



Dinas a Sir Abertawe

Hysbysiad o Gyfarfod

Fe'ch gwahoddir i gyfarfod

Panel Perfformiad Craffu – Newid yn yr Hinsawdd a Natur

Lleoliad: O bell drwy Microsoft Teams

Dyddiad: Dydd Mawrth, 16 Gorffennaf 2024

Amser: 10.30 am

Cynullydd:

Aelodaeth:

Cynghorwyr: C M J Evans, E W Fitzgerald, O G James, M H Jones, S E Keeton, M W Locke, B J Rowlands a/ac W G Thomas

Agenda

Rhif y Dudalen.

- | | | |
|----------|--|----------------|
| 1 | Cadarnhau Cynullydd | |
| 2 | Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb | |
| 3 | Datgeliadau o fuddiannau personol a rhagfarnol
www.abertawe.gov.uk/DatgeluCysylltiadau | |
| 4 | Gwahardd pleidleisiau Chwip a Datgan Chwipiau'r Pleidiau | |
| 5 | Cofnodion y Cyfarfod(ydd) Blaenorol
Derbyn nodiadau'r cyfarfod(ydd) blaenorol a chytuno eu bod yn gofnod cywir. | 1 - 14 |
| 6 | Cwestiynau gan y cyhoedd
Rhaid cyflwyno cwestiynau'n ysgrifenedig, cyn hanner dydd ar y diwrnod gwaith cyn y cyfarfod fan bellaf. Rhaid i gwestiynau ymwneud ag eite mau ar yr agenda. Ymdrinnir â chwestiynau o fewn cyfnod 10 munud. | |
| 7 | Rôl y Panel | 15 - 26 |
| 8 | Cynllun Gwaith Drafft 2024-25 | 27 - 28 |

Cyfarfod nesaf: Dydd Mawrth, 17 Medi 2024 am 10.30 am

Huw Evans

Huw Evans
Pennaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd
Dydd Llun, 8 Gorffennaf 2024

Cyswllt: Liz Jordan 01792 637314

Agenda Item 5



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Lilian Hopkin Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 14 May 2024 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor S E Keeton (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

M W Locke
B J Rowlands
W G Thomas

Councillor(s)

C M J Evans
O G James

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
M H Jones

Other Attendees

Cyril Anderson
David Hopkins
Andrea Lewis

Cabinet Member for Community (Services)
Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance
Cabinet Member for Service Transformation

Officer(s)

Liz Jordan
Rachel Lewis
Paul Meller
Jane Richmond
Mark Wade

Scrutiny Officer
Directorate Project Manager
Natural Environment Section Manager
Project Manager Strategic Climate Change
Director of Place

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): J A Hale
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 19 March 2024 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

5 Climate Change Update (including achievement against corporate priorities/objectives/policy commitments)

Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Service Transformation and Cyril Anderson, Cabinet Member for Community (Services) together with relevant officers attended to update the Panel and answer questions.

Discussion Points:

- Panel asked what the biggest challenges are, in terms of both Climate Change and Nature to Council achieving its goals apart from money, and if there is anything else the Panel could do to help. Informed there are several challenges. It was suggested in the Community Growing Working Group the day before about encouraging schools to have a dedicated 'green' governor to champion climate change, energy efficiency and biodiversity. Panel very keen on this idea and agreed to make this recommendation to Cabinet Members. Cabinet Members fully supported this.
- Other examples where the Panel can help include:
 - Through partnerships, by championing that work and encouraging partners to have greater input.
 - Signposting people to the energy efficiency hub on High Street
 - There is a small pot of money in the Environmental Partner Framework, and councillors should talk to officers if there are small projects in their wards which could benefit.
 - Workshops going to be held in the community on climate adaptation and mitigation, and councillor participation would be appreciated.
- Panel discussed Public electric vehicle points and asked if new legislation has been brought in that all new cars will have to have the charging point in the same place, and if so, what effect this will have on installation of charging points. Cabinet Member agreed to provide a full written response following the meeting.
- Panel asked about battery recycling. Aware of excellent scheme for household batteries, but what happens to vehicle batteries. Informed by Cabinet Member that there have been no discussion nationally about disposal of EV batteries so they cannot provide any more information on this currently.
- Panel heard in terms of nature and biodiversity locally, it is not just the Council's responsibility and need to get across to the public that little things can make a difference for biodiversity and nature enhancement.
- Panel happy Council is committed to buying green energy but need to remember this does not guarantee the energy used to charge our cars comes from renewable energy sources.
- Panel Member stated University has been running Green Impact Project to help reduce energy usage and encourage employee behaviour change, and asked if the Council would consider doing something similar. Cabinet Member confirmed they are interested and will look at it in more detail to see how the Council could potentially roll it out itself.

- Panel has concerns about the new recycling receptacles for glass and cans, in terms of the weight of them when they are full, as could cause problems for people with a disability or who live in a flat. Informed the department can work with residents who are disabled by adding them to the 'Assist' list which is already in place.

Actions:

- Information to be provided to Panel on new legislation regarding location of charging points on cars, and effects of this.
- Waste Strategy and Recycling to be added to work plan for new municipal year.

6 Nature and Biodiversity Update (including achievement against corporate priorities/objectives/policy commitments)

David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance and Paul Meller, Natural Environment Section Manager attended to update the Panel and answer questions.

