

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 MAY 2018

Present: Councillor Patel (Chairperson)
Councillors Philippa Hill-John, Owen Jones, Lancaster, Mackie,
Owen, Wong and Wood

65 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Lay.

66 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration was received in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct and the Local Government Act 1972:

Councillor Patel	Item 4	Cabinet Member with portfolio responsibility when decision was taken
------------------	--------	--

67 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 14 February 2018 and 17 April 2018 were approved by the Committee as a correct record and were signed by the Chairperson.

68 : GREENER GRANGETOWN - MEMBER UPDATE

The following declarations of interest were received in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct and the Local Government Act 1972:

Councillor Patel - Cabinet Member with portfolio responsibility at the time of the decision

The Committee received a report providing Members with an information update on the Greener Grangetown Project and allowing Members to assess progress achieved; consider lessons learned and identify potential opportunities arising from the scheme.

The Greener Grangetown Project was a partnership project between Cardiff Council, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and Natural Resource Wales. The project aimed to rethink surface water management strategy in part of Grangetown and trigger a range of benefits for the community. A formal partnership structure was agreed and the three partners created a signed memorandum of understanding agreement, a project board and funded design and consultation process.

The project was based on the idea of using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) as a catalyst for maximising the benefits from surface water, rather than disposing of surface water directly into the sewer system. The potential benefits resulting in the implementation of such a scheme include improved water quality, financial, health

benefits, increased recreational spaces, community engagement and education. The aims of the project were summarised in the report.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and the Environment; Andrew Gregory, Director; and Matt Wakelam, Operational Manager, Infrastructure and Operations to the meeting. The officers were invited to deliver a presentation on the project.

The Director made a brief statement about the project. Members were advised that the project was the first of its kind and was at the forefront in terms of sustainable management of surface water in an urban environment. The project was challenging and lessons were learnt in terms of the impact upon the community and in terms of public engagement. There would be an opportunity to address these issues during the debriefing phase. Officers were continuing to work closely with local members in relation to the project 'snagging list' and any outstanding planting, design and parking issues. The project provided a learning process and valuable insight which may prove to be useful in informing similar projects in the future.

The Chairperson then opened the debate on this topic. Members were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members asked an officer to explain the format of the debriefing phase and how residents' concerns would be incorporated. Members were advised that data from the construction period in terms of complaints and representation made to local members would be reviewed. Officers considered that residents did not perceive or understand that benefits from not pumping surface water 8 miles to a sewage treatment works, but losing a parking space would impact on their day to day lives.
- Members asked whether consideration has been given to the ongoing maintenance costs of the project. The partnership agreed to provide maintenance costs for 3 years for the planting element of the scheme. Officers will be working with local schools and in order to foster a sense shared ownership and shared responsibility.
- Members noted that the project was a pilot and asked whether any other areas were being considered. Officers stated that developments on brownfield sites that are in suitable, i.e. near a river or watercourse, such as Dumballs Road and the Brains Brewery site, will include sustainable urban drainage schemes. Officers indicated that there were no definitive plans to undertake similar schemes to the Greener Grangetown Project at present. Rivers and large water courses are suitable. The new developments in the north and north-west of the City will also include sustainable urban drainage schemes.
- A Member asked whether air quality would improve and whether air quality monitoring would be undertaken. Officers stated that the planting scheme would help improve air quality. There are proposals to introduce LED street lighting and these new LED street lighting columns are able to support air quality sensors.

