



Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure Management

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 10 February 2020

Key Headlines: Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure Management

Purpose: This report outlines notable activities and achievements in terms of ensuring the delivery of key priorities within the Environment and Infrastructure Management portfolio. It describes key activities within the portfolio and how they are implemented in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The report also identifies objectives, key challenges and decisions which are anticipated for Cabinet over the next 12 months. It also sets out how activity is aligned with the Public Services Board.

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For Information

1.0 The Portfolio for Environment and Infrastructure Management

1.1 Key responsibilities within the portfolio include;

- Coastal Defence, Marina, Foreshore & Beach Maintenance
- Cycleways
- Environmental Health
- Estates Maintenance Management (Non HRA)
- Fleet Renewal & Maintenance
- Fly Tipping Task Force

- Highways & Engineering
- Infrastructure Repairs & Maintenance
- Lead Elements of Sustainable Swansea
- Parking Policy & Control
- Parks & Cleansing
- Pothole Task Force
- Poverty Reduction
- Public Protection
- Public Transport
- Regional Collaborations for Transport, Highways & Waste
- Regional Transport Policy
- Streetscene
- Trading Standards
- Waste Management & Recycling

1.2 The Cabinet member provides strategic direction to departments delivering the services within the portfolio. The role is drive the delivery of corporate and political priorities by working closely with senior directors and heads of service. This involves the monitoring of key performance indicators and ensuring appropriate actions are taken, tracking the delivery of planned savings and supporting the identification of any future transformational opportunities.

1.3 This report highlights the progress made and future areas of focus in relation to key priorities within the portfolio; Environment, Highways and Infrastructure, Transport and Public Protection and Services. The report also highlights other notable areas of achievement and focus for the longer term. In particular, the report highlights how the Well-being of Future Generations Act's sustainable development principle is applied throughout the service in terms of the five ways of working, (Prevention, Long term, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement) and maximising contribution to the seven national well-being goals.

1.4 This year again, services within the portfolio continue to work under severe budgetary pressures yet strive to deliver high quality services increasingly in line with the five ways of working. The Place directorate has been subject to significant budget cuts which are likely to continue in future years.

2.0 Environment

2.1 Mumbles Coastal Defence

2.1.1 Ground investigation studies to the promenade and foreshore, wave modelling and overtopping assessments have all been undertaken and reports concluded. The first Public Engagement Session was held via a drop in session on 26 November 2019. This proved very successful with in excess of 80 people attending. Feedback has been issued to some key stakeholders.

2.1.2 The appointment of design services to undertake detail design will be required, with a view to seeking planning approval mid-year. A key decision will involve both public and council acceptance of the final design for the project.

2.1.3 The project will provide a sustainable coastal defence in Mumbles by adapting to climate change and will explore opportunities for wider additional and community benefits.

2.2 *Marina*

2.2.1 The decision made to install a petrol facility was due to local boat brokers unable to sell petrol boats into Swansea Marina. Until now boat owners living locally were using other Marinas further afield with petrol availability. Petrol installation was completed in September 2019. This improvement will allow safer refuelling by existing boat owners, attract new customers and allow opportunities for local businesses. This facility will allow Swansea Marina to operate so local people can enjoy using the sea for recreational uses.

2.2.2 A Boatyard Tourer Park has been developed. This facility will allow visitors with Motor homes to park up at the Marina within close proximity to the City Centre.

Regular calls have been made to Parking services asking for safe places to park overnight when using the City Centre. This facility will help encourage local people and visitors to use their motor homes in a safe manner by parking in spacious bays within a secure parking compound. They will be able to enjoy the City Centre and foreshore within a safe environment.

2.3 *Foreshore and Beach Maintenance*

2.3.1 Improvements to sand dune management have been made at Swansea Bay. Options to minimise sand movement from the Bay to the Promenade and adjacent highways will be evaluated in 2020.

A consultative study determined options for improvement works at Port Eynon Bay including toilets, car park and wider foreshore areas. An action plan is developing.

2.3.2 The long term sustainability of the assets is key to ensuring that the use of the beaches and outdoors becomes the cultural norm, encouraging healthy and active lifestyles and prosperity.

2.3.3 Options are also being explored to determine appropriate means to deal with sand loss movement issues at Knab Rock causing problems for boat launching and will be evaluated in the near future.

2.4 *Environmental Health*

- 2.4.1 The Bathing Water Quality for Swansea Bay was 'Good' and analysis is underway for reporting against the new KPI for the Nature and Biodiversity Priority, linked to the prediction model and public message display.