Discussion Points:

- Panel heard the scrutiny inquiry on Nature Recovery in 2018 made a number of recommendations which have been implemented. Officers stated this work has very much become business as usual for the Nature Conservation Team and suggested that going forward the Panel may want to look at the picture across the Council. Panel noted that probably the best way of doing this, given the Local Nature Recovery Section 6 Action Plan is now in place is to bring these reports to the Panel annually.
- Panel would like to see 'no mow May' rolled out across the County. Full response to be provided by relevant Cabinet Member following the meeting.
- Panel asked why the Council cannot stop using weed killers, stating that some councillors have asked for it not to be done in their wards this year. Cabinet Member this has been debated at the Panel many times and ward members now have the opportunity to opt out wherever possible. Full response to be provided by relevant Cabinet Member following the meeting.
- Panel queried why the Council cannot plant more rain gardens. Full response to be provided by relevant Cabinet Member following the meeting.
- Panel asked how we know if nature recovery is working and there is biodiversity gain. Informed this is currently being look at, net biodiversity gain needs to be monitored whether it is through planning applications or generally as part of the Council's work.
- Panel noted Local Development Plan (LDP) consultation is underway and queried if biodiversity protections will be improved as part of the LDP. Informed enforcement is always a problem and the Department is looking to see what can be done.
- Panel stated it has been talking for a number of years about biodiversity with regards planning applications, and asked if there has been any progress. Panel feels if every planning application included a simple question about enhancing biodiversity it would make people think more about what they can

do. Cabinet Member stated they are working towards value added to biodiversity in all planning applications at this time.

- In terms of the LDP, Panel suggested that if a greenfield site is used for housing it would have a significant impact on biodiversity which can never be compensated for. Heard there are different types of greenfield sites, not all are rich in biodiversity and a site can be enriched, for example with rain gardens and trees.

Actions:

- Item on 'Local Nature Recovery Section 6 Action Plan' to be added to work plan for next municipal year.

7 Panel Review of the Year 2023-24

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

What went well?

- Think everything went well. Looked in depth at a lot of topics and made some very good recommendations.
- One of the best bits of scrutiny was Local Flood Risk Management – highlighted a number of issues and hopefully the Department took on board what was said.
- It is good to have Natural Resources Wales at the Panel from time to time so can ask them questions directly. The Panel should continue with this.

What, if anything, could be done better?

- Panel could maybe highlight SUDS issues more. Need to do more on this.
- Been asking for a number of years for questions to be added about biodiversity to planning applications. Don't think the Panel has made any real progress, and it is probably where the Council could make the most change in this area. As a Panel need to spend a bit more time looking at this in the future.

What have we learnt that will help us to improve and develop future scrutiny?

- Need to constantly revisit issues of concern and ask about progress.

The Work Plan for 2024-25 will be drafted and circulated to Members. Final version to be agreed at next meeting on 16 July 2024.

The meeting ended at 10.55 am



To:

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

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

**Councillor Cyril Anderson, Cabinet Member
for Community (Services)**

and

**Councillor Andrew Stevens, Cabinet
Member for Environment and Infrastructure**

BY EMAIL

cc Cabinet Members

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

Scrutiny

*Scrutiny Office
Line:
Llinell
Uniongyrochol:*

01792 637314

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

*Date
Dyddiad:*

11 June 2024

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 14 May 2024. It covers Climate Change, Nature and Biodiversity and Panel Review. A formal written response is required.

Dear Cllrs Lewis, Hopkins, Anderson and Stevens

The Panel met on 14 May 2024 and received updates on Climate Change and Nature and Biodiversity, including achievement against corporate priorities, and discussed the Panel's Review of the Year 2023-24.

We would like to thank Cllr Lewis, Cllr Hopkins, Cllr Anderson, Mark Wade, Rachel Lewis, Paul Meller and Jane Richmond for attending to present the items and answer the Panel's questions. We appreciate your engagement and input.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

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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 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

Cabinet Members Andrea Lewis and Cyril Anderson together with relevant officers attended to update the Panel and answer questions.

We asked what the biggest challenges are in terms of both Climate Change and Nature to achieving our goals apart from money, and if there is anything else the Panel could do to help. We were informed there are several challenges. We heard that for 2030, for example, in terms of greening the fleet, with a fleet of 900 vehicles if all electric vehicles were purchased there would be difficulties in terms of infrastructure. Also, the cost of a hydrogen refuse vehicle is 3 times the cost of diesel and you are waiting for industry and economies of scales to make those vehicles more affordable. Another example given was public electric vehicle charging infrastructure and the challenges around people living in terraced properties. We heard the Panel has helped on these issues with its input, debate and discussion, which is really valuable.

In terms of 2050, we heard there will be opportunity for wider engagement and councillors as community leaders can support this by engaging with communities about reducing energy usage, rollout of greener technologies and potential grants which could be accessible. Also many councillors are governors and have strong links to schools and there is an educational toolkit you are keen for councillors to champion, looking at energy usage within public buildings. We heard it was suggested in the Community Growing Working Group held the previous day about encouraging schools to have a dedicated 'green' governor to champion climate change, energy efficiency and biodiversity. We as a Panel are very keen on this idea and would make this recommendation to Cabinet Members that this is taken forward. Cabinet Members present stated they fully support this.

We heard that other examples where the Panel can help include:

- Through partnerships, by championing that work and encouraging partners to have greater input.
- Signposting people to the energy efficiency hub on High Street
- There is a small pot of money in the Environmental Partner Framework, and councillors should talk to officers if there are small projects in their wards which could benefit.
- Workshops are going to be held in the community on climate adaptation and mitigation, and councillor participation would be appreciated.

We discussed Public Electric Vehicle Charging points and asked if new legislation has been brought in that all new cars will have to have the charging point in the same place, for example, at the front of the car, and if so, what effect this will have on installation of charging points. Cllr Andrea Lewis agreed to provide a full written response following the meeting. We noted you are keeping a watching eye on emerging technologies and are trying to plan but have to be flexible as things are changing quickly.

We asked about battery recycling. We are aware of the excellent scheme for household batteries, but wanted to know what happens to vehicle batteries. We were informed by Cllr Cyril Anderson that there has been no discussion nationally about disposal of EV batteries so you cannot provide any more information on this currently. We noted the Waste Strategy 2024 will not include anything about EV batteries. A Panel Member stated there is a company in Llanelli that repurposes EV batteries and this might be worth you looking into.

