



Report of the Director of Place

Economy, Environment & Infrastructure Policy Development Committee

17 June 2021

Annual Report & Proposed Work Plan 2021-2022

Purpose:	To summarise the work programme for 2020/2021 and outline the draft work programme for 2021/2022.
Recommendation:	That the Committee note the report and approve the draft work programme for 2021/2022.
Report Author:	Martin Nicholls.
Finance Officer:	Paul Roach.
Legal Officer:	Deb Smith.
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar.

1. Introduction

This report sets out the progress of the PDC over the last year which was clearly impacted by the Covid Pandemic which curtailed the programme to a little over 6 months. However, significant progress has still been made and this is set out as follows.

2. Work programme 20/21

The Committee received a number of reports over the course of the year summarised as follows (in chronological order).

2.1 22nd October 2020

Active Travel.

The Team Leader, Transport Strategy and Monitoring, provided a briefing on the development and delivery of the Active Travel Programme.

Members' noted the Policy Framework, Barriers and Trends, Active Travel Programme, Projects, Byways Promotional Campaign, Forward Programme and Community Benefits.

It was resolved that the report be noted and the Committee examine the results of the consultation exercise which would take place during the course of 2021.

Amnesty on Waste.

The Head of Waste Management referred to the previous initiatives undertaken by the Local Authority by placing skips (with operatives) within communities. However, this initiative had been undertaken prior to the current sensitivities surrounding waste management and the various initiatives to enable residents to manage and recycle their own household waste effectively.

It was noted that providing skips with operatives within communities would be extremely labour intensive and may cause animosity given the good recycling centres in place. Furthermore, it would contradict the current recycling strategy. However, awareness raising regarding fly tipping and recycling could be disseminated through Waste Management's usual promotional exercises.

Members' asked questions of the Officer who responded accordingly.

Comments regarding the procedure for bulky waste collections would be relayed to the relevant Cabinet Member. However, Member's noted that the current procedure had previously been approved by Cabinet.

2.2 **19th November 2020**

Consultation Response from Local Toilet Strategy.

The Director of Place introduced the consultation response in respect of the Local Toilet Strategy.

Members' noted the background, public consultation, recent and upcoming developments and next steps.

In addition the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration and Tourism, referred to the development of the top end of High Street. The development would include student accommodation and would generate opportunities for local businesses. It was noted that Transport for Wales were considering the siting of public conveniences in front of the train station.

Economic Recovery Action Plan.

The Head of Planning and City Regeneration, assisted by the Economic Development and External Funding Manager, provided a comprehensive summary of the Economic Recovery Action Plan.

Members' noted the key issues within the Action Plan and the positive work that had been undertaken in securing grant streams and providing alternative range of support to support individuals and businesses.

The Cabinet Members for Investment, Regeneration and Tourism and Environment Enhancement and Infrastructure Management praised Officers for joint working and securing positive outcomes during the COVID 19 Pandemic.

2.3 **17th December 2020**

Green Infrastructure Strategy.

A report was presented on the Green Infrastructure Strategy which sought Committee approval prior to being presented to Cabinet in February 2021.

It was outlined that the Strategy was designed to support the Local Development Plan (LDP) and emerging Supplementary Planning Guidance on Green Infrastructure. The strategy contributed to the Council's duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and would support the application of the Statutory SuDS Standard 2019. It also delivered one of the steps in the Council's well-being objective: Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity and, the Swansea Public Service Board's Working with Nature Objective.

The Committee discussed the following: -

- The very positive partnership working with NRW to produce the excellent strategy;
- The importance of also improving air quality within the County;
- Concentrating the current strategy upon the city centre, the 'buy in' from developers and developing the strategy throughout the County as part of a three stage process;
- Delays caused by the Covid 19 Pandemic;
- Future funding of the project;
- The vision of the strategy.

The strategy was subsequently forwarded to Cabinet for adoption in February 2021.

2.4 **21st January 2021**

Sustainable Transport Strategy.

A report was presented on 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.

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.

It was 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.

2.5 **18th February 2021**

Economic Recovery Action Plan.

A report was presented on the Council's Economic Recovery Action Plan and a range of measures were covered including:

- The COVID 19 pandemic and the economic recovery forecast;
- The major strategic projects such as the Copr Bay phases 1 and 2, 71-72 The Kingsway, the regeneration of the Hafod Copperworks and the restoration of the Palace theatre had progressed at pace despite the pandemic;
- They were providing visible signs of confidence in the City, raising the profile of Swansea as a business location and when completed would create employment opportunities and economic growth;
- The success of Local employability projects such as Workways+, Communities for Work, Swansea Short Term Unemployed project, Cam Nesa and Communities for Work Plus and the Council's Beyond Bricks & Mortar initiative ;
- The Economic Recovery Action Plan specifically references the support for the Tourism, Leisure, Events and Hospitality sectors.

It was Resolved that:

- 1) The report be noted.
- 2) A further update report be submitted to the Committee in the 21/22 programme.

- 3) The report is to include details of number of organisations benefitting from finance raised from grants in respect of the Transforming Towns and PEDG and details of the tourism algorithm.