The Pest Control service continues to deliver free visits to members of the public for bedbugs, cockroaches and rats. Chargeable services include treatment for mice, fleas, wasps etc. The team services 32 chargeable contracts (not including the schools) and maintains a chargeable 'Out of Hours' service. In addition, the team administers the 'All Swansea Schools' Pest Control Contracts

- 2.4.2 The 2019 Air Quality Progress Report has been submitted to and approved by Welsh Government. Collaborative working will continue to be important as Swansea Council continues to fulfil the role of Chair for the All Wales Pollution Expert Group and is an active member of the Welsh Air Quality Forum (WAQF) and Welsh Noise Regulators Group.
- 2.4.3 In April 2020, the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) will be released for public consultation. This will include interventions including carrying out research studies on air quality, noise and traffic flow to work towards achieving compliance with Welsh Government Policy guidance.
- 2.4.4 The Council continues to act as a co-investigator in a collaborative study with Swansea University and VortexIOT (Internet of Things) on an Innovate UK grant-awarded project looking at developing new low cost sensor technology to collect real-time localised City Centre-based air quality, traffic and parking data.
- 2.4.5 Moving forward the Council is supporting a separate Swansea University, Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) grant-funded application, as co-investigator, looking at collaborative networks and the Indoor/Outdoor interface. The dredging of the River Tawe will take place by the barrage in the marina to remove silt build-up. Ongoing work will continue on the automation of the Bathing Water Model.

2.5 *Parks (Maintenance and Operations) and Cleansing*

- 2.5.1 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.
- 2.5.2 A cross cutting Ash Dieback Action Plan is in place and is being implemented.
- 2.5.3 Over the next year, the Council will be exploring options to increase biodiversity and tree cover. We will continue to implement the Ash Die back Action Plan in house as far as possible. Challenges include taking

on new green areas as part of the City Centre regeneration. Protecting and improving ecosystem services contributes to many of the national well-being goals and new requirements under the Environment Act.

2.6 *Streetscene*

- 2.6.1 Dog fouling enforcement training has been given to a number of frontline staff to discourage dog fouling and facilitate an improved response. Moving forward, plans are being considered to publicise the antisocial consequences of dog fouling.
- 2.6.2 The Cleansing Project Team and NEAT Teams continue to carry out effective deep cleans and improvement works while also contributing to social and cultural well-being goals.
- 2.6.3 Future aims include an ongoing review of the Cleansing Service to better targeting resources to build on the Project Team's deep cleaning type work. In line with the long- term and prevention principles, Cleansing Traineeships are due to be implemented.

2.7 *Fly tipping taskforce*

- 2.7.1 The taskforce provides a more responsive and targeted service to fly tipping. Existing activity has been supplemented with enforcement training given to a number of frontline staff to discourage fly tipping and facilitate an improved response.
- 2.7.2 In the next twelve months, the provision of training is to be extended to Coastal Housing staff. Increased collaboration is intended to deter fly tipping at Coastal Housing sites.

2.8 *Waste Management and Recycling*

- 2.8.1 Keeping Recyclables Out of Black Bags Initiative has now been fully implemented. Work to ensure a reduction in film and other contaminants of Plastic Recycling bags presented at the kerbside has been successfully completed.

Residual waste tonnages at the kerbside reduced by circa 15% which equates to about 3,000 tonnes less waste going to landfill every year, and after the first 6 months, we are predicting a full year recycling performance in excess of the new Welsh Government statutory target of 64%.

Collaborative work has focused on seeking long term recycling improvements and improving the circular economy potential. Swansea Council is working with Welsh Government across Wales on an Absorbent Hygiene Product (AHP) collection and recycling project.

2.8.2 The regional Long Term Food Waste Contract (including Bridgend) continues to work well and provide a very cost effective disposal option. The exploration of a Regional Energy from Waste Contract continues with Welsh Government support. A Market Feasibility Study has been completed, and an intermediate, or long term Energy from Waste solution is required by January 2022.

2.8.3 Moving forward the focus will be on increased the recycling of AHP and exploration of opportunities to recycle textiles.

3.0 Highways and Infrastructure

3.1 Infrastructure and Repairs

3.1.1 The service has achieved an APSE nomination for best improver in highways maintenance for the second year running. Sustainability is key, demonstrated by the use of an All Wales asset management tool to ensure the whole life efficiency of schemes.

3.1.2 The PotHole Task Force repaired approximately 5,400 potholes in 2019. 99% of which took place within 48 hours of receiving a report from members of the public.

