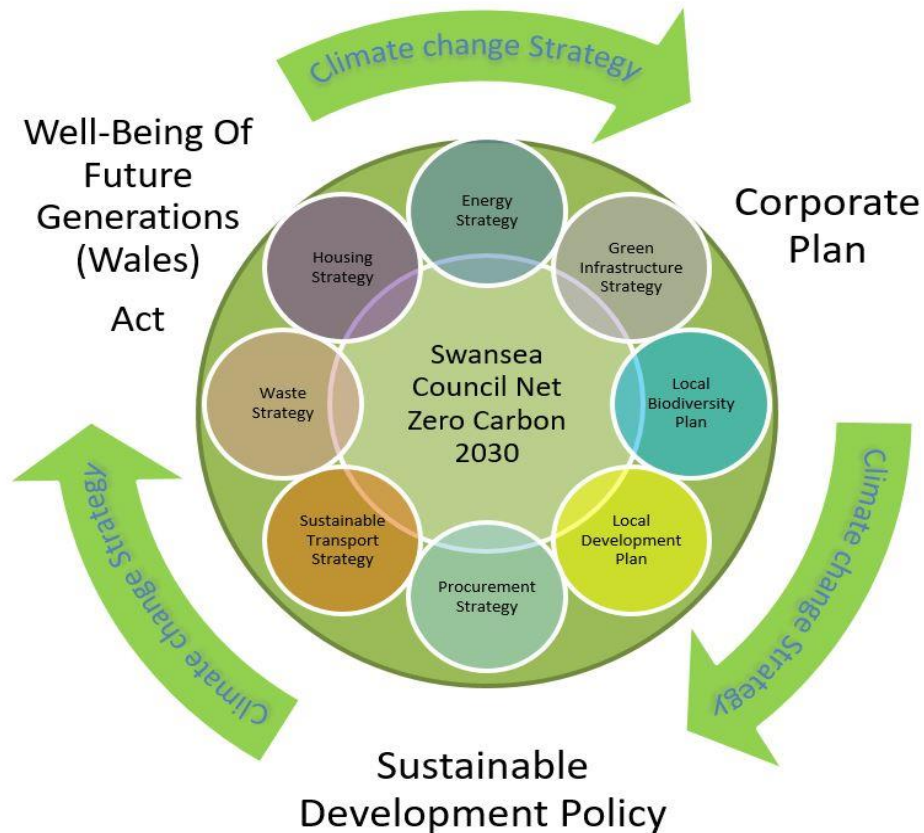
- 2.1.20 12 Council car parks have had electric vehicle charge points installed. A total of 16 dual-headed charge points have been installed, serving 32 recharging bays. With the exception of the two Park & Ride sites, the charge points provide 22kW 'fast' charging capabilities. The Park & Ride sites feature 7-22kW charge points (load balancing depending on how many vehicles are plugged-in at the same time). All charge points provide 100% renewable electricity to users. Users can access the charge points through an App or by calling a 24/7 customer service line (bi-lingual).

- 2.1.21 Active Travel. The total network has increased in length by 25% in the past three years, with over £12million of investment made in active travel infrastructure. Of the 72,000 households in Swansea, 60% now live within 500m of a dedicated off-road cycle route.

3.0 Policy Review

- 3.1 To enable the Council to continue to make progress one of the key actions from the NoM was to review the current policy framework and how this could contribute to the achieve achievement of net zero carbon and climate emergency response.

3.1.1 Therefore it has been necessary to review over 100 Council policies that contribute to this agenda and try and distil these down to 8 key themes as outlines in the pictogram below.



3.1.2 In grouping the key policies into a framework it appears that the Council has many of the underlying strands already in place and it also helps to identify where any “gaps” are.

3.1.3 The graphic also hopefully shows that these policies overlap to firstly feed into the core short term target of net zero carbon for the council emissions by 2030 and the longer term goal of achieving a similar aim for the whole of the city by 2050. These policies are then intrinsically wrapped up in the overarching requirements of the Corporate Plan, Sustainable Development Policy and Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

3.1.4 The report also clearly incorporates the requirements and aspirations of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 although we understand Welsh Government are undertaking a review to further improve the net zero targets by 2050. Any strategy and future action plan will incorporate any new requirements arising of the legislative changes.

3.2 To demonstrate how these policies contribute to both ambitions detailed below is a short overview of the current position with each of these policies and examples of progress made.

3.2.1 **Work Stream 1 – Swansea Council Net Zero Carbon by 2030**

i. Energy Strategy

Swansea Council recognise and understand the importance of effective energy and carbon management and the implications and risks of climate change, rising energy costs and the preservation of finite energy sources. The preservation of our natural environment on a regional and national level and safeguarding of the wellbeing of our communities for current and future generations is a vital aim of the Authority.

It is within this context that the Energy and Carbon Management Strategic Plan was developed. The Energy and Carbon Management Plan provides a co-ordinated approach which will identify and analyse energy and carbon emissions from the delivery of the Authority's operational service deliveries and will:

- Provide an overarching programme that will align and integrate all legislations and policies that relate to energy, carbon management and climate change
- Clearly define Swansea Council's strategic ambition and intent for addressing energy and carbon management
- Quantify the Authority's baseline carbon emissions from its service property activities.
- Identify and evaluate energy saving projects towards reducing energy costs.
- Adaptable to the new Welsh Government Net Zero Carbon Reporting requirements.
- Adapt a low carbon / renewable technology way of working, reducing the dependency on conventional energy supplies.

ii. Green Infrastructure Strategy

This strategy considers how green infrastructure can be increased in area and quality in the central area of Swansea in order to make it better adapted to climate change and better for people and wildlife. Green infrastructure is a term used to describe all the greenspace, soil, vegetation and water (ranging from parks to roof gardens) that provide the ecosystem services that make our cities liveable.

This strategy sets out a vision for the central area in Swansea to be much greener, creating green spaces and using a combination of street-level features like street trees and rain gardens as well as vegetation on buildings, including green roofs and green walls. The intention is to

double the amount of green infrastructure (with the exception of open water) within 10 years.

The focus will be to create a green infrastructure network, centred on a Green Artery that will connect Swansea Station in the north, with the beach and marina in the south and the wider area, via existing, improved greenspaces including churchyards and Castle Square. Green infrastructure will be planned and designed to be multi-functional and will involve a partnership approach, using innovative solutions, including Supplementary Planning Guidance for green infrastructure and a Green Space Factor tool (GSF). Swansea Council is committed to using the GSF tool, designed for the Swansea Central Area, as a measure for the quantity and functionality of green space in development.

iii. Local Biodiversity Plan

Promoting Swansea's Natural Environment is a strategy and action plan for the protection, management, enhancement and promotion of Swansea's outstanding natural environment and biodiversity. It outlines a number of strategic actions required for the conservation of the wider biodiversity resource together with a set of detailed actions for the protection of priority habitats and species.

The Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (LBAP) has three key parts:

Part 1 Strategy This part provides a background to the biodiversity action planning process, identifies key issues affecting biodiversity in Swansea and priorities for future work. It proposes a number of broad actions to meet these priorities, and outlines procedures for measuring progress.

Part 2 Audit This part provides an overview of Swansea's biodiversity resource and contains information on protected habitats and species present in the County, together with draft proposals for the identification of a network of non-statutory Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation or candidate SINC.s.

Part 3 Habitat and species action plans This part provides detailed action plans for priority habitats and species which occur in the County in accordance with UK and Welsh Assembly Government Guidance. At the time of printing 23 Habitat Action Plans (HAP.s) and 98 Species Action Plans (SAP's) have been included. There are plans to add additional HAP's and SAP's in due course.

iv. Local Development Plan

The 2010-2025 Plan provides a clear planning framework to address key issues facing the County, providing certainty and the basis for efficient planning decisions. Its policies and proposals will enable the delivery of sustainable development, and ensure that social, economic,

environmental and cultural well-being goals are all suitably balanced in the decision making process so that the right development occurs in the right place.

The Plan is underpinned by an extensive and up to date evidence base which, in combination with extensive public and stakeholder engagement undertaken during Plan preparation, has been used to identify the key opportunities, land use requirements, and issues for the County over the Plan period.

v. Procurement Strategy

Swansea Council procurement is underpinned by maximising the economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits that may be obtained from buying power. Best value can be viewed as the optimum combination of whole-life costs in terms of not only generating savings and good quality outcomes for the organisation, but also benefit to society and the economy.

