



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Climate Change & Nature Recovery Service Transformation Committee**

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

**Monday, 6 January 2025 at 3.00 pm**

**Present:** Councillor R A Fogarty (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**  
M Baker

**Councillor(s)**  
O G James

**Councillor(s)**  
H Lawson

**Also Present:**

Councillor A H Stevens

Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure

**Officer(s)**

Kieran O'Carroll

Associate Lawyer

Jane Richmond

Project Manager Strategic Climate Change

Rachel Lewis

Project Manager

Geoff Bacon

Head of Property Services

Jeremy Parkhouse

Democratic Services Officer

Penny Gruffydd

Sustainable Policy Officer

Catherine Matthews

Landscape & Green Infrastructure Team Leader,  
Planning and City Regeneration

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): D H Hopkins and S E Keeton

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**20 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City & County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

**21 Minutes:**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Climate Change and Nature Recovery Service Transformation Committee held on 9 September 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**22 Artificial Grass Environment Issues.**

Penny Gruffydd, Landscape and Green Infrastructure Principal Officer presented a report which sought the Committee's advice on a corporate position in relation to artificial grass on Council owned land.

It was outlined that artificial grass, also known as fake grass, or even 'counterfeit grass' had been used in sports arenas for decades. In recent years it had become increasingly popular for residential lawns and commercial landscapes. It was often marketed as a low-maintenance and versatile alternative to natural grass, due to it being hard wearing, not requiring watering and reduces the need for potentially harmful fertilisers and herbicides. The more expensive versions mimic the colour, texture and softness of natural grass. Some artificial grasses used recycled materials and plant-based components.

It was added that there were numerous environmental issues resulting from choosing artificial lawns, which far outweighed the benefits detailed above. However, the importance of synthetic sports pitches of which artificial grass is a component, i.e. 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G was widely acknowledged. To reflect this, the use of artificial grass on sports pitches (and other limited locations e.g. specific playground surfaces) was out of the scope of the report, i.e. sports pitches would be exempt from any position statement against using artificial grass on Council owned land.

The report also detailed the environmental and legislative impacts of artificial grass, including the impact upon biodiversity; climate change; resource intensive production; lifespan and recycling; micro-plastic and chemical pollution; legislation and policy; and general issues.

Councillor A H Stevens, Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure commented that further discussions were required regarding raising awareness on the impact of artificial grass. He thanked the Committee for highlighting the issue.

The Committee discussed the following: -

- Raising awareness within schools in order to inform children and parents.
- Raising awareness in the Council's housing stock.
- Developing a Council position statement.
- Connection with the Local Nature Recovery Plan and using relevant sections from the Plan.
- Micro plastic aquatic pollution.
- Flooding / water runoff, SUDS and sustainable drainage.
- This issue not being included in the planning process and linking it into the green infrastructure statement process.
- Additional work – developing why the Council does not use artificial grass on its own new developments and explaining why. Also, the Council do not recommend that residents use artificial grass, while also improving the communications to Council tenants on the issue.
- Recognising that artificial grass is purchased to reduce maintenance when it still needs to be maintained, to raise awareness of this and potentially assisting tenants with the provision of tools to maintain grassed areas.

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) The Council raises awareness around the environmental impacts associated with artificial grass.
- 2) The Council promotes the use of sustainable landscaping practices as an alternative to artificial grass.
- 3) The Council develops a position statement on the use of artificial grass on Council sites and in Council projects.

**23 Work Plan.**

The Chair presented and updated Work Plan 2024/25 report. She added that the presentation of topics listed until the end of the Municipal year had been agreed following advice from officers.

**Resolved** that the contents of the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.23 pm

**Chair**