



**Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure Management, Cllr Mark Thomas**

**Scrutiny Programme Committee – 11 February 2019**

**Key Headlines: Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure Management**

**Purpose:** This report outlines notable activities and achievements in terms of ensuring the delivery of key priorities within the Environment and Infrastructure Management portfolio. It describes key activities within the portfolio and how they are implemented in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The report also identifies objectives, key challenges and decisions which are anticipated for Cabinet over the next 12 months. It also sets out how activity is aligned with the Public Services Board.

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**For Information**

**1.0 The Portfolio for Environment and Infrastructure Management**

1.1 Key responsibilities within the portfolio include;

- Biodiversity
- Coastal Defence, Marina, Foreshore & Beach Maintenance
- Cycleways
- Environmental Health
- Fleet Renewal & Maintenance
- Fly Tipping Task Force
- Green Vehicle Adoption (Support)
- Highways & Engineering

- Infrastructure Repairs & Maintenance
- Lead Elements of Sustainable Swansea
- Parking
- Parks (Maintenance & Operations) and Cleansing
- Pothole Task Force
- Poverty Reduction
- Public Protection
- Public Transport
- Regional Collaboration for Transport, Highways & Waste
- Regional Transport Policy
- Streetscene
- Trading Standards
- Waste Management & Recycling

1.2 The Cabinet member provides strategic direction to departments delivering the services within the portfolio. The role is drive the delivery of corporate and political priorities by working closely with senior directors and heads of service. This involves the monitoring of key performance indicators and ensuring appropriate actions are taken, tracking the delivery of planned savings and supporting the identification of any future transformational opportunities.

1.3 This report highlights the progress made and future areas of focus in relation to key priorities within the portfolio; Environment, Highways and Infrastructure, Transport and Public Protection and Services. The report also highlights other notable areas of achievement and focus for the longer term. In particular, the report highlights how the Well-being of Future Generations Act's sustainable development principle is applied throughout the service in terms of the five ways of working, (Prevention, Long term, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement) and maximising contribution to the seven national well-being goals.

1.4 Services within the portfolio continue to work under severe budgetary pressures yet strive to deliver high quality services increasingly in line with the five ways of working. The Place directorate has been subject to significant budget cuts which are likely to continue in future years.

## **2.0 Environment**

### *2.1 Biodiversity*

2.1.1 In October 2018, Swansea Council adopted a sixth Corporate Well-being Objective: 'Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's Natural Resources and Biodiversity'. This corporate recognition of the value of nature demonstrates how environmental considerations are increasingly integrated into the work of all services in line with the sustainable development principle. Section 6 of the Environment Act and the Well-being of Future Generations Act's national well-being goals require the Council to protect and improve ecosystems and ensure this is

considered at the earliest project stages. The new Section 6 Plan and proposed actions arising will ensure environmental well-being is considered alongside economic, social and economic well-being.

2.1.2 A Green infrastructure initiative has been designed and is being delivered in collaboration with Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend Councils. While funding has been secured from 'Trees for Cities' for major tree planting scheme in Penlan. Funding has been obtained from NRW to appoint a volunteer co-ordinator up to Dec 2019 (initially). A collaborative project has been delivered with BUG Life to implement actions for pollinators.

2.1.3 The Cabinet Portfolio worked with Scrutiny (April to Nov 2018) to address 'What should the Council be doing to maintain and enhance its natural environment and biodiversity, and in so doing promote the resilience of eco-systems'. This Scrutiny Inquiry utilised the involvement principle in engaging external stakeholders and interested parties.

2.1.4 Moving forward, acceptance of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Inquiry will take place. The adoption of a Section 6 Biodiversity Duty Action Plan is planned with the establishment of a Section 6 Working Group and funding for a section 6 Biodiversity officer. In addition, the adoption of a corporate tree strategy is planned along with a City Centre Green Infrastructure Strategy and development of a Green Infrastructure Planning tool.

## 2.2 *Coastal Defences*

2.2.1 A Welsh Government Grant has been secured to complete design enhancement to Mumbles Sea Defence Wall, to be completed by Oct 2019. The design process will involve members and public engagement.

2.2.2 Key decisions this year will involve both public and council acceptance of the final scheme. The scheme will provide long term sustainable coastal defences in Mumbles by adapting to climate change and will explore opportunities for wider additional and community benefits.

## 2.3 *Marina, Foreshore and Beach Maintenance*

2.3.1 Improvements to sand dune management have been made at Swansea Bay. A consultative study determined options for improvement works at Port Eynon Bay including toilets, car park and wider foreshore areas. Development of an action plan to determine options for Port Eynon.

2.3.2 The long term sustainability of the assets is key to ensuring that the use of the beaches and outdoors becomes the cultural norm, encouraging healthy and active lifestyles and prosperity.

