



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the Economy, Environment & Infrastructure Policy Development Committee

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Thursday, 21 January 2021 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor C Anderson (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

J E Burtonshaw
P K Jones
P M Matthews

Councillor(s)

P Downing
W G Lewis
T M White

Councillor(s)

P R Hood-Williams
P Lloyd

Officer(s)

Stuart Davies
Scott Dummett
Phil John
Martin Nicholls
Cath Swain
Samantha Woon

Head of Highways & Transportation
Senior Lawyer
Project Officer, Highways
Director of Place
Integrated Transport Manager
Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): M A Langstone

18 To receive Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests from Members.

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

19 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Policy Development Committee on 17 December, 2020, be approved as a correct record.

20 Sustainable Transport Strategy.

The Director of Place, assisted by the Head of Waste Management, Integrated Transport Manager and Project Officer (Highways) submitted a report which detailed the proposed actions for the development of a Sustainable Transport Strategy.

A report was considered by Cabinet on 3 December 2020, which highlighted a recommended approach to deliver upon the Council's commitment to its Climate Emergency Declaration.

In order to enable the Council to make progress, one of the key actions was to review the current policy framework and how this could contribute to the achievement of net zero carbon and climate emergency response.

Over 100 Council policies were reviewed and these were distilled down into 8 key themes and a policy framework.

It was noted that grouping key policies into a framework helped identify 'gaps' and it was proposed and accepted that in line with other strategic groups, a Sustainable Transport Strategy would be a valid addition.

A further recommendation of the report was that the commitment to addressing climate change be broken down into two clearly defined work streams:

Work Stream 1 – Swansea Council striving for net zero carbon by 2030 on its own in scope emissions.

Work Stream 2 – How the City and County of Swansea, its major employers, its citizens and businesses can achieve net zero carbon by 2050.

The previous recommendation to Cabinet was that:

A Sustainable Transport Strategy is developed, having identified the need to collate activity into one document, current projects already include Green Fleet Strategy, Business Travel Review and LED Lighting Replacement Programme.

These three themes will all contribute to our 2030 target and are at different stages of development.

This approach would allow the Council to integrate and further develop these and other initiatives, as part of one single sustainable travel and transport strategy.

Whilst the initial focus was on the elements which contribute to the 2030 targets, other work streams which are continuing in parallel, for example Active Travel, EV charging infrastructure and the South West Wales Metro Programme, would be brought into this Strategy in due course.

The reason for this two stage approach was that Welsh Government are progressing the development of Llwybr-Newydd (the new Wales Transport Strategy) which was currently out to consultation. It is intended to develop the local and regional work programmes that align to this overarching strategy with an indicative timescale being May 2022.

In terms of policy, the Green Fleet Strategy was the most complete of these work pieces. The Green Fleet Strategy was agreed in December 2018 and is committed to reducing fleet emissions by 5% each year. This would result in a 50% reduction in 2030 a saving of 2,350 t/CO₂.

These targets are considered to be challenging but achievable although much would depend upon technological developments. Whilst the Council has made good progress in replacing smaller vehicles with electric variants, larger vehicles had previously been considered less appropriate. However, that is a developing area which the Council would continue to monitor.

The Green Fleet Policy is scheduled for a three yearly review which will be scheduled for 2022. A copy of the current strategy was included in Appendix A of the report.

In response to Member questions, Officers stated that:

1. The base line figure of a 5% yearly reduction was taken from 2016/17 figures. The target 50% reduction had been calculated over the period 2018-2030.
2. Calculating the percentage of the Fleet that could be fossil free by 2030 was challenging due to the diverse range of vehicles (in particular HGV's) and the progress of technological advances.
3. A detailed analysis had been undertaken on the Council's 'Grey Fleet'. Progress had been made in developing an approach to review the use of employees use of private vehicles. Deployment of electric vehicles and initiatives such as car club schemes were in progress. However, the COVID 19 Pandemic had disrupted progress. Officers were using a 'defined hierarchy' trying to eliminate the need to travel. When looking at this type of travel, private cars at bottom of hierarchy and posed a significant cost for the Authority.
4. The fleet comprises 750 vehicles, a combination of pool cars, small and large vans, Social Services buses and refuse vans. All vehicles were covered by the Green Fleet policy and Officers will identify all options to replace/convert vehicles.
5. The provision of appropriate charging stations was a challenge. The development of Hydrogen was slow and expensive. As the technology and infrastructure progresses, the Council can proceed on an exponential curve. Whilst there are currently charging points within depots, many employees take vehicles home therefore posing some logistical challenges. Issues such as Council investing in home charging kits could be examined later in the year.
6. The development of an in-house EV farm and a charging network was another issue to be determined later in the year.

The Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement and Infrastructure Management stated that funding bids had been submitted to the Welsh Government for EV in Council owned sites.

Officers' referred to the review of business travel arrangements with regard to staff travel, where staff use their own vehicles for business travel and are reimbursed via mileage claims. This is widely referred to as the Grey Fleet.

The Business Travel Review highlighted that in 2017-2018 (circa) 2.5 million miles were undertaken by the Grey Fleet. The associated financial cost was £1.2 million. This would also account for almost 700 t/CO₂e (in the region of 300 tonnes).

The recommendations from the review suggested that significant savings were achievable both financially (£200k+) and in terms of t/CO2e (in the region of 300 tonnes).

To achieve these savings a suite of recommendations were proposed which centred around:

- a) Introducing a Travel Hierarchy to reduce Grey Fleet miles;
- b) Improved pool car provision (potentially via a 'car club');
- c) Promoting walking, cycling and public transport alternatives; and
- d) Reducing actual travel through behavioural change.

The COVID 19 Pandemic had brought about a significant reduction in business mileage and the introduction and (broad) acceptance of new ways of working. Home working and the use of technology to host meetings has now become the norm and whilst savings made from the operational change would not be fully visible until after year end. A conservative estimate would suggest that savings in excess of 50% had already been achieved during the current financial year.

In response to a Member question, Officers stated that a move from Civic Centre would result in no parking provision for staff which could serve to discourage staff from driving to work. The Council needs to develop greater clarity around the future operating model and how this would be aligned with its accommodation and agile working strategy.

Officers detailed the current staff initiatives which included discounted travel in the form of vouchers which offered a 20% discount for usual day travel. Staff could pay for these through salary sacrifice schemes.

Additionally, a scheme was in place for staff to purchase discounted bicycles from Halfords. The cycle hire facility within Swansea was limited at the moment, the current provision having been secured by Swansea University and Santander.

The Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement and Infrastructure Management referred to the benefits of interchangeable tickets between the rail franchise and stated that cycle hubs would be extended around the Quadrant and Train Station.

It was stated that the development of the Kingsway had been successful in discouraging car usage within the City Centre.

Street Lighting does not have a formal policy in place and this would be addressed as part of the Sustainable Transport Strategy.

A street lighting replacement programme had been running since 2011 and the service has upgraded 21,506 lights to LED, which represents 74% of the current estate.

In addition to the LED's, 3,854 dimmable SONs (high pressure sodium lanterns) have been installed. This results in a total of 25,360 energy efficient lights (88.13% of the Council's total inventory).

These initiatives combined have reduced street lighting carbon emissions since 2010/11 by 4,194 t/CO2.

It was noted that future progress would be constrained by budget restrictions. The street lighting budget included energy usage in addition to maintenance and upgrade costs. It naturally follows that as energy prices rise there is less headroom for spend on maintenance and improvements.

In response to a Member questions, Officers stated that reducing energy usage by turning off street lighting would be a controversial issue. However, this could be included in the LED Policy report.

The Chairman thanked Officers for their informative presentation.

Resolved that:

1. The current Green Fleet Strategy is scheduled for the 3 yearly review at the PDC late 2021 or early 2022.
2. PDC endorse the need to develop a new Green Fleet Policy as part of the wider Sustainable Transport Strategy and include this in its forward work plan.
3. PDC endorse the need to develop a Street Lighting Policy and that a further report is to be presented to PDC in due course.
4. A further report is presented to the PDC once the Welsh Government consultation on the development of Llwybr-Newydd (the new Wales Transport Strategy) has ended.

21 Work Plan 2020-2022.

The Director of Place referred to the items scheduled for discussion at the meeting on 18 February, 2021.

He stated that the items would comprise a combined report.

Resolved that:

- 1) A Joint Report on Local and Regional Economy & Recovery Response (including High Street Regeneration) be considered at the meeting on 18 February, 2021.
- 2) The Work Plan items for the remainder of the year include:

18/03/21	More Homes Housing and De-carbonisation Strategy
18/03/21	Management and maintenance of open space. (Biodiversity & Tree Policy)
22/04/21	Future City Wide Workforce

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Cont'd

May 2021	Grey Fleet Policy
June 2021	Street Lighting
Sept/Oct 2021	Sustainable Transport Policy (Committee to review report prior to submission to Cabinet)

The meeting ended at 15:26.

Chair