We heard from Cllr David Hopkins that in terms of nature and biodiversity locally, it is not just the Council's responsibility and there is a need to get across to the public that little things can make a difference for biodiversity and nature enhancement. We also heard the Council works very closely with lots of schools and needs to do more of that. Nationally, there needs to be policy changes made by Government and procurement changes.

We are happy the Council is committed to buying green energy but must remember this does not guarantee the energy used to charge our cars comes from renewable energy sources. In the long term we think there is a need to consider producing our own energy.

Panel Member stated the University has been running a Green Impact Project to help reduce energy usage and encourage employee behaviour change, and asked if the Council would consider doing something similar, where every section of the Council is looking at energy and water usage and ways to save energy and money, and it is undertaken by the departments themselves. Cllr Andrea Lewis stated that it is really important as public sector partners that we share good practice, and this is a really good example of this. Cllr Lewis confirmed you are interested and will look at it in more detail to see how the Council could potentially roll it out itself.

We have concerns about the new recycling receptacles for glass and cans, in terms of the weight of them when they are full, as it could cause problems for people with a disability or who live in a flat etc. We were informed the department can work with residents who are disabled by adding them to the 'Assist' list which is already in place. We would like to find out more about the Waste Strategy and Recycling and will be adding an item on this to the Panel's work plan for 2024-25.

Nature and Biodiversity Update

Cabinet Member David Hopkins and Paul Meller, Natural Environment Section Manager attended to update the Panel and answer questions.

We heard the scrutiny inquiry on Nature Recovery in 2018 made a number of recommendations which have been implemented, including Climate Change and Nature Recovery becoming a corporate objective. Officers stated this work has very much become business as usual for the Nature Conservation Team and suggested that going forward the Panel may want to look at the picture across the Council. We noted that probably the best way of doing this, given the Local Nature Recovery Section 6 Action Plan is now in place (and monitored annually), is to bring these reports to the Panel to look at progress of work across the County as a Council and with partners. An item on this will be added to the work plan for the new municipal year.

We stated we would like to see 'no mow May' rolled out across the County and were informed this was tried last year but equipment was damaged as the grass had grown so long. As a result, only a few areas were picked this year for 'no mow May'. We heard the Department has now managed to secure funding for new cut and collect vehicles and new plant which will be able to do the job. We were very pleased to hear this. We were informed that a full response will be provided by the relevant Cabinet Member following the meeting.

We asked why the Council cannot stop using weed killers and added that some councillors have asked for it not to be done in their wards this year. Cllr Hopkins stated this has been debated at the Panel many times and ward members now have the opportunity to opt out wherever possible. We were informed this is ongoing, there is a commitment by the Council to look for alternatives wherever it can, and it is still looking at different technologies. We stated that we keep bringing it up because it is such an important issue as we are losing lots of insects every year due to spraying. We were informed that a full response will be provided by the relevant Cabinet Member following the meeting.

We asked about the Council's approach to the design and implementation of rain gardens and were informed a full response will be provided by the relevant Cabinet Member following the meeting.

We asked how the Council would know if nature recovery is working and if there is biodiversity gain. We were informed this is currently being looked at and that net biodiversity gain needs to be monitored whether it is through planning applications or generally as part of the Council's work. We heard it needs to be done in a consistent way across Authorities but there is currently no agreed way of doing it from Welsh Government or nationally. We suggested Friends of Parks Groups across Swansea could help locally with monitoring net biodiversity gain if something structured is put in place, for example, by identifying if any new species of insects are present etc before and after 'no mow May'. We suggested that schools could also get involved.

We noted the Local Development Plan (LDP) consultation is underway and queried if biodiversity protections will be improved as part of the LDP. We heard that enforcement is always a problem and the Department is looking to see what can be done.

We feel the Panel has been talking for a number of years about biodiversity with regards planning applications, but there has been little progress. We believe if every planning application includes a simple question about enhancing biodiversity it would make people think more about what they can do. Cllr Hopkins stated you are working towards value added to biodiversity in all planning applications at this time.

In terms of the LDP, we suggested that if a greenfield site is used for housing it would have a significant impact on biodiversity which can never be compensated for. We heard there are different types of greenfield sites, not all are rich in biodiversity and a site can be enriched, for example with rain gardens and trees.

Panel Review of the Year 2023-24

Panel Members reviewed their year on the Panel. The comments are noted below for your information:

What went well?

- Think everything went well. Looked in depth at a lot of topics and made some very good recommendations.
- One of the best bits of scrutiny was Local Flood Risk Management – highlighted a number of issues and hopefully the Department took on board what was said.
- It is good to have Natural Resources Wales at the Panel from time to time so can ask them questions directly. The Panel should continue with this.

What, if anything, could be done better?

- Panel could maybe highlight SUDS issues more. Need to do more on this.
- Been asking for a number of years for questions to be added about biodiversity to planning applications. Do not think the Panel has made any real progress, and it is probably where the Council could make the most change in this area. As a Panel need to spend a bit more time looking at this in the future.

What have we learnt that will help us to improve and develop future scrutiny?

- Need to constantly revisit issues of concern and ask about progress.
- Work Programme for 2024-25 will be drafted and circulated to Panel Members. Final version to be agreed at first meeting of new municipal year on 16 July 2024.

Your Response

We hope that you find the contents of this letter helpful and would welcome comments on any of the issues raised within. However, on this occasion, a formal written response is required by Tuesday 2nd July 2024 to the following:

- Information to be provided on new legislation regarding location of charging points on cars, and effects of this.
- Further information on 'no mow May' to be provided to the Panel.
- Further information on use of weed killers to be provided to the Panel.
- Further information on the installation of rain gardens to be provided to the Panel.

