



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 3 October 2023 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor S E Keeton (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

B J Rowlands
M W Locke

Councillor(s)

O G James

Councillor(s)

M H Jones

Other Attendees

David Hopkins
Hamish Osborn
Sarah Bennett

Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance
Natural Resources Wales
Natural Resources Wales

Officer(s)

Ian Davies
Liz Jordan
Carol Morgan
Tom Price

Development Manager
Scrutiny Officer
Head of Housing & Public Health
Team Leader - Pollution Control

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): E W Fitzgerald, J A Hale and W G Thomas

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 4 July 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

5 Water Quality, Management and Pollution Control

Relevant Cabinet Member, Team Leader Pollution Control and representatives of Natural Resources Wales attended to brief the Panel on this issue and answer questions.

Discussion Points:

- Panel heard Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is the key player on this issue, but the Council works very closely with them.
- Panel heard a lot about rising water temperatures over the Summer and asked if this makes it more likely to have problems with bacteria in sea water. Heard it is potentially an issue and would warrant some investigations in the future, probably by the scientific community.
- Panel queried what interaction there is between Welsh Water, the Council and NRW regarding sewerage discharges and how Swansea is performing compared to other parts of the UK. Heard there is a lot of interaction. NRW liaises with Welsh Water over the number and duration of spills from sewer overflows, with the aim of reducing them. This area does not have same level of problems as some areas in UK.
- Panel discussed how new suburban housing developments damage wildlife habitats and can also create pollution and asked what measures should be taken by the Council to ensure surface water drainage solutions do not pollute existing local environmental amenities such as ponds and water courses. Heard from NRW perspective it is important to have a sustainable strategy for dealing with surface water on any site and that is why there is SUDS legislation. It is the construction phase which NRW is particularly concerned about and would like improvement from the industry on.
- Panel stated there has been a lot in the press about water leaks and the amount of time to repair them and asked if there is a major leak from a clean water main how long the response time is. Informed NRW does not have direct control over this. Water companies are responsible for controlling leaks.

6 Planning Enforcement: Nature and Biodiversity

Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance and the Development Manager attended to brief the Panel on how the Planning system seeks to incorporate Nature and Biodiversity in the decision-making process.

Discussion Points:

- Panel informed there is a requirement in Future Wales, the national development framework, that action is taken to secure the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity to provide net benefit, to ensure resilience of eco systems and green infrastructure assets. The Local Development Plan supports this and provides a clear planning framework.
- In addition, to provide clarity, the Council has provided Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 'Biodiversity and Development'. This is available on

the Council website and maildrops have been sent out to developers to inform them about the SPG.

- Panel noted it is a reactive service as no legislative requirement for developers to notify Planning when starting a development, and Council does not have enough resources to proactively monitor every development. Cabinet Member emphasized the public have very important role to play in reporting issues, therefore public awareness raising is essential going forward.
- Panel felt it would be useful to publish contact details for reporting issues on Council's social media pages. Cabinet Member gave commitment to liaise with Communications team to see what they can do proactively to communicate this message.

Actions:

- Cabinet Member to liaise with Communications Team regarding publicising this message to the public and feed back to Panel.

7 Work Plan 2023-24

Panel considered the work plan and noted items for the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 10.40 am