- 2.3.3 Options will be explored to determine appropriate means to deal with sand loss movement issues at Knab Rock causing problems for boat launching will be evaluated in the near future.

### **2.4 Environmental Health**

- 2.4.1 A Draft Review of Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was submitted to Welsh Government in April 2018 and the 2018 Air Quality Progress Report has been submitted to Welsh Government. Bathing Water Quality for Swansea Bay was Satisfactory and Pest Control Contracts have been secured for all Swansea Schools this year.

- 2.4.2 Collaborative working will continue to be important as Swansea Council continues to be an active member of the Welsh Air Quality Forum (WAQF) and Welsh Noise Regulators Group.

- 2.4.3 By April 2019, the draft (AQAP) will be updated with public consultation planned including carrying out research studies on air quality, noise and traffic flow.

- 2.4.4 Moving forward the Council will act as a co-investigator in a collaborative study with Swansea University and Vortex Internet of Things on an Innovate UK Grant awarded project looking at developing new low cost sensor technology looking at collecting real-time localised City Centre based Air Quality, traffic and parking data. The dredging of the River Tawe will take place by the barrage in the marina to remove silt build up. Ongoing work will continue on the automation of the Bathing Water Model.

### **2.5 Parks (Maintenance and Operations) and Cleansing**

- 2.5.1 The Parks Operations Teams continue to protect the natural environment, and provide attractive and safe areas for everyone to enjoy the outdoors. Areas including beaches, parks, woodlands, and playgrounds offer opportunities for the young and elderly alike to be more active and gain health and wellbeing benefits.

- 2.5.2 The Parks Operations service area covers Clyne and the Botanical Gardens, all other parks, playgrounds, tree services, verge maintenance, rural flail work, knotweed control, sports pitches, and floral decorations.

### **2.6 Streetscene**

- 2.6.1 Dog fouling is an anti-social and public health concern within communities. Cleansing teams proactively and reactively remove dog fouling from public areas. They also routinely empty the numerous dog fouling bins situated around Swansea that are widely used by responsible dog owners. Council Enforcement/3GS Officers also patrol

and target problematic areas. Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to offenders where appropriate.

2.6.2 The Cleansing Project Team and NEAT Teams continue to carry out effective deep cleans and improvement works while also contributing to social and cultural well-being goals.

2.6.3 Future aims include better targeting resources to build on the Project Team's deep cleaning type work. In line with the involvement and collaboration principles work with volunteering groups is to be expanded.

### 2.7 *Fly tipping taskforce*

2.7.1 The taskforce provides a more responsive and targeted service to fly tipping with increased enforcement to follow.

2.7.2 The next year will see the introduction of the FlyMapper (data recording) initiative and Fixed Penalty Notices for minor fly tipping. Fly Mapper exemplifies collaborative working as it is a joint project which offers a way of recording via GPS co-ordinates the location of fly tipping across Swansea. It provides the opportunity to take photographs of fly tipping that is recorded onto a database that is controlled by Natural Resource Wales. (NRW). Regular 'grot/hot spots' can then be monitored, with waste being removed by the local authority,

### 2.8 *Waste Management and Recycling*

2.8.1 Achievements to date include the replacement of the collection fleet and introduction of a successful trainee programme. All 9 candidates qualified and a new tranche is being taken on this year.

2.8.2 The regional Long Term Food Waste Contract (including Bridgend) continues to work well and provide a very cost effective disposal option. The exploration of a Regional Energy from Waste Contract continues with Welsh Government support. A Market Feasibility Study is approaching completion. The progression of this contract in order to take advantage of long term benefits will be a key focus for the future.

2.8.3 The conversion of 3 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) into Recycling only, and the introduction of Black Bag Challenges at the remaining 2 HWRCs continues to be a best practice model duplicated by other Councils.

2.8.4 The two key initiatives ongoing are the 'Keeping Recyclables Out of Black Bags' and 'Reduction in film and other contaminants of plastic in recycling bags presented at the kerbside' initiatives. The first prohibits the recyclables we separately collect at the kerbside, from being placed in black bags as a recycling improvement behaviour change.

The second initiative is to reduce the high level of contamination in pink sacks to make the product more suitable for the UK plastic reprocessing market.

### **3.0 Highways and Infrastructure**

#### *3.1 Infrastructure and Repairs*

3.1.1 The service has achieved an APSE nomination for best improver in highways maintenance. Sustainability is key, use of an All Wales asset management tool ensure the whole life efficiency of schemes.

3.1.2 The PotHole Task Force repaired approximately 6000 potholes within 48 hours of receiving a report from members of the public in 2018.

