



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Scrutiny Performance Panel - Climate Change and Nature

At: Remotely via Microsoft Teams

On: Tuesday, 4 July 2023

Time: 10.00 am

Convenor:

Membership:

Councillors: C M J Evans, E W Fitzgerald, J A Hale, O G James, M H Jones, S E Keeton, M W Locke, B J Rowlands and W G Thomas

Agenda

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| 1 | Appointment of Convener | |
| 2 | Apologies for Absence | |
| 3 | Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests
www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests | |
| 4 | Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips | |
| 5 | Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)
To receive the minutes of the previous meeting(s) and agree as an accurate record. | 1 - 6 |
| 6 | Public Question Time
Questions must be submitted in writing, no later than noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Questions must relate to items on the agenda. Questions will be dealt with in a 10-minute period. | |
| 7 | Draft Work Plan 2023-24 | 7 - 8 |

Next Meeting: Tuesday, 3 October 2023 at 10.00 am

Steve Evans

Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
Tuesday, 27 June 2023

Contact: Liz Jordan 01792 637314

Agenda Item 5



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel - Climate Change and Nature**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 2 May 2023 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor H Lawson (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
E W Fitzgerald
M W Locke

Councillor(s)
M H Jones
B J Rowlands

Councillor(s)
S E Keeton
W G Thomas

Other Attendees

David Hopkins
Andrea Lewis

Cabinet Member – Corporate Service and Performance
Cabinet Member – Service Transformation

Officer(s)

Geoff Bacon
Mark Barrow
Liz Jordan
Rachel Lewis
Mark Wade

Head of Property Services
Fleet Manager Highways and Transportation
Scrutiny Officer
Directorate Project Manager
Director of Place

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): C M J Evans
Other Attendees: A H Stevens

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No disclosures of interest were received.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

No declarations were made.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

Panel agreed the minutes of the meeting on 8 March 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

5 Climate Change Update

Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Service Transformation, Mark Barrow, Fleet Manager and Geoff Bacon, Head of Property Services attended to update the Panel on this issue and answer questions.

Discussion Points:

- Panel heard the Council faces a number of challenges in relation to Green Vehicle Adoption. Welsh Government and UK Government have tight targets which must be met in terms of low emission vehicles.
- Panel pleased to hear Swansea Council is well ahead of other councils in Wales in terms of numbers of battery electric/hybrid vehicles.
- Cabinet Member stated the Council does not have the budget to undertake many things in relation to climate change and nature recovery including green vehicle adoption and will have to lobby hard both the Welsh Government and UK Government for the resources it needs to meet the targets.
- Panel queried if greening the fleet was best use of any money that becomes available and if this has been modelled. Heard in terms of efficiencies, the department does not want to make false economies but will change to electric where it can.
- In relation to downsizing vehicles, Panel wanted to know if this would be inefficient or unproductive. Heard all Council vehicles are deployed with telematics which has driven efficiency. Also, smaller vans will minimise the opportunity for excess load and will still be able to carry everything they need.
- Panel queried where the Council's energy comes from as need to be using renewable energy to charge up electric vehicles. Informed the Council is using 100% renewable sources for its electricity so is currently 100% green, but it cannot be guaranteed going forward.
- Panel queried if Council has got a battery recycling policy in place. Informed there is not currently one in place.
- Panel discussed how it is better to keep current vehicles for as long as possible rather than just replacing them with electric and can keep an eye on new markets at the same time.
- Panel expressed concern about how some renewable energy is achieved, for example wind turbines, and if damage is being done to other parts of the environment to achieve renewable outcomes. Heard major solar farms, major wind turbines etc are outside of the Council's control.
- Panel queried how much more expensive electric vehicles are in comparison to diesel. Informed lighter commercial are 25-30% more expensive, heavy goods are 100-150% more expensive. It is hoped cost of vehicles will come down in price through economies of scale.
- Panel wanted to know if weight of vehicles is something that needs to be considered as far as roads are concerned. Heard electric vehicles are heavier and this will impact on the road network, car parks and bridges etc longer term as more people transition to electric.
- Report proposes that in future the Panel receives an annual update on Climate Change.

Actions:

- Add Update on Climate Change to future work programme in May/June 2024.

6 Achievement against Corporate Priorities / Objectives / Policy Commitments

Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Service Transformation, David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance and Geoff Bacon attended for this item and informed the Panel that this is a huge area spanning a number of portfolios.