What can the Council do to encourage more shops and support High Street Regeneration?

A report was presented on actions being undertaken to encourage more shops and support High Street Regeneration.

The historic origin of Swansea High Street was detailed along with the changing business models which have had an impact on the area.

The Economic Recovery Plan sets out the range of initiatives that form the wider package of support needed for both the core retailing streets of the City Centre and the ancillary zones such as High Street. This applies equally to our district high streets. For High Street Swansea, a range of programmes are already being deployed through the Transforming Towns package of measures including property enhancement grant for new commercial space and 'homes above shops' funding to release vacant upper floors for market housing. The Palace Theatre, as per the existing Swansea Central Area Regeneration Framework is the catalyst building for upper High Street, with the refurbishment works tender now out to advert.

Resolved that:

- 1) The report be noted.
- 2) An update report be submitted to the Committee in 2021 with the Economy Recovery Plan.

2.6 **18th March 2021**

More Homes Strategy and Decarbonisation of Existing Housing Stock

A report was presented which outlined the More Homes Strategy and the emerging development programme for new council homes funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The report outlined current progress and future aspirations for the Council's development programme.

The report also outlined progress in achieving Welsh Housing Quality Standard, the approach to decarbonise the existing Council Housing stock, and the pilot schemes being designed to test principles and inform the future strategy.

Officers detailed the Background to the More Homes Strategy, More Homes Specification – The Swansea Standard, Completed Schemes and Current Activity, Future Schemes and Planned Activity, Background to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and Decarbonisation, Past Energy Efficiency Delivery, Future Decarbonisation Programme – National Policy Development, Welsh Government Draft Decarbonisation Policy Proposals, Transitional Period – Decarbonisation Pilot Schemes, Proposed Future Decarbonisation Strategy and Future Opportunities, Challenges and Risks for the Council.

Resolved that:

1. The Committee note the contents of the report and confirmed that the current policy context continued to be appropriate as the Council developed its decarbonisation strategy of its housing stock.

2.7 22nd April 2021

Management & Maintenance of Open Spaces (Biodiversity)

A report was presented on the policies in place to manage open spaces and the Council's commitment to biodiversity and climate change.

This detailed the issues associated with wildflower meadows, grass cutting and the need to ensure consultation/engagement with communities in order to achieve a compromise and adhere to biodiversity and climate change.

It also summarised the current maintenance practices and offered areas of consideration on how the Council could manage its green spaces differently to achieve the corporate priority of maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity - so that we maintain and enhance biodiversity, reduce our carbon footprint, improve our knowledge and understanding of our natural environment and benefit health and well-being.

Members' noted the scope, roadside verges, other grassed areas and amenity spaces, potential areas for consideration of review and general issues.

Resolved that:

- 1 The scope of this review is confined initially to the maintenance of grassed areas.
- 2 The Parks Operations and Nature Conservation Teams liaise with Plantlife and other relevant organisations in a review of the Council's green space maintenance regime.
- 3 That a further report will be brought back to the PDC in due course setting out the proposed future policy context prior to seeking approval by Cabinet.
- 4 A workshop be organised to determine a co-ordinated and effective method of consultation to ensure continuity.

3. Proposed Work Programme for 2021/2022.

The following set out the draft work programme for 2021/2022 for the Committee to discuss and agree.

Date of Meeting	Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author
22/04/21	Management and Maintenance of Open Space. (Biodiversity).	To identify how the Council could manage its green space differently e.g. grass cutting in parks, green spaces and grass verges to maximise biodiversity, while ensuring the City remains visually attractive.	
	Annual Report.		
	Future City Wide Workforce.	We will consider what has changed and what the future plans are for the city and identify good practice and examples of how training and skills can be connected through universities and colleges with business and manufacturing.	
	Street Lighting Policy.		Stuart Davies
	Llwybr-Newydd (the new Wales Transport Strategy).		Stuart Davies
	Grey Fleet Policy.		Stuart Davies
	Speed Humps, do they cause damage to: existing road Surfaces, and do they add to air pollution?	To identify how speed humps affect the community, road surfaces and affect air pollution.	Stuart Davies
	Green Fleet Policy.	Development of an EV Farm. Charging Networks. Investment in Home Charging Kits.	Stuart Davies

	Economic Recovery Plan.		Phil Holmes
	High Street Regeneration.		
	Siting of Bus Stops.		
	More Homes Housing and De-carbonisation Strategy.	How is the Council providing more affordable and energy efficient homes as part of its Housing Revenue Account.	Mark Wade

4. Financial Implications.

4.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. Any subsequent implications would be set out in individual reports to Cabinet.

5. Legal Implications.

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report. Any subsequent implications would be set out in individual reports to Cabinet.

6. Equality and Engagement Implications.

6.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

- 6.2 Each of the reports listed would have had EIA or IIA's carried out and these will form part of the reports when originally presented and as such these are not replicated for the purpose of this summary report.
- 6.3 Any reports provided for the 2021/2022 programme would be subject to their own IIA process.