Yours sincerely

SARA KEETON
CONVENER, CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURE SCRUTINY PANEL
CLLR.SARA.KEETON@SWANSEA.GOV.UK

Councillor Sara Keeton
Convener, Climate Change and
Nature Scrutiny Panel

(SENT BY EMAIL)

Please ask for:

Direct Line: 01792 63 6141

E-Mail: Cabinet.office@swansea.gov.uk

Our Ref: AS/DH/AL/CA/JW

Your Ref:

Date: 27 June 2024

Dear Councillor Keeton

Thank you for your letter dated 11 June 2024.

Please see below our further comments as requested.

1. Information to be provided on new legislation regarding location of charging points on cars, and effects of this.

Panel note:

We discussed Public Electric Vehicle Charging points and asked if new legislation has been brought in that all new cars will have to have the charging point in the same place, for example, at the front of the car, and if so, what effect this will have on installation of charging points. Cllr Andrea Lewis agreed to provide a full written response following the meeting. We noted you are keeping a watching eye on emerging technologies and are trying to plan but have to be flexible as things are changing quickly.

Response:

At present, there is no specific legislation introduced in the UK that mandates the standardisation of the placement of connector sockets on electric vehicles. New requirements and regulations have been introduced by the UK Government to enhance charging infrastructure, although these pertain to the accessibility, reliability and technical specifications of public charge points rather than the positioning of connectors on vehicles. The positioning of EV connector sockets therefore remains at the discretion of the electric vehicle manufacturers.

The following article lists upcoming public charging regulations and their timelines for implementation in the UK.

[Upcoming public charging regulations in the UK – Monta](#)

2. Further information on 'no mow May' to be provided to the Panel.

Panel Note:

We stated we would like to see 'no mow May' rolled out across the County and were informed this was tried last year but equipment was damaged as the grass had grown so long. As a result, only a few areas were picked this year for 'no mow May'. We heard the Department has now managed to secure funding for new cut and collect vehicles and new plant which will be able to do the job. We were very pleased to hear this. We were informed that a full response will be provided by the relevant Cabinet Member following the meeting.

Response:

Swansea wide application of No Mow May (NMM) was trialled in 2023 and the results discussed in detail with relevant cabinet members, Nature Conservation Team and Parks. The NMM trial caused significant operational issues including damage to numerous equipment costing significant sums to repair as that equipment is not designed for cutting much longer grass. This presented an unsustainable pressure on the service revenue budget. As a result the decision was not to carry out the scheme in the same manner as 2023 but attempt to achieve similar principles through our cut and collect trial which utilises speciality equipment designed to cut longer grass, however we have limited numbers of this kit and due to its size and requirements for cuttings disposal is not suitable for all sites. The service will continue to review its equipment replacement programme and embrace future technological advances which allow wider biodiversity application. More details on the cut and collect trial can be found here:

<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/8806/Cut-and-collect-trial---boosting-biodiversity>

3. Further information on use of weed killers to be provided to the Panel.

Panel note:

We asked why the Council cannot stop using weed killers and added that some councillors have asked for it not to be done in their wards this year. Cllr Hopkins stated this has been debated at the Panel many times and ward members now have the opportunity to opt out wherever possible. We were informed this is ongoing, there is a commitment by the Council to look for alternatives wherever it can, and it is still looking at different technologies. We stated that we keep bringing it up because it is such an important issue as we are losing lots of insects every year due to spraying. We were informed that a full response will be provided by the relevant Cabinet Member following the meeting.

Response:

The Parks service do use a Glyphosate based herbicide when preparing wild flowering areas for sowing. Ideally we would prefer not to do so, but given that we sow some 40,000sqm per year we do not have the labour resources to manually remove invasive weed growth when prepping for sowing which is essential to have an effective floral growth and display. The council has to balance a range of views and approaches and whilst in some areas we are trialing further reduction there is still a desire from other stakeholders to continue the practice to ensure we can give efficient colourful displays which give much joy and enhance wellbeing and mental health.

The Parks service also use it for control of invasive species, in particular Japanese Knotweed.

The Formulated products continue to be classified as non-hazardous by The European Chemicals Agency's (ECHA) Committee for Risk Assessment (RAC). Taking this into account the service continues its limited use of Glyphosate whilst it remains fully licensed. It will of course continue to monitor opportunities for further reduction by use of alternative methods which must be as effective, affordable and not create inefficiency elsewhere. Parks' use of Glyphosate based herbicides is by fully trained and certificated staff.

The Highways service use Glyphosate for hard areas, kerb edges, paving joints, back of footways and the like. This is currently the only method for control over the length of the network. We will continue to look for large area alternatives that are as effective and affordable. The areas sprayed are not suitable for any flowers or other vegetation. The only Authority we are aware of that stopped spraying on Highways, was Brighton however, they have recently made the following comments: "Since 2019, we have been reliant on manual weeding alone. After 5 years, the problem is now out of control and many pavements present serious safety and accessibility problems for our residents. Manual weeding alone simply hasn't been effective and has left some streets inaccessible to wheelchair users, parents and carers with buggies and those with visual or mobility impairments". We will continue to monitor for alternative methods.

4. Further information on the installation of rain gardens to be provided to the Panel.

Panel Note:

We asked about the Council's approach to the design and implementation of rain gardens and were informed a full response will be provided by the relevant Cabinet Member following the meeting.