Procurement activity strives to deliver the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act through a holistic approach to procurement processes and including where relevant specific provisions within the procurement documents. There is commitment to strive to ensure that carbon reduction ambitions that underpin the sustainable development principle are integrated within procurement practice as appropriate.

vi. Sustainable Transport Strategy (working Title)

A great deal of positive work has been carried out in this area to date but the recommendation is that the various aspects are integrated into a single sustainable travel and transport strategy. This would include how the council deals with its Council fleet, the grey fleet (personal mileage by employees), its emissions from street lighting, the continued promotion of active travel and the development of a local and regional sustainable public transport system.

Some specifics include:

- Continuation of planning for, and improving the active travel network. Refresh of the current Active Travel maps and consult on potential new routes for development, though a new Active Travel Network Map in 2021.
- Increase levels of active travel through promotion, engagement and encouragement of active travel with the general public, businesses, communities and educational establishments, through a behaviour change campaign, Swansea Bayways.
- Further roll out of EV charging infrastructure.
- Continue to deliver a 5 % year on year reduction in council fleet emission via its green fleet strategy.

- Seek to embed the reductions in grey fleet mileage which achieved 50% and 1 million miles less in 2020/21 to date.

South West Wales Metro

- Continue the development of business cases for investment in active travel, bus and rail projects across the region.
- Investigate low-emission public transport alternatives through work with partners, such as Transport for Wales and First Cymru to establish how vehicle emissions could be reduced in the future.

vii. Waste Strategy

The Council's existing strategy was aligned to Welsh Government's recycling targets which aimed to achieve 64% recycling levels by 19/20 and this was achieved by Swansea. This target increases to 70% by 24/25 and the council is reviewing its option to achieve these increased levels.

In the meantime as part of the overall Climate change plan it will develop a new Waste Strategy which it will seek to align with the overarching Welsh Government plans over the coming 12 to 18 months.

viii. Housing Strategy (Decarbonisation)

Following the publication of the report, Better Homes, Better Wales, Better World (BHBWBW), Welsh Government set up a working group made up of the Welsh School of Architecture (WSA) and selected social landlords to further develop decarbonisation targets and prepare guidance for social landlords on decarbonising their housing stock.

Officers from the Housing Service have participated in the development of the study document and so are included in regular update meetings with Welsh Government's Decarbonisation Team and academics from WSA on latest developments.

Welsh Government has taken a view that a retrofit decarbonisation programme can be delivered as an extension to the existing Welsh Housing Quality Programme due for completion at the end of 2020. The revised WHQS programme that will commence in April 2021 will set a target achieving EPC A/SAP 92 to 231,000 socially owned properties by 2030, which represents almost 17% of the entire housing stock in Wales.

The next stage for Swansea will be to develop a long term Decarbonisation Strategy alongside the excellent work that is already being undertaken. Examples include:

New Homes 'Swansea Standard' are currently being developed as HAPS at Parc y Helyg, Birchgrove, Colliers Ways, Penplas development 1 and 2 and Hillview Crescent, Clase. The properties will not have a traditional gas supply, but will generate, store and then release their own electricity.

Homes as Power Stations (HAPS): The Council has retrofitted and transformed into HAPS 6 bungalows at Ffordd Ellen, Craig Cefn Parc which include external wall insulation, Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP), Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery unit (MVHRs), PV solar roofs and Tesla battery storage.

3.2.2 **Work Stream 2 – County wide Net Zero Carbon by 2050**

In addition to the 2030 actions required to reduce direct emissions the second work stream requires the Council to engage the wider Swansea community, which will be supported by the development of a full **Climate Change Strategy which should be developed over the next 12 months**. This will be underpinned by the Well-being of Future Generations Act goals and ways of working, the Corporate Plan Priorities and the Sustainable Development Policy actions.

- i. **The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015** This legislation places a duty on the Council to carry out sustainable development improving social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being. It sets out the sustainable development principle's five ways of working and seven national well-being goals.
- ii. **Sustainable Development Policy-** This sets out how the Council can ensure it meets present needs while ensuring future generations can meet their needs too. It guides services and decision makers in applying the five ways of working and maximising their contribution to Swansea's well-being.
- iii. **Corporate Plan-** This details how the Council will improve well-being in practice. It lays out priorities for action in six well-being objectives and the steps to achieve them in line with the sustainable development principle.

All activities will align to create a long term Climate Change Strategy and demonstrate the commitment asked of the Notice of Motion.

Future governance will need to take account of Regional, Welsh, National and European directive alongside the additional policies and strategies sitting at Council level that will support delivery.

This approach not only aligns with the council's pledged to "Act in Response to the Climate Emergency" within its Corporate Plan 2020-23, aiming for carbon neutrality by 2030, but also the study of a range of other Policy forums including the APSE research entitled "*So You've Declared a Climate Emergency, What Next?*" a summary of which is shown in Appendix 2.

3.2.3 Climate Change Charter

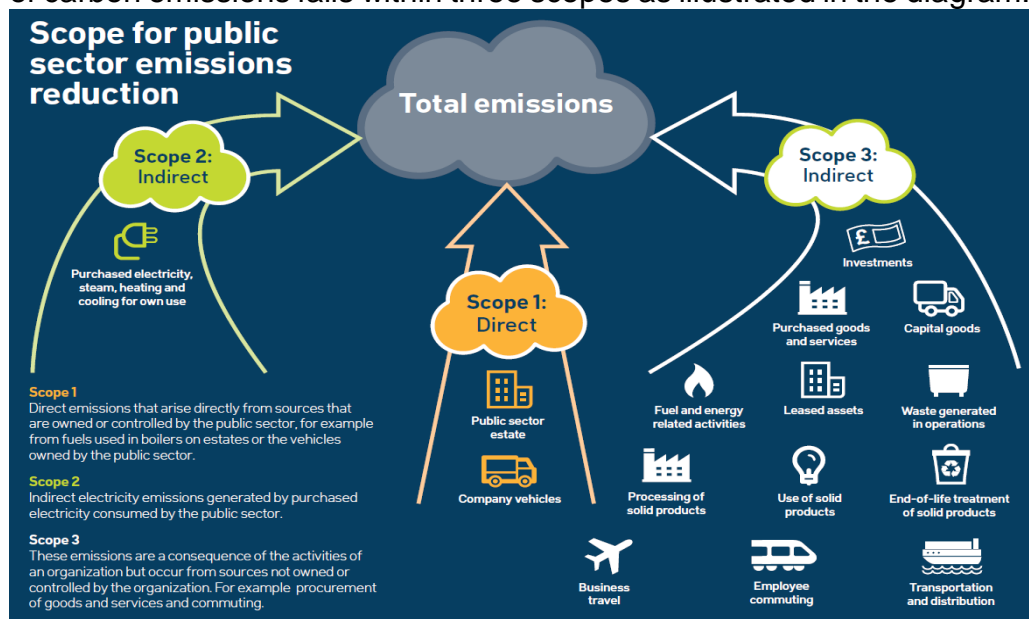
There will be a continued commitment to engage with local people, groups and businesses and help them be smarter and better prepared for the impacts of climate change. This will be enhanced by the introduction of the Climate Change Charter. (See Appendix 2)

Swansea Council recognises that it must lead by example and use its 'Sphere of Influence' to reach out to as many citizens and businesses as possible. The intention is to endorse the strategy and charter through the approval of this report for signature by the Leader supported by Cabinet Members and to report to full council for wider visibility and to invite group leaders to sign up to the Charter and this will then be used as one of the mechanisms to seek wider buy in across the whole city and county for businesses and public sector partners alike.

4.0 Achieving Net Zero Carbon by 2030

Whilst the above gives a clear policy framework to assist the council in moving towards net carbon neutral, the authority will need to confirm the detailed actions and the key areas that the Council will require to commit to deliver directly include aligning departments with a carbon reporting requirement into its governance, infrastructure, strategies and policies.

It is proposed that the Energy Strategy Action Plan aligns its carbon emissions reporting with the widely used international reporting tool, the Greenhouse Gases (GHG) Protocol which categories Greenhouse gas emissions into three Scopes as illustrated in the diagram below. The delayed publication of the Welsh Government Carbon emissions reporting requirements is anticipated to follow this approach. Reporting of carbon emissions falls within three scopes as illustrated in the diagram.



