



Report of the Director of Place

Economy, Environment & Infrastructure Policy Development Committee
17th March 2022

Annual Report

Purpose:	To summarise the work programme for 2021/2022 and outline the draft work programme for 2022/2023.
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FOR INFORMATION

1. Introduction.

This report sets out the progress made on the work programme during the 2021/2022 municipal year.

2. Work programme 2021/2022.

The Committee received a number of reports over the course of the year summarised as follows (in chronological order).

2.1 17th June 2021

Annual Report & Proposed Work Plan 2021-2022.

The Director of Place presented the Annual Report and proposed Work Plan for 2021-2022.

Members' noted the topics that had been covered during the previous Municipal Year.

Members' debated the proposed work plan items and asked questions of the Director of Place who responded accordingly.

2.2 15th July 2021

Siting of Bus Stops.

The Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management introduced the report.

The Integrated Transport Unit Manager provided a comprehensive overview of the ownership, type, location and maintenance of bus stops and shelters. It was noted that Officers utilise guidelines as opposed to a formal policy being in place.

Members' agreed that a Policy should be devised for use within the City and County of Swansea.

It was resolved that The Passenger Transport Team Leader draft a policy (based on current operational guidance) and investigate policies used by other local authorities.

Traffic Calming.

The Road Safety Manager provided an overview on the background and issues for consideration associated with the introduction of traffic calming works.

A number of matters were discussed including:

1. 20 mph zones do provide a modest benefit to environmental issues.
2. There is a need to monitor/enforce 20 mph zones to ensure compliance.
3. The introduction of traffic calming measures has a negative impact on the highway infrastructure and there is currently no additional funding available to counteract this.
4. All emergency services are consulted prior to the introduction of traffic calming measures and their comments are taken into consideration.
5. Public consultation is vital in determining the appropriateness of the differing types of traffic calming.
6. Traffic calming does not adversely affect the availability of residents parking bays.

2.3 16th September 2021

Swansea Bay City Deal – Skills & Talent Programme Business Case.

The Director of Place presented an update of the Swansea Bay City Deal Skills and Talent business case recently approved by Cabinet and to explore how this may fit in with a future PDC agenda item of developing local skills.

Members' noted the background and context, the business plan for the skills and talent programme, funding, delivery of the phases (including the gap analysis and whether the Council is required to make further interventions), challenges faced in respect of skills gaps, the aim of the programme and the financial impact.

Members' discussed:

1. Developing local skills and recruitment and how the Council can develop its policies to assist in that regard.
2. The role of schools in aligning the school aged curriculum to what is required post 16 years in order to address the massive skills shortages.
3. Costs of consultant's fees and the need to ensure the majority of funding is channelled into training opportunities.

It was resolved that further, detailed reports, addressing local skills and recruitment, including areas of Council intervention and the role of education developing a curriculum which addresses the issues with skills shortages post 16 years.

2.4 21st October 2021

Employability Programmes Update.

The Principal External Funding Officer presented an information report detailing key employability, skills and training programmes being delivered by Swansea Council. The report summarised the achievements to date and highlighted opportunities and challenges going forward that should be taken into consideration in the development and securing of funding for successor projects, post-EU funding.

Members' noted the background and context, current economic and employability projects issues and outputs and opportunities and challenges.

In response to Members' questions, Officers stated that:

1. £2.5m a year is received through grant funding which is used for project staffing and qualifications.
2. Whilst there is merit in forward planning in order to develop a policy prior to funding concluding, future grant funding is unknown. Working groups could take place mid-2022 to determine a way forward. However, given the Local Government elections in May 2022, determination of this topic would need to be considered by the PDC post May 2022.
3. Skills planning gained from labour market intelligence form the basis for a robust skill plan. The City Deal Talent RLSP Board co-ordinates the information and assesses the requirements for the region.
4. Progress had been made with schools and post 16 educational establishments in order to address the identified skills shortages.

2.5 18th November 2021

Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Strategy.

The Fleet Manager presented a 'for information' report which detailed the new Ultra Low Emission Strategy that had been submitted to the Welsh Government in support of the Council approach and overarching Green Fleet Policy.

Members' discussed: upskilling of technicians to the Institute of Motor Industry Standards of Competency; apprenticeship opportunities; electric vehicle charging infrastructure demands; hydrogen fuel vehicles and the salary sacrifice scheme.

In response to a question from the Director of Place, the Chair confirmed that the Committee were content with the 20 actions detailed in the transition plan.

2.6 16th December 2021

Management and Maintenance of Open Space (Biodiversity).

The Head of Waste Management, assisted by Officers, presented a progress update on the review of the Council's management of its green spaces.

Officers detailed progress to date (including the role of the working group), purchase of equipment, engagement with environmental bodies, surveys, operational trials, preparation for expansion of trials next season, information and raising awareness, community consultation and general issues.

Members' asked questions of the Officers who responded accordingly.

The Head of Waste Management stated that a strategic policy would be required to be developed in the first instance, prior to any broader consultation. He reiterated the challenges faced by Members in balancing the Council's commitment to the climate change/nature emergency and the views of their local communities. Future consultation exercises would need to be implemented in a staged approach once the overarching framework had been approved.

It was resolved that:

- 1) The progress to date and direction of travel were noted.
- 2) Chris Howell invite the Chair and Councillor P K Jones to future meetings of the Officer Working Group.
- 3) Members' to be invited to attend a working group to discuss the future on-line consultation exercise.

Tree Policy.

The Natural Environment Section Officer presented a report which sought approval of a strategy for the management of trees on/affecting land/property in Council ownership and setting out the Council's duties in relation to protected trees.