Response:

Rain gardens are engineered sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS), designed to capture, and clean surface water run off diverting it from drainage systems. On Council owned land rain gardens should be designed and/or approved by qualified drainage engineers / landscape architects. Raingardens are typically installed in hard grey infrastructure or in green space and their creation depends on several factors:

Functionality, i.e. ecosystem services, contributing to reducing surface water flooding, cleaning water, increasing biodiversity by creating food and habitat for nature, providing summer cooling through evapotranspiration, increasing connectivity and improving amenity. There are different types of rain gardens offering different functions:

1. **Bioretention rain gardens** – these include engineered soils to capture, store water and remove pollutants. This reduces the level of pollutants reaching our waterways and affecting aquatic ecosystems. Bioretention rain gardens are often installed on or adjacent to areas with high vehicle movements (highways / car parks etc.). They are normally designed to be at and below ground level. A local example of a highways bioretention rain garden is currently being installed in Burrows Road in Sandfields.
2. **Rain planters** – Are very similar to rain gardens but they are above ground. They typically are designed to capture rainwater run-off from roofs. Local examples of rain planters can be found in Llys Glas, Swansea City Centre and at the Swansea Community Farm in Cadle.
3. **Swales and retention ponds** - These types of SuDS are generally installed in green space. Swales are shallow vegetated channels designed to be dry and wet. Retention ponds are areas of shallow open water designed to store rainwater.

Location – is key. Rain gardens need to be located where the water gathers. In the highway / hard landscape of the urban realm they need to be located adjacent to an existing drainage system allowing clean water to be slowly released back into the system and acting as an overflow in extreme weather events.

Design - they also need to be designed into the public realm taking into consideration existing services, accessibility, building basements, etc.

This means rain gardens are not suitable for all locations. There are a range of solutions to managing surface water quality and quantity across the urban landscape with multiple benefits for people and wildlife. Where rain gardens are not suitable other green infrastructure typologies such as green roofs / green walls and street trees also capture and hold stormwater as does urban landscaping. This range of typologies enables the urban landscape to act like a sponge, capturing and slowing the flow of surface water run-off and providing space for habitat creation and amenity.

Budget - there is no dedicated budget for installing rain gardens. To date they have tended to be designed into new schemes or are created from grant funded regeneration / enhancements projects. To maximise functionality maintenance is vital, and needs to be resourced either by Parks Services, where resources are limited, or externally which requires a maintenance budget.

Yours sincerely



Y Cynghorydd / Councillor Andrew Stevens
Aelod y Cabinet dros Yr Amgylchedd ac Chydraddoldebau
Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure



Y Cynghorydd / Councillor Andrea Lewis
Dirprwy Arweinydd / Aelod y Cabinet dros Drawsnewid Gwasanaethau
Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Service Transformation



Y Cynghorydd / Councillor David Hopkins
Dirprwy Arweinydd / Aelod y Cabinet dros Wasanaethau a Pherfformiad
Corfforaethol
Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance



Y Cynghorydd / Councillor Cyril Anderson
Aelod y Cabinet dros Wasanaethau Cymunedol
Cabinet Member for Community Services

Agenda Item 7



Report of the Convener

Climate Change and Nature Scrutiny Performance Panel – 16 July 2024

Role of the Climate Change and Nature Scrutiny Performance Panel

Purpose:	As it is the first meeting of the municipal year this report has been written to help give clarity and ensure understanding of the role of the Climate Change and Nature Scrutiny Performance Panel. It is also designed to aid discussion on effective working.
Content:	A description of the role of Performance Panels is provided, the focus of the Climate Change and Nature Panel, and link to relevant Council Priorities / Policy Commitments.
Councillors are being asked to:	Discuss the role of the Panel and effective working
Lead Councillor:	Convener of the Climate Change and Nature Scrutiny Performance Panel
Lead Officer & Report Author:	Liz Jordan, Scrutiny Officer E-mail: liz.jordan@swansea.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Within the Council's arrangements for Overview & Scrutiny, the Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for developing a Scrutiny Work Programme and managing the overall work of scrutiny to ensure that it is as effective as possible.
- 1.2 The broad aim of the scrutiny function is to engage non-executive councillors in activities to:
 - provide an effective challenge to the executive
 - help improve services, policies, and performance
 - engage the public in its work.
- 1.3 At the same time the Committee must ensure that the work of scrutiny is:
 - manageable, realistic and achievable given resources available to support activities
 - relevant to council priorities
 - adding value and having maximum impact

- coordinated and avoids duplication.
- 1.4 In order to discharge the work of Scrutiny, the Scrutiny Programme Committee can establish informal Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.
- There are two types of Panel:
- Inquiry Panels will undertake discrete in-depth inquiries into significant areas of concern on a task and finish basis.
 - Performance Panels will undertake provide ongoing in-depth monitoring and challenge to particular services / service areas
- 1.5 The Committee has established six Performance Panels, each with a specific focus:
- Service Improvement Regeneration & Finance
 - Education
 - Adult Services
 - Child & Family Services
 - **Climate Change & Nature.**
- 1.6 Panel meetings will typically involve consideration / assessment of service performance reports from Cabinet Members, with support from lead officers, and discussion of issues arising. Where necessary, Panels will drill down into specific matters. Panels may request relevant reports on activities, performance and information that will help it to assess progress regarding the Council's work, commitments, and implementation of agreed plans.
- 1.7 Performance Panels are expected to have on-going correspondence with relevant Cabinet Members in order to share views and recommendations, arising from monitoring activities, holding them to account for service performance, quality and improvement.
- 1.8 The Committee also determines the frequency of Performance Panel meetings that can be supported within the overall Scrutiny Work Programme. Performance Panels will meet on an on-going basis during the Council term until otherwise agreed by the Committee. Accordingly, Panels will develop a work plan for meetings that effectively discharge their responsibilities and Committee expectations.
- 1.9 Non-executive councillors who are not members of the Committee have the opportunity to participate in Panels and other informal task and finish groups. The membership of Panels and Working Groups is determined by the Committee. The Committee will appoint Panel Conveners in the first year of a Council term, however, has agreed for Performance Panels to then re-confirm / appoint their Convener at the start of every subsequent municipal year. There are no fixed number of seats on Panels, however, more than one political group should be represented on each and should be of a manageable size in terms of team working and effective questioning. A minimum of 3 members should be present at all meetings.

