

Councillor S. Keeton
Convener, Climate Change & Nature
Scrutiny Panel

(VIA EMAIL)

Cllr.Sara.Keeton@swansea.gov.uk

Please ask for: Councillor David Hopkins

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Our Ref: DH/JG

Your Ref:

Date: 3 May 2024

Dear Councillor Keeton,

**Re: Convener's Letter to Cabinet Members David Hopkins and Andrew Stevens –
Climate Change and Nature Scrutiny Panel 19 March 2024**

Thank you for your letter sent on 15 April 2024. Please find the following response:

- **Link to Met Office website to be shared with the Panel.**

Please see attached link to Met Office Website which holds precipitation data from 1836-2024.

[https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/pub/data/weather/uk/climate/datasets/Rainfall/date/England SW and S Wales.txt](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/pub/data/weather/uk/climate/datasets/Rainfall/date/England_SW_and_S_Wales.txt)

- **Training on SUDS to be arranged for Planning Committee.**

Referring to the recommendations that you have made, requesting Suds Training to the Planning Committee, I can confirm that enquiries have been made with Bob Bray Associates to provide formal training. Once confirmation has been received on availability and costs for the course then committee members will be informed accordingly. In the meantime, I would like to attach a summary of the training pack/slides which were used in the training events to officers.

- **Red list on the maintenance programme to be shared with the Panel.**

Please see 2 attachments:

- Watercourse Inspections April 24
- Watercourse Red List Record Sheet

- **Information on legislation relating to permeable surfaces to be provided.**

With regard to legislation relating to the use of permeable paving. I wish to confirm there are permitted development rights in Wales. A Householder can lay or replace a hard surface to the front of their house with permeable or porous materials without the need to apply for planning permission. Alternatively surface water run-off from an

impermeable hard surface, such as concrete, directed to a permeable or porous surface to the front of the home is also permitted development.

In addition, planning permission is not required for a householder to replace or repair a small area, up to 5 square metres, of existing hard-surfacing without using permeable or porous materials - for example to repair potholes in a driveway, or replace paving slabs in an existing patio.

In the above circumstances, no application is required and therefore conditions cannot be used.

If planning permission is required and an application submitted, if the approved plans indicate permeable surfacing, the condition requiring development to be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans deals with this issue.

Where no materials are specified, we have the following condition which is used where necessary:

The proposed parking area hereby approved/illustrated on the submitted plan shall be:

- (i) porous or permeable; or
- (ii) constructed to direct run-off water from the hard surface to a porous or permeable area or surface within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse; and
- (iii) be permanently maintained so that it continues to comply with the requirements of paragraph (i) and (ii).

Reason: In the interests of sustainability.

If the development requires SAB approval, which applies to any construction exceeding 100m² which has drainage implications, then permeable paving or porous tarmac is frequently used as developers find solutions for making their developments compliant to Suds Legislation. However, the choice of Suds materials and features within any particular development rests with the developer.

- **Comments on engine idling outside schools to be taken back through procurement chain.**

I have confirmed with colleagues in Public and School Transport and Procurement that conditions are in place within contracts regarding the idling of vehicles engines and that Contractors must comply with all relevant legislation in all matter arising in performance of the contracts. Contact will be made with the providers of services for Bishop Gore Comprehensive School regarding the requirement for engine idling to be kept to a minimum.

If instances are observed and vehicle registration recorded, then specific contact can be made with operators.

Furthermore, Welsh Government has included a fixed penalty provision within the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024 for Stationary Idling offence that the Council will consider once further guidance is provided by Welsh Government.

- **Information on whether roundabouts or traffic lights are best for air quality to be provided to Panel.**

There are peer reviewed publications that indicate that positive effects upon NO_x (Nitrogen Oxides) concentrations from vehicles when traffic lights junctions have replaced roundabouts. In Swansea, the introduction of traffic light control junctions on Gower Road, Sketty and on Vivian Road, by Tycoch College, have indicated a reduction in NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide) concentration. However, it is acknowledged that a downward trend in concentrations over time is occurring and so the contribution of the infrastructure changes has not been calculated.

It is important to note that the reductions observed relate to NO₂ which is one of the pollutants that the Council must assess under Local Air Quality Management functions. However, peer reviewed publications also indicate that emissions of CO₂ (Carbon Dioxide) had been observed to increase at traffic lights.

Highways colleagues do contact the Pollution Control & Private Sector Housing Team when looking at significant infrastructure projects and air quality is a consideration.

We hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Y Cynghorydd David Hopkins / Councillor David Hopkins
Dirprwy Arweinydd / Aelod y Cabinet dros Wasanaethau a Pherfformiad
Corfforaethol
Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance



Y Cynghorydd /Councillor Andrew Stevens
Aelod y Cabinet dros Yr Amgylchedd ac Chydraddoldebau
Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure

Enc.