3.1.3 Moving forward plans include the preparation of a 5 year maintenance programme of works for 2020 to 2025.

#### *3.2 LED Street Lighting*

3.2.1 Annual energy consumption for Street Lighting has decreased by 41% since the implementation of LEDs and dimming lanterns, between 2011/12 and 2017/18. This equates to an annual reduction of 2,169 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Had the LED Street lighting programme not been implemented, the annual cost for street lighting in 2017/18 would have been £1.201M whereas the actual cost was £715K. 90% of the lighting stock has been replaced with LED lanterns or energy reducing dimming gear.

3.2.2 There are circa 1200 SOX lanterns (Orange lights) in operation according to energy figures. These comprise of approximately 540 columns that are in a poor condition and will require replacement within 12 months. There are also Circa 980 lighting columns that are in poor condition which need replacing within 24 months. There are also lanterns which are located on non-highway adopted land i.e. housing estates, leisure and private land.

3.2.3 Although the L.E.D. replacement programme has reduced the need to maintain the lanterns, the aging cable network, the structural condition of the columns and the need to electrically test apparatus, has to be taken into account when setting budgets for both maintenance and capital replacement.

Another major future challenge for the Authority is the rate at which the price of electricity is increasing. Currently this is by an average of 12% year on year and the ability to absorb these increases in the maintenance budget is untenable.

### 3.3 Cycleways

3.3.1 Swansea Council was successful in securing 20% (£2million) of ring-fenced Welsh Government funding for Active Travel in 2018/19. Bids for 2019/20 have been prepared and were submitted in January 2019. Cabinet approval will be required for any grant funding received.

3.3.2 The statutory duties of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act are intrinsically linked to the work of the Active Travel (Wales) Act. The 'Integrated Network Map' operates on a 15 year timescale to increase the number of those travelling by active travel means for their daily needs for the benefit of generations to come.

## 4. Transport

### 4.1 Public Transport

4.1.1. The Council has developed a quality partnership with First Cymru. Upgraded bus shelters and electronic passenger information have been introduced to key points on main bus corridors. The new Cae Rowlands community car scheme has been developed, based in Cwmbwrla.

4.1.2 In response to a Sustainable Swansea Commissioning Review. An Integrated Transport Unit has been established bringing together passenger transport functions across the Council

4.1.3 In the short term, more improvements to strategic bus corridors are anticipated as a result of Local Transport Funding and Local Transport Network Funding. A review of subsidised bus services in the light of the changes made by commercial bus companies is continuing.

4.1.4 It is also recognised that the Welsh Government White Paper consultation in relation to public transport closes in March 2019. This could result in significant changes to the planning and delivery of local bus services and licencing.

### 4.2 Regional Working

4.2.1 The Cabinet member influences regional transport policy acting as the current Chair of the Regional Transport Forum.

4.2.2 Regional collaboration for transport and highways is key. Regional Heads of Service and Transport Planning Officers continue to meet quarterly and monthly respectively.

4.2.3 The regional collaboration is intrinsically tied to the City Deal and Regional Transport Plan both of which operate on a multi-year programme. This means that objectives are aligned across organisations.

- 4.2.4 Councils are being encouraged by Welsh Government to formalise regional working arrangements with constituted governance. The region is being encouraged to work with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to develop transport improvements. Governance arrangements will require some level of scrutiny.

### 4.3 *Road Safety Engineering, Education, Training and Publicity*

The council has successfully contributed to the casualty reduction targets set out by the Welsh Government's Road Safety Framework for Wales. It has tailored interventions through a data led approach, particularly targeting the link between areas of social deprivation and child casualties. This approach has proven successful with continued success annual grant applications to the Welsh Government for Local Road safety grant funding.

The same team also undertakes considerable local community consultation to develop high quality Safe Routes in Communities grant bids to the Welsh Government, meeting the objectives of the Active Travel Act and Well-being of Future Generations Act. Creating sustainable transport routes to key community attractions such as Schools, Libraries and Community Centres, ensuring the most vulnerable sections of our community can access these facilities through sustainable modes of travel, tackling reliance on motorised vehicles for local journeys.

### 4.4 *Parking*

- 4.4.1 Following the Scrutiny process winter tariffs have been amended in foreshore car parks to support local businesses.
- 4.4.2 Future plans include the introduction of cashless parking to improve the customer experience of car parks. There is a potential requirement to procure a new 'pay on foot' system for city centre multi story car parks. City Centre Regeneration will involve managing future city centre parking provision.

### 4.5 **Fleet Renewal and Maintenance**

- 4.5.1 The Council has procured a fleet of electric powered vehicles. This means the Council will have more vehicles that are electric on the road than any other local authority in Wales. Departments including waste management, highways, facilities and corporate building and property services, who are very regularly on the road in the course of their work, will use the electric vehicles. Swansea recently awarded the prestigious Public Sector Green Fleet of the Year Award (Medium to Large fleet category) as well as being finalists in the WhatVan! Green Fleet Award category.