- 1.10 Performance Panel Conveners are required to provide the Scrutiny Programme Committee with regular progress reports on the work and impact of their Panels. Performance Panel conveners can attend meetings of the Scrutiny Programme Committee as co-opted members.
- 1.11 Panels and Working Group meetings are accessible to the public, just as the Scrutiny Programme Committee. Agendas, reports, letters relating to scrutiny activities are published on the Council's modern.gov online platform:
<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1&LLL=0>

2. The Climate Change and Nature Scrutiny Performance Panel

- 2.1 The Climate Change and Nature Scrutiny Performance Panel is responsible for ongoing monitoring of Council performance in relation to climate change and the natural environment. It will monitor delivery of the Council's work, commitments and implementation of agreed plans, and assess progress.
- 2.2 The Panel currently has a membership of 8 councillors.
- 2.3 In accordance with the agreed Scrutiny Work Programme, the Panel meets every two months. This has been programmed for 10am, usually on a Tuesday.
- 2.4 The Panel was established by the Committee in July 2019 as the Natural Environment Panel and was renamed the Climate Change and Nature Panel in July 2022. The Panel has been focused on contributing to the ongoing development and enhancement of Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity and climate change, acting as a critical friend for the Cabinet, and helping to ensure accountability for performance. To support regular monitoring of key activity the Panel receives an update report on 'Nature and Biodiversity' and 'Climate Change' annually. These provide a regular 'health check' on climate change and natural environment activity to facilitate challenge by the Panel. The Panel has then, where necessary, drilled down on specific work, to provide a more in-depth level of scrutiny. For example, during 2023/24 this included discussion on: Water Quality and Pollution, Air Quality, Local Flood Risk, Environmental Tourism.
- 2.5 The Panel will write to the relevant Cabinet Members, to convey its views including suggested action, arising from meeting discussions. Letters, and responses where requested, are reported back to the Panel for comments and discussion as necessary.
- 2.6 Link to Corporate Objectives as set out within the Corporate Plan 2023-28:

*Delivering on **Nature Recovery and Climate Change** - so that we maintain and enhance nature and biodiversity in Swansea, reduce our carbon footprint and tackle climate change.*

The Council's Corporate Plan, pages 35-40, relate specifically to Climate Change and Nature matters and have been **appended to this report**.

2.7 Link to Policy Commitments 2022-2027 (taken from Council report 7 July 2022):

Climate Change

- Swansea Council is committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- We will support delivery of the first phase of the Blue Eden Lagoon project.
- We aim to progress the development of a council-operated solar energy farm at the City's Tir John site.
- The Council will strive to install more electric vehicle (EV) charging points across the county, supporting a move to more EV ownership.
- We will install more LED street lighting.
- We will develop a new city-wide tree planting map allowing us to plant thousands of new trees in communities.
- We aim to make neighbourhood greening improvements.
- Swansea Council will continue to review the council transport fleet to maximise opportunities for use of a green fleet in line with its green fleet strategy.

Housing

- Swansea Council commit to providing more energy efficient homes and more affordable homes, alongside more investment in social housing.

100 days target:

Transport and Energy

- The Council will announce progress on the Blue Eden project.
- and consider further extensions.
- Swansea Council will support and enable the increase and availability of electric vehicle (EV) charging points and develop a wider EV charging strategy.
- We will continue to review the council transport fleet to increase the green fleet in line with its agreed green fleet strategy.
- We will progress discussions on the development of a hydrogen fuelling hub.

3. Support

3.1 Performance Panels have the dedicated support of a member of the Council's Scrutiny Team. This lead Scrutiny Officer will assist with work planning and project-manage scrutiny activities and help to ensure that things run smoothly, for example by:

- directly supporting meetings
- liaison with Cabinet Members, departments, partners and the public
- contacting and arranging witness sessions
- carrying out research and arranging evidence gathering
- carrying out and assisting with any consultation and public engagement exercises
- helping to keep the work to time

- capturing and reflecting back the ideas, evidence gathered and any key issues that have been highlighted
- assisting in the drafting of scrutiny letters and reports
- promoting work using social media and other methods of communication.

3.2 The Corporate Management Team and Service Departments are also an essential source of advice and support. Engagement with departments will be important in providing context for areas of work, knowledge about policies and service delivery, and technical expertise.

3.3 The Committee should recognise that resource constraints may have an impact on the scrutiny activity and delivery of work plans. Being focussed, proportionate and flexible will be important as we carry out scrutiny.

4. Effective Working

4.1 The Panel is encouraged to consider how it can work more effectively, for example in its preparation for meetings, and think about its approach to issues including the following:

- Developing Questions and Questioning Strategy
- Use of short Pre-meetings / Post meetings
- Team / Inclusive Working and Communication
- Decorum at meetings
- Meeting times / length
- Any other practical considerations.

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Extract from Corporate Plan 2023/28 on 'Nature Recovery and Climate Change'.