The Council has already adopted proactive programmes to reduce its

carbon emissions over a number of years. Some of these were outlined in the opening section of the report but in addition the following action linked to the above scope are highlighted:

4.1 Scope 1 (Direct Emissions)

- Refit Low Carbon Programme - Swansea Council is participating in the Welsh Government supported Re:fit Low Carbon Programme in order to implement energy efficiency saving opportunities in non-domestic buildings. A £1.3 million interest free loan has been secured from Welsh Government Wales Funding Programme (Salix) to deliver a Re:fit Cymru (Energy Efficiency) Phase 1 project comprising over 18 buildings which is projected to save an estimated 400 tCO₂e every year. Quantifying the energy savings delivered by the Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs) will be validated using the Measurement and Verification (M&V) process.
- Carbon Reduction Retrofit: Potential to develop long-term retrofit Phase 2 and Phase 3 projects (such as decarbonisation of the heat network).
- Swansea Council have been working in collaboration with EGNI Co-op, and have recently (Sept 20) installed 220kW of rooftop Solar PV on three comprehensive schools Pentrehafod, Gowerton and Pontardulais.
- Solar Farm Projects - Collaborating with Welsh Government Energy Services on model size scenarios and financial appraisal assumptions towards the development of a 3MW Ground Mounted Solar PV farm. The projected finance model is currently being evaluated, it is predicted over the asset lifespan (35 years; assuming no downtime) that 101,302,731 kWh of renewable energy will be generated or 3,189,600 kWh/year (projected as the electricity generated by a PV module decreases over time), equating to 688 t/CO₂ year. This represents 3.6% renewable generation against 2019/20 carbon emissions of 18,757 t/CO₂.
- Supporting community owned renewable energy schemes to deliver clean energy and benefit local schools and communities, such as Swansea Community Energy Enterprise Scheme (SCEES) who have installed 360kW Solar PV and more recently EGNI Co-op with 220kW Solar PV, with additional scope to progress with further installations.
- Continuing to seek opportunities to add to our corporate fleet of Electric Vehicles, currently with Electric Vans (40); Electric car (1).
- Between the reporting periods 2017/18 and 2018/19 a percentage reduction of 4.88% in diesel purchased was achieved through the

adoption of new electric vehicles and the renewal cycle of fuel efficient vehicles.

- Progressing work towards a world-leading Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon, estimated electricity generation of 504,854 MWh, equating to carbon emission savings of 94,913 mT CO₂e.

4.2 Scope 2 (Indirect Emissions)

- Swansea Council procures its energy using Crown Commercial Services Framework Agreements, via the National Procurement Service (NPS), for the vast majority of supplies. All electricity procured via the NPS framework is from 100% renewable energy sources; 41% sourced from Wales (Apr 20 – Mar 21); Gas – Total Gas and Power (TGP) procured as new gas supplier (Apr 21 – Mar 22); Green Gas tariffs - dependent on viability and cost impact; pricing option available with TGP later in the year.

4.3 Scope 3 (Indirect Emissions)

- This covers carbon emissions not controlled or owned by the authority and only has powers of influence/ support / engagement to seek the necessary changes and needs to be divided into two elements:
 - a. The authority's own work and the wider economy, for example engaging with procurement covering environmental impacts as part of contract of services; housing (i.e. sustainability); collaborating with Welsh Government / working with other public sector organisations (Swansea University / Health Service).
 - b. The second element of this strategy is to work with everyone else to achieve a significant Swansea change area wide, for example engaging with Low Carbon Swansea Bay & Swansea Environmental Forum / private sector.

The Council is already highly visible with regards to activity but further work to develop a full Climate Change Strategy must continue to increase momentum if the council is to be seen as the lead influencer within the area, aiming for net zero carbon by 2050 across the county. (Work stream 2).

5.0 What does net zero carbon look like?

- 5.1 As stated above the council appears to have a strong Policy framework and commitment to achieve its net zero carbon target on its own operations by 2030 and has the ability to significantly influence the future direction of the city and region.

- 5.2 However in this instance commitment isn't enough and it needs a clear and published plan and actions to allow it to reach these goals.
- 5.3 As stated above there is a lack of clear Welsh Government Guidance as to what constitutes net zero carbon on emissions so the council has determined the most appropriate measure is to capture those contained in scope 1 (direct emissions) and some of those contained within scope 2 (grey fleet) due to the direct link with its business.
- 5.4 As such the Council is developing its own measurement methodology as a "carbon calculator tool" to capture the key activities, target & reductions and the actions required to achieve these. This is a very high level summary and the details for each of these are contained within the individual strategies listed above. For example cabinet on the 19th November are due to consider an updated energy strategy which contains a detailed action plan.
- 5.5 The carbon calculator is a "live document that can be updated year on year and used to monitor progress and assist in its reporting on progress whilst also allowing targets to be flexed over the next 10 years to reflect the changing landscape.

6.0 How can Net Zero Carbon be achieved by 2030?

- 6.1 Previous section of this report have outlined the significant progress made over the last 10 years.
- 6.2 However to essentially get to net zero by 2030 the council needs to reduce or offset its current total emissions which equate to 27,500TCo2 for 19/20.
- 6.3 **The following outlined the TOP TEN actions aimed at achieving this.**

6.3.1 Reducing Current Emissions:

1. Accelerate the green fleet strategy – The Council through its green fleet strategy has made a commitment to reduce fleet emissions by 5% each year. Which would result in a 50% reduction to 2030, a saving of 2,350 t/CO2.
2. A reduction in grey fleet emissions by 50% would save 300 t/CO2 by reducing staff travel, developing an improved pool car/ car club scheme, and linking staff travel to wider public transport plans.
3. Council Buildings – The Energy Strategy and Carbon Management Action Plan, due to be approved by Cabinet on the 19th November 2020, proposes detailed initiatives to support the net zero carbon journey e.g. increase the pace and scale of the Re:Fit Cymru programme, with the provision of available resource and finance.
4. A commitment to construct and Build new schools and future civic buildings to net carbon zero. The combined effect of items 3 and 4

equates to a 20% reduction in emissions equivalent to 20% or 4000T Co2.

5. Street Lighting savings could be made delivered by the introduction of new technology, possibly by 20% over the next 10 years- 440 t/CO2.

6.3.2 Offsetting:

A range of offsetting measures are also being progressed and considered.

These proposals will need to be worked up in detail over the coming months but the key themes are as follows:

1. The Council is pursuing an Energy aggregation model for PV and battery storage installed on its housing stock which can result in cheaper energy bill for its tenants whilst also being counted towards its offsetting target.
2. The creation of solar farms and other renewable projects would help offset carbon emissions. One scheme has already been confirmed which will generate an offsetting of circa 960TCo2 per annum and further schemes will be investigated.
3. The intention of increasing tree cover and other measures as part of its biodiversity plan.
4. Continue to progress the delivery of Dragon Energy Island which would deliver one of the largest integrated green energy projects in the world and **potentially generating carbon emission savings of 94,913 mT CO2e per annum.**
5. Welsh Government have yet to confirm how the purchase of green energy is treated but Swansea Council current purchases all its electricity is 100% renewable sources and it is intended that this is counted towards its overall emission target. In addition it is progressing the procurement of 100% “green gas” which would further positively impact on its overall emissions.

- 6.3.3 These top actions - 5 in terms of reductions and 5 in relation to offsetting are forecast to achieve a net carbon zero position by 2030. This will be backed up by a full communication and engagement plan aimed at maximising the buy in from all sources which will assist to moving towards the 2050 target for the whole of the City.

7.0 The Impact and conclusions

- 7.1 The mission across the eight priority areas will be long-term in scope and ambition, considering the drivers of change, the opportunities, the risks and resources required to deliver. The journey will take time and will be

challenging. The proposal to align Council carbon emission related strategies, policies and governance structures, is believed to be the best approach to ensuring Swansea Council achieves net carbon zero by 2030. Once the method of recording emissions guidance has been released by Welsh Government then the new action plan can be implemented.



7.2 This report seeks Cabinet approval for the following commitments which are condensed into the two recommendations on the front cover of this report.

1. The programme of activity be divided into two work streams:
 - i. Swansea Council strives for net zero carbon by 2030 through the development and delivery of robust targets and action plans, pending Welsh Government guidance.
 - ii. The Council develops an overarching Climate Change Strategy, striving towards net zero carbon by 2050 for the whole county – citizens, businesses etc.
2. An eight pronged approach forms the basis of robust Climate Change governance for the first work stream going forward with the establishment of an overarching Working Group.
3. The WG/UK Gov. suggest **“Lobbying” to Welsh and UK Government** The NoM outline includes a requirement to Call upon the UK and Welsh governments to provide us with the necessary powers and resources to ensure Swansea becomes carbon neutral by 2030. In response the Council has written to WG ministers on the overarching agenda but also on individual strands contained within the strategy through consultation responses and specific projects.

