



Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management

Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel – 12 January 2022

Management of Green Space / Weed & Verge Management

Purpose:	To brief/update the Panel on Swansea Council's management of green space / weed & verge management
Content:	A briefing/update on progress and overview of future aims
Councillors are being asked to:	Consider the information provided and give views
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management
Lead Officer & Report Author:	Jeremy Davies, Group Leader Parks & Cleansing Bob Fenwick, Group Leader Highway Maintenance

1. Management of Green Spaces and Verges

- 1.1 The Parks Service is responsible for maintaining the diverse range of Parks and Open Spaces within the City and County of Swansea. This service offers the community and visitors to Swansea locations the opportunity to enjoy recreational activities, improve health and well-being, participate in sports, relax, learn and play. The service is sub-divided into sections each with a commitment to deliver a high quality, cost effective service. The Nature Conservation Team also manage a range of Council owned nature reserves and wildlife sites.
- 1.2 The report at Appendix A is the report on Management and Maintenance of Open Space (Biodiversity) presented to the PDC on 16 December 2021 as an update on progress on the review of the management of our grass verges and open spaces balancing needs of both biodiversity and people, with an aim of increasing wildflower diversity and habitat for pollinators as well as maintaining space for recreation.
- 1.3 The PDC process will continue with consideration of how highway verges and associated grassed areas could be managed to increase biodiversity, and further trials of cut and collect operations across a wide range of parks and verges.

2. Weed Management

- 2.1 The Highways Service area is responsible for management of weeds on the adopted highways and have provided this update.
- 2.2 Highways Weed spraying is carried out by contractors on a routine programmed basis. This allows for 3 sprays each year of the whole Highway network. The amount of weed spraying chemical used is minimised and scanning technology is employed to ensure only areas where weeds are present are sprayed. The contract is currently being renewed and the option for alternative treatments has been included. Currently there are not thought to be any viable alternatives to using Glyphosate on a wide area programme. The requirements for the scheduling of the sprays has been reviewed as the delay in a single spray this year caused by inclement weather led to a number of issues. The success will remain partially dependant on weather patterns.
- 2.3 The Highways service have introduced a weeding hotspot team to tackle reported issues, this is in place working on areas prioritised through Officer knowledge and will be publicised in the new year, initially via Members and then rolling out to the public. A joint task force with Cleansing has been working weekends and early mornings to clear overgrowth and vegetation build up on major thoroughfares.

3. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 3.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, 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 Acts.
 - 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.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 3.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

3.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

3.2 An IIA Screening has been opened however is not required until all trials with regards increasing biodiversity are completed and a set of proposals reported.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A Report to the Economy, Environment & Infrastructure Policy
Development Committee - 16 December 2021
“Management and Maintenance of Open Space (Biodiversity)”