Delivering on Nature Recovery and Climate Change

Why this priority is a well-being objective

- Following Welsh Government declarations for Wales, the council has declared both a Climate Emergency in June 2019 and a Nature Emergency in November 2021.
- Using the Welsh Government Route map to net zero, Swansea Council will align with its principles, knowing what needs to be done now, by 2022-26 Low Carbon becoming the norm and by 2030 where choosing carbon zero is routine.
- Sound governance has been established within the council to act on such challenges and all activity will be driven within the parameters of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, the Environment Act (Wales) 2016, the Strategic Equality Plan and the Corporate Plan and the Swansea (PSB) Well-being Plan.
- To ensure that in addition to achieving net zero 2030 for Swansea Council, we will work with partners, organisations, schools, businesses to support Swansea as a whole county and citizens in its efforts to become net zero by 2050, aligning with the Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget (2) 2022 / 2025. Establishing both Climate and Nature Charters and a Pledge Wall to encourage active participation and help build a healthier, more prosperous and biodiverse / ecologically resilient Swansea.
- Swansea is one of the most ecologically rich and diverse counties in the UK. Its unique variety of habitats and species and wonderful range of parks, green spaces, nature reserves, beaches and landscapes needs to be maintained, enhanced and sustainably managed for the benefit of everyone now and into the future.
- Our natural environment and biodiversity is under threat and in decline due to unsustainable human activities. Habitats and species are being lost at an alarming and unsustainable rate. We need to raise awareness of the impacts of biodiversity loss and climate change at the local level and provide information, advice, and practical support and incentives to encourage others to take action and collaborate to deliver positive solutions to these challenges.

- We want everyone to have access to, understand, appreciate and benefit from Swansea's outstanding natural environment and to play their part in looking after and enhancing it, resulting in a healthier, greener and more prosperous Swansea.
- Our future survival and quality of life is dependent on healthy resilient natural environment, the multiple benefits it provides to society and on reducing our carbon emissions to net zero.
- We have a moral responsibility to look after biodiversity for its own intrinsic value.

The longer-term challenges this well-being objective will help address

- A public sector target of 2030, ahead of the Welsh Government's target of 2050 for the whole of Wales, will give us our best chance of keeping global warming below 1.5°C. This is the tipping point at which the climate impacts we're already experiencing will go from bad to potentially catastrophic. We'll see natural systems cross danger points, triggering lasting changes such as extreme storms, heatwaves, mass loss of natural habitats and species.
- We are at a critical point in time for nature recovery and without urgent transformative change, many of our species and habitats will continue to decline or become extinct.
- Halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity through reducing harm and unsustainable use and moving to a situation where we are working with nature to maintain healthy resilient ecosystems that will continue to provide long-term quality of life (or ecosystem services) benefits upon which we all depend.
- Tackling climate change, which is one of the greatest challenges facing us all and we need to reduce our carbon footprint and to mitigate for and adapt to the likely risks and impacts.
- Creating high quality environmentally and low carbon responsible and sustainable green jobs that make the most of our unique natural resources, for example, through environmental tourism, sustainable land and coastal management, local food production, sustainable waste management, energy efficiency, renewable energy and carbon capture. As such we will explore and support projects such as on and off shore renewables which align to these ambitions.
- Reducing inequalities in health and well-being by maintaining and enhancing a high quality and accessible natural environment plus ensuring fair access to low carbon energy, homes, travel options, sustainably sourced food and greener job opportunities.
- Sustainably managing and enhancing the quality of our natural resources including air, water, soils and biodiversity will help increase Swansea's ecological resilience and the well-being of its inhabitants.

The steps we will take to meet this well-being objective are:

Net Zero Swansea Council by 2030

- Achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030, following the approved Swansea Council Net Zero 2030 Delivery Plan.
- Reduce the council's impact on the environment, monitoring via the Welsh Government reporting process on the 6 organisational categories.

The 6 organisational categories

Buildings and Energy	Fleet and Other Mobile Equipment	Land Use (Offsetting)
Waste - Operational	New Ways of Working	Supply Chain

- Replace for street lighting with LED.
- Develop a new county-wide tree planting map allowing us to plant thousands of new trees.
- Continue to review the council transport fleet to maximise opportunities for use of a green fleet in line with its green fleet strategy.

Net Zero Swansea by 2050

- Collectively support the wider Swansea ambition, working alongside Climate Charter signatories, PSB, citizens, schools, businesses, community groups and environmental partners to help deliver the Welsh Government ambition of Net Zero Wales by 2050.

Net Zero Wales by 2050

Electricity and Heat Generation	Transport	Residential Buildings
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Industry and Business	Agriculture	Waste and Circular Economy
Education and Engagement	Enriching our Natural Resources	LULUCF

- Develop a Swansea Adaptation and Mitigation Plan.
- Support delivery of the first phase of the Blue Eden Lagoon project.
- Progress the development of a council-operated solar energy farm at the city's Tir John site.
- Aim to make neighbourhood greening improvements.
- Support and enable the increase and availability of electric vehicle (EV) charging points and develop a wider EV charging strategy.
- Progress discussions on the development of a hydrogen fuelling hub.
- Work towards announcing new Active Travel routes, which develop the built and natural environment and encourages higher levels of physical activity.

Nature Recovery

- Develop and monitor the delivery of the Section 6 Corporate Biodiversity Plan and the Resilient Wales goal through annual business planning and reporting mechanisms up to 2028. We will report to Welsh Government every 3 years in line with our Biodiversity Duty.
- Contribute to the review, delivery and monitoring of the Local Nature Recovery Action Plan and a County Wide Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- Work to improve the ecosystem resilience of council owned Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and greenspaces.
- Improve awareness and understanding of climate change and our natural environment through provision of information, training, and events.

- Continue to deliver a programme of wildflower planting and management and take actions that help to control invasive non-native species.
- Engage with local communities to encourage volunteering and to support them taking action to enhance and maintain their local greenspaces and wildlife sites.
- Take action to maintain and improve the quality of our air, water and soils.