In addition the Council has written to UK Government ministers where the strategy overlaps their powers and this includes lobbying for the delivery of the Dragon Energy Island renewals projects. Once the overarching strategy and charter have been approved further written approaches will take place linked with the agreed action plans.

4. A Sustainable Transport Strategy is developed, having identified the need to collate activity into one document – current projects already include Green Fleet Strategy, Business Travel Review and LED Lighting Replacement Programme.
5. The Carbon Calculator tool is used to determine project priority, and investment focus, whilst always considering impact on council policy. Note some policies may need to be rewritten in order to align with the net zero carbon challenge. The top 10 actions summarised in this report will be embedded in the future reporting mechanism.
6. An all-encompassing Climate Change Strategy and respective engagement and communication plans are developed and there is continued commitment to involve local people and businesses and help them be smarter and better prepared for the impacts of climate change. This will be enhanced by the introduction of the Climate Change Charter and will be governed via the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the Corporate Plan and the Sustainable Development Policy.

8.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

8.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our Equality Impact Assessment process ensures that we have paid due regard to the above.

8.2 An EIA screening form (See Appendix 3) has been completed with the outcome that a full EIA report will not be required at this point. This is an overarching plan that when approved will be broken down into many projects. At this point EIA's will be undertaken for each of these individually.

9. Financial Implications

9.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report. Any decision to commit the council to additional expenditure as part of this strategy will be subject to the relevant due consideration in line with the Council constitution and financial procedure rules.

10. Legal Implications

10.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

FOR INFORMATION

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Notion of Motion

Appendix 2 – Citizens Charter

Appendix 3 - EIA



Council – 27 June 2019

Notice of Motion from Councillors P K Jones, M Sherwood, R C Stewart, C A Holley, L R Jones, P N May, C E Lloyd, M C Child, R Francis-Davies, D H Hopkins, E J King, A S Lewis, S Pritchard, A Pugh, J A Raynor, A H Stevens and M Thomas,

Notice of Motion on Climate Emergency

This Council notes the recent conclusion of an interim report from scientists on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that every effort must be made to prevent the continuing average global temperature rise exceeding 1.5C above pre-industrial levels. However, such an increase could, with present government policies, be reached as early as 2030, with further increases in the decades thereafter. Such a scale of temperature rise threatens both human civilisation and all other life forms on the planet, with drastic disruption of agriculture, and the loss of terrestrial and marine wildlife habitats. We recognise that throughout the world, already, species of plants and animals are becoming extinct in record numbers; coral reefs, which are fundamental to marine life are dying; small island nations and coastal cities are threatened by sea level rise from the melting of polar ice sheets; the human death toll from adverse weather events – such as excess cold, excess heat, hurricane, flood – is increasing.

We note the activism of young people throughout the world, expressing their feeling of disempowerment in this situation and asking the decision-makers of today to take urgent action to protect their futures.

We acknowledge that globally, the actions required to address climate change effectively rest with national governments and require international collaboration, but there is still important work that local councils can do.

We recognise the recent history of this council in aiming to do its utmost to reduce carbon emissions, enhance biodiversity, and secure a prosperous, low-carbon economy for our region. We are proud of the actions taken by Swansea Council to date which include:

- The City & County of Swansea Pension Fund is one of the first Pension Fund's in the UK to adopt an Environmental, Social & Governance policy which commits the pension fund to reduce its already low exposure to carbon based fossil fuel investments by up to 50% over the next 4 years. In doing so, it accepts that investing in new green energy, infrastructure and socially responsible investments offers the best sustainable financial return for members of the pension fund over the long term. Progress is reported on an annual basis.
- Changing 21,053 street lights to LED, reducing CO2 year on year by 2,198,608.49kg.

- Delivering an annual Clean Air Roadshow to stimulate public uptake in electric vehicles and promote improving air quality.
- Delivering insulation and energy efficiency measures to benefit tenants of our council housing.
- Promoting Welsh & UK Government campaigns and programmes to increase energy efficiency amongst private tenants and home owners, reducing fuel poverty and reducing emissions.
- Campaigning for the electrification of the railway line from Swansea to London.
- Progressing work towards a world-leading Tidal Lagoon, supporting community-owned renewable energy schemes, like SCEES, to deliver clean energy and benefit local schools and community buildings.
- Working with others nationally to urge Welsh Government to develop electric car charging infrastructure.
- Being leaders of good practice in Wales through having Sustainable Development policies and approaches pre-dating the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.
- Recently incorporating care for the natural environment into our corporate plan as a new priority, recognizing the hugely important contribution made by the extensive work of our Nature Conservation Team.
- Building the first council housing in a generation here in Swansea to Passivhaus standard, and begun building new council housing to a super-energy-efficient “Swansea Standard” that will enable all components to be procured locally and reducing emissions using solar battery storage and air source heat pumps.
- Using innovation in construction for flagship projects such as Pentrehafod School, showcasing waste minimization and sustainability.
- Winning investment for innovative green technology, such as “Homes as Power Stations”, as part of the City Region Deal.
- Continuing to seek opportunities to add to our corporate fleet of Electric Vehicles, which is already the largest in Wales.
- Continuing to deliver on our Carbon Reduction strategy: 42% reduction in emissions since our baseline year.
- Securing funding for a vast increase in Active Travel (walking and cycling) routes throughout the county and supported Swansea University’s community cycle scheme.
- Becoming an Anti-Fracking Local Authority in 2016, having passed a motion to “oppose any unconventional gas development (fracking)” which also committed us to working towards being a fossil fuel free local authority by 2025.
- Implementing agile working so that our workforce may reduce unnecessary travel.
- Developing local procurement practices to reduce our carbon footprint.
- In Education, we are early joiners of the international EcoSchools programmes which encourages schools to promote recycling and reduce energy and water consumption.
- Encourage our Foundation Phase learning pupils to learn outdoors ensuring a respect for nature, biodiversity and eco-systems.
- At KS4, developing partnerships with our Universities to establish STEM workshops including the impact of climate change.

We recognise the importance of working closely with researchers in order to have the latest knowledge and the clearest understanding about what we can do to respond to the urgent need to address climate change.

This Council therefore declares climate emergency, and calls upon the government of the United Kingdom to do the same. We commit to:

1. Call upon the UK and Welsh governments to provide us with the necessary powers and resources to ensure Swansea becomes carbon neutral by 2030.
2. Publicise climate emergency and promote a greater awareness of the truth of climate change amongst the local population.
3. Work with relevant experts in research and development to:
 - a. Review our current strategies and action plans for addressing climate change.
 - b. Identify any further policy changes or actions which we could undertake, within the scope of our powers and resources, to meet the challenge of climate emergency.
 - c. Seek the help of local partners such as Swansea University and other research bodies to, within one year, produce a report to share with the community, explaining work already underway and achievements already made, as well as targets for the future.
4. Update on further work undertaken by the Council in this area on an annual basis through the Council Annual Review of Performance Report section on corporate objective - *Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity.*



We, the Signatories to Swansea Council Charter on Climate Action, affirm our commitment on behalf of our company/organisation to work towards becoming net carbon neutral by 2030 and in doing so commit to the following:

WHAT WE AIM TO DO

- Within 1 year of signing, review our organisations current strategies and action plans for addressing climate change and Identify any further policy changes or actions which we could undertake, within the scope of our powers and resources, to meet the challenge of climate emergency.
- Fully align our actions with our wellbeing and biodiversity obligations to ensure our actions and commitments meet the requirements of our future generations and the need to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity.
- Provide constructive challenge and proposals to Welsh and UK Governments and seek the relevant powers and resources to deliver against our action plan and Commitments
- Facilitate and partner with experts, businesses, investors, environmental advocates and other stakeholders to develop and implement a decarbonisation strategy for the region, including by developing a work programme, tools and resources necessary to achieve the agreed emission reduction targets;
- Maximise the use of renewals, and the reduction of energy use and loss both within our own energy consumption and in relation to utilising our assets for renewable energy generation
- Review our procurement methodologies and criteria to align with our emerging principle of what constitutes “value for money” to ensure appropriate inclusion of climate change and biodiversity is an appropriate part of any award criteria

HOW WE AIM TO DO IT

- Working collaboratively with others through seeking the help of local partners including public, private and voluntary sectors to, produce our own response to share with the community, explaining work already underway and achievements already made, as well as targets for the future.

MONITORING PROGRESS & KEEPING ALL PARTIES INFORMED

- Utilise our formal reporting mechanisms to place in the public domain how we are performing against our committed actions
- Fully engage with children and young people in line with the core principles of the UNCRC
- Quantify, track and publicly report our carbon emissions, consistent with standards and best practices of measurement and transparency

GETTING MESSAGE ACROSS

- Above all communicate a shared vision and understanding through the development of a common strategy and messaging, including by championing climate action within our sectors through an enhanced and trust-building dialogue with relevant stakeholders.

Signed by Organisational Champion..... Date.....

Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form – Appendix 3

Please ensure that you refer to the Screening Form Guidance while completing this form. If you would like further guidance please contact the Access to Services team (see guidance for details).

Section 1

Which service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Property Services

Directorate: Place

Q1(a) WHAT ARE YOU SCREENING FOR RELEVANCE?

Service/ Function	Policy/ Procedure	Project	Strategy	Plan	Proposal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) Please name and describe here:

Climate Emergency Declaration Policy Review and Proposed Action

The programme of **activity** be divided into two work streams:

- i. Swansea Council strives for net zero carbon by 2030 through the development and delivery of robust targets and action plans, pending Welsh Government guidance.
- ii. The Council develops an overarching Climate Change Strategy, striving towards net zero carbon by 2050 for the whole county – citizens, businesses etc.

The mission across the eight priority areas will be long-term in scope and ambition, considering the drivers of change, the opportunities, the risks and resources required to deliver. The journey will take time and will be challenging. The proposal to align Council carbon emission related strategies, policies and governance structures, is believed to be the best approach to ensuring Swansea Council achieves net carbon zero by 2030. Once the method of recording emissions guidance has been released by Welsh Government then the new action plan can be implemented.

Q2(a) WHAT DOES Q1a RELATE TO?

Direct front line service delivery	Indirect front line service delivery	Indirect back room service delivery
<input type="checkbox"/> (H)	x <input type="checkbox"/> (M)	<input type="checkbox"/> (L)

(b) DO YOUR CUSTOMERS/CLIENTS ACCESS THIS...?

Because they need to	Because they want to	Because it is automatically provided to everyone in Swansea	On an internal basis i.e. Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> (H)	<input type="checkbox"/> (M)	x <input type="checkbox"/> (M)	<input type="checkbox"/> (L)

Q3 WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE FOLLOWING...

	High Impact (H)	Medium Impact (M)	Low Impact (L)	Don't know (H)
Children/young people (0-18) →	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older people (50+) →	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other age group →	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability →	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race (including refugees) →	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asylum seekers →	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form – Appendix 3

Gypsies & travellers		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Religion or (non-)belief	→	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	→	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	→	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	→	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh Language	→	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty/social exclusion	→	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Carers (inc. young carers)	→	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Community cohesion	→	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	→	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	→	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4 WHAT ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION / CO-PRODUCTIVE APPROACHES WILL YOU UNDERTAKE?

Please provide details below – either of your planned activities or your reasons for not undertaking engagement

Council working with many groups, Swansea Environment Centre, Extinction Rebellion, University, Welsh Government Energy Services

Q5(a) HOW VISIBLE IS THIS INITIATIVE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC?

High visibility <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (H)	Medium visibility <input type="checkbox"/> (M)	Low visibility <input type="checkbox"/> (L)
--	---	--

(b) WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL RISK TO THE COUNCIL'S REPUTATION? (Consider the following impacts – legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)

High risk <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (H)	Medium risk <input type="checkbox"/> (M)	Low risk <input type="checkbox"/> (L)
--	---	--

Q6 Will this initiative have an impact (however minor) on any other Council service?

Yes No **If yes, please provide details below**

Yes in a positive way – with the reduction of carbon emissions and a better Swansea council- net zero carbon by 2030

Q7 HOW DID YOU SCORE? Please tick the relevant box

MOSTLY H and/or M → HIGH PRIORITY → EIA to be completed
Please go to Section 2

MOSTLY L → LOW PRIORITY / NOT RELEVANT → Do not complete EIA
Please go to Q8 followed by Section 2

Q8 If you determine that this initiative is not relevant for an EIA report, you must provide a full explanation here. Please ensure that you cover all of the relevant protected groups.

This is an overarching plan that when approved will be broken down into many projects. At this point EIA's will be undertaken for each of these individually. As such no full EIA is required at this time

Section 2

NB: Please email this completed form to the Access to Services Team for agreement before obtaining approval from your Head of Service. Head of Service approval is only required via email – no electronic signatures or paper copies are needed.

Screening completed by:	
Name:	Rachel Lewis
Job title:	Project Manager
Date:	2.11.20
Approval by Head of Service:	
Name:	Martin Nicholls
Position:	Director of Place
Date:	2.11.20

Please return the completed form to accesstoservices@swansea.gov.uk

Agenda Item 9



Report of the Convener

Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel – 14 December 2020

Work Plan 2020/21

Purpose	To identify and agree a work plan for the Panel that will support ongoing monitoring of Council activities and performance in relation to the natural environment, and assessment of progress regarding the Council's commitments, work and implementation of agreed plans.
Content:	A proposed draft Work Plan is provided.
Councillors are being asked to	Discuss and agree its work plan for 2020/21.
Lead Councillor	Councillor Peter Jones, Convener of the Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel,
Lead Officer & Report Author	Emily Davies, Scrutiny Officer Tel: 07980 757686 E-mail: emily-jayne.davies@swansea.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Panel should identify and agree a work plan at the start of each municipal year that supports its role as a Performance Panel and will represent effective scrutiny.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Programme Committee has agreed to increase the frequency of the Natural Environment Performance Panel from quarterly to meeting every two months. This is a reflection of the growing seriousness of issues around biodiversity and climate change and their importance, as well as recognition of the Council's corporate well-being objective on maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity.
- 1.3 Additional Panel time should enable better monitoring of Council performance against objectives, targets and action plans, and the role it is playing, as well as examination of specific natural environmental issues.
- 1.4 A draft work plan has been prepared taking into account previously identified priorities, key issues, and consultation with Panel Members.

- 1.5 The Panel is asked to consider the **attached** draft work plan for agreement, so that future Panel meetings can be planned and prepared for.
- 1.6. Subject to agreement of the attached work plan, arrangements will be made for the Panel to meet in February 2021 (date to be confirmed) to consider the management of green space / weed & verge management. This can include discussion on use of glyphosate, wildflower planting programme, and green infrastructure.
- 1.7 Panel meetings will typically require the involvement of relevant Cabinet Members and key officers in presenting information, answering questions and discussion. The Panel may wish to involve others, e.g. external contributors, as and when considered necessary and appropriate. Any such external engagement should have a clear rationale and benefit to the work of the Panel.
- 1.8 Following each meeting, and on behalf of the Panel, the Convener can write to relevant Cabinet Member(s) reflecting on key findings, raising issues of concern, comments and recommendations for response as appropriate following discussion. This will facilitate the ongoing performance conversation with Cabinet Members.
- 1.9 The Convener of the Panel is also a co-opted member of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and will report, at least annually, to the Committee on progress providing headlines on Panel activities, achievements, and impact.
- 1.10 Any agreed plans would need to be flexible. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic calls for scrutiny to be proportionate and responsive to organisational pressures that may affect resources to support activities.

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None

Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel**DRAFT Work Plan**

Meeting 1 14 December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Delivery of Corporate Priority – Maintaining & Enhancing Swansea’s Natural Resources & Biodiversity • Climate Emergency Declaration – Council Action Plan • To agree Work Plan 2020/21
Meeting 2 TBC February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of Green Space / Weed & Verge Management (incl. discussion on use of glyphosate; wildflower planting programme; green infrastructure)
Meeting 3 TBC April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Quality Management
Meeting 4 TBC June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Delivery of Corporate Priority – Maintaining & Enhancing Swansea’s Natural Resources & Biodiversity - Progress • Climate Emergency Declaration – Council Action Plan Progress
Meeting 5 TBC August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Flood Risk Management • Ash Die Back Update
Meeting 6 TBC October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Pollution (incl. discussion on marine biodiversity) • Environmental Tourism

Agenda Item 10



**To/
Councillor Mark Thomas
Cabinet Member for Environment
Enhancement & Infrastructure
Management**

**Councillor David Hopkins
Cabinet Member for Delivery &
Operations**

BY EMAIL

cc Cabinet Members

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:
Linell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

*Our Ref
Ein Cyf:*

*Your Ref
Eich Cyf:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

Scrutiny

01792 637257

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

NE/2019-20/5

05 October 2020

Summary: This is a letter from the Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Members following the meeting of the Panel on 1 September 2020. It is regarding COVID-19 impacts, issues, and environmental lessons; and the recent train derailment at Llangennech and pollution risk.