It was resolved that:-

- 1) The Tree Management Strategy is agreed and referred to Cabinet for approval.
- 2) A mapping exercise is carried out to identify potential sites/zones for planting on Council owned land subject to future funding and maintenance availability.

2.7 20th January 2022

Climate Change.

The Director of Place submitted a 'for information' report. The report highlighted the recently approved Cabinet report on the Climate Change and Nature Strategy (18th November 2021) which took into account the recent declaration of a Nature Emergency on 4th November 2021. To aid forward planning, it also informs the Committee on the current status of each policy area included within the governance structure.

Members' noted progress in relation to: Governance Update; Strategy and Policy Update; Biodiversity Plan/Section 6/Nature Recovery Action Plan; Develop a Sustainable Transport Strategy; Tree Management Strategy; New School Buildings; Procurement; Housing; Waste Strategy Policy 2022-25; Green Infrastructure Strategy; Local Development Plan; Energy Plan and Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The Project Manager referred to the collaborative work involving all Welsh Authorities and Swansea's input in the recent COP Cymru initiative.

The Director of Place referred to the volume of work and ongoing progress contained in each of the policy areas detailed above.

Speed Control Measures in Residential Areas to include 20 mph speed limits.

The Senior Engineer submitted a report which provided a brief overview on the background and issues associated with the introduction of speed control measures to support a speed limit of 20mph in residential areas.

The Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement and Infrastructure Management provided an overview of the challenges associated with

implementing the measures which included ensuring compliance with the scheme; financial implications and consultation.

The Senior Engineer referred to the eight pilot schemes within Wales and stated that the Welsh Government would be assessing the data derived from each pilot scheme. He stated that there was limited information locally regarding compliance and omissions resulting from speed control areas.

The Head of Highways and Transportation stated that there were many conflicting challenges associated with the Scheme which required careful consideration prior to implementation.

Members' asked questions of the Officers who responded accordingly and it was resolved that the issue could form part of the PDC work plan in the forthcoming municipal year.

2.8 17th February 2022

High Street Regeneration and Empty Premises.

The Economic Development & External Funding Manager provided a 'for information' report which provided an update on the actions being undertaken to regenerate High Street and address empty premises.

Members' noted the recovery plan actions currently being progressed and delivered:

- Grant funding allocated to local businesses through the Premises Outdoor Adaptions Grant, to support local businesses to adapt to social distancing requirements majority completed.
- Continuing to administer Welsh Government covid-19 financial support to local businesses through schemes such as direct NDR support and discretionary grants
- Recruitment of new business development officers was completed in March 2021 working under the Business Swansea banner and delivering a range of business support that has included start up grants, themed online seminars and increasing engagement with businesses across Swansea
- Shop Local Shop Swansea campaign rolled out across county, timed with easing of restrictions at different stages over the past 12 months
- Wide range of employability provision including Kickstart placements
- 44 start up bursaries issued to date

The Dyfatty Community Hub proposals outlined in February 2021 around the vacant shop units were progressing well, presenting a great opportunity to locate and test these approaches working closely with all relevant support services and providing a real opportunity to act as enablers in giving local people in particular the tools they need to strengthen the community and generate positive micro-business opportunities. Four of the six units were now

refurbished with utilities activated. Initial community engagement had been undertaken, and support would be provided to various groups and individuals to try out their ideas which included new small businesses, support activities and services. Engagement activity had been very positive. In addition the former Lamb Pub was acting as the site office for the Palace Theatre works, in itself creating footfall and creating a temporary use of an existing building complementary to the activities that would start in the shop units shortly.

The enforcement action plan was in place and work was starting on initial schemes.

The key was integration of these activities – no one sector or area of work has all the answers, but the opportunity to create a positive and cost-effective environment to enable people to realise their own futures is real, with a holistic package of support available at the same time at the right time.

In response to Member questions, Officers stated that various marketing strategies were progressing which included the availability of grants and business rate relief. A multi-disciplinary team involving other public sector organisations, the third sector and community groups were also involved in the regeneration of High Street.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their informative presentation and their ongoing work.

3. Proposed Work Programme for 2022/2023.

Due to the fact that local government elections will be taking place in May 2022 any future work programme can only be determined once a new committee is formulated. Notwithstanding this the following are some indicative headings that the PDC may wish to consider for future including:

- Climate Change and Nature Strategy;
- Ongoing consideration of current economic situation within Swansea and any policy context that would assist its ongoing regeneration and recovery;
- Review of the current policy of managing empty shops within the City;
- Ongoing review and policy recommendations for High Street;
- Consideration of the Council's current approach to decarbonisation of its housing stock;
- Review of the Council's current energy strategy;
- Review of policy objections of its local and regional transport strategies;
- Review and policy implications of current approach to employability and talent and skills;
- Development of a future sustainable transport strategy including requirements relating to street lighting, green and grey fleet;
- Review of biodiversity strategy and implications of maintenance programmes;
- Policy in relation to traffic calming and Welsh Governments 20mph speed

- limit roll out.
- Development of an on street EV charging

4. Financial Implications.

4.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. Any subsequent implications would be set out in individual reports to Cabinet.

5. Legal Implications.

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report. Any subsequent implications would be set out in individual reports to Cabinet.

6. Integrated Assessment Implications.

6.1 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.

6.1.1 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'.

6.1.2 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.

6.2 This is a for information report but an IIA screening has been carried out and is enclosed in Appendix A. This has identified that a full IIA is not required.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices: Appendix A – IIA Screening Report.