By the end of 2023-2024 we will have:

- Reported to Welsh Government on Swansea Council 2022-23 emissions.
- Progressed phase 2 of the public buildings retrofit programme.
- Delivered a second year of projects with our environmental partner.
- Agreed a development model and progressed with the Tir John solar farm development.
- Agree and announce progress on the Blue Eden project with our development partner.
- Built strong collaborative working relationships with climate charter signatories on the 2050 Swansea agenda.
- Begun to implement our ULEV Transition Strategy 2021-2030, with over 150 ULEV vehicles and fleet charge points.
- Continue with the LED street lighting installation programme.
- Agreed an updated tree planting and management strategy.
- Planted hundreds of new trees.
- Produced a series of Wild About your Ward Maps to support communities in identifying opportunities for enhancing local greenspaces and wildlife sites and engaging them in volunteering activities.
- Drafted Management Plans for Council owned Local Nature Reserves.
- Targeted treatment and / or removal of Invasive Non-Native Species on nature sites.
- Produced a series of Climate Change and Nature Recovery e-training modules.
- Continued amenity grassland and road verge management trials to establish as species rich wildflower meadows.
- Prepared a Local Nature Recovery Action Plan and a County Wide GI Strategy.

How we will measure progress*

*Provisional pending review and data development.

- Embed a Climate Change and Nature Strategy.
- Emission reductions to be monitored annually via the Welsh Government reporting process.
- Monitor progress against 30 actions by 2030 for Swansea Council delivery plan on an annual basis.
- Report regularly on collaboration successes with Climate Charter signatories, PSB, citizens, schools, businesses, community groups and environmental partners.
- Delivery of the Section 6 Corporate Biodiversity Plan, alongside a Nature Recovery Action Plan in collaboration with the Swansea Nature Partnership and adoption of a Countywide Green Infrastructure Strategy Continue to monitor air, water and soil quality.

The contribution this well-being objective makes to the national goals

A prosperous Wales	A resilient Wales	A more equal Wales	A Wales of more cohesive communities	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A healthier Wales	A globally responsible Wales
Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Direct

How we will maximise our contribution to the national goals through the way in which we work

- Preventing problems from occurring or from getting worse - By halting the decline of biodiversity and maintaining and enhancing a resilient natural environment, we will maintain vital ecosystem services (for example, flood alleviation, air and water quality, carbon storage and pollination) and help to maintain people's health, well-being, and quality of life. By helping people to understand the causes of problems and how by working together, we can prevent problems occurring. By delivering net zero targets we can help avoid global warming and subsequent consequences. Adaptation activity will help us prepare for change already identified as unavoidable.
- Addressing long-term challenges - We want to reverse the loss of biodiversity, promote healthy resilient ecosystems, and strengthen green infrastructure to adapt to and mitigate for the impacts of climate change, and ensure that our natural environment and the benefits and services it provides are protected for the benefit of future generations. We want to

achieve net zero carbon.

- Working in partnership with others - We will continue to support and collaborate with others Climate Charter signatories, PSB, citizens, schools, businesses, community groups and environmental partners to co-ordinate the planning and delivery of actions and maximise use of resources.
- Avoiding conflicts between public body objectives - By raising awareness of biodiversity and climate change and ensuring that it is taken into account at the early decision-making / design stages of plans and projects, the potential for conflict will be reduced.
- Involving people - We will build capacity and achieve more by involving and supporting the local community to participate in identifying and delivering initiatives that maintain and enhance the natural environment and reduce our carbon footprint. More people will be enabled to access and enjoy their natural environment and contribute to mitigating the impacts of climate change.

The contribution this well-being objective makes to the Public Services Board Well-being Objectives

Early Years	People live well and age well	Working with nature	Strong communities
Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct

Agenda Item 8

CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURE SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL DRAFT WORK PLAN 2024-25

<p>Meeting 1 16 July 2024</p> <p>10.30am</p>	<p>Appointment of Convener</p> <p>Role of the Panel and draft Work Plan 2024-25</p>
<p>Meeting 2 17 September 2024</p> <p>10.30am</p>	<p>Update on Planning Enforcement: Nature and Biodiversity <i>Cllr David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance</i> <i>Ian Davies, Development Manager, Planning and City Regeneration</i> <i>Eilian Jones, Area Team Leader, Planning and City Regeneration</i></p>
<p>Meeting 3 19 November 2024</p> <p>10.30am</p>	<p>Briefing on New Waste Strategy / Recycling <i>Cllr Cyril Anderson, Cabinet Member for Community (Services)</i> <i>Chris Howell, Head of Waste, Parks and Cleansing</i> <i>Matthew Perkins, Group Leader Waste</i></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)</i> <i>Representatives from Natural Resources Wales</i></p>
<p>Meeting 4 21 January 2025</p> <p>10.30am</p>	<p>Sustainable Transport Strategy (including Electric Vehicle Charging Point Provision) <i>Invited to attend:</i> <i>Cllr Andrea Lewis – Cabinet Member for Service Transformation</i> <i>Stuart Davies, Head of Highways and Transportation</i> <i>Matthew Bowyer, Group Leader Highways and Transportation</i> <i>Ioan Brannigan, Transport Strategy Officer Highways and Transportation</i></p> <p>Renewable Energy / Local Area Energy Plan <i>Cllr Andrea Lewis – Cabinet Member for Service Transformation</i> <i>Relevant Officers (Geoff Bacon, Rachel Lewis, Andy Edwards)</i></p>
<p>Meeting 5 18 March 2025</p> <p>10.30am</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</i></p>

	<p><i>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>Tom Price – Team Leader, Pollution Control</i></p>
<p>Meeting 6 13 May 2025</p> <p>10.30am</p>	<p>Climate Change Update <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>Local Nature Recovery Section 6 Action Plan (Progress of work across the County as a Council and with Partners) <i>Invited to attend:</i> <i>Cllr David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance</i> <i>Cllr Andrew Stevens?</i> <i>Relevant Officers</i></p> <p>Achievement Against Corporate Priorities/Objectives/Policy Commitments <i>Cllr Andrea Lewis / David Hopkins / Cyril Anderson / Andrew Stevens</i></p> <p>Panel Review of the Year</p>

Future work programme items:

- **Asset Management Strategy (in terms of decarbonisation) TBC**