Dear Councillor,

Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel – 1 September

Thank you for attending the Scrutiny Performance Panel meeting on 1 September 2020 to discuss service specific impacts of COVID-19 and environmental lessons. We also thank lead officers for their input to support the session, answering questions, and their contribution to the debate.

We are writing to you both, as relevant Cabinet Members, to reflect on the discussion, share the views of the Panel, and highlight any outstanding issues / actions for your response.

Being our first Panel for many months due to the pandemic, we wanted to hear from you about the experience during the COVID-19 pandemic and effects on relevant service areas, specific impacts on the natural environment & biodiversity, as well as environmental lessons and opportunities. For example, we have seen:

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU
SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE
GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE
www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

- reduced air pollution from vehicular traffic;
- public reconnection with nature / wildlife;
- more active travel such as walking and cycling;
- increased use of parks and open spaces (valuable to improving mental health & wellbeing); and;
- less cutting and weed management in parks and roadside verges etc.

The Panel is concerned that any positives / gains are not lost, and that the experiences help to inform Council actions on biodiversity, habitats and climate change.

It was useful to discuss this with both of you as main cabinet members; although we would maintain that, the maintenance and enhancement of the natural environment and biodiversity ought to be everyone's responsibility.

We heard from you and officers that:

- There have been some beneficial impacts on the environment from the COVID-19 experience, mainly resulting from the lockdown of society with reduced activity, less travel, more use of outdoor spaces. Unsurprisingly that has meant reduced levels of air pollution, however like other benefits, whilst there has been a difference, it is uncertain whether these will be long lasting as society reopens, recovers, and returns to levels that are more 'normal'. We are yet to find out what the new 'normal' level is as the pandemic continues, and is difficult to forecast. Whilst there may be less travel, significant reductions in public transport usage may actually be contributing to more car usage.
- COVID-19 has highlighted the value of local green spaces and we have seen a greater appreciation of parks, gardens, and places for walking and cycling for people's health and wellbeing. The Council wants to invest in green spaces, and the relevant Policy Development Committee could do some work on this to help us achieve a greener environment.
- The pandemic has impacted service delivery and resources within the Council. A reduction in parks maintenance, grass cutting, and weed management has been welcomed by many as helping to support nature and increase biodiversity, but criticised by others who expect the Council to cut back on over-growth and keep things neat and tidy. From a highways point of view, safety is paramount, and cutting would be necessary; however there may be other areas which could be left to develop naturally. However, it is a challenge to reconcile the differing public views, and would need careful consideration and perhaps specific community consultation. It is also hard to measure the impact of what has happened in the last six months.

- The use of glyphosate to control weeds remains the most cost-effective method of treatment, given the mileage of footways in the city and county; however, usage is kept to a minimum with spraying only on hard surfaces. Alternatives have been looked at. Community action is welcomed if people wish to take responsibility locally; however, any method other than spraying is very labour intensive and not financially viable. Any clear desire from individuals or communities to opt out of spraying would also be considered.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of cycle users, with some of our most popular cycle paths seeing around a six-fold increase in volume. Again, whilst we may see more regular users, it remains to be seen whether the high levels of usage seen will be sustained in the long-term as individuals return to cars and public transport. However, the growth in cycling has to be supported and facilitated.
- Despite the temporary suspension of bulky waste collection, there has not been a particular problem or increase in fly tipping during the lockdown. Where it does occur, it may not be on Council land. If it is not on Council land it is not the Council's responsibility to clear the waste, which is something that not all members of the public realise. You acknowledged this sort of fly tipping can be a particular problem in more rural areas. All waste collection services are currently operating as normal.

Main points from our discussion and views:

- The Panel accepts there may be differences in public opinion about cutting back or leaving areas to naturally grow and mature, but given the Council's stated priorities the public should be informed so that there is better understanding about how this will enhance the natural environment, habitats, and biodiversity. There are many examples of positive action taken by governments concerning our health, wellbeing and safety, despite opposition in some quarters e.g. seatbelts, plastic bag charges, and smoking bans. The Council has to take a firm view and maintain its position if we are to see a real difference being made in support of nature. Clearly where there is a highway safety issue then we accept the need to remove overgrowth, and where weed growth is perhaps unsightly, and is perceived to give a poor image of our city to visitors at key entrance points, or could be presenting a flood risk, e.g. weeds in gutters.
- The Council may need to undertake specific consultation and engagement with residents to both raise awareness of our environment and biodiversity objectives as well as gathering views that will help us to balance actions, and inform the Council's policy direction about future weed and verge management.
- Our own Natural Environment Scrutiny Inquiry highlights the view that we may have gone too far with cutting and spraying and must redress the balance in favour of the natural world; to learn to live with, not control, nature. What we do is not just a matter for those involved in parks management and maintenance or highways maintenance, but requires a clear policy direction from the Council, that educates our communities

about why this is so important but also brings people along with it through co-production.

- As well as having general aims to green the city, the Council should be looking at access and fairness across the city and county so that all communities, including our most deprived areas, have quality green spaces to enjoy. The period of lockdown has highlighted the need for green spaces to be available and accessible to all parts of the community.
- There are examples where other Welsh Councils e.g. Monmouthshire, appear to be doing more in support of the natural environment and biodiversity. We should be looking at policy making in other parts of Wales (and beyond) to see what can be achieved in Swansea that we are not already doing to meet our Section 6 biodiversity duty and wider objectives. We would also encourage the Council to engage with organisations such as Plantlife who can provide expert information and advice that could help us develop a more nature-friendly approach to our management of green spaces in our parks and gardens and roadside verges, and reap the benefits. We have had direct contact from others, including the West Glamorgan Branch of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust who urge us to reduce mowing regimes as it can make a big difference to pollinators, and increase wildlife-rich habitats, striking a better balance within parks and open spaces for sport and recreation and for nature. Members reflected on their own experiences, including seeing an increase in local wildlife with birds, insects and hedgehogs becoming common sightings during lockdown; but since grass mowing has recommenced these sightings have reduced.
- The Council's wildflower planting programme draws much interest but is perhaps misunderstood. We recognise that it involves deliberate cultivation, treatment, and planting; and are not just areas left to flower naturally. We felt that the Council could explore opportunities for more natural meadows, which did emerge during lockdown with the suspension of mowing / cutting, as opposed to deliberately treated & cultivated wildflower areas, as well as further reduce the use of herbicides.
- Whilst more cycle usage is welcome, again we asked whether there was a clear policy direction. Members reflected on issues from cyclists and walkers competing for the same space, and the behaviour of some cyclists that deters walkers who fear for their safety. There should be signs and better protocols for cyclists to adhere to, ensuring the safety of less mobile pedestrians such as elderly members of the public or children playing. You undertook to look into our query on whether there was a specific speed limit on our cycleways, including the foreshore.
- We will continue discussion on weed management, and the use of glyphosate, at a future Panel meeting given our concerns about its impact on human health and wildlife. Engagement with areas where there is a Community Council, which may have the budget, may also help the Council to arrive at alternative weed management solutions. For example, Mumbles Community Council has recently employed a Natural Environment Engagement Officer.

Pollution Risk – Train Derailment at Llangennech and Diesel Spillage

We were able to ask about the emerging situation with the train derailment at Llangennech, fire and extent of diesel spillage into the Loughor Estuary and environmental / ecological impact. As you know, it is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and home to many species of birds and other wildlife.

We noted that it is too early to comment as assessments were still being carried out by relevant lead agencies, such as Natural Resources Wales, Public Health Wales, and our own lead pollution control officer. It would be appreciated if you were able to provide any more information about this incident and impact.

Your Response

In your response, we would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised in this letter. We would be grateful, however, if you could specifically address the following recommendations:

- The Panel would encourage you to reflect on current practice, and consider developing new policy in relation to parks / grass cutting, weed and verge management, informed by necessary research, consultation and community engagement, including practice elsewhere that would help to deliver Council aims and objectives in relation to the nature conservation and biodiversity. A small joint working group of members, including a member of the Panel, and officers may be a good way forward, which engages relevant organisations such as Plantlife.
- We would also ask you to consider how the gains over the last six months during the pandemic – the increased level of human engagement with the natural environment evidenced - could be maintained and enhanced.

Please provide your joint response to this and any other comments about our letter by 26 October. We will then include both letters in the agenda of the next available Panel meeting.