- Officers advised that the local pumping station was previously running at its capacity and therefore taking surface water out of the sewage system would allow more development to take place in the area and it would also help to reduce the carbon footprint.
- Members asked whether the initial funding provided for the project was adequate. Officers indicated one of the lessons learnt is that it must be clearly understood by all parties what their allocation of funds can be used for. For example, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water funding could only be used for drainage improvements. However, having completed this pilot project the partners are potentially in a better position to apply for grant funding in the future.
- Members asked whether there were constraints in 'retro-fitting' sustainable urban drainage schemes in established residential areas and whether such schemes (SUDs) are more suited to new developments. The Director stated that it is far easier to incorporate SUDs in new developments – at no cost to the authority. The Plasdwr development includes SUDs. The cost of retro-fitting scheme in existing communities is far higher – officers estimated that providing SUDs on brownfield developments would be 40-50% lower.
- Members asked that, as there was a financial benefit to Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, would they be contributing to the maintenance and upkeep of the project. Officers advised that these issues have been discussed. The partners agreed that the Council is best placed to maintain the project and Dwr Cymru Welsh Wales will provide assistance.
- Members asked how much the local community was involved in the design and implementation of the project. Officers stated that the local community were consulted. The scheme was amended and the location of planters were moved as a result. Residents indicated that they did not want to lose parking provision outside their properties. Officers considered that the focus of the scheme was lost when parking issues were discussed. The partner organisations need to learn from this. Parking was a key concern for residents and therefore should be one of the key consideration when planning similar projects in the future as it impacts on day-to-day lives. The Cabinet Member considered that it was also important to reinforce the benefits of such schemes and to demonstrate what has been achieved.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson write to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee to convey their comments.

69 : PRE DECISION SCRUTINY OF CABINET PAPER TITLED 'RECYCLING & WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - 2018 TO 2021'

A report titled 'Recycling and Waste Management Strategy – Delivery Plan Requirements 2018 to 2021' was due to be considered by the Cabinet on 17 May 2018. The report is intended to progress components of the Recycling and Waste Management Strategy 2015-18 and update the strategy for the next three years. The report sought approval for the following:

- The expansion of the provision of wheeled bins in the city;

- Proposed changes to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) education stations;
- A pilot scheme for the collection of domestic glass waste for recycling;
- Consultation on a draft Recycling and Waste Management Strategy 2018-21, as well as future infrastructure, partners and service standards required to meet statutory Welsh Government targets for recycling.

Members were advised that Cardiff is Britain's best performing Core City for recycling and recycling rates, operational efficiencies and service costs continue to be priorities for the Council. The Recycling and Waste Management Strategy 2015-18 is intended to respond to these challenges. Furthermore, if the Council does not increase the recycling performance year on year then annual fines can quickly escalate. If recycling rates remain at 60% then fines could potentially grow to £10.45m by 2025.

Global recycling markets are also impacting on services. Since approving the Strategy in 2015, the recycling markets have decreased in value, whilst demands on the quality of recycled materials have increased. This has increased pressure on the Council to improve the quality of separation and clean materials from both the kerbside and material recycling facilities.

The updated strategy will outline the changes intended to drive forward the next phase of the Council's recycling delivery and meet the Council's statutory obligations. The Welsh Government and the Council's Capital Ambition document place great value on recycling education, cleaner streets and community partnerships. These are of key importance to the updated strategy also.

The report summarised the key legislation relating to recycling and waste management. In order to meet these legislative requirements, the Council increase recycling rates from 60% to 64% in the next two years; and to 70% by 2024-25. The strategy explains where performance needs to improve and how the Council intends to help residents, businesses and its services to deliver those changes by looking at recycling potential and focussing on improving yields across various waste streams to improve performance.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Recycling, Clean Streets and Environment to address the Committee. Councillor Michael stated that the updated strategy sets out how the Council must improve on its recycling performance and how it can achieve a 70% recycling rate by 2024-25. Councillor Michael considered that the reason Cardiff is the best performing core city in terms of recycling is because the public support recycling; and people like their wheeled bins. The updated strategy has identified an additional 3000 homes which are able to join the wheeled bin scheme. The Cabinet Member gave a commitment to engage with Ward Members regarding this proposal.

Tara King, Assistant Director, Commercial and Collaboration, also addressed the Committee and provided a summary of the key themes of the strategy.