Heard the report gives some examples of specific activities to demonstrate action going forward. The Council is trying to do as much as it can in terms of development, developing policies, working with regional partners, doing some early activities and early outcomes where it has got them with limited resources and in a worsening financial climate.

7 Panel Review of the Year 2022-23

Panel Members reviewed their year on the Climate Change and Nature Panel and made the following comments:

- Panel has done some valuable work although finance is always an issue. Hope Panel will be able to continue this work going forward.
- Finance - having to think more about how we spend money is not such a negative.
- Possible topic for future work plan - How planning process works with biodiversity and how we encourage people to work with nature. Checklist / toolkit on biodiversity which people can look at to see if they have considered different aspects of nature, biodiversity etc, would be a good idea.
- Positive things done within the Panel.
- Vital for the Panel to look at Planning.
- Battery disposal – maybe worth a discussion on how we can lobby Welsh Government about it.
- SUDS – great idea but there are some bad SUDS practices. Need to look at it and how we can make it work. Recommend Panel Members do SUDS training.

Actions:

- Add to future work programme – Planning: discussion on how to encourage people to look at biodiversity within planning applications.
- Update on battery disposal to be included in next update to Panel on Climate Change.
- Update on SUDS to be included in next update to Panel on Local Flood Risk Management.

The meeting ended at 10.50 am



To:
**Councillor Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member
for Service Transformation**

**Councillor David Hopkins, Cabinet Member
for Corporate Service and Performance**

Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:

Scrutiny

*Scrutiny Office
Line:
Llinell
Uniongyrochol:*

01792 637314

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

*Date
Dyddiad:*

15 May 2023

BY EMAIL

cc Cabinet Members

Summary: This is a letter from the Climate Change and Nature Scrutiny Performance Panel to the relevant Cabinet Members following the meeting of the Panel on 2 May 2023. It covers Climate Change and Corporate Priorities/Policy Commitments.

Dear Cllr Lewis and Cllr Hopkins

The Panel met on 2 May 2023 and received an update on Climate change including Green Vehicle Adoption and discussed Achievement against Corporate Priorities/Objectives/Policy Commitments.

We would like to thank you, Geoff Bacon, Mark Barrow and Rachel Lewis for attending to present the items and answer the Panel's questions. We appreciate your engagement and input.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learned from the discussion, share the views of the Panel, and, where necessary, raise any issues or recommendations for your consideration and response.

Climate Change Update

We heard the Council faces a number of challenges in relation to Green Vehicle Adoption. The Welsh Government and UK Government have tight targets which must be met in terms of low emission vehicles.

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

We were pleased to hear Swansea Council is well ahead of other councils in Wales in terms of numbers of battery electric/hybrid vehicles in the fleet.

We noted vehicles are just one piece of the puzzle in relation to climate change and nature recovery and that there is a much bigger picture when it comes to the 2030 and 2050 targets that the Council is trying to solve. Cabinet Member Andrea Lewis stated the Council does not have the budget to carry out many things in relation to climate change and nature recovery, including green vehicle adoption, and will have to lobby hard both the Welsh Government and UK Government for the resources it needs to meet the targets.

We queried if greening the fleet was the best use of any money that becomes available and if this has been modelled. We feel that it may be a false economy to prioritise new electric vehicles if the cost of resource then increases, and asked if the Council would be better off prioritising, for example, insulating schools, installing solar panels on school roofs etc. We heard that in terms of efficiencies, the department does not want to make false economies but will change to electric where it can. However, it is driven by the ambitions of Welsh Government and the Council. We were informed that 10% of the modelling has been done but the remaining 90% will be a real challenge in terms of service delivery.

In relation to downsizing vehicles, we wanted to know if this would result in staff having to come back to the depot more to pick up stores, this would not be efficient or productive. We heard all Council vehicles are deployed with telematics which has driven efficiency and the smaller vans will minimise the opportunity for excess load. They will still be able to carry everything they need, but it will stop them carrying the 'just in case' stuff.

We queried where the Council's energy comes from as we need to be using renewable energy to charge up electric vehicles. We were pleased to hear the Council is using 100% renewable sources for its electricity so is currently 100% green, but were informed this cannot be guaranteed going forward, as it depends on the markets and the Council is in a national procurement for energy with other councils.

We queried if the Council has got a battery recycling policy in place and were informed it does not have one at the moment, as the Council's electric vehicles are 5 to 7 years old, so you have not reached the issue of renewing batteries. Also, the electric vehicles the Council has currently are leased so it's the suppliers who have the obligation in terms of disposal. The Council will need to become more aware of this if it begins purchasing electric vehicles to ensure the full supply chain is sustainable going forward.