Finally, the Panel will shortly be developing its work plan for the coming year and we will be in touch to invite you to future Panel meetings. The Scrutiny Programme Committee has agreed, in principle, to increase the frequency of the Natural Environment Performance Panel from quarterly to meeting every two months. This is a reflection of the growing seriousness of issues around biodiversity and climate change and their importance, as well as recognition of the Council's corporate well-being objective on maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity. Additional Panel time will enable better monitoring of Council performance against objectives, targets and action plans, and the role it is playing, as well as examine specific natural environmental issues.

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR PETER JONES

Convener, Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel

✉ cllr.peter.jones@swansea.gov.uk

Cllr Peter Jones
Convener, Natural Environment Scrutiny
Performance Panel

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Councillor Mark Thomas
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Our Ref: MT/HS
Your Ref:
Date: 30 October 2020

Dear Cllr Jones

Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel – 1 September

Thank you for your letter dated 5 October 2020. Please find the response to the questions you raised below.

The Panel would encourage you to reflect on current practice, and consider developing new policy in relation to parks / grass cutting, weed and verge management, informed by necessary research, consultation and community engagement, including practice elsewhere that would help to deliver Council aims and objectives in relation to the nature conservation and biodiversity. A small joint working group of members, including a member of the Panel, and officers may be a good way forward, which engages relevant organisations such as Plantlife.

We would also ask you to consider how the gains over the last six months during the pandemic – the increased level of human engagement with the natural environment evidenced - could be maintained and enhanced.

In terms of current practices, we have already significantly reduced use of herbicide by not spraying grass around trees, lamp columns, safety barriers etc unless for a safety reason. This will result in long grass/weeds up against these features which would periodically be strimmed. It should also be noted that whilst the some may express safety concerns over the use of Glyphosate, it is a licenced product and our staff are trained in its safe use.

Existing grass cutting can be split into a number of categories:

- a. Vision splays and other safety areas cut around 9 times a year
- b. Urban verges and other amenity areas cut around 9 times a year for amenity/aesthetic reasons
- c. Rural verge areas cut once or twice a year, on a rolling programme throughout the season, with the cut grass left down

- d. Amenity areas of long grass, some with walkways cut through, are flailed once a year. This can provide improved habitat, but limited biodiversity due to the grass left down enriching soil.
- e. Uncut areas left to grow wild. These can also provide improved habitat, but again, limited biodiversity due to dominance of certain plants

If the Council wished to create areas of meadow land rich in natural wildflowers, these areas need to be maintained in a specific way. This would include a cut mid-July to end August after flowers have seeded, collection of the grass cuttings so that they don't form a thatch and enrich the soils, and a second cut before Christmas (or possibly early March) before the next year's growth. Due to the required timings of grass cuts, these areas cannot be on a rolling programme through the full season, so are therefore restricted to the areas which could be cut within the specified cutting windows. There would also need to be funding to purchase cutting & collecting equipment, and to cover the disposal costs for the arisings.

We could engage with Plantlife over the detailed approach for our climate and appropriate sites, and trials areas could be done initially, although Cabinet would need to approve the approach based on balancing the biodiversity benefits, amenity needs, and maintenance costs in relation to the Council's grassed areas.

I'd be happy for the Parks Operations Team to participate in a small Member/Officer/Plantlife Working Group on these issues, which will allow us to gain from Plantlife's experience, and allow Members to gain a better understanding of the operational issues.

For the increased use of the outdoors by our residents, during the pandemic, to be maintained and enhanced, we need to ensure that we have the optimum balance for our open spaces areas between amenity value and biodiversity.

Yours sincerely



Y Cyngorydd / Councillor Mark Thomas
Aelod Y Cabinet Dros Wasanaethau'r Amgylchedd
Cabinet Member for Environment Services



Y Cyngorydd/Councillor David Hopkins
Aelod Y Cabinet Dros Cyflawni a Gweithrediadau
Cabinet Member for Delivery & Operations

**To/
Councillor David Hopkins
Cabinet Member for Delivery &
Operations**

BY EMAIL

cc Cabinet Members

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Scrutiny

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NE/2019-20/6

05 October 2020

Summary: This is a letter from the Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member following the meeting of the Panel on 1 September 2020. It is regarding the follow up on the Natural Environment Scrutiny Inquiry Recommendations and impact.

Dear Councillor Hopkins,

Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel – 1 September

Thank you for attending the Scrutiny Performance Panel meeting on 1 September 2020 to present progress with the implementation of scrutiny recommendations following the in-depth inquiry on the Natural Environment. We also thank lead officers for their input to support the session, answering questions, and their contribution to the debate.

Usually this would have been followed up by the Inquiry Panel itself, which of course I convened, but it was appropriate for this new Performance Panel to take responsibility for this activity. We invited along any councillor who had participated in the inquiry but were not members of the Panel to contribute to the follow up.

We thank you and officers, in particular Paul Meller (Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager), for providing the written report to help the Panel assess the impact of the scrutiny inquiry report and providing a progress statement against each of the agreed recommendations, since Cabinet agreed its response back in July 2019. We know that of the 20 inquiry recommendations made, 18 were agreed, 2 of those in part.

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We are writing to you, as relevant Cabinet Member, to reflect on the discussion, share the views of the Committee, and highlight any outstanding issues / actions for your response.

We were pleased to note from your report specific contributions to change as a direct result of the inquiry:

- Inquiry recommendations incorporated within corporate actions plans to further the Corporate Objective for Maintaining and Enhancing Swansea's Natural Resources and Biodiversity.
- Corporate Biodiversity Working Group set up in August 2019 to help review, monitor and report on progress in delivering the steps / actions listed under the Corporate Biodiversity Objective, and help embed biodiversity duties across the Council.
- Establishment of a dedicated Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel.
- Biodiversity clauses now included in service level agreement, licences, leases, etc.

We recognised that many of the recommended actions of the Scrutiny Inquiry were already part of thinking in order to meet the Council's Biodiversity Duty, but welcomed your description of the specific impact of the scrutiny inquiry:

- Helping to focus on specific tasks / projects that could be carried out in the short/medium term (as quick wins).
- Most significantly, inquiry has given increased profile to natural resources and biodiversity as well as the work of the Natural Environment Section both across the Council and with external stakeholders. The Inquiry's endorsement of the planned and future work of the Section has empowered officers and put them in a much stronger position to deliver projects / improvements and identify finance in support of the biodiversity agenda.
- Costs are now increasingly being shared across services; planning ecology work is to be carried out in house subject to resource availability; and contributions to the SEWBREC (South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre) agreement have been negotiated.
- Biodiversity matters are now discussed across all service areas from the outset of projects, proposals and events, whereas previously they would have been an after-thought or possibly not considered at all.
- Funding from grants and other sources has been used to employ an additional part-time Planning Ecologist for a temporary period of 2 years. They have been in post since December 2019 and extended their hours in April 2020 to take on the part time role of the Local Nature Partnership Officer.

The updated action plan progress report appeared to show:

- 8 recommendations as complete (Recommendations 1,3,5,8,10,15,16,19)
- 3 as partly complete (Recommendations 2,7,11)
- 7 as incomplete, with a number of these noted as work that is essentially ongoing (Recommendations 4,6,9,14,17,18,20)

We also heard from you and officers that:

- There is much sharper focus on the natural environment, resources, and biodiversity and the scrutiny report has been a catalyst for change. This is an issue for everyone.
- The follow up report focuses on progress over the period 2019/20 and is therefore largely unaffected by recent events. COVID-19 has however delayed the award of certain grants for 2020/21. This in turn has affected the implementation of those recommendations set out in the Action Plan, which were reliant upon the appointment of specific grant-funded project officers. This includes work on: biodiversity ward mapping of existing biodiversity and green infrastructure assets and ecosystem service provision; establishing an environmental link governor within school governing bodies; and the employment of a dedicated outdoor learning officer to work with schools. We note this work is dependent on the appointment of project officers but could we not progress the appointment of environmental link school governors, without waiting for the ward mapping exercise?
- Over half of the scrutiny inquiry recommendations have been implemented and many of the recommendations represent work that will be ongoing and aimed at long-term improvement.
- Biodiversity advice is now mainly in-house rather than outsourced as previously.
- There is optimism about securing grant funding necessary to take forward outstanding work.
- The Council's first Section 6 Biodiversity Duty Monitoring Report was submitted to the Welsh Government earlier this year.
- A council-wide Climate Emergency Action Plan is being developed
- The Council's regeneration activities in the city centre incorporates the development of green infrastructure and other environmental benefits.