The Chairperson invited Members of the Committee to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- In terms of the trial separation of glass recycling, Members asked for details of the areas participating in the pilot exercise. Members were advised that 7 areas within a number of wards have been identified. The pilot is seeking to establish how much glass can be collected and whether quality can be improved. The pilot will run for between 3 and 6 months and a report will be brought back to the Committee before the Cabinet decides how it wishes to move forward.
- A Member referred to Page 51 of the report and asked whether the statements made that the authority would not take aesthetics into consideration whilst conservation area status would be considered was contradictory when decisions regarding extending the wheeled bin scheme are taken. Officers stated that there are several levels of criteria for conservation areas and some conservation areas have higher levels which may be prohibitive, whereas other areas do not. The proposal is to consult with local members first in order to assess their local knowledge of such issues.
- A Member asked the Cabinet Member to comment on an article in the local press which claimed that the Council is refusing to identify the areas proposed to join the wheeled bin scheme. The Cabinet Member stated that the Council is not refusing to provide these details but local members are to be consulted before these details are made public.
- Members asked whether the authority is seeking to increase commercial tonnages from smaller independent traders or from larger operators. The Cabinet Member stated that there are approximately 3300 commercial customers – 30% of businesses in the City. Each business is different and some businesses have challenges regarding storage capacity. There was therefore a need to invest in more bespoke services. Waste collection services are offered to large and small businesses. Large businesses are able to manage separation but this is also more challenging for small businesses. The Council is competing with the private sector for contracts and it is hoped that the Welsh Government's Environment Act may help to level the playing field.
- Members considered that the targets set out in the strategy are aspirational and the delivery of a new HWRC in the North of the city is a key issue that needs to be addressed.
- Members requested that any information packs circulated to residents participating in the glass recycling pilot exercise include a calendar in order to aid those reliant on paper forms of communication. Officers confirmed that residents will receive a comprehensive information pack which will include a calendar. The information will be provided in a number of languages and the authority is also trialling the 'digital bot' which provides information via recorded telephone messages available in over 100 languages.
- Members welcomed the issue of single use plastic was being addressed. Members asked officers to outline proposals for increasing the recycling of plastics. Officers stated that the issue of plastic recycling is a complex one due to the range of different types of plastic in the waste stream. The MRF can separate

plastic vessels such as bottles and other containers and the authority has invested in an auto-sorter which can sort plastics into different colours and weights, providing better quality separation. However, film type plastics cause problems during the sorting process as they can jam sorting equipment. The market for film type plastics is volatile. Officers advised that they are working with the Welsh Government and City Deal Partners to investigate opportunities to establish plastic recycling facilities within the region. It was considered that the long term solution needed to provide reprocessing facilities locally. The Cabinet Member stated that Wales needed to find a recycling reprocessing solution so that recycling materials can be put to use, rather than authorities being reliant on recycling markets.

- A Member asked whether opportunities to increase recycling were being missed such as in blocks of flats, where there is not provision for storage of food waste caddies and food waste is being disposed of in general waste. Officers stated that blocks of flats need bespoke systems but the service area is happy to look at specific locations. Flats in shared ownership have often have communal bins where contamination is known to be high. The service area has a dedicated 'flats officer' who has responsibility for these issues.
- The Committee asked whether the Council is lobbying or applying pressure on retailers with a view to reducing the amount of packaging in the waste stream. Officers stated that discussions have been held with the Welsh Government Minister who is looking to address the issue of packaging in the Waste Strategy for Wales. Consultation on the Waste Strategy for Wales will be undertaken later in the year. The Waste Strategy for Wales is a long-term plan and officers suggested legislative boundaries governing packaging need to be tackled at a national level. The authority is able to lobby Welsh Government. Anecdotally, Members were advised that the trends indicate that the use of wrapping is falling and the use of card is increasing, which may be a signal that businesses are adapting.
- Members asked officers for a summary of their more forward thinking proposals for waste collection and recycling in the City. The Cabinet Member stated that basic method of waste collections in the city have not changed for some time. The service is giving consideration to how and when waste is collected. For example, some ward may be more suited to nighttime waste collections and waste collections could also potentially take place on weekends or bank holidays.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson write to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee to convey their comments.

70 : ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

The Principal Scrutiny Officer presented the Committee's draft Annual report 2017/18 and comments on the structure of the report were invited from Members of the Committee.

The Principal Scrutiny Officer advised that a list of items for possible inclusion on the Committee's future work programme would be circulated via email for feedback from

the Committee. The list would be used to inform the work programme during 2018/19.

AGREED – That the report be noted.

71 : ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME
2017/18

Members considered items to be included on the work programme for forthcoming meetings of the Committee. The Principal Scrutiny Officer was requested to circulate a draft agenda for the June and July meetings of the Committee via email.

72 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee will take place on 5 June 2018.

The meeting terminated at 6.50 pm