

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 DECEMBER 2017

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

19 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Lay.

20 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct:

Councillor Owen	Item 5	Personal Interest
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21 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 5 October and 7 November 2017 were approved by the Committee as a correct record and were signed by the Chairperson.

22 : ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT IN CARDIFF

The Committee received a report providing Members of the Committee with an opportunity to review the roles and responsibilities of the Council and its statutory partners in terms of managing flood risk in Cardiff.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment; Andrew Gregory, Corporate Director; Matt Wakelam, Operational Manager; Tim England of Natural Resources Wales; and Nick Holt and Redmond Jenkins of Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water; to the meeting.

Councillor Michael was invited to deliver a brief statement. Councillor Michael stated that during the winter flooding was often at the forefront of people's minds. Flooding seems to be getting worse and the threat of flooding is taken seriously by the authority and its partners.

Members were advised that as a result of changing weather patterns and more localised high intensity rainfall events flooding risks have grown in recent years. Flooding can have a significant impact on property and businesses and flooding can come from a number of courses, including rivers, streams, the sea and more commonly from blocked drains and old sewers that are unable to cope with the volumes of water from heavy rainfall.

The Council and its partners share a commitment to reduce the risk of flooding in Cardiff and, although Cardiff has not had many significant flooding incidents, there are an increasing number of flooding incidents that occur in periods of heavy rain.

The Council acts as the Lead Local Flood Authority and has prepared a 'Local Flood Risk Management Strategy'. A copy of this document was appended to the report. The Strategy details the roles and responsibilities of the organisations working in Cardiff that contribute to flood risk management and explains how we aim to work together to reduce the consequences of flooding. As Lead Authority the Council is responsible for surface water, streams, culverts and ground water flooding. The Strategy also outlines the responsibilities of key partners such as Welsh Water, NRW and the Internal Drainage Board. An overview of the roles and responsibilities of each of the 'Risk Management Authorities' was contained within Table 2.1 of Appendix A to the report.

In addition to the external partners, a variety of service areas have a role in supporting the prevention of, and preparations for, flooding events, including Emergency Management, Harbour Authority, Highways, Housing, Planning, Social Services and Street Cleansing.

The objectives, priorities and statutory requirements of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy were summarised in the report. Members were advised that the authority spends approximately £1 million annually on activities directly related to managing flood risk through the services provided by the Highways Drainage teams. Without maintenance it is estimated that in any given year the potential economic impact of local flood risk to properties will be over £13.2 million.

The Chairperson invited Tim England of NRW and Nick Holt of Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water to deliver presentations setting of their roles and responsibilities. Members were invited to comment, raise questions or seek clarification on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members asked which body would act as the lead authority in the event of a major flooding event. Members were advised that in the event of a major flood a multi-agency Local Resilience Forum would be established which would be chaired by colleagues in South Wales Police. All partners would participate. For smaller flooding events NRW would lead and for flooding from water courses the local authority would take the lead.
- Members were advised that an Emergency Management plan is in place to respond to local flood events. Silver Command Officers will work to manage such events; to dedicate resources to limit the extent of flood damage; and to advise residents. As there are systems in place that provide good data in terms of the likelihood of flood events, the authority has up to 12 hours to prepare in the event of flooding.
- Responding to a question from the Committee, Nick Holt of Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water advised that he did not have the figures available for the operational capacity of local sewage treatment plants, but he gave an undertaking to advise Members accordingly in due course.
- A Member asked whether the authority has sufficient resources available to provide the additional services required in the future. Officers stated that in terms of the strategic element of the service there were sufficient resources in place, with the only area of growth being sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). The operational element must expand as the City expands and resources will need to

be made available to manage the City's growth. Improved asset management will enable those resources to be best utilised. Members were also advised that the authority is aware of the flood risk assessments in the LDP and it was seeking to get developers to provide resources to manage flood risk.

- Efforts were also being made to raise awareness and preparedness amongst members of the public in flood risk areas. The authority and its partners are targeting high-risk locations with a view to raising awareness and providing advice and guidance. A Member asked whether there were any local 'flood groups' – groups of residents who are trained to react during flood events – established in Cardiff. Members were advised that there is 1 flood group in Roath and NRW have carried out awareness raising sessions in Riverside. NRW have consulted the Council's Emergency Management Team in order to prioritise where the awareness raising sessions should be delivered. Work in this area was ongoing and would continue.
- Members asked how proactive or responsive the authority was when clearing drains blocked by 'leaf drop'. Officers stated that cleansing and drainage teams have improved engagement and work together to target areas identified as hot-spots. The Directorate is looking to further improve a strategic approach by improving software and intelligence in order to better identify major risk areas and target resources accordingly. Furthermore, it is also possible to prioritise resources at times of high demand and use cleansing operatives to back up drainage teams when necessary.
- Members noted that the authority spends approximately £1 million per annum on activities related to flood management and that if the Council stopped carrying out these actions then it is estimated that the potential economic impact of local flood risk to properties would be over £13.2 million. Members asked how the latter figure was calculated. Officers advised that the figure reflects the estimated insurance liabilities for flood damage to property and loss of earnings.
- Members asked whether sufficient resources were being allocated to gulley clearance. Officers indicated that additional resources would allow flood risk to be reduced further. 26,000 properties were at risk of flooding and officers asked how that figure can be reduced within the finite resources available. The Cabinet Member added that new developments will have better drainage systems built in, which will help to further mitigate flood risk.
- In relation to the 348 sewer flooding incidents listed in the report, Members asked whether it has been possible to identify any commercial causes. Nick Holt stated that it was difficult to attribute such flooding incidents to specific premises, but Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water provide advice to business regarding the best methods to dispose of fat, oil and grease. Matt Wakelam advised the Committee that commercial premises that do need to have a waste transfer contract in place risk being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Officers confirmed that Cardiff compares favourably with other authorities in terms of its flood defences.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson writes on behalf of the Committee to the Cabinet Member to convey the Committee's comments and observations.