Main points from our discussion and views:

- We are happy to hear about the impact that the scrutiny inquiry has had, helping to push the natural environment up the agenda, and face up to the challenges.
- We hope that the Council can move forward with the recruitment of a Section 6 Biodiversity Officer. We note that a Job Description has been prepared in anticipation of funding becoming available at some future date. I would welcome a meeting with yourself and relevant officers to discuss how this could be progressed.

- We note that budget was identified to enable the appointment of a part-time temporary Planning Ecologist in December, and would support the conversion of that post as permanent, crucial to our nature conservation aims.
- Relevant to inquiry recommendations 4 and 5, we welcome the delivery of biodiversity training events for councillors, officers, and the public, as appropriate.
- We hope that inquiry recommendation 9, asking for an assessment of verges where mowing and spraying could be stopped, can be taken forward. Arising from our discussion on COVID-19 impacts and environmental lessons and opportunities, which we have written to you and the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management separately on, we would like to see a member of the Panel, together with relevant Cabinet Members, officers, and other stakeholders come together to discuss a new approach to grass and weed cutting in Council-owned parks, gardens, and road-side verges that will enhance the natural environment and biodiversity.
- Relating to inquiry recommendation 16, in which we asked that the Council continues to nurture good working relationships with relevant external agencies, we note the absence of RSPB Cymru and Plantlife in the list of organisations shown in the action plan and would suggest their inclusion in our network.
- When the relevant project officer(s) is appointed, we would encourage greater collaboration between the Council and Community Councils, who also do good work to manage and protect the natural environment, so that there is a sharing of learning and expertise, and co-ordinated efforts to improve community engagement.
- Our work with schools on biodiversity should also include a focus on litter and the damage it can do to the environment. However, we accept that littering is not confined to children. We noted Council activities around anti-litter promotional campaigns and litter enforcement.
- The establishment of a Corporate Biodiversity Working Group is a positive step; however, it would help to have greater visibility of the work of the Group. The Panel would be happy to receive a regular report on progress to see the impact and difference it is making.
- The Council needs to carefully consider how any decisions to develop on green spaces are consistent with its commitments to the natural environment and biodiversity.

In conclusion, the Panel agreed that good progress has been made with the implementation of recommendations, and we were happy to conclude formal monitoring of the inquiry report. However, we will, as necessary, pick up on any specific issues of concern through the Panel's ongoing monitoring activities.

Your Response

We hope that you find the contents of this letter useful and would welcome any further comments, but we do not expect you to provide a formal response.

However, as noted above, the Panel would welcome any news on developments with grant funding and the appointment of projects officers, Section 6 Biodiversity Officer, and Planning Ecologist. We would also ask you to consider arrangements for the future reporting of progress on the Corporate Biodiversity Working Group to this Panel.

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR PETER JONES

Convener, Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel

✉ cllr.peter.jones@swansea.gov.uk

**To/
Councillor Mark Thomas
Cabinet Member for Environment
Enhancement & Infrastructure
Management**

BY EMAIL

cc Cabinet Members

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NE/2019-20/7

05 October 2020

Summary: This is a letter from the Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member following the meeting of the Panel on 1 September 2020. It is regarding Local Flood Risk Management.

Dear Councillor Thomas,

Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel – 1 September

Thank you for attending the Scrutiny Performance Panel meeting on 1 September 2020 to present to us on progress with Local Flood Risk Management. We also thank lead officers for their input to support the session, answering questions, and their contribution to the debate.

This topic was previously the subject of a Scrutiny Working Group, which last met in April 2019. Now that this Performance Panel has been established we will carry out ongoing scrutiny of local flood risk management, at least annually. We will monitor progress against local flood risk management plans and actions.

Picking up from where the Working Group left off the Panel wanted to hear about activities and achievements, and the experience over the past year or so, issues / challenges, and current assessment. It is clear to us that flooding is a growing problem.

We are writing to you, as relevant Cabinet Member, to reflect on the discussion, share the views of the Committee, and highlight any outstanding issues / actions for your response.

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We heard from you and officers that:

- Flooding is becoming more prevalent but not all flooding occurs on Council owned land and it is not, therefore, always the Council's responsibility. However, the Council is usually first point of contact for the public in times of need and the general expectation is to fix the problem; however, this sometimes occurs on non-Council owned land or private watercourses. Flooding can also be fluvial (river flooding) resulting from overspill off watercourses onto the urban environment. The team will try to help if required and able, but there is a need to manage public expectations in terms of what the Council is responsible for, given the pressure on us.
- The flood incidents this year have been exceptionally high and demanding, putting a strain on the service. Some members of the Highways Team have not experienced such flooding in their careers of 35 years. The last 3 years have been exceptionally difficult and the situation has changed drastically. Storm surges have been dramatic and the team have been faced with very difficult circumstances.
- There have been three significant incidents in the last 12 months that have had a devastating effect. In the autumn of 2019 Atlantic weather fronts saw storms cause major flooding affecting 20 houses in the Llansamlet and Birchgrove areas, and the highway infrastructure from over-spilling watercourses. In February 2020, Storm Dennis caused significant impacts across Swansea with unprecedented levels of flood warnings, alerts and rainfall. A one-month average rainfall fell on one day. 65 properties (residential and business) were attended by the Fire Service to pump water out. The worst affected areas were Gorseinon, Clydach, Gowerton and Penllergaer, with many properties suffering internal flooding. Thunderstorms in June 2020 rendered some roads impassable and brought a multitude of flooding incidents.
- If more than five properties are flooded in an area the authority is duty bound to investigate and report, but this costs. COVID-19 has affected this work. We need to fund further investigations and there is concern around the ability of limited Welsh Government funding to cover these.
- Drains are cleared every three years as standard, however there is a process in place to clean problem drains every six months or annually, where necessary. However flooding can occur despite clearing drains. Extensive survey work has also been carried out, e.g. survey of culverts, to identify repairs.
- An Assistance Fund has been awarded to the team for the first time, which enabled them to assist and help with flooding properties, for example sand bag delivery.
- An All-Wales Asset Management Group works to promote best practice, and identify improvements to drainage management. We are currently meeting about 80% of what they recommend – this work is all related to gully emptying.

Main points from our discussion and views:

- Climate change is clearly having an impact on the frequency and severity of extreme weather events locally. If these patterns of flooding continue to be repeated, we need to be better prepared going forward. The frequency and severity is likely to worsen in the future. The Panel recognises the scale of the problem and challenge, which decision-makers (local and national) will need to meet through better resources to tackle and manage flood risk and measures that will prevent flooding, particularly where it is a common occurrence.
- The Council needs to be able to provide reassurance to local residents affected by flooding incidents that action is being taken to support the prevention of flooding in their areas. We understand the fear and distress that flooding can bring to people.
- Parked cars can hamper gully clearance. We raised the possibility of greater collaboration between the Highways Department, Councillors, and their communities. However, we accept that it is impossible to co-ordinate a community wide action to move parked cars at the right time. It was explained to us that coordinating with the public is not always feasible for the gully cleaning team who may visit 20 roads per day.
- The Panel was concerned whether the Council is spending more on reactive emergency flood responses rather than preventative maintenance. We asked whether cutbacks and savings in road sweeping and routine maintenance were adding to flood risk and flash flooding, as we understood that silt (we understand a bigger problem than leaves) can build up and is washed into gullies causing blockages. We asked whether that was a genuine saving or whether it would be more cost effective to revert to more planned cleaning / maintenance that may avoid flash flooding.
- We noted that there is coordinated pre-storm activity between cleansing and highways teams, which targets areas. We welcomed news of extra resources this year which has enabled purchase of an extra gully machine, taking us to 4, and that the post for this has just been filled. We are happy to hear that there is synergy between the work of cleansing teams and those responsible for drainage and flood management and hope that means flexibility to prioritise and respond quickly to issues.
- We felt that there is a need to better communicate flood risks and share that information with communities, for example advice and guidance on what to do next in the event of flooding and key contacts. We noted that there is a public FAQ page on the Council website providing a range of information.

Your Response

We hope that you find the contents of this letter useful and would welcome any further comments, but we do not expect you to provide a formal response on this occasion.

However, the Panel will be scheduling a further meeting on this subject and will follow up on our discussion and your thoughts, including what longer-term planning and steps can be taken to counter the likely flood consequences of climate change. It would also be helpful if the Panel can have a report on every serious flooding event on each occasion that we meet to discuss progress on local flood risk management.

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR PETER JONES

Convener, Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel

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