3.1.3 Moving forward plans include the publication of a 5 year maintenance programme of works for 2020 to 2025.

3.2 LED Street Lighting

3.2.1 Annual energy consumption for Street Lighting has decreased by 41% since the implementation of LEDs and dimming lanterns, between 2011/12 and 2017/18. This equates to an annual reduction of 2,169 tonnes of CO₂. Had the LED Street lighting programme not been implemented, the annual cost for street lighting in 2017/18 would have been £1.201M whereas the actual cost was £715K. 90% of the lighting stock has been replaced with LED lanterns or energy reducing dimming gear.

3.2.2 Improvements include the installation of illumination level control lighting on the Kingsway project.

3.2.3 A detailed asset management plan of all the street lighting assets is currently being produced. This will enable long term funding needs to be identified and prioritised.

3.2.4 The major challenge with regard to Lighting is the deterioration of the assets. This is in two areas:

- Deterioration of the cable network resulting in an increasing number of underground faults; and

- Structural stability and consequent failures of columns and bracket arms.

A previous report is in the process of being updated which will define the current position and anticipated costs to replace failed columns and brackets.

3.2.5 When planning for the medium to long term some major issues are to be noted. There is a statutory duty to maintain a lighting network and the columns being structurally tested could result in an extensive requirement for replacements. Similarly the underground cable is old and in need of sectional replacement.

3.3 *Highways and Engineering*

3.3.1 Achievements include the delivery of works under the External Facilities programme for Housing. Completion of the present phase of funding is scheduled for December 2020. The project will improve the housing asset for Swansea residents.

3.4 *Cycleways*

3.4.1 Swansea Council has secured £5.5million for the provision of active travel infrastructure in 2019/20. Bids for 2020/21 will be prepared now for submission in Jan/Feb 2020. Cabinet approval will be required for any grant funding received.

3.4.2 The statutory duties of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act are intrinsically linked to the work of the Active Travel (Wales) Act. The 'Integrated Network Map' operates on a 15 year timescale to increase the number of those travelling by active travel means for their daily needs for the benefit of generations to come.

4. **Transport**

4.1 *Public Transport*

4.1.1. The Quality Partnership Board with First Cymru meets quarterly to discuss bus network changes/ performance and proposals for improvement.

4.1.2 There has been increased use of Integrated Transport Unit in-house fleet to provide home to college transport for pupils with Additional Learning Needs.

4.1.3 The Council has supported Transport for Wales in the reissue of concessionary bus passes to all eligible people in Swansea (circa 65,000).

- 4.1.4 The Provision of upgraded bus shelters and electronic passenger information on main bus corridors and at bus interchanges has taken place.
- 4.1.5 Procurement and implementation of new contracts for all subsidised local bus services and a dynamic purchasing system for taxi services for Council clients has taken place and a new contract has been procured enabling park and ride bus services funded by the Council to be provided as part of the local bus network. More improvements to strategic bus corridors (LTF/LTNF funding).
- 4.1.6 In line with the involvement principle, ongoing dialogue is needed with commercial transport service providers to ensure that they have the opportunity to plan and provide services which meet the future needs of travellers particularly linked to the City Centre regeneration proposals.

4.2 *Regional Working*

- 4.2.1 Regional collaboration for transport is vital in shaping regional transport priorities and supporting the City Deal. Regional Heads of Service and Transport Planning Officers continue to meet monthly and fortnightly respectively.
- 4.2.2 The regional collaboration is intrinsically tied to the City Deal and Regional Transport Plan both of which operate on a multi-year programme. This means that objectives are aligned across organisations.
- 4.2.3 The regional transport arrangements will shortly be formalised with a transport sub group being established under the City Deal Board. The regional collaboration is intrinsically tied to the City Deal working and the Regional Transport Plan, both of which operate on a multi-year programme. This ensures a long term perspective to decision-making.
- 4.2.4 The Councils are being encouraged by Welsh Government to formalise its regional working with constituted governance. The region is being encouraged to work with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to develop transport improvements.
- 4.2.5 A draft governance structure has been agreed with the Swansea Bay City Deal Board. This is expected to be formalised in the coming months following clarification regarding Corporate Joint Committees. A constituted transport forum is expected to be formalised in 2020.

4.3 *Parking*

- 4.3.1 Following the Scrutiny process winter tariffs have been amended in foreshore car parks to support local businesses.

4.3.2 Successful implementation of cashless parking technology, providing an additional, convenient method of payment whilst reducing reliance on cash payment with associated efficiencies in service. Cashless parking will in turn deter thefts from and damage to pay and display payment machines.

4.3.3 Moving forward, the provision of key Pay on foot parking system in Multi storey car parks and new Pay & display machines in all surface car parks to improve customer experience.

4.4 *Fleet Renewal and Maintenance*

4.4.1 In the last year, 30 new vehicles delivered or ordered including 20 Social Services welfare buses to replace existing old vehicles. Workshop maintenance staff upskilling to enable statutory Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) testing in house, increasing corporate resilience and vehicle maintenance viability. Workshops continued to provide high level of service despite structural issues with existing facility.

4.4.2 Plans include the relocation of the Central Transport Unit workshops and fleet facility to new premises in the Enterprise Park. Challenge of transitioning whilst remaining fully operational and not disrupting fleet users' daily support. Key decisions for Cabinet may include options on future service delivery models (and potentially T&Cs) with regard to in-house or externalised vehicle maintenance based on new facility's commercialisation approaches.

4.4.3 Fleet renewals continue to apply Green Fleet Policy principles in terms of most viable and environmentally friendly options for vehicle replacements. Lord Mayor's replacement civic car to be hybrid and further 40 fully electric and hybrid vehicles planned for 2020. Swansea was awarded the prestigious Public Sector Green Fleet of the Year Award (Medium to Large fleet category) as well as being finalists in the WhatVan! Green Fleet Award category.

5. **Public Protection and Services**

5.1 *Trading Standards*

5.1.1 Tethered Horses – In 2015/16 the authority was asked to respond to a petition from an animal welfare pressure group around horses being tethered on Council land without permission. This matter was referred to Scrutiny and triggered a collaborative effort with a number of animal/horse welfare charity organisations and the Council. An Equine working group was set up with partner agencies and charities looking at the issues with horses within the County. This co-ordinated action achieved a reduction in tethered horses across the city, this situation continues to be under control and monitored.

- 5.1.2 There have been a number of successful high profile prosecutions relating to Food Standards, Allergens, unsafe counterfeit goods including cosmetics, tobacco and unsafe vehicles and Scams aimed particularly at the vulnerable residents of Swansea. This includes a prosecution against a call centre which lead to a total sentence for those convicted to over 12 ½ years custody.
- 5.1.3 Work continues on the initiative to reduce knife crime. This will include taking court action against retailers alleged to sell to under 18s. Through this work with both South Wales Police and the Home Office we have seen a decrease in the availability of knives in stores across the authority.
- 5.1.4 A significant amount of seizures have taken place over the last year targeted at illegal tobacco which is aimed at reducing its availability to both children and the vulnerable. This tobacco is continually found to be unsafe and these seizures allow the measure put in place by government to be more effective on the take up of tobacco use.
- 5.1.5 We have become the lead authority for advice to Welsh Government on the Protected Geographical Information scheme and we audit traders who wish to become part of that scheme.
- 5.1.6 Work is ongoing in preparation for the implementation and enforcement of the MUP (minimum unit price of alcohol) which is being introduced on the 2nd March 2020 and also the continued education and enforcement of food retailers in respect of accurate allergenic information being provided to consumers.
- 5.1.7 The service undertakes core preventative and compliance work to improve the surrounding environment for residents to lead healthier lives. The work it undertakes adds value to the ongoing improvement work of other agencies such as Natural Resource Wales, HSE, Welsh Government, etc.

5.2 *Food Safety*

- 5.2.1 The service has consistently achieved 100% of programmed inspection targets for high risk food premises and increased the number of inspections of lower risk food premises and new food businesses. The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme continues to be implemented. In addition, all reported cases of confirmed and suspected notifications of food related diseases have been investigated along with accident notifications where required. A number of successful prosecutions of food businesses for hygiene offences have taken place.

5.2.2 The service undertakes core preventative and compliance work to improve the surrounding environment for residents to lead healthier lives. The work it undertakes adds value to the ongoing improvement work of other agencies such as Natural Resource Wales, HSE, etc. together with raising awareness and working with local businesses and stakeholders.

5.2.3 Moving forward, existing standards will be maintained and the service is continuing to increase the number of inspections of lower risk food premises. All high risk new businesses are inspected within 28 days. The introduction of a paid business advice service for food hygiene is progressing and work is also being done to develop Primary Authority relationships with businesses operating in Swansea. The aim of the Primary Authority Scheme being to make the local regulation of businesses operating at multiple premises across the UK more consistent. The introduction of agile working has also allowed the team to improve ways of working and which has had a positive impact on the service delivery.

5.3 Registrars

5.3.1 The Registrar's service continues to make a valuable contribution to the well-being goals of the Authority particularly in terms of maximising a more equal Wales. A Wales of Cohesive Communities is supported by monthly citizenship ceremonies – with excellent feedback being received from participants.

5.3.2 In February 2019 the Registrar General introduced new fees in relation to birth, death, marriage and CP certificates to reflect the increased cost of certificate production since 2010 when certificate fees were last revised. The new fees also standardise charges for certificate priority services across England and Wales. At the time of registration, the certificate fee was increased from £4.00 to £11.00. Post registration, certificates are now £11.00 for non-priority service or £35.00 for priority. In Swansea they were previously £10 and £15.

5.3.3 On 26th March 2019, the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019 was introduced. The Act makes provision about the registration of marriages and extends the eligibility of civil partnerships to opposite sex couples.

5.3.4 The regulations for opposite sex couples civil partnerships were made and approved in Parliament on 5th November and came in to force on 2nd December. From that date Registrars were able to take notices for civil partnerships for opposite sex couples with the first partnerships being formed on 31st December. Up to 6th January 2020 Swansea Register Office has attested 6 notices for opposite sex civil partnerships and seen 3 partnerships formed so far (2 on 31st Dec and 1 on 2nd Jan). The service continues to receive a number of enquiries from opposite sex couples who wish to form a civil partnership.

5.3.5 General Register Office was anticipating that the regulations for the Marriage Schedule System would be approved by the end of 2019 with Opposite Sex Civil Partnerships but this was been delayed due to the General Election. These regulations will bring about a change to the way that marriages are registered and will provide for the inclusion of mother's details on a marriage entry in addition to father's details. When introduced, marriages will no longer be registered in traditional registers. Instead couples will sign a 'schedule' document and the marriage registration entry will be held electronically on the RON system (national registration system).

5.3.6 2020 will also see the introduction of the Medical Examiners scheme. This will be rolled out throughout the year, firstly for hospital deaths and then deaths in the community. The ME scheme will see greater scrutiny of deaths and the surrounding documentation prior to registration.

5.4 *Bereavement Services*

5.4.1 As with Registrars above the introduction of the Medical Examiners scheme in England and Wales will also impact on the Bereavement service. This will mean deaths in the clinical setting (hospitals) are reportable directly to the medical examiner for scrutiny in the same way that deaths are reported to a coroner; the aim is to benefit bereaved families by giving a more transparent approach on causes of death. This will remove the need for a medical referee providing the second signature to authorise cremations as the medical examiner will be executing those duties.

5.4.2 Last year dog fouling across all cemetery locations was a particular problem. Efforts focused on educating the general public with more vigilance to identify offending dog owners. More meaningful signage has been erected at all locations to warn of the risk of prosecution if offenders do not keep their dogs on a lead and clean up after them.

5.4.3 The service is currently in the process of developing the Babies Garden and is aiming to officially open the same with a babies service in June. Audio and visual enhancements are also planned for the Crematorium in 2020.

5.4.4 Our second woodland burial site has recently been introduced at Kingsbridge Cemetery.

5.5 *Building Control*

5.5.1 The aftermath of the Grenfell tragedy continues to impact on the construction industry in general. Welsh Government is in the process of reviewing the Building Regulation system in Wales following Dame Judith Hackett's report. An expert group has been formed to assist in the development of this new system, Swansea Council has representation

on this group. The purpose of the export group is to assist the Welsh Government in developing proposed changes to Building Regulations and associated areas in Wales. The group will consider appropriate regulatory solutions aimed at supporting action to deliver the new building safety programme for Wales.

5.5.2 Earlier in 2019 the section received national recognition for becoming the first Authority in England and Wales to have all its Building Control officers qualified to the highest level of fire specialism in accordance with the LABC (Local Authority Building Control) qualification and QA standard.

5.5.3 Much resource for 2020 will be committed to the redevelopment of the City Centre.

5.5.4 The service continues to be self-financing whilst in competition with the private sector and commands 80% of the market share.

6.0 Links to the Public Services Board and Local Well-being Plan

6.1 The overall priorities and work of this portfolio provide a significant contribution to supporting the objectives of the PSB Local Well-being Plan including helping to build stronger communities, by supporting people to live well/age well and to feel safe, etc. A good environment provides opportunities for the best start in life.

6.2 The work of parks, cleansing and streetscene alongside other partners and the community contributes to the Working with Nature objective. Work in transport and highways makes a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions and improving sustainable procurement.

7.0 Legal, Financial and Equalities Implications

7.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

7.2 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

7.3 There are no equalities implications associated with this report.