### **4.6 Green Vehicle Adoption (support)**

- 4.6.1 The Council has explored the concept of introducing more electric car charging points in collaboration with local authority, university and health board partners in Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot and Pembrokeshire. A Clean Air Roadshow was also organised by Swansea Council, which took place in Castle Square to showcase electric and hydrogen vehicle technology.
- 4.6.2 Recent adoption of a Green Fleet Policy provides the framework to ensure that the acquisition, use and management of the corporate vehicle fleet consistently and continuously seeks to contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan commitments in respect of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

### **5. Public Protection and Services**

#### *5.1 Trading Standards*

- 5.1.1 In 2015/16 the authority was asked to respond to a petition from an animal welfare pressure group around horses being tethered on Council land without permission. This matter was referred to Scrutiny and triggered a collaborative effort with a number of animal/ horse welfare charity organisations and the Council. An Equine working group has been set up with partner agencies and charities looking at the issues with horses within the County. This co-ordinated action achieved a 60% reduction in tethered horses, which continues to be maintained and monitored today.
- 5.1.2 There have been a number of successful prosecutions of food retail outlets, who are providing food with incorrect allergen information which cause consumers to have an allergic reaction. There have also been a successful number of cases brought to a satisfactory conclusion in respect of safety matters including unsafe counterfeit cosmetics, tobacco and vehicles.
- 5.1.3 Forward plans include the continuation of an initiative to reduce knife crime. This will include taking court action against retailers alleged to sell to under 18s. Successful convictions will also be sought against call centre targeting vulnerable people in Swansea.
- 5.1.4 Other future priorities include preparing for the implementation and enforcement of the MUP (minimum unit price of alcohol) and the continued education and enforcement of food retailers in respect of accurate allergenic information being provided to consumers.
- 5.1.5 The service undertakes core preventative and compliance work to improve the surrounding environment for residents to lead healthier lives. The work it undertakes adds value to the ongoing improvement work of other agencies such as Natural Resource Wales, HSE, etc.

together with raising awareness/ working with local businesses, stakeholders etc.

### 5.2 *Public Protection – Food and Safety*

5.2.1 The service has achieved 100% of programmed inspection targets for high risk food premises and increased the number of inspections of lower risk food premises and new food businesses. The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme continues to be implemented. In addition, all reported cases of confirmed and suspected notifications of food related diseases have been investigated along with accident notifications where required. A number of successful prosecutions of food businesses for hygiene offences have taken place.

5.2.2 The service undertakes core preventative and compliance work to improve the surrounding environment for residents to lead healthier lives. The work it undertakes adds value to the ongoing improvement work of other agencies such as Natural Resource Wales, HSE, etc. together with raising awareness and working with local businesses, stakeholders etc.

5.2.3 Moving forward, existing standards will be maintained with an aim of continuing to increase the number of inspections of lower risk food premises. All high risk new businesses are to be inspected within 28 days. A forthcoming innovation is the introduction of a paid business advice service for food hygiene.

### 5.3 *Registrars*

5.2.1 The Registrar's service makes a valuable contribution to the well-being goals particularly in terms of maximising a more equal Wales as a result of legislation relating to civil partnerships and the recent inclusion of mother's details on marriage records. A Wales of Cohesive Communities is supported by monthly citizenship ceremonies – with excellent feedback being received from participants.

5.2.2 This year saw the introduction of facilities to order and pay for certificates online.

5.2.3 Moving forward, there is an opportunity to introduce online payments for ceremonies. There is potential for the introduction of civil partnerships for opposite sex couples and implementation of NHS Wales Medical Examiner services relating to the reporting and scrutiny of deaths.

**6.0 Links to the Public Services Board and Local Well-being Plan**

- 6.1 The new Corporate Objective ‘ Maintaining and enhancing Swansea’s natural resources and biodiversity’ builds upon and seeks to help deliver in collaboration with partners the ‘Working with Nature’ challenge set out within the Public Services Board’s Local Well-being Plan. The Nature Conservation Team is contributing to the delivery of this objective.
- 6.2 The overall priorities and work of the Public Health service are ‘To protect and promote the health, well-being, safety and consumer interests of people living in, working in or visiting the City and County of Swansea. This provides a significant contribution to supporting the objectives of the PSB Local Well-being Plan including helping to build stronger communities, supporting people to live well/age well and to feel safe, etc.
- 6.3 The work of parks, cleansing and streetscene alongside other partners and the community contributes to the well-being step which enables people to feel safe and confident in their communities.

**7.0 Equality, Legal and Financial Implications**

No equalities, legal or financial implications have been identified arising from this report.