



City and County of Swansea

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

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Monday, 9 September 2024 at 3.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor H Lawson (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**  
M Baker  
S J Rice

**Councillor(s)**  
S E Keeton

**Councillor(s)**  
M Jones

### **Also present**

Councillor D H Hopkins  
Councillor A S Lewis

Deputy Leader of the Council  
Deputy Leader of the Council

### **Officer(s)**

Geoff Bacon  
Jeremy Davies  
Kieran O'Carroll  
Rachel Lewis  
Mark Barber

Head of Property Services  
Group Leader Parks and Cleansing  
Associate Lawyer  
Project Manager  
Biodiversity Natural Environment Officer / Local Nature Partnership (LNP) Co-ordinator  
Placemaking and Strategic Planning Manager  
Project Manager, Property Services  
Democratic Services Officer  
Nature Conservation Team Leader

Tom Evans  
Andy Edwards  
Jeremy Parkhouse  
Deb Hill

### **Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): A J O'Connor and A H Stevens

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#### **14 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City & County of Swansea, the following interests were declared: -

Councillor S J Rice declared a personal interest in the agenda as a whole.

#### **15 Minutes:**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Climate Change and Nature Recovery Service Transformation Committee held on 15 July 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## 16 No Mow May Trials.

Jeremy Davies, Group Leader Parks & Cleansing, supported by Mark Barber, Biodiversity Natural Environment Officer provided the Committee with a verbal update on No Mow May trials.

He outlined the background to the trials and informed the Committee that this was an initiative promoted by the charity Plant Life, whose aim is to restore plant and fungi habitats. The initiative was originally focussed upon the approach of the general public to maintain their own gardens and lawns. The principle was also taken up by many larger organisations, including local authorities,

The overall aim includes providing a feast for pollinators, tackle pollution, heat extremes and trap carbon underground. The approach of the Council has included not cutting in May, cutting certain sections or not cutting throughout for long periods, which has resulted in queries from the public.

As a result of a request from a previous Committee in 2021 regarding open space management, the Council had undertaken cut and collect procedures, which plays a major role in maintaining a species rich vegetation, curbing the growth of dominant plants, improving soil nutrient levels and encouraging wildflower growth. This had been a major undertaking by the Authority and involved the Nature Conservation Team successfully bidding for appropriate machinery from Welsh Government grants. It was noted that the cut and collect method was very resource intensive and details were available on the Council website.

The No Mow May trials commenced in 2023, with a mixed take up from Councillors and mixed response from residents. The practicalities of not cutting for long periods were highlighted, including machinery difficulties and the impact of climate change resulted in the biodiversity benefit being very low compared to the cut and collect against the cost to the service. It was clear that the cut and collect trial was benefitting more than No Mow May. The Council was also leaving large areas uncut in order to benefit biodiversity.

The Council was looking to expand the cut and collect provision in the future, subject to resources and viewed the process far more beneficial than No Mow May. It was confirmed that all cut and collect sites were monitored closely, with an increase in wildflowers being observed and additional species, e.g. yellow rattle, being planted.

The Committee discussed fly-tipping in overgrown areas, recognising the lessons learnt regarding communications this year, cutting edges of overgrowth to show a deliberate strategy, theft of Council signage relating to the initiatives and specialist equipment required.

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

## **17 Local Development Plan (LDP).**

Tom Evans, Placemaking and Strategic Planning Manager provided a verbal update regarding the Local Development Plan (LDP), which would be presented to the Committee in January 2025.

He outlined the timescales involved in the process and added that the Council was in the process of replacing the old LDP. During the course of the year there had been communications with stakeholders and partner organisations, such as Natural Resources Wales.

The first key stage of the process would see the pre-deposit document / preferred strategy being presented to Council prior to the end of the year. The report would be the summary of the new strategy and would outline the corporate priorities, overall objectives, housing requirements etc. This would include a wide-ranging public consultation.

The report to the Committee in January 2025 would provide details of LDP deposit plan. Reference was made to the cross party LDP Member Group.

The Committee discussed brown / grey field sites, key times for discussing specific sites / procedures, protecting biodiversity sites, Section 106 principles, overarching governing objectives / principles within the LDP, public consultation on draft policies, virtual consultation room, partnership working and green infrastructure assessment / connectivity / strategy.

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

## **18 Local Area Energy Plan - Status Report.**

Andy Edwards, Project Manager presented a report which advised the Committee on the development of Swansea's Local Area Energy Plan.

The background to the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) was outlined. It was noted that on 9 December 2023, the Committee considered the LAEP's development and the final plan was presented to Cabinet on 16 May 2024.

It was detailed that Swansea's LAEP consisted of 2 documents: the Local Area Energy Plan and a Technical Annex. The LAEP was the primary document that sets out the context, vision, potential interventions and an action plan. This was supplemented by a Technical Annex that provided more detailed information, offering a deeper understanding of the intricacies and specifics surrounding the local energy landscape and the strategic approach outlined in the LAEP.

The context of the plan presented a comprehensive vision for Swansea's future energy system, delineating the essential characteristics it would need to achieve a net zero energy system by 2050. It outlined a potential pathway towards this goal, which was used to develop and support a detailed Action Plan.

It was noted that the vision considered three options; to do nothing, widespread engagement or widespread hydrogen. It was highlighted that the UK Government was currently scheduled to make its decision on hydrogen for heating in 2026 and this decision would influence how the LAEP developed.

The six intervention areas within the plan and factors of assessment were detailed. These intervention areas were brought together to identify fifteen priority actions under five headings.

The final report had been agreed and City Science were in the process of translating both the LAEP and the Technical Annex into Welsh. Once these had been received, they would be published on the Council's website.

The proposed governance of the local area energy planning, risks and mitigation were listed. Appendix B provided Swansea's Local Area Energy Plan.

The Committee discussed EV charging, particularly from terraced housing, circular economy in industry to use others' waste, partnership working with neighbouring authorities, membership of the South Wales Industrial Cluster and the need for industry to lead on some areas.

Councillor A S Lewis, Deputy Leader of the Council updated the meeting in respect of the ongoing work surrounding EV charging.

**Resolved** that the progress of Swansea's Local Area Energy Plan be noted.

## **19 Work Plan 2024-2025.**

The Chair presented an updated Work Plan 2024/25 report. It was noted that the Swansea Council Sustainable Food Policy Draft would not be ready on 2 December 2024. The meeting would therefore be a workshop session and the Chair requested Councillors forward potential discussion topics.

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

The meeting ended at 4.08 pm

**Chair**