23 : ROATH FLOOD SCHEME

The Committee received a report providing an opportunity to review the progress of the development and implementation of the Roach Flood Scheme.

Members were advised that in many homes and businesses in the Roath area of the City are at risk from flooding. Roath Brook burst its banks in 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2012 during high river flows and high tides. It is anticipated that flooding will increase over time, as sea levels rise and more frequent and intense heavy rainfall are predicted. The Welsh Government has made a commitment to provide funding to flood risk management schemes in Wales in order to minimise the risk and mitigate the impact of flooding events. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are in the process of delivering a Flood Risk Management Scheme in the Roath area at several locations along the Roath Brook between Roath Brook Gardens and the River Rhymney at Newport Road. Flood risk mitigation measures consisted of flood walls and embankments, to include landscaping. NRW were also to widen the channel in Roath Brook Gardens and enhance a number of bridges to increase the brook's flow capacity.

In order to achieve the required flood protection the removal of some trees along the banks of Roath Brook is necessary. NRW commissioned a survey of all trees in the four gardens and identified the trees to be removed, those that would need protecting and where additional planting is required.

Members were advised the NRW acknowledges the concerns of the local community and the design of the scheme has attempted to minimise the impacts. However, the scheme will involve the removal of 149 trees and to compensate for this NRW will plant 105 trees. Of the 149 trees identified for removal 111 are categorised as low quality, decaying, dead or young and 38 are categorised as mature, good quality or high quality.

NRW aims to ensure that the Roath Flood Scheme provides a positive contribution to the community by planting additional trees in parkland throughout Cardiff and by working with a local school offering tree saplings to school children for home planting. This will allow NRW to increase the overall planting to offset those trees which are removed and cannot be replaced. The integration of public art into the scheme will also support the goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

The report provided details of the public consultation undertaken as part of the scheme. The feedback received from the consultation exercise was used to shape the final design. Public consultation included:

- Door knocking and public meetings
- Public drop-in sessions
- Stand at Waterloo Gardens Fete
- Walkover the site with local residents
- Press adverts, site notices and consultation letters to properties bordering the gardens
- Regular updates via newsletters, posters, webpage and social media

The Chairperson welcomed Tim England, Gareth Jones and Paul Isaac from Natural Resources Wales and Dr Johansson, representing local residents. Gareth Jones was invited to deliver a presentation on the Roath Flood Scheme. Dr Johansson was invited to deliver her presentation on possible alternative solutions. The Committee also receive representation from a number of local residents.

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

- A Member asked if the works proposed in 2 gardens did not proceed, how many trees would have been cut down anyway and how much money would be saved. Gareth Jones advised that the costs for separate models were not available and therefore the costs of not proceeding at some locations were unclear. It was also not clear how many of the trees would have been cut down. The approximate cost of cutting one tree is £1,000.
- Members were advised that 122 mature trees would replace the 140 scheduled to be cut down. Gareth Jones stated that it was proposed to replace the trees to be lost with quality trees with room to establish themselves rather than replace the quantity of trees lost.
- Members acknowledged that this was an emotive issue and members of the public were concerned. However, the Committee were assured that the trees lost are to be replaced with mature specimens. Gareth Jones confirmed that in order to minimise the impact of the scheme on local residents a high quality design, with good diversity and stock would be provided.
- The Committee was advised that the lifespan for the scheme was 100 years. The standard of flood protection can be raised if the flood risk increases in the future. Any such decision would be evidence based and climate change statistics and guidance will be kept under review.
- Gareth Jones confirmed that CADW were consulted as a formal stakeholder. CADW did not object to the planning application.
- Member considered that contrasting representations were received regarding the necessity of the flood defence scheme. Gareth Jones stated that NRW decisions were evidence based and NRW were confident that their evidence was robust and accurate. There were 432 along the length of the scheme, of which 140 were to be felled, representing 1/3. 122 were to be replanted and therefore 5% would be lost. Gareth Jones did not consider this to be a significant number and it was considered in the design of the scheme. Trees would be replanted in the same or similar locations in order to reduce the visual impact of the scheme.
- Members were advised that it was not possible to delay the implementation of the scheme as the bird nesting season begins in April and in a worst case scenario the scheme would be delayed until birds have fledged.
- Gareth Jones confirmed that the original budget for the scheme was £15.7 million – this was reduced to £11.5 million. The main costs were in the construction and

design of the scheme.