We discussed how it is better to keep the current vehicles for as long as possible rather than just replacing them with electric, and you can keep an eye on new markets at the same time.

We expressed concern about how some renewable energy is achieved, for example wind turbines, and if damage is being done to other parts of the environment to achieve renewable outcomes. We heard major solar farms, major wind turbines etc are outside of the Council's control, however, within the Council's control you are looking at using renewable energies wherever possible.

We queried how much more expensive electric vehicles are in comparison to diesel and heard lighter commercial are 25-30% more expensive, heavy goods are 100-150% more expensive but it is hoped the cost of vehicles will come down in price through economies of scale.

We wanted to know if the weight of vehicles is something that needs to be considered as far as roads are concerned and heard electric vehicles are heavier and this will impact on the road network, car parks and bridges etc longer term as more people transition to electric. This is a concern.

The report proposes that in future the Panel receives an annual update on Climate Change. The next update will be scheduled in the Panel's work programme for May/June 2024.

Achievement against Corporate Priorities/Objectives/Policy Commitments

We noted that this is a huge area spanning a number of portfolios.

We heard the report gives some examples of specific activities to demonstrate action going forward. We were informed the Council is trying to do as much as it can in terms of development, developing policies, working with regional partners, doing some early activities and early outcomes where it has got them, with limited resources and in a worsening financial climate.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised, however in this instance, a formal written response is not required.

Yours sincerely

HANNAH LAWSON
CONVENER, CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURE SCRUTINY PANEL
CLLR.HANNAH.LAWSON@SWANSEA.GOV.UK

Agenda Item 7

CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURE SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL WORK PLAN 2023/24 **DRAFT**

<p>Meeting 1 4 July 2023</p> <p>10am</p>	<p>Appointment of Convener</p> <p>Draft Work Plan 2023-24</p>
<p>Meeting 2 3 October 2023</p> <p>10am</p>	<p>Water Quality, Management and Pollution Control <i>Cllr David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance</i> <i>Relevant Officers (Tom Price / Carol Morgan)</i> <i>Representatives from Natural Resources Wales TBC</i></p> <p>Planning Enforcement: Nature and Biodiversity (Discussion on how to encourage people to look at biodiversity within planning applications, for example, checklist/toolkit on biodiversity) <i>Lead TBC</i></p>
<p>Meeting 3 28 November 2023</p> <p>10am</p>	<p>Environmental Tourism briefing (suggested at last year's work planning conference) <i>Lead TBC</i></p>
<p>Meeting 4 30 January 2024</p> <p>10am</p>	<p>Nature and Biodiversity Update (including Monitoring Delivery of Corporate Priority/Objective – Maintain & Enhance Nature & Biodiversity in Swansea) <i>Invited to attend:</i> <i>Cllr David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance</i> <i>Paul Meller – Natural Environment Section Manager</i> <i>Deborah Hill – Nature Conservation Team Leader</i></p>
<p>Meeting 5 19 March 2024</p> <p>10am</p>	<p>Local Flood Risk Management – Annual Update (including discussion on Drainage Systems/Services) <i>Invited to attend:</i> <i>Cllr Andrew Stevens – Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure</i> <i>Stuart Davies – Head of Highways and Transportation</i> <i>Mike Sweeney – Team Leader, Highways and Transportation</i></p> <p>Air Quality Management <i>Invited to attend:</i> <i>Cllr David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance</i> <i>Carol Morgan, Head of Housing and Public Health</i> <i>Tom Price – Team Leader, Pollution Control</i></p>
<p>Meeting 6</p>	<p>Climate Change Update (update on battery disposal to be</p>

<p>14 May 2024</p> <p>10am</p>	<p>included) <i>Invited to attend:</i> <i>Cllr Andrea Lewis - Cabinet Member for Service Transformation</i> <i>Relevant Officers (Geoff Bacon / Rachel Lewis)</i></p> <p>Achievement against Corporate Priorities / Objectives / Policy Commitments <i>Cllrs Andrea Lewis / David Hopkins / Andrew Stevens? / Cyril Anderson</i></p> <p>Panel Review of the Year</p>
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Future work programme items:

- Impact of New Housing Developments on the Environment - concerns around housing developments and impact on the environment, including flooding / flood risk. TBC (from work planning conference). **Discuss under item - Local Flood Risk Management (March 2024)?**
- Public Electric Vehicle Charging Provision TBC (from work planning conference). Last discussed at the Panel in January 2023. **Schedule on 2023/24 work plan?**