- Responding to a question from the Committee, NRW agreed to provide a summary of the range of public consultation undertaken.
- There are other similar schemes including examples in Dolgellau and Hereford. NRW have committed to undertake maintenance in all parks for a 3-year period and beyond that financial support will be provided to the Council.
- Members asked whether retractable flood barriers have been considered as a solution. Gareth Jones stated that this approach was considered as part of the options appraisal exercise, but barriers are expensive and their use would require the diversion of other services and therefore barriers would not be considered viable.
- Members were advised that a compensation scheme was available for small businesses in areas affected. The cost of the compensation scheme was included within the £11.5 million budget. Interim payments have been made to a number of businesses.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson writes on behalf of the Committee to the Cabinet Member to convey the Committee's comments and observations.

24 : CITY OPERATIONS DIRECTORATE AND COMMERCIAL & COLLABORATIVE SERVICES - QUARTER 1 & 2 PERFORMANCE REPORTS 2017/18

The Committee received the City Operations and Commercial and Collaborative Services Quarterly Performance reports for Quarters 1 and 2 2017/18. Members were asked to consider and comment on the contents of the performance reports.

A number of key observations from the performance reports for each directorate were summarised in the cover report.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment; Andrew Gregory, Corporate Director; and Tara King, Assistant Director; to the meeting. The Cabinet Member made a brief statement and the officer provided a presentation on the performance report results.

Members were asked to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

City Operations

- Members asked what percentage of total overspend related to sickness absence and whether it would be possible for officers to provide a comparative breakdown of the costs of long term and short term sickness absence. Officers did not have the information available but offered to provide these details with the Committee.
- A Member asked how many vehicles were fitted with in-cab technology. Officers stated that discussion around moving to mobile and in-cab technology were ongoing.

- Members welcomed technological improvements such as the car parking monitoring system. However, Members were concerned that technology was lacking in other areas, such as parking enforcement, which still relied on a paper based system. The Corporate Director agreed and stated that the service area is focussing on the systematic digitalisation of parking enforcement.
- Members were surprised that 95% of streets were rated as high or acceptable in terms of cleanliness. Officers accepted that some streets are below standards and the service is attempting to tackle issues earlier by adopting a total street scene approach.
- Members asked what the objectives of the 20mph zones were and whether they were being met. Officers stated that the aim was to ensure that areas that are most trafficked are safe environments. The 20mph zones underpin active travel, model shift and other benefits.

Commercial Services

- The Committee welcomed the proposal to move towards hybrid fleet vehicles.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the 18,000 missed collections reported. Members asked what proportion of the overspend related to missed collections. Members were advised that in-cab technology will assist in reducing and preventing service failures. Many missed collections are the result of access issues and some waste is presented late by residents. In the future if missed collections are reported quickly then the new system will allow operatives to return. The Cabinet Member stated that of 24 million collections, 18,000 were missed – or 0.25%. There were a variety of reasons for missed collections including fallen trees and roadworks. The target was to reduce the 18,000 missed collections to zero.
- Responding to a point made by a Member of the Committee, officers indicated that when repeat failures occur were often acute issues to consider, such as access issues.
- Members asked whether the in-cab technology can also be used by operatives to report issues on the ground, such as fly-tipping. Officers confirmed that there was a mechanism by which issues could be reported.
- Members requested feedback on the scheme to improve the quality of garden waste. Members were advised that contamination levels have been reduced and there was a marked improvement in the quality of garden waste. Officers agreed to provide further information on this point.
- Members asked how sickness absence rates in waste collection teams compared with other local authorities. Members were advised that Cardiff's the sickness absence rates in these teams were similar or lower than in other local authorities. However, in the private sector rates are lower but they have different policies with a harsher line attendances.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson writes on behalf of the Committee to the Cabinet Member to convey the Committee's comments and observations.

25 : ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME
REVIEW

At this point in the meeting the Chairperson requested that webcast be paused. It was proposed that the webcast should not continue. The proposal was voted on and the Committee agreed that the webcast should not continue. Councillor Hill-John raised concerns that the webcast was stopped prior the Committee giving its approval. Councillor Hill-John requested that her dissent be recorded in the minutes.

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) Future meetings would focus on fewer items so that to ensure that items are thoroughly scrutinised;
- (2) A Member made a request that future agenda items should be reviewed to ensure that there was a practical purpose for the scrutiny. In making this point the Member questioned the merits of the Roath Flood Scheme scrutiny and suggested that future items should be assessed to make sure that the scrutiny could add value;
- (3) To reflect the requests made in (1) and (2) above, the Committee agreed to receive a revised work programme at its meeting on 16 January 2018.

26 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 16 JANUARY 2018

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 16 January 2018.

The meeting terminated at 9.20 pm

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg