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AGENDA

Committee ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting WEDNESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2019, 4.00 PM

Venue ROOM L, CITY HALL

Membership Councillor Patel (Chair)
Councillors Boyle, Derbyshire, Owen Jones, Lancaster, Jackie Parry, Owen, Wong and Wood

Time approx.

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest

To be made at the start of the agenda item in question, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

3 Minutes - to follow

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 1 October 2019.

4 Shared Regulatory Services - Four Year Progress Update *(Pages 5 - 84)* 4.05 pm

This will provide the Committee with the opportunity to consider:

- The performance of Shared Regulatory Services since it was established in May 2015;
- Details of the Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report 2018/19; and,
- The findings and actions falling out of the recent Wales Audit Office report titled 'Delivering with Less – Environmental Health Services'.

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

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5 **Draft Task & Finish Report - Managing Biodiversity & Natural Environment in Cardiff** *(Pages 85 - 160)* 5.05 pm

An item to consider the content of the draft task & finish report titled 'Managing Biodiversity & Natural Environment in Cardiff', and to decide if any changes are required before finalising the report and then submitting it to Cabinet.

6 **National Development Framework - Member Briefing Note** *(Pages 161 - 242)* 5.35 pm

A Member briefing note that will provide the Committee with an opportunity to comment on the Cabinet response to the recent National Development Framework consultation. Once discussed, they will need to agree if any future actions are required on this topic.

7 **Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan - Member Briefing Note** *(Pages 243 - 252)* 5.45 pm

A Member briefing note to provide the Committee with an opportunity to comment on the item titled 'Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan' that is due to be received by Cabinet on the 21st November 2019. Once discussed, they will need to agree if any future actions are required on this topic.

8 **Environmental Scrutiny Committee - Draft Work Programme 2019/20** *(Pages 253 - 256)* 5.55 pm

An item to review the proposals contained within the Environmental Scrutiny Committee – Draft Work Programme 2019/20. Members will be asked to agree a way forward for the period of December 2019 to March 2020.

9 **Urgent Items (if any)**

10 **Way Forward** 6.15 pm

To review the evidence and information gathered during consideration of each agenda item, agree Members comments, observations and concerns to be passed on to the relevant Cabinet Member by the Chair, and to note items for inclusion on the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

11 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 3 December 2019 at 4.30pm in Committee Room 4, County Hall.

Davina Fiore
Director Governance & Legal Services
Date: Thursday, 14 November 2019
Contact: Graham Porter, 02920 873401, g.porter@cardiff.gov.uk

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CYNGOR CAERDYDD
CARDIFF COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20th NOVEMBER 2019

SHARED REGULATORY SERVICES – FOUR YEAR PROGRESS UPDATE

Reason for the Report

1. To provide the Committee with an opportunity to review the service provided by Shared Regulatory Services, and in doing so:

   - **Four Year Progress Update:** Consider the performance of Shared Regulatory Services since it was established in May 2015;
   - **Annual Report 2018/19:** Consider the Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report 2018/19; and,
   - **Wales Audit Office Report:** To consider the findings and actions falling out of the recent Wales Audit Office report titled 'Delivering with Less – Environmental Health Services'.

Background

2. Shared Regulatory Services is a collaborative service that was formed between the partner local authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan on 1st May 2015. The new approach aims to deliver a fully integrated service under a single management structure for Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Licensing functions with shared governance arrangements ensuring full Elected Member involvement.

3. The creation of the service was originally driven by the need to address the real terms reduction in council budgets while at the same time building resilience within the operation. The budget for Shared Regulatory Services across the three partner local authorities has significantly reduced in recent years. In response to the

challenging financial position all three authorities recognised an opportunity to work together to deliver services jointly and agreed the principle of a shared service.

4. In September 2014 Cabinet reports were submitted to each of the three partner local authorities to propose and further the development of a single Shared Regulatory Service comprising the functions of Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing. The model recommended that Shared Regulatory Services would be delivered through a single management structure. This approach was approved by Cabinet and Council at each of the partner local authorities in autumn 2014 with a proposed implementation date of 1 April 2015.

5. On the 1st May 2015 all staff in scope transferred to Shared Regulatory Services and were employed by the host authority, the Vale of Glamorgan Council. Since then staff have worked hard to continue providing the required service while implementing new working and management structures.

6. Shared Regulatory Services operates under a Joint Working Agreement with the Head of Service reporting on service provision to a Joint Committee of Elected Members drawn from the three partner local authorities. The detailed delegations of policy and functions from partners to the Joint Committee and Head of Service are set out in the Joint Working Agreement, these include:

- The functions to be carried out by the joint service.
- The terms of reference and constitution of the Joint Committee, the Management Board, etc..
- The proposed terms of Shared Regulatory Services, for example, staffing, the services to be provided by the host and other partners, financing and other functional issues.
- The financial operating model.

Core Services Provided by the Shared Regulatory Service

7. Shared Regulatory Services provides a diverse and comprehensive range of services that safeguard the health, safety and economic wellbeing of consumers, businesses and residents. The services are covered under the three main areas of Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing.

8. These broad areas encompass a wide range of services that deal with issues that can have a huge impact upon people when things go wrong or have not been enforced properly. A brief description of specific services delivered by Shared Regulatory Services is included in this section of the report.

9. **Trading Standards** – this service protects consumers and businesses by maintaining and promoting a fair and safe trading environment. This area of work ensures that businesses comply with a host of consumer protection statutes including those relating to:

- Product safety;
- Food standards;
- Animal feed;
- Age restricted sales;
- Counterfeiting;
- Environmental safety;
- Weights and measures;
- False claims about goods and services;
- Malpractice including rogue traders, scams and doorstep crime.

10. The Trading Standards Service investigates complaints, participates in criminal investigations and exercises, conducts inspections of businesses, undertakes a sampling programme, provides consumer advice to vulnerable residents and provides business advice to help businesses improve their trading practices. Furthermore the Trading Standards Service has the only UKAS accredited Metrology laboratory in Wales providing calibration of weights and measures of length and capacity.

11. **Food Safety** – this service protects public health by ensuring that the food we eat is without risk to the health and safety of consumers. This is achieved through regular food safety inspections of food business and guest caterers, operating the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, providing education courses and practical advice,

investigating food and hygiene related complaints, carrying out regular food and water sampling and undertaking checks on imported food.

12. **Housing Safety** – this service protects public health by working with private landlords and owners to provide warm, safe and healthy homes for tenants. They ensure that Houses in Multiple Occupation are licensed through Mandatory and Additional Licensing Schemes, inspecting Houses in Multiple Occupation and improving physical and management standards of privately rented accommodation. Complaints from tenants about their rented accommodation are investigated; these can include complaints about damp, mould, heating disrepair, nuisance and student housing issues. Problems with empty homes that have fallen into disrepair are addressed and immigration inspections are undertaken.

13. **Pollution** – this service protects public health by controlling noise and air emissions into the environment. The Pollution Service investigates noise complaints about issues such as amplified music, DIY activities, house and car alarms, barking dogs, and construction sites. It investigates air pollution complaints such as smoke, dust and odour and illegal burning, undertakes environmental monitoring, local air quality management and regulates emissions from industrial processes.

14. **Contaminated Land** – this service protects public health by reviewing and implementing the Contaminated Land Strategy which ensures the identification, inspection and remediation of historically contaminated sites. Private water supplies used for both domestic and commercial purposes (such as drinking, cooking, and washing) are regulated and responses are provided to Environmental Information Requests and Planning application consultations.

15. **Health and Safety** – this service protects public health and safety by working with others to ensure risks in the workplace are managed properly. This is achieved by undertaking planned inspections and targeted initiatives, investigating reported accidents, diseases, dangerous occurrences and complaints, providing advice and guidance to employers and employees and securing safety standards at outdoor events.

16. **Communicable Disease** – this service protects public health by controlling and preventing cases and outbreaks of infectious disease by investigating confirmed sporadic and outbreak cases of communicable disease, providing and reviewing advice and guidance on infection control, cleaning and disinfection, case and contact exclusions, providing training on food hygiene, nutritional and infection control, enforcing health protection legislation to minimise the spread of communicable disease and contamination from radiation and chemicals that threaten health and leading on local and national communicable disease surveillance programmes.

17. **Animal Health and Warden Services** – this service ensures the wellbeing of animals generally and during transport. It also administers animal movements to prevent the spread of diseases such as rabies, anthrax and foot & mouth. Wardens respond to complaints about straying animals such as dogs and horses.

18. **Licensing** – this service determines applications for the grant, renewal, variation and transfer of many different authorisations which are the responsibility of the three partner local authorities. Applications for licences, certificates, registrations and permits are processed and enforcement undertaken in respect of statutory requirements such as alcohol, public entertainment, gambling, street trading, taxi licences, charitable collections and animal related licensing.

19. **Pest Control** – this service offers services to the Vale of Glamorgan area for the treatment of pests and infestations. This could include, rats, wasps, mice, fleas, cockroaches etc..

20. **Port Health** - this service prevents the import of infectious and animal disease into the UK, ensuring ships comply with international agreed public health sanitation standards and improving the safety and quality of the food chain.

21. **The Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit** - this service is one of only three units operating across the UK. The Unit covers all 22 Local Authority areas in Wales with the key aim of tackling the problem of illegal money lending. The Unit is both proactive and reactive in its work providing education and promotion across Wales to various social groups and highlighting the dangers of illegal lending. The unit also

carries out detailed investigations with a view to prosecuting offenders and has the capabilities to act swiftly where necessary to deal with victims of loan sharks.

Shared Regulatory Services – Four Year Progress Update

22. At the meeting the Head of Shared Regulatory Services will deliver a presentation that will summarise:

- The progress that has been made by the service since it was created in May 2015;
- The content of the Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report 2018/19 that was received by Cabinet on the 10th October 2019 (attached to this report as **Appendix 1**).

Shared Regulatory Services - Annual Report 2018/19

23. In April 2015, Cardiff Council, Bridgend County Borough Council and the Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council signed a Joint Working Agreement for the provision of regulatory services across the three Council areas. The document created Shared Regulatory Services and the Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee.

24. The Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment and the Chair of the Licensing and Public Protection Committees are the two Cardiff Council representatives on the Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee following appointment by the Council on 24 May 2018.

25. In accordance with Clause 5.1 of the Joint Working Agreement, Shared Regulatory Services is required to produce an annual report that covers the operational and financial performance of the service for the preceding year. The latest Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report covers the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

26. In July 2017, the Council ratified the insertion of a new Clause 5.6 into the Joint Working Agreement to enable each partner authority's Cabinet to receive the Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report, for information purposes. This report apprises Cabinet of the decisions taken and functions carried out by the Shared Regulatory

Services Joint Committee over the proceeding financial year, as well as the performance and financial position of Shared Regulatory Services.

27. The Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report 2018/19 was received and approved by the Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee on 11 June 2019. The document was then received by Cardiff Council's Cabinet on the 10th October 2019, where the content of the report was noted. A copy of the Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report 2018/19 that was received by Cabinet is attached to this report as **Appendix 1**.

28. The management of key operational performance is through the Client lead for Shared Regulatory Services in Planning, Transport & Environment. The Client Lead and the Head of Shared Regulatory Services work closely with Finance, Legal and other Service Areas to ensure that the delivery of services is to the required level and where required improvements are implemented.

Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report 2018/19 - Operational Performance & Implications

29. The key aspects of operational performance across the region from the annual report are as follows:

- Sickness absence levels for 2018/19 were 7.55 days per FTE person. This is below the Council's average of 11.53 days FTE, but is an increase on the previous year where absence rates were recorded as 6.89 per FTE person. There are mitigating factors with a number of staff undergoing planned medical interventions. There are no discernible trends in either the short or long term absence figures.

- The Gross Revenue Budget position for 2018/19 for the service was an underspend of £496,000 against the gross revenue budget of £8.504m. The Authority Specific Services for Cardiff Council, mainly licensing activities, overspent by £94,000, a reduction of £40,000 on the previous year. The outturn position in respect of Authority Specific services is due to expenditure in excess of budget and a reducing income stream. On a positive note, service efficiency drives have seen a gradual reduction in expenditure on authority specific services

in comparison to the previous years. Additionally, the Wales Audit Office completed its independent financial audit of the service in September 2019; there were no recommendations for improvement.

- Shared Regulatory Services has consolidated service delivery in accord with the agreed standards and delivered the requisite financial savings. However, more demands are being placed upon the service at a time of reducing resources.

- Operational performance throughout 2018/19 has been reported both to the Joint Committee and to the Council through the corporate system. The targets and actions identified in the 2018/19 plan were achieved for the most part. All statutory documents were published on time and the change programmes identified for the period concluded on time. The only failings were an inability to complete all of the proactive programmes due to resourcing.

- Agile working, which underpins the new operating model, continues to be deployed to allow maximum flexibility for the deployment of officers. In 2019, Shared Regulatory Services is seeking to understand how to quantify objectively that this mode of working is increasing productivity.

- The SRS has been active in the Courts - Appendix 2 of the Annual report sets out the successful interventions undertaken in the 2018/19 period.

30. The key operational implications for Cardiff Council are as follows:

Public Accountability Measures:

- **PAM 13:** Percentage of empty private sector properties brought back into use during the year through direct action by the local authority.

- **PAM 14:** Number of additional dwellings created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use.

  These indicators are focused upon reducing the number of empty properties. The indicators are not explicitly mentioned in the Annual Report, as Shared Regulatory Services did not perform this function in the Vale of Glamorgan for the

2018/19 period and only began to deliver the function in Bridgend from November 2018.

In recent years, there has been concern regarding performance against this indicator. In 2017/18, the performance level achieved was for PAM 13 and PAM 14 felt short of the target. However, in 2018/19, performance has improved and Shared Regulatory Services exceeded the target number. The performance against PAM 13 was 58 properties brought back into reuse against a target of 40, and the performance against PAM 14 was 32 additional dwellings created against a target of 30.

For 2019/20, PAM 14 has been redesignated as PAM 45. The targets have been set at 48 properties to be brought back into use for PAM 13 and 33 additional dwellings created for PAM 45.

- **PAM 23:** the percentage of food premises that are broadly compliant.

  This measure provides an indication of how well a food business complies with food hygiene legislation. The food industry is responsible for producing and distributing safe food. Shared Regulatory Services, as the enforcement agency, conducts inspections, ensuring that standards are met through a robust enforcement programme to deal with those who do not comply with standards. The business support regimes introduced into the Shared Regulatory Services structure also play a part in promoting an increase in hygiene standards, but ultimately this is a measure of the performance of the food businesses themselves. Premises are deemed broadly compliant if specified risk scores are achieved for cleanliness, structural issues, and confidence in the management of the business. The target for 2018/19 was 93% of businesses to be broadly compliant; the performance recorded was 94.54%. This is the best score ever recorded in Cardiff. It is important to note that Cardiff has a significant turnover of food business operators, many of these new entrants to the market do not attract immediately a broadly compliant rating, and that affects the overall broadly compliant score for Cardiff. Areas with a more settled food business community often score well on this indicator because the food business operators have had time to become accustomed to the requirements of the food hygiene legislation.

31. Shared Regulatory Services also has targets contained within the Capital Ambition document. These are:

- **Ensure taxi users and visitors to the city experience a consistently high quality and safe service, and that Cardiff taxi drivers are provided with a level playing field by using our regulatory powers to support customers and providers.**

  - During the year, the Council recognised the Cardiff Hackney Alliance as a properly constituted taxi trade organisation allowing direct consultation with a group that represents over 300 licenced drivers.

    The consultation on Welsh Government proposals on new taxi legislation was received during December 2018 and took the form of a wider consultation on transport in Wales. Shared Regulatory Services prepared a response to the consultation and supported the engagement events hosted by the Welsh Government. Shared Regulatory Services officers gave evidence to the National Assembly for Wales Economy and Transport Committee on this issue.

    In February 2019, the Public Protection Committee received a report proposing changes to the age of taxis and private hire vehicles and a new element incorporating an emissions standard. The policy proposals support the City wide action plan to address air quality; improvements in the emission standards of the licensed taxi fleet in Cardiff will have a positive impact on NO2 levels as demonstrated in the modelling work undertaken as part of the Councils Feasibility Study. Consequently, a consultation on the proposal to introduce emissions standards for Taxis has been carried out through the Taxi forum and other stakeholder meetings. This complements the work being done on the wider air quality improvement programme. The consultation will extend into 2019/20 and be reported back to the Public Protection Committee later this year.

- **Drive up standards in the private rented housing sector by taking enforcement action against rogue agents and landlords letting and managing properties.**

  - Following the tragic fire and loss of life at Grenfell Tower in North Kensington there has been a nationwide review of the use of a particular type of cladding known as Aluminium Composite Material which was used on the Tower. Within Cardiff in the last year, Shared Regulatory Services has begun to take a more prominent role in respect of the affected high-rise buildings, and remains in consultation with Welsh Government, the Fire Service and the Councils Building Control service on the remedial action being taken by property owners and developers.

    The Minister for Housing and Regeneration convened an Expert Group, to develop a 'road map' to respond to the issues raised by the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety (the 'Hackitt' review). Shared Regulatory Services attends this group as a representative of the Regulatory services in Wales. Shared Regulatory Services is encouraging the Welsh Government to update aspects of the Housing Act in Wales, and to make other policy changes to Housing law to improve standards in the private rented sector.

  - Houses in Multiple Occupancy often present the worst physical and management standards, as well as having a detrimental impact on the neighbourhoods in which they are situated particularly in relation to street scene. Shared Regulatory Services took prosecutions on six properties in Cardiff during 2018-19 for a range of offences, including neglect of proper management standards, failure to obtain a House of Multiple Occupancy licence or to register with Rent Smart Wales and breach of a Prohibition Order, with fines totalling £70,000. In addition to this enforcement work, the Housing Enforcement Team dealt with over 900 complaints about property conditions, issued over 400 works notices and licensed over 500 Houses of Multiple Occupancy, bringing the total licensed in Cardiff to 3,500. The team carried out over 100 fit and proper person checks for Rent Smart Wales, with a small number of these becoming more significant investigations into

landlord performance. The team carried out Rent Smart Wales audits of nine managing agents, identifying action plans for improvement in each case and will follow up during 2019-20.

- **Help protect the public and ensure businesses act responsibly through the provision of the collaborative Regulatory Service.**

  - Shared Regulatory Services protects the public and ensure that businesses act responsibly through the delivery of a programme of activities that are outlined in the Shared Regulatory Services Business Plan. Delivery of the programme ensures the Council improves health and wellbeing, safeguards the vulnerable, protects the environment, supports the local economy and maximises the use of resources. The Business Plan for 2019/20 highlights achievement made under these headings.

  - Air Quality has become a high profile issue, featuring in the headlines on an almost daily basis. The annual Local Air Quality Management Progress Report for 2017 was submitted to the Welsh Government by the 31st December deadline. Shared Regulatory Services continues to review monitoring locations in Cardiff, but the most significant challenge for Shared Regulatory Services in 2018/19 was to assist with the development of Cardiff Council's Air Quality Strategy. This follows the issue of a direction by Welsh Government to identify the option that will deliver compliance with legal limits for nitrogen dioxide in the city in the shortest possible time. Shared Regulatory Services has seconded an officer to support the Council achieve this goal while continuing to support elected members with other associated initiatives.

  - Cabinet has asked for a report outlining the performance of Shared Regulatory Services over a longer period. Such a report would allow trends to be identified and provide a different perspective on the performance of Shared Regulatory Services since its formation in 2015. In May 2019, the Wales Audit Office began its own assessment of the environmental health discipline, revisiting its earlier study in 2014. That report, when published, will be used as a part of the wider Shared Regulatory Services assessment.

Wales Audit Office Follow Up Review: Delivering with Less- Environmental Health Services

32. During the summer of 2019 the Wales Audit Office undertook three separate reviews in Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan to look at 'Delivering with Less - Environmental Health Services'. This document will focus on the Wales Audit Office report that was prepared for Cardiff Council, a copy of which is attached as **Appendix 2**.

33. The aim of the report was to review environmental health services in Cardiff, and in doing so considered:

- If there had been any budgetary or workforce changes within the Council's environmental health services; and,
- The extent to which these changes had addressed the recommendations identified in the previous 2014 national report.

34. Overall, the report findings were generally positive, and it concluded that:

- '*The Shared Regulatory Services model is enabling the Council to sustain its delivery of environmental health services in a context of reducing resources and additional responsibilities placed on it by ongoing changes in legislation*'.

The review also identified that:

- *'there is scope for the Council to strengthen its independent oversight and assurance arrangements of Shared Regulatory Services and work with Shared Regulatory Services and other providers to explore opportunities for future improvement*'.

35. The key findings from the follow up review were:

- **P1.** The Council should subject any future changes to environmental health services to a more rigorous analysis of costs, benefits and impacts. We found some evidence of cost/benefit/impact analysis being performed to enable decision-making around savings and changes to services. Whilst some consideration was given to the impact of staffing restructuring over the period

between 2018-2021, members and officers acknowledged that the real impact of this will be largely unknown until £498,000 of savings begin to take effect.

- **P2.** The Council should investigate further possibilities for commercialisation and income generation for environmental health services in order to provide additional financial capacity if funding reduces in the future.

- **P3.** When considering how environmental health services may need to change in the future, the Council should ensure that the distinction between statutory and non-statutory services is clearly documented and understood by decision-makers. This will help to ensure that statutory responsibilities and powers are weighed and prioritised appropriately alongside discretionary services.

- **P4.** The Council should introduce greater challenge of the level and quality of environmental health services provided by third parties, including the Shared Regulatory Services under the Joint Working Agreement.

- **P5.** The Council should work with Shared Regulatory Services to undertake a review of business continuity and succession planning arrangements in relation to Shared Regulatory Services to mitigate the risk of overreliance on key individuals, such as the Head of Shared Regulatory Services and operational managers.

- **P6.** The Council should strengthen accountability and elected member oversight of its environmental health services, for example through more regular scrutiny of services provided by third parties, including Shared Regulatory Services

- **P7.** The Council should consider introducing more structured and targeted development and training opportunities for relevant members, which may be beneficial in the event of changes in personnel and in areas experiencing changes in legislation, for example, air pollution/food safety/infectious diseases.

- **P8.** The Council should more clearly link any future decisions on changes to service levels to an assessment of impact on relevant stakeholders, including service users and residents. Whether consultation is necessary, and the most appropriate means of consulting should be decided on a case-by-case basis.

However, where changes are likely to impact service users, businesses and local residents, they should be aware of and consulted on these decisions.

- **P9.** The Council needs to build on initiatives such as the Noise app, to ensure that future funding reductions can be mitigated by innovation and transformation in service delivery and that environmental health services are able to benefit from new technologies.

36. In response to this report the Council has produced a draft 'WAO Delivering with Less - Environmental Health Services – Follow Up Audit Cardiff Action Plan', which is attached to this report as **Appendix 3**.

Previous Scrutiny

37. The Environmental Scrutiny Committee received an item titled 'Shared Regulatory Services Business – Draft Business Plan 2019/20' at its meeting on the 7th May 2019. The purpose of the scrutiny was to consider the content of the Draft Business Plan and the impact that this might have on services delivered by the Shared Regulatory Service in 2019/20. Following the meeting letters were sent by the Chair on behalf of the Committee to the Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment and Cardiff's Chair for Licensing & Public Protection. The letters set out the comments, observations and recommendations of the Committee in relation to the Draft Business Plan for 2019/20, and are attached to this report as **Appendices 4** and **5**.

Way Forward

38. Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment and Councillor Norma Mackie, Chair of Cardiff's Licensing & Public Protection Committee have been invited to attend for this item. Officers from Shared Regulatory Services and the Council's Planning, Transport & Environment will support them. In addition to this, representatives of the Wales Audit Office will attend the meeting to comment on the report titled 'Wales Audit Office Follow Up Review: Delivering with Less - Environmental Health Services'.

Legal Implications

39. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

40. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

(i) Consider the information in this report and the information presented at the meeting;

(ii) Determine whether they would like to make any comments, observations or recommendations to the Cabinet on this matter; and,

(iii) Decide the way forward for any future scrutiny of the issues discussed.

DAVINA FIORE
Director of Governance & Legal Services
14th November 2019

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Recommendations

1. That the Joint Committee approves the report and authorises the Managing Director, Vale of Glamorgan Council, to forward a copy of the report to the Heads of Paid Service for the other partner Councils.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To meet the requirements set out in Clause 5.1 of the Joint Working Agreement.

2. Background

2.1 Under the Joint Working Agreement, the Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) is required to produce an annual report that covers the operational and financial performance of the service for the preceding year. Clause 5 of the Joint Working Agreement states:

"The Joint Committee shall receive in each year at its annual meeting which shall be held no later than 30th June the report of the Head of Regulatory Services and the Lead Financial Officer in respect of the functions delegated to the Joint Committee relating to the twelve months ending 31st March of that year and a copy thereof shall be forwarded to the Chief Executive of each Participant.

2.2 The report shall include:-

(i) a statement showing the performance of the Regulatory Service Functions and progress in achieving the Objectives and delivering the Business Plan.

(ii) a summary revenue account and statement of capital spending including the distribution or use of any revenue surpluses and the financing of any capital expenditure"

2.3 This is the fourth report produced under this requirement and covers the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019. If the content of this report is agreed, a copy of the report must be sent to the Head of Paid Service of each of the three Councils along with the SRS Business Plan for 2019/20. The report outlines many of the actions undertaken at each partner Council to deliver the wide range of statutory functions assigned to the Service. The report provides a review of operations across the service, a summary of the financial position, and outlines performance against the 2018/19 service objectives.

Operating the Shared Regulatory Service

2.4 The Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) operates across Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. The SRS delivers a range of statutory services through a collaborative model that are critical to maintaining the health, safety and economic wellbeing of local communities. The operating model delivers an integrated service for the Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Licensing functions, which has three service delivery sectors focusing upon the customer rather than the traditional professional delivery model.

2.5 The Annual report is presented here for consideration by the Joint Committee.

- Neighbourhood Services: activities relating to residential premises or having an impact on the local community.
- Commercial Services: activities relating to business premises (generally where national standards apply).
- Enterprise and Specialist Services: specialist areas of work and income generating services.

2.6 As a regional organisation, providing regulatory services across three local authority areas, the SRS seeks to ensure that the corporate priorities and stated outcomes of the three councils at the heart of all its activities. Using them as a focus, the strategic priorities for the Shared Regulatory Service:

- Safeguarding the Vulnerable
- Improving Health and wellbeing
- Protecting the Environment
- Supporting the local economy
- Maximising the use of resources

2.7 Provides a robust base for achieving the outcomes identified in the 2019/20 business plan and the partner Council's corporate aspirations.

2.8 The Joint Working Agreement, executed in April 2015, and updated in July 2017, underpins the entire service provision. The JWA contains a number of "milestones and requirements". In accordance with those requirements:

- The Wales Audit Office completed an independent financial audit of the service in September 2018 there were no recommendations for improvement.

- The service set its budget in December 2018 for the 2019/20 period. This implements Year 2 of the 3 year budget reduction programme which set out a budget reduction of 5% p.a. for the period to March 2021.

- The Business Plan for 2019/20 is presented for political approval in other papers to the June 2019 Committee, following consultation with stakeholders.

- The Joint Committee will receive an audited statement of accounts in September 2019.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

3.1 The 2017/18 Annual report illustrated that the SRS consolidated service delivery in accord with the agreed standards and delivered the requisite financial savings. However, the report indicated that more demands were being placed upon the service at a time of reducing resources. The Key Milestones for 2018/19 were:

- Delivery of the SRS Business Plan 2018-2019.

- A review of the organisational structure for the SRS to meet the budget savings set out for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

- Consequently, to implement the financial savings agreed for the delivery of the SRS for the period 2018 – 2020.

- As with any law enforcement agency, new legislation and new policy developments were anticipated to place greater responsibilities upon the service; and with those responsibilities greater expectations. The consequences arising from the Grenfell disaster, the changes to the Public Health regime, the increased exploitation of vulnerable people, the challenges of improving air quality, all placed the SRS under considerable pressure the at a time of reducing budgets cannot be understated.

Human Resources

3.2 Throughout 2018/19, filling vacancies has continued to be challenging and the SRS has struggled to recruit suitable individuals into the service. This was exacerbated by the consultation undertaken on the budget reduction process where a number of officers formed a view that the SRS could not offer the job security they needed and left the service. However, the Service's programme of "growing our own" officers particularly in the food and trading standards disciplines has seen a number of individuals achieve higher accreditation levels to allow them to undertake a wider range of inspections. With officers assuming new roles and the taking on of new responsibilities to deliver the service, the retention of those officers needs a clear commitment to the resourcing of training and development within the organisation; competency within remains, of paramount importance.

3.3 The SRS is undergoing another significant period of change; the functions delivered for the partner councils such as Air Quality, Food Hygiene, Housing

enforcement are attracting new demands. As indicated above, recruitment and retention of good officers remains a challenge to ensure the SRS meets existing targets but is nimble enough to meet future agendas for public protection. The shortage of applicants with the right skills, abilities and experience in the different professions, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, has created a more competitive market. These shortages, attributable to an aging professional demographic, increasing turnover due to retirement and a reduced investment in sponsorship of students by the Councils have to be addressed if SRS is to continue delivering effective regulatory services. We know that the majority of our officers are content with their employment within the SRS, yet the SRS delivery model is at significant risk due to the inability to attract, recruit and retain a high calibre workforce.

3.4 Consequently, the SS management team have developed a new recruitment and retention strategy which seeks to enable the SRS to recruit high calibre individuals and experienced professionals to ensure the provision of high quality regulatory services across the region. Alongside that aim will be a clear objective of managing existing resource effectively to be able to respond speedily and effectively to necessary changes. The first step toward doing that is to extend the criteria for use of the Regulatory reserve created in 2016 to include the funding of apprentices and trainee officers. Elected members will be aware of an underspend in 2018/19, much of which is attributable to staff vacancies. Continued vacancies will impact upon service delivery and it is proposed to use the Regulatory reserve over the next three years to address the recruitment and development challenges faced by the service.

3.5 Sickness absence levels for 2018/19 were 7.55 days per FTE person. This is an increase on the previous year where absence rates were recorded as 6.89 per FTE person. There are mitigating factors with a number of staff undergoing planned medical interventions. This increase, while disappointing, compares favourably when viewed in a wider context through comparison against the average sickness rates across the partner Councils. In June 2018, the management team began the consultation process on the need for further budget savings and that may have had an impact upon attendance, even where managers are providing all of the relevant support to staff. There are no discernible trends in either the short or long term absence figures.

3.6 Over the summer of 2018, Conflict Management and Lone Worker training was arranged for SRS operational staff. Local provider, Safety Training Solutions Ltd delivered eight sessions of the day long course in house. The trainer engaged fully with SRS to create training that was tailored to the needs of the Service and its ways of working. This included working to SRS specific risk assessments, and teams were invited to submit examples of scenarios encountered previously that would be suitable for use as case studies in the training.

3.7 The course was designed to provide the skills necessary to identify confrontational / threatening behaviour through the combination of observation,

communication, threat and risk assessment; and to enable participants to take control of challenging situations.

3.8 Topics covered included teaching to provide:-

- Awareness of the health and safety legislation in the context of workplace violence and aggression.
- Understanding of how confrontation maybe expressed through use of body Language.
- Ability to identify situation where personal safety may be at risk.
- Recognition of the sings of alcohol, drugs, solvents and mental health issues being exhibited by individuals.
- An ability to use effective communication skills and positive body language to diffuse and manage confrontational situations.
- Safe strategies particularly when engaging with individuals at their own property / at home.
- An understanding of when to report incidents and how to produce effective incident reports to assist in the event of complaints/litigation.
- Basic actions to take when approached by a dangerous dot at a client's home or out in the community.
- Awareness of legislation in respect of self defence.

3.9 In addition, some perhaps less obvious areas of teaching included:

- Awareness of one's outline and social media profiles and steps to manage effectively.
- Use of the mobile phone in emergency situations.

3.10 By the end of the eight sessions, over 130 staff had received the training with excellent feedback being received.

Operational Performance

3.11 Operational performance throughout 2018/19 has been reported both to the Joint Committee and to each partner Council through the legacy systems. Performance is gauged against the 2018/19 Business Plan and the targets and actions identified in the plan were achieved for the most part with all statutory documents being published on time, the change programmes identified for the

period concluded on time. The only failings were an inability to complete all of the proactive programmes due to resourcing. The SRS had a role in two of the Council Public Accountability Measures; PAM 023 and PAM 013 and 014 for Cardiff only.

- PAM 023 – Food establishments - broadly compliant (%).This measure provides an indication of how well a food business complies with food hygiene legislation. The food industry is responsible for producing and distributing safe food. The Shared Regulatory Service, as the enforcement agency, conducts inspections, ensuring that standards are met through a robust enforcement programme to deal with those who do not comply with standards. Additionally, the business support regimes introduced into the SRS structure play a part in promoting an increase in hygiene standards, examples of that are set out under the priority heading supporting the local economy. Premises are deemed to be broadly compliant if specified risk scores are achieved for cleanliness, structural issues, and confidence in the management of the business.

3.12 The number of premises that are broadly compliant with food hygiene requirements, i.e. scoring 3* or above, are gradually increasing and in line with the UK average of 95%. The number of food businesses with a food hygiene rating of more than 3 increased in each authority area during 2018/19 from the previous year to a higher rating than ever before. (Bridgend from 96.69% to 97.52%, Cardiff 92.71 % to 94.54%, Vale of Glamorgan 95.40% to 95.92%). The results show an increasing number of businesses improving their standards. This translates to an additional 83 premises in Bridgend, 131 in Cardiff and 55 in the Vale over the last 2 years achieving a satisfactory rating, some of which can be attributed to the success of the intervention programme for food businesses. It is important to note that Cardiff has a significant turnover of food business operators and many of these new entrants to the market do not attract immediately a broadly compliant rating and that affects the overall broadly compliant score for Cardiff. Areas with a more settled food business community often score well on this indicator because the food business operators have had time to become accustomed to the requirements of the food hygiene legislation.

- PAM 13, Percentage of empty private properties brought back into use and PAM 14, the number of new homes created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use. This is a new indicator, but the core subject matter of reducing the number of empty properties remains the same. The performance measure guidance suggests that there are categories of direct action that local authorities can take to bring a property back into use, including:

  Grants, loans or other financial assistance either provided or facilitated by the local authority; (managed by Cardiff Council).

  Enforcement action including statutory notices;

  Dialogue with the owner where the owner has engaged with the responded to the local authority.

3.13 Progress has been made on over 200 empty homes cases giving an indication of the level of activity and the potential for future performance. The annual target has been achieved and the actions undertaken in this area of work have been positive; the response from property owners has been encouraging and bodes well going forward. It is important tot understand that the nature of empty homes means that there can be a significant lag time between attempted contact with empty property owners and re-occupation which means it can take time to see results. In addition to SRS work on this indicator, a key contributor to this PI in the past has been the Welsh Government Houses into Homes Scheme operated by the Council to assist in bringing properties back into beneficial use.

3.14 The SRS has recently begun to support Bridgend County Borough Council in delivering this function and discussions are on-going on the scope of the SRs activity for 2019/20.

3.15 Finally the performance indicator PAM 14 is being replaced with PAM 45, which takes account of commercial properties being brought back into use as residential property. PAM 14 has previously not accounted for these increases in private residences.

3.16 The detail of performance against all the agreed indicators is set out in **Appendix 1.**

3.17 The SRS may, through the relevant participative Council, prosecute breaches of legislation, particularly in respect of those who flout the law or who act irresponsibly, or where there is an immediate risk to health and safety. In the period, the service has been successful in challenging a range of unfair practices, many of which attracted significant media attention. An example of a significant increase in prosecutions is clearly evident. Last year there were 11 food hygiene investigations initiated, in 2018/19 this figure increased to 39. The time and work required to thoroughly investigate these matters and the consequences of officers ability to carry out day to day work whilst these matters are on going is significant.

3.18 The details of all the prosecutions concluded in the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 are set out in **Appendix 2.**

3.19 The SRS has also continued to support relevant corporate challenges at each Council, most notable in recent months with the issues arising from "Brexit". The uncertainty surrounding the UK's departure from the EU has required increased interaction with civil servants in Westminster and Cardiff on a range of public protection matters. Other examples of providing corporate support include officers playing a key role in assisting the Councils to deal with the requirements to improve air quality, participating in a range of audits including the WAO audit

on safeguarding and in the Vale of Glamorgan SRS officers have played a key role on the reshaping programme, particularly in relation to the management development programme.

3.20 SRS officers have supported all three Councils statutory Licensing and Public Protection Committees through the year. The Committees have agreed a number of policy documents on Alcohol licensing and Gambling to protect the vulnerable in the community.

3.21 The SRS has held discussions with the partner Councils on the potential for a joint Scrutiny regime for the service. It is evident that the different scrutiny processes at work in the Councils are likely to lead to a duplication of resource. An examination of specific items through the process operated at Cardiff, for example, would be likely repeated at any joint session. Notwithstanding, the SRS has appeared before a number of Scrutiny Committees and task and finish groups in the last year.

Significant Service achievements

3.22 Paragraph ***X*** above, sets out the priorities for the SRS; there have been a number of achievements in 2018/19 that demonstrate progress toward delivering the outcomes associated with those priorities. These actions can be found in Section 6 of the SRS Business plan for 2019/20. Set out below are some examples of the work undertaken in the previous 12 months.

Improving Health and Wellbeing

3.23 Improving health and wellbeing is a key priority for Shared Regulatory Services. Work undertaken to ensure that food is safe, that infectious disease, noise and air emissions are controlled, that risks in the workplace are managed properly, allows people to live in healthy environments. Add to this our activities to ensure the quality of private rented property, the promotion of a safe trading environment and our regulation of licensed premises to ensure they operate responsibly and it is evident that the work undertaken by the SRS is hugely important to the health and wellbeing of the region.

3.24 The Gambling Policy for all 3 authorities was reviewed and reissued. The review was undertaken to meet the requirements of the Gambling Act 2005. Previous years reviews have focused upon young people and ensuring they are not able to gamble at premises licensing by the Councils. More recently, gambling is being recognised as a public health problem. While only a minority of gamblers are identified as problem gamblers, research is emerging that suggests that the financial, health and social harms that arise from gambling can impact upon families, communities and wider society. The increase in on-line gambling, the increase in the advertising of gambling products all plays a significant role. Research suggests, such developments increase gambling behaviours and possibly shape a more permissive social attitude to gambling. The Councils role

here is limited, but the SRS is working with a range of organisations in Wales to contribute where possible to mitigate the impact gambling has upon vulnerable individuals

3.25 Following the tragic fire and loss of life in Grenfell Tower in North Kensington there has been a nationwide review of the use of a particular type of cladding known as Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) which was used in the Tower. Within Cardiff in the last 12 months, the SRS has begun to take a more prominent role in respect of the affected high-rise and remains in consultation with Welsh Government and the Fire Service as to the potential changes in policy and practice as a consequence of Grenfell. Recently, the Minister for Housing and Regeneration convened an Expert Group, to develop a 'road map' to respond to the issues raised by the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety (the 'Hackitt' review). The Head of Service attends this group as a representative of the Regulatory services in Wales. A new addendum to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System guidance (HHSRS) to clarify how an HHSRS assessment of fire risk where aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding is present in high rise buildings should be conducted has been introduced in England. The SRS is encouraging the Welsh Government to introduce the addendum promptly in wales and to make other policy changes to Housing law.

3.26 Three owners of takeaways in the Barry and Bridgend areas were prosecuted following test purchases carried out in relation to allergens. Orders were made of rice dishes where the businesses were specifically told it was for someone who was allergic to egg. However, when tested the food was later found to contain egg or egg protein. In one case, 77 times the amount of egg required to cause a reaction in an allergic person was found. Furthermore, these purchases were conducted only a few months after informal test purchases had been carried out when all three businesses had failed and subsequently been provided with advice. The businesses were fined in total £1800, £1975 in costs and £265 victim surcharges. One owner was given a Community Order to undertake 300 hours of unpaid work. This project is now being undertaken in other parts of the Country.

3.27 A business was fined £140,000, ordered to pay costs of £11,835 and a victim surcharge of £170 following a successful prosecution instigated by Shared Regulatory Services for a health and safety offence. The incident which occurred in 2018 occurred at a pub in Barry when a customer was left with serious injuries after falling through a cellar door which had been left open for cleaning staff. The customer fell down a concrete flight of stairs and was found unconscious after suffering a fractured skull and a bleed on the brain.

3.28 The SRS began an investigation into the safety of trampoline parks in 2018. These indoor activity areas have become increasingly popular and attract significant numbers of children. SRS investigated the construction materials used at one site and determined that the products used were of concern. The application of the law to these relatively new play environments was unclear. Following a legal

opinion, the SRS intervened and required the operator to undertake a number of corrective actions before reopening the facility to the public. The SRS will now extend this piece of work in 2019 to the other similar venues in the region.

3.29 The Port Health work has received significant attention this financial year. At Cardiff Airport due to the airport having divert status and being a designated point of entry for Communicable Disease, SRS port health are working closely with Public Health Wales, the Ambulance Trust and airport management to ensure suitability of facilities in case of an infectious disease emergency. Imported trade is continuing to be monitored from Qatar Airlines, to date no food has been identified as being imported.

3.30 Vessel movements at the sea ports of Cardiff and Barry continue to be monitored with ships boarded according to risk in order to carry out inspections. The importance of this in protecting crew welfare was highlighted when a ship arrived at Cardiff sea port with a ship sanitation control certificate that had been issued in Turkey but without any indication of what these controls should be. A port health officer from SRS boarded the ship and found that conditions on board were very poor with issues relating to cleanliness of the galley, welfare of the crew i.e. a lack of food provision for the crew with only a very small amount of dry food and frozen meat and no fresh food, and disrepair to the structure of the ship including in cabins. The officer through the agent and owner arranged for food to be delivered to the ship within 24 hours and contacted the Maritime and Coastguard Agency who detained the ship at Cardiff dock due to major contraventions being identified and the ship was not able to leave until the MCA had approved it.

Safeguarding the Vulnerable

3.31 Our safeguarding work seeks to ensure that children are protected from harmful substances and products, that older and vulnerable people are protected from unscrupulous individual and traders, that illegal money lending activities across Wales, are challenged robustly and that the public feel safe when using taxis as public transport. We will do this in partnership with our Council colleagues and other agencies to help people who need our support. Safeguarding the vulnerable is a central theme to many of the activities undertaken by SRS.

3.32 Call blockers can put an end to nuisance or malicious calls. They can be installed at the homes of residents being repeatedly targeted by scams and once fitted, prevent all calls coming through other than those from recognised friends and family numbers. In one case a referral was received from a social worker concerned about a person who was being bombarded by sales and nuisance telephone calls. Following intervention by SRS officers and a review of the individual's financial commitments, "unnecessary" payments to different organisations were terminated and the vulnerable person also received some compensation. SRS now has some 40 call blockers installed in residents' as a highly effective way of reducing nuisance and scam calls. Figures for 2018

published by the device supplier indicate that 41% of all incoming calls at these properties are nuisance or scam related, and that the devices are blocking 100% of unwanted calls from getting through to the residents concerned.

3.33 Research has shown that the average amount lost through a scam is £1,862, however the true value of call blocker devices can be immeasurable when they provide the comfort and peace of mind older and vulnerable residents need to help them continue living independently in their own homes. The SRS call blockers are now being supplemented by the use of "Memocams" which can be fitted to deter cold callers at the door.

3.34 In order to strengthen improvements in safeguarding, particularly in relation to children, a programme of training and awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) with the taxi community and other stakeholders was undertaken in Bridgend where training sessions were held with the trade in conjunction with South Wales Police and Social Services. A recent initiative, Operation Brake, involved Licensing Officers in Bridgend working with South Wales Police to raise awareness of child Sexual exploitation within the night time economy in Bridgend. Officers visited licensed premises and taxi ranks in the town centre to engage with workers in the night time economy on how to spot the signs of child sexual exploitation and how to report anything suspicious. This operation involved partnership working to highlight this crucial issue which impacts on the most vulnerable young persons within our communities. In Cardiff, the hackney carriage/private hire driver's written knowledge test was also updated to include a section on CSE, based on the booklet produced in conjunction with Cardiff Children's Services. Drivers must pass this test to show that they can spot the signs of vulnerability and what to do if they see an issue to become a licensed driver.

3.35 Following a spate of tragic incidents involving the use of knives, Cardiff was identified as one of two areas of concern in Wales with regard to the prevalence of knife crime. In order to play a key role in tackling this disturbing trend, SRS successfully bid for nearly £20,000 of Home Office funding to undertake compliance checks to identify the extent of which young people were able to purchase knives and other bladed instruments across the city and identify problem sectors of the trade. 250 test purchases took place of knives, bladed articles and axes across SRS using trading standards volunteers under the age of 18. The failure rate was 11% with 28 out of 250 premises selling to a person under the age of 18. A variety of products were sold including kitchen knives, Stanley knives and an axe. Following the test purchasing exercise all of the premises that failed were sent a warning letter and invited to engage with SRS to discuss the sale and the training that is provided to staff. Most of the premises made contact and further visits were carried out by officers to offer advice and education. Fifteen premises that failed have recently been re tested with South Wales Police assisting and all of the premises passed. Some premises had removed all knives from the shop whilst others had taken extra steps to reduces

accessibility of the product by placing them behind the till areas. A further thirteen premises are due to be re tested at the end of April.

Protecting the Environment

3.36 Protecting the environment is a core strategic priority of SRS. Many of the activities such as water sampling, monitoring air quality, and remediating contaminated land contribute toward promoting a better environment. This in turn means better long term prospects for the health and wellbeing of our communities. The SRS has a key role to play in ensuring we make best use of existing resources and bringing back redundant/derelict properties into use is an important contributor to both the environment and local community development. We have a key role to play in the wider climate change and future generations agendas through our enforcement role on energy efficiency controls on properties and products. The impact of these activities is less apparent in the short term for communities, but has an important role for future generations. In the more immediate term, we ensure communities are protected from nuisance and are safer by investigating noise complaints, dealing with stray dogs and horses.

Empty Homes

3.37 Within Bridgend and Cardiff Council the SRS has provided dedicated Officer resource to assist with the work bringing empty properties back into residential use. It is recognised that empty properties are a wasted resource. Whilst they may not always be left in a state of disrepair, there are always consequences, and these can be summarised into three factors:

Social, such as crime including arson, graffiti, squatting, as well as reduced public confidence in the area or the Council.

Environmental, including rodent infestation, fly tipping, dangerous structures, and a poor impression of the area

Economic, such as repair costs, increased burdens on councils' resources, property devaluation, deterred investment

3.38 Within Bridgend an SRS Officer has co-ordinated an Empty Homes Working Group which has led to consultation on a new Empty Homes Strategy, using a whole authority approach. The council and its partners seek to work cooperatively with owners of empty properties to bring their properties back into use. The council also provides owners with help and assistance, including empty homes grants and empty property loans and where appropriate, through the use of targeted enforcement action. The renewed focus on empty properties has led to increased performance, with a total of 104 properties brought back out of 1237 empty at the start of the year.

3.39 Similarly at Cardiff, the Welsh Government performance indicators were exceeded for last year as a result of a combination of both proactive and reactive work, with an on going caseload of approximately 200 empty properties. Casework involves both informal negotiation and formal enforcement work in order to assist owners in bringing their properties back into use or to require improvements to eradicate associated nuisances. The work follows a general process in line with the Council's Empty Property Policy in order to open a dialogue with owners and where that fails, formal enforcement in the form of statutory notices, in addition to such measures as compulsory purchase and enforced sale. During 2018/2019 the compulsory purchase procedure has been commenced on 3 long term problematic empty properties, one of which is currently being renovated by the owner. The Empty Homes Policy within Cardiff is being reviewed this year and we will consult with internal and external stakeholders as part of that process.

3.40 Although no dedicated SRS resource has been allocated within the Vale, we continue to contribute to the Empty Homes Strategy through the use of enforcement where owners have refused offers of help and the property is having a significant impact on the surrounding area.

3.41 During the last year, SRS ensured that the Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils met their statutory obligations under the Environment Act by producing air quality reports for each area and reporting to the respective Cabinets. Failure to produce said reports could have led to the issue of a Welsh Government direction under Section 85(3) of the Environment Act 1995.

- In Cardiff, SRS continued to play a significant role in assisting the City of Cardiff Council as it identifies the most effective way to improve air quality going in the city going forward. The SRS Team Manager Specialist Services Environment has been seconded to Cardiff Council for a period of at least nine months in the role of Project Manager for the Council's Air Quality Strategy.

- In Bridgend, the monitoring at a new location during 2017 and 2018 identified average nitrogen dioxide levels (NO2) that breach the annual objective set for NO2. As a result of this finding, Bridgend County Borough Council approved a recommendation made by SRS to designate an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at this town centre location (Park Street), and the new AQMA was declared, effective from 1st January 2019. Public engagement is due to commence on possible solutions for the AQMA and a draft action plan is being produced to set out and consider a range of measures.

- In the Vale of Glamorgan, Cabinet approved a recommendation made by SRS to revoke the Windsor Road, Penarth AQMA as a result of improvements in air quality over a number of years. Public engagement on the revocation is due to

commence and residents are reminded that the monitoring will continue in the area to ensure that the greatly improved standard of air quality is maintained.

3.42 Officers within Cardiff have led a consultation on new emission standards for taxis and private hire vehicles which is part of the package of proposals aimed at improving air quality and ensuring legal compliance by 2021. Currently 87 % of the taxi fleet licenced in the city does not meet the latest Euro 6 standard and it is estimated that should the proposals be implemented 622 of the oldest and most polluting vehicles will be replaced within the first year. Officers will continue to liaise with the Trade and will draft a report on the result of the consultations for Members to take a final decision on the age, emission and testing proposals for taxis licensed in the city.

Supporting the Local economy

3.43 A strong local economy is a key component in the quality of life experienced by local people. The work of SRS has a significant, but often unseen, impact upon the local economy. The provision of timely advice and guidance on regulation can benefit the economic viability of businesses resulting in improved business practice. Much of our market surveillance activity focuses upon maintaining balance in the "marketplace"; the equitable enforcement of regulations helps businesses to compete on equal terms ensuring a fairer trading environment. Our role as regulator also extends to providing information to support consumers to enable them to become better informed and confident. In an age where people can purchase goods and services without leaving home, the importance of the principle of "caveat emptor" has never been more relevant.

3.44 SRS hosted a forum for food businesses at the Principality Stadium in March to give businesses advice on how best to meet standards. Over 170 delegates booked onto the event, representing a diverse range of organisations, including cafés, health boards, nurseries and hotel chains. Environmental Health and Trading Standards professionals from SRS advised delegates about health and safety in catering, how the food hygiene rating system works in practice and how to improve and maintain a food hygiene rating. Furthermore advice was given on preventing the spread of norovirus and the topic of food allergens which gave attendees the chance to understand their responsibilities in law whilst ensuring the safety of their customers. The event also highlighted the tailored advice services available via paid-for services, or through Primary Authority partnerships which can include staff training, auditing of terms, conditions, policies and procedures and mock food hygiene inspections to better prepare businesses for the real thing. The event was very well received by all attendees, in fact, following the event, a food inspection was undertaken at a delegate's food business where he had implemented improvements as a result of the event and received an improved food hygiene rating score.

3.45 Helping businesses to improve their food hygiene rating score was the drive behind a successful bid to the Food Standards Agency for project funding during 2018. The FHRS intervention grant enabled SRS to target those businesses most in need of support in improving their score, and officers worked with food businesses across the region having poor scores of between 0 and 2. What followed was a programme of intensive 1 to 1 assistance provided to some 14 businesses. The impact of the interventions has been evaluated by reference to the FHRS scores of each of the businesses both before and after the training and support was provided. The results are quite remarkable. Most notably:

The average FHRS score across the fourteen businesses before the intervention was 1.5.

The average FHRS score across the fourteen businesses after the interventions was 4.

The greatest improvement was shown by a business achieving a FHRS rating of 4 having previously been zero rated.

Three premises achieved a 5 rating after the intervention, two having been on a rating of 2 previously and the other on a rating of 1.

3.46 As an added benefit of this work, officers were able to pilot the newly developed SRS HACCP training for businesses which is now available to book. It is hoped that given the huge success of the project in driving up low FHRS scores, similar interventions will be possible in the coming year, ideally with further FSA funding.

3.47 The three Licensing teams throughout the SRS are busy front line services dealing with a wide variety of activities which require licensing by the Council in order to protect public health and safety. One of the major developments in the Licensing sphere is a consultation and report by Welsh Government in relation to the future of taxi licensing. Reports have been taken to all three Public Protection Committees to advise Members of the proposals which include the option of removing Licensing of taxis from local authority control and the setting up of a Joint Transport Agency to undertake this work. Officers have participated in stakeholder meetings with Assembly Members and have fed back the view that whilst local authorities support the establishment of national standards and information sharing between Authorities, there is no evidence to support the view that the public would benefit from the role being passed to one JTA.

Maximising the use of resources

3.48 Maximising the use of resources was the original catalyst for creating SRS, and our work in this area continues. By reducing “triplication” of effort, introducing better processes, making our systems work without constant intervention, improving access into the service, our business improves and we increase

customer satisfaction. Income generating activities like marketing our metrology laboratory, offering paid for advice services, building Primary Authority partnerships and extending our training provision to business are examples of our move to a more "commercial" culture. Our income levels in 2018/19 were the best to date and we are confident that this will continue in 2019/20.

3.49 Above all, we recognise that crucial to the success of SRS are the people who work within the service. We will ensure that our officers are effective in their roles by investing in learning and development opportunities, by engaging them fully in the development of the service, and by fostering an environment where people are encouraged to think, lead and innovate. The service has been recognised by different organisations for our efforts in regulating particular aspects of the marketplace. In 2018/19 the SRS was recognised by the RSPCA award for our work on animal welfare, by the Hallmarking Council for our investigations into sales of gold and silver, and by the Anti Counterfeiting Group for our challenges to the sale of fake products.

3.50 Our Business Support team has achieved further efficiencies over the course of the year as we continue to streamline and harmonise working practices across the three hubs. This work has been particularly successful in respect of the processing of Freedom of Information requests and in the transcription of defendant interviews as part of the prosecution process where demand can now be managed over the different offices. In addition, a further tranche of the remaining phone calls dealt with by the Cardiff hub have been transferred to C1V.

3.51 Further improvements have been made in accessibility to, and the content of, the SRS website with greater reliance being placed on web forms as a means of contacting the service for non-urgent matters. Going forward, this continues to be an important element of the wider SRS agenda for digital channel shift which over time will lead to a reduction in enquiries reaching the service by telephone.

3.52 The SRS Twitter account (@SRS_Cymru) continues to prove popular with a steady growth in the number of its followers. A more recent development has been the launch of the dedicated Twitter account for the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit (@LoanSharksWales) As well as the obvious benefits this brings in terms of raising awareness of the dangers of dealing with loan sharks; complaints, the account provides an additional route for complaints, intelligence and requests for victim support to come through to the Unit direct.

3.53 While the SRS budget savings work resulted in the loss of three Support Officer posts last year, the progression of a number of staff into vacancies elsewhere in the structure meant that that the number of staff leaving the service was kept to a minimum.

Financial Performance

3.54 The Gross Revenue Budget and provisional outturn position for 2018/19 are shown in the tables below, with the position in respect of each of the partners detailed to include both Core and Authority Specific expenditure positions. The service has a provisional underspend of £496k against the gross revenue budget of £8.504m, as illustrated in the following table:

	Gross Budget	Provisional Outturn	Outturn Variance
Authority	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	1,774	1,602	172
Cardiff	4,978	4,789	189
Vale	1,752	1,617	135
Total Gross Expenditure	8,504	8,008	496

3.55 However, it should be noted that to enable the Service to successfully meet the agreed savings target of 2019/20, a mini restructuring of the service was undertaken during 2018, which has actively contributed towards the draft outturn position.

3.56 An unanticipated outcome of the savings consultation was the departure of officers who were not at risk, to take up employment elsewhere. Recruitment drives have been undertaken, however the Service has experienced some issues in attracting suitable candidates to certain disciplines.

3.57 As a direct consequence of staff vacancies, a number of planned (Core) operations scheduled to be undertaken during 2018/19 have been postponed until 2019/20. This has contributed to the increase in the provisional underspend position since the last report.

3.58 A full breakdown of the projected gross revenue outturn position is shown in Appendix 3.

Implementation

3.59 Provision was made in the 2016/17 accounts for items that were yet to be realised within the accounts. Funding for the remaining two items will be carried forward into 2019/20. These include:

£46k to cover the anticipated cost of setting up the SRS as a separate employer within the Cardiff & Vale Pension Fund as agreed by the Joint Committee on the 20th December 2016.

£10k in respect of partially completed additional IT consultancy work.

Core Services

3.60 The approved gross Core Services budget for 2018/19 is £6.261m, and has achieved a provisional underspent outturn position of £500k. The Core Service budget is allocated in line with the population split across the participating authorities, as detailed in the following table:

		Gross Budget	Provisional Outturn	Outturn Variance
Authority	%	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	22.39%	1,401	1,286	115
Cardiff	57.51%	3,601	3,318	283
Vale	20.10%	1,259	1,157	102
Total Core		6,261	5,761	500

3.61 Employee costs achieved a £300k underspend, which may in part be the result of the reduced staffing levels and subsequent recruitment issues which were particularly felt within the Food and Health and Safety Teams. Sixteen members of staff have left the Service during the year. Thus, resulting in a number of vacant posts that are actively contributing towards the employee underspend. There continues to be on-going issues in attracting suitable cover within particular disciplines that did not form part of the savings initiative, plus a shortage of suitable agency cover.

3.62 The Service has also borne an above average percentage of maternity and paternity taken in 2018/19, which has exerted additional pressures on existing staffing levels. The Vale's Corporate average instances of maternity leave stands at 1.51%, whereas, the SRS is 2.67% higher at 4.18%.

3.63 Included within the Employee expenditure are the costs of two part-year unbudgeted members of staff, who supported the Public Space Protection Order initiatives at Cardiff Council and the Vale of Glamorgan. The costs of which were recharged directly back to the two instructing Authorities. Additionally, two team leaders from within Core are currently on secondments out of the service, with team members acting up into the management roles. Unfortunately, this has left vacancies further down the structure.

3.64 Transport costs have achieved a £4k overspend which is the result of an anticipated spend in excess of budget on vehicles repair costs.

3.65 A number of vehicles inherited by the Service have been determined as approaching the end of their economic life due to disproportionate repair and running costs. As a result, the service has purchased a number of replacement vehicles which will have reduced running costs and make a positive contribution towards air quality standards resulting from lower emissions. These purchases have been met by a revenue contribution to capital, and are shown within the Supplies and Services element of this report.

3.66 Supplies and Services have achieved a total overspend of £110k. This includes an unbudgeted spend of £123k against vehicle acquisitions, which will be met by the overall revenue underspend. Additional overspends on this heading include £27k on legal costs, £18k on equipment plus an overspend of £17k on audit fee's, which include the WAO charge associated with the external audit of the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts. These have then been offset by £75k of various underspends across a number of headings. The legal fees are partially offset by income received in accordance with a Monetary Order which was imposed as a result of a Trading Standards case heard at Crown Court.

3.67 Income has over recovered by £314k. Which is made up of £111k of recharged staff costs associated to the Public Space Protection Orders projects at both Cardiff and the Vale Councils, a recharge to Cardiff in respect the secondment of a team leader to their Clean Air Feasibility Study. £73k of various Fees and Charges. Compensation of £47k has been received in respect of the Monetary Order, which offsets the legal and investigation costs of the case. £40k of recharges to Welsh Government in respect a staff secondment to support the Special Procedures Project which is to be incorporated in to the Public Health (Wales) 2017 Act, £33k of Primary Authority income, plus the receipt of an unbudgeted £10k Food Standards Agency grant.

3.68 The 2018/19 Welsh Government Rentsmart Grants of £66k have been built into the SRS budget. The Service has recouped 100% of the costs incurred from the grants from both Welsh Government, and also from the partner Authorities included in the pilot scheme where the grant now forms part of the Flexible Funding Grant received by the participating Authorities.

Authority Specific Services

3.69 The approved gross budget of £2.243m in respect of Authority Specific Services is projected to overspend by £4k as detailed in the following table:

	Gross Budget	Provisional Outturn	Outturn Variance
Authority	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	373	316	57
Cardiff	1,377	1,471	(94)
Vale	493	460	33
Total Authority Specific Services	2,243	2,247	(4)

3.70 The £57k underspend at Bridgend is partially the result of a £29k underspend within the Licensing Section. This is made up of an £25k underspend on employees, where the majority of this variance is due to a temporary vacancy that was carried for a number of months, plus a £4k underspend within Supplies and Services. There is also a £28k underspend within Kennelling and Vets where

activity is below budget. This service was subject to a re-tendering exercise earlier in the year, which has also actively contributed toward lower Kennelling Costs being achieved. The decreasing level of service take up agrees with previous year's performance, and is consistent with the national trend in the reduction of dogs presented as being homeless.

3.71 The £94k overspend at Cardiff predominantly relates to overspends within Licencing and Night Time Noise, which have then been partially offset by underspends elsewhere on the budget.

3.72 There is an overspend of £150k within the Licensing Section. Where there are £50k of unbudgeted Employee costs. This is partially due to agency being accessed to cover sickness absences, plus providing operational support as required, and will be offset through License Fee income received directly by Cardiff.

3.73 The £2k underspend on Premises is the result of the Licensing Unit vacating the privately rented offices at Hadfield Road, Cardiff. The Licensing Section are now no longer geographically split, with the unit occupying a suite of offices at City Hall.

3.74 There is an overspend of £102k within the Licensing Supplies & Services heading which includes unbudgeted Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) costs of £45k, plus £25k Taxi Plate costs. There is also an overspend of £26k of General Offices Expenses, plus legal fees of £6k. It is understood that this position will be fully met by offsetting Licensing Income. The 3 years Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Licences were renewed from late 2018 onwards, which has impacted on the level of DBS expenditure incurred in the year. However, there will also be an offsetting uplift in the DBS income received in the year at Cardiff as this cost is met directly by the customer.

3.75 HMO Plasnewydd and Cathays have a combined underspend of £24k.

3.76 As a direct result of the post of Student Liaison Officer being vacant for many months, there is an underspend of £38k. The post lay vacant whilst revised funding mechanisms were investigated by Cardiff Council. The position has now been resolved, and it is expected that the vacancy will be filled in the near future.

3.77 The £7k overspend within Night Time Noise relates directly to activity levels in excess of budget.

3.78 The £1k underspend at Cardiff Port Health is the result of smaller underspend across the headings.

3.79 The £33k underspend in the Vale of Glamorgan is partly the result of a £16k underspend within Kennelling and Vets. This is due to a lower than budgeted uptake in the service, and emulates the reduction in pressures experienced at

Bridgend. There has also been a change in the supply of kennelling services which has actively contributed towards this position.

3.80 The £6k underspend within Licensing due to an underspend on Employees where there was a temporary vacancy. This post has now been filled.

3.81 The £8k underspend within Pest Control is the result of expenditure being below budget within both Transport and Supplies and Services.

3.82 The Additional Licensing Scheme which is located within the Castleland Ward in Barry has now expired, and will not be renewed, thus resulting in a £4k underspend.

3.83 There is a 1k overspend within Burials where the cost of Public Health Funerals exceeds the available budget. However, this may in part be met by income recovered from the estate of the deceased.

Net Position

3.84 In accordance with the Joint Working Arrangement (JWA), income budgets remain the responsibility of each Participant Authority and are shown in this report for completeness. The following table illustrates the provisional net underspend of £355k at year-end, against a net budget of £6.146m:

	Net Budget	Provisional Outturn	Outturn Variance
Authority	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	1,328	1,199	129
Cardiff	3,410	3,334	76
Vale	1,408	1,258	150
Total Net Expenditure	6,146	5,791	355

3.85 A full summary of the projected net outturn position is illustrated in **Appendix 4**.

3.86 Year-end income positions were provided by partner Councils. At year-end, the Service offered recommendations to the legacy accountants in respect of the treatment of income received during 2018/19 but relating to future periods.

3.87 The net position for Bridgend is an overall underspend of £129k against a net budget of £1.328m, and is the result of income received being £43k below target overall. Licensing income experienced a shortfall against target of £48k, which may in part be due to an in year income budget increase. It is hoped that this position will improve in 2019/20 upon the implementation of the revised fees and charges rates that was recently presented to the Licensing Committee. This is then partially offset by Core income which over recovered by £5k.

3.88 The net position for Cardiff is an underspend of £76k against a net budget of £3.410m. There is an overall shortfall in income of £113k, of which £29k relates directly to Core with the remaining £84k shortfall relating to Authority Specific Services.

3.89 The Authority Specific position may in part be due to the historic pattern of income receipts falling off from the second year onwards of the 5 year HMO licence period. HMO Plasnewydd will finish its current cycle in October 2019, with HMO Cathays finishing in December 2021. 2016/17 was the first year that an adjustment in respect of income received in advance had been administered to the account, with no consideration within the accounts made for periods prior to 2016/17.

3.90 HMO Cathays and Plasnewydd have achieved income of £211k against a combined budget of £232k, resulting in a shortfall in the achievement of income targets by £21k.

3.91 The Licensing Section has achieved a shortfall in income of £91k against a budget of £959k, which is marginally below the performance achieved in 2017/18.

3.92 The Student Liaison scheme has achieved income of £16k against a budget of nil. The costs of the scheme are shared between Cardiff Council and the local Universities.

3.93 Cardiff Port Health Authority is funded by precepts, and would therefore, be anticipated to meet target. Income received by this unit has exceeded target by £12k and negates expenditure.

3.94 The net position in respect of the Vale of Glamorgan is a net overall underspend of £150k, against a net budget of £1.408m. Which has been achieved by an over recovery of income valued at £15k.

3.95 Core has achieved income of £17k against a budget of £14k, equating to an over recovery of income valued at £3k.

3.96 The Licensing Section has achieved income of £304k against a budget of £290k, exceeding target by £14k.

3.97 Unbudgeted income of £2k has been received within the Burial section.

3.98 This is then partially been offset by an under recovery of income with the Pest Control unit of £4k.

3.99 The Draft Statement of Accounts is shown as **Appendix 5.**

4. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

4.1 The Annual report demonstrates the partner Councils commitment to improving social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being and promoting sustainable development in line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Equalities, Sustainability and safeguarding issues have all been taken into account when drafting this plan. Our work with stakeholders seeking to ensure that our early intervention and prevention activities maintain wellbeing in the SRS region is a crucial element of our approach to protect local people and the environment.

4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires the SRS to underpin decision making by contributing to the seven well-being goals of the Act, following the five ways of working, and consequently undertaking actions that will have a positive impact on people living in the future as well as those living today The SRS Business Plans contains a number of initiatives that contribute to the well being objectives. Section 6 of the 2017/18 plan approved in June 2018 illustrates how the SRS priorities interface with the well being goals on matters such as safeguarding the vulnerable and protecting the environment and forms the basis for the Annual report.

4.3 Aligning the Well-being Goals of the Act enables us to evidence our contribution to the National Well-being Goals. Promoting the five ways of working is reflected in our approach to integrated business planning. Setting consistently challenging yet realistic steps and performance improvement targets, the SRS is able to clearly demonstrate progress towards achieving the national goals by the production of the Annual report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

5.1 The implications are set out in the body of the report.

Employment

5.2 The implications of the budget reductions undertaken in 2018/19 are set out in the body of the report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

5.3 The partner Councils have a duty to improve under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The report outlines achievements in 2018/19 for the matters assigned to the Shared Regulatory Service.

5.4 The Shared Regulatory Services Business Plan 2017 / 2018 and 2018 / 2019. The Joint Working Agreement executed on 10 April 2015 and amended July 2017.

6. Background Papers

Appendix 1 – SRS Performance Measures 2018 / 2019

Appendix 2 – SRS Prosecution Statistics 2018 / 2019

Appendix 3 – Projected Gross Revenue Outturn Position

Appendix 4 – A Summary of the Projected Net Outturn Position

Appendix 5 – Draft Statement of Accounts

APPENDIX 2

WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru
Auditor General for Wales

Delivering with Less – Environmental Health Services – Follow-up Review – **Cardiff Council**

Audit year: 2018-19

Date issued: September 2019

Document reference: 1492A2019-20

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

The work was delivered by Grant Thornton UK LLP under the direction of Huw Rees.

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- Resources available to environmental health services have reduced since 2014-15, but the Council's performance has been maintained by collaborating with two other councils through the SRS 9
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- The Council has consulted key external stakeholders on significant changes to environmental health services, but should more carefully consider the impact of future changes on residents and businesses and undertake direct consultation where appropriate 16
- The Council and the SRS must continue to innovate and transform services in order to help mitigate any future funding reductions 17

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Summary report

Summary

What we reviewed and why

1 In October 2014, the Auditor General published a national report, **Delivering with less – the impact on environmental health services and citizens** (see Appendix 1 for the recommendations from that report). Our local review in 2019 assessed whether there have been any budget and staff changes within the Council's environmental health services and the extent to which it has addressed the recommendations included in our 2014 national report. For the purposes of this review, we focused on the Council's progress in addressing recommendations 2, 3, 4, and 5.

2 Councils have numerous statutory environmental health duties and citizens highly value many of the environmental health services provided. Furthermore, environmental health services directly impact upon the health, wellbeing and safety of residents and visitors to Wales.

3 Environmental health services cover a range of issues, such as food safety, pest control, dog control, housing and reducing the causes and effects of air pollution.

4 To inform our findings, we interviewed a selection of officers and members whose remit includes Cardiff Council's (the Council's) environmental health arrangements. We also reviewed relevant documentation.

5 We undertook the review during the period April 2019 to June 2019.

Background

6 Since 1 May 2015, Cardiff Council (the Council), Bridgend County Borough Council and the Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council have been operating a joint service known as the shared regulatory service (SRS). The SRS provides environmental heath, licensing and trading standards services. The Council continues to provide other services outside the SRS, as listed in paragraph 11.

7 The SRS has a single management team working across the three councils. It operates under a joint agreement between the participating councils. It is governed by a Management Board (officer-led) and a Joint Committee consisting of six elected members, two from each council.

8 The SRS provides core services (functions common to all councils) and specific services which are unique to each council. Core services are jointly funded, and the contribution of each council is based on their population.

9 The SRS was established to make more effective use of the councils' resources and to enable the three councils to continue to deliver high-quality services whilst reducing costs.

10 This report provides an assessment of the Council's environmental health service performance including services delivered directly by the Council (dog kennelling, pest control and environmental enforcement) as well as those delivered jointly through SRS.

11 Exhibit 1 below sets out the services which were in scope of our review.

Exhibit 1: services in the scope of our review

Services provided by the SRS	Services provided by the Council
Pollution Control Food safety Health and Safety Infectious diseases Private sector housing Port health function Burial/cremation of persons deceased at public expense Licensing Night time noise	Dog control and kennelling Pest control Environmental enforcement

What we found

12 Our review sought to answer the question: Is the Council's environmental health service continuing to deliver its statutory obligations given the financial challenges?

13 Overall, we found that the SRS model is enabling the Council to sustain its delivery of environmental health services in a context of reducing resources and additional responsibilities placed on it by ongoing changes in legislation. There is scope for the Council to strengthen its independent oversight and assurance arrangements in relation to the SRS and work with SRS partners to explore opportunities for future improvement. We reached this conclusion because:

- resources available to environmental health services have reduced since 2014-15, but the Council's performance has been maintained by collaborating with two other councils through the SRS.
- whilst the Council and SRS are confident that environmental health obligations are being met, neither has explicitly assessed whether this is the case. The Council and SRS would benefit from working together to distinguish between statutory and non-statutory services to help inform decision making around any future budget reductions.
- governance and performance management frameworks for the SRS are robust, but arrangements for review and challenge of performance information could be formalised.

- there is scope for the Council to improve the level of independent challenge and oversight it exercises in relation to environmental health services provided to it by the SRS.
- the Council has consulted key external stakeholders on significant changes to environmental health services, but should more carefully consider the impact of future changes on residents and businesses and undertake direct consultation where appropriate.
- the Council and the SRS must continue to innovate and transform services in order to help mitigate any future funding reductions.

Proposals for improvement

Exhibit 2: Proposals for improvement

The table below sets out the proposals for improvement that we have identified following this review. Please note that the proposals for improvement apply to both services provided by the SRS and by the Council, unless stated otherwise.

Proposals for improvement	
P1	The Council should subject any future changes to environmental health services to a more rigorous analysis of costs, benefits and impacts. We found some evidence of cost/benefit/impact analysis being performed to enable decision-making around savings and changes to services. However, whilst some consideration was given to the impact of staffing restructuring over the period between 2018-2021, officers and members acknowledged that the real impact of this will be largely unknown until £498,000 of savings begin to take effect.
P2	The Council should investigate further possibilities for commercialisation and income generation for environmental health services in order to provide additional financial capacity if funding reduces in the future.
P3	When considering how environmental health services may need to change in the future, the Council should ensure that the distinction between statutory and non-statutory services is clearly documented and understood by decision-makers. This will help to ensure that statutory responsibilities and powers are weighed and prioritised appropriately alongside discretionary services.
P4	The Council should introduce greater independent challenge of the level and quality of services provided by the SRS under the Joint Working Agreement.
P5	The Council should work with SRS to undertake a review of business continuity and succession planning arrangements in relation to the SRS to mitigate the risk of overreliance on key individuals, such as the Head of SRS and operational managers.

Proposals for improvement	
P6	The Council should strengthen elected member oversight of its environmental health services, for example, through more regular scrutiny of services provided by third parties including the SRS.
P7	The Council should consider introducing more structured and targeted development and training opportunities for relevant members, which may be beneficial in the event of changes in personnel and in areas experiencing changes in environmental health legislation, eg air pollution/food safety/ infectious diseases.
P8	The Council should more clearly link any future decisions on changes to service levels to an assessment of impact on relevant stakeholders, including service users and residents. Whether consultation is necessary, and the most appropriate means of consulting should be decided on a case-by-case basis. However, where changes are likely to impact service users, businesses and local residents, they should be aware of and consulted on these decisions.
P9	The Council needs to build on initiatives, such as the Noise app, to ensure that future funding reductions can be mitigated by innovation and transformation in service delivery and that environmental health services are able to benefit from new technologies.

Detailed report

The shared regulatory services (SRS) model is enabling the Council to sustain its delivery of environmental health services in a context of reducing resources and additional responsibilities placed on it by ongoing changes in legislation. There is scope for the Council to strengthen its independent oversight and assurance arrangements in relation to the SRS and work with SRS partners to explore opportunities for future improvement

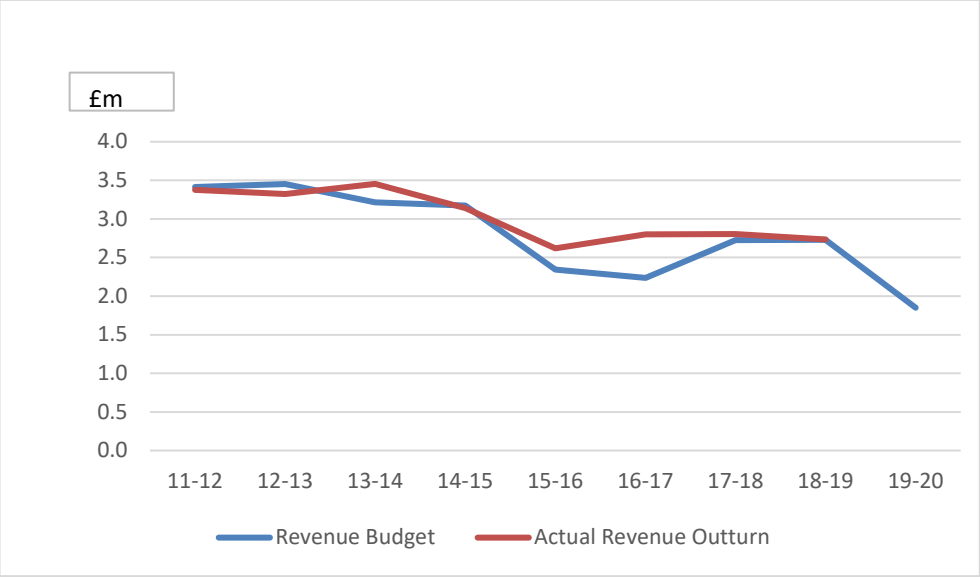
Resources available to environmental health services have reduced since 2014-15, but the Council's performance has been maintained by collaborating with two other councils through the SRS

14 The delivery of environmental health services through the SRS provides flexibility and resilience. Whilst resources have reduced, the SRS has been able to shift resources as priorities change and issues arise. Through the SRS, the Council has been able to continue to deliver some non-statutory environmental health services, such as food hygiene events to support local businesses.

15 The cost of providing the services has reduced from £3.378 million in 2011-12 to £2.735 million in 2018-19 (revenue outturn, combined Cardiff and Cardiff SRS services), as illustrated in Exhibit 3, representing a reduction of 19%.

Exhibit 3 – The Net Cost of Environmental Health Services, Cardiff and SRS Combined – Revenue Budget compared to Outturn from 2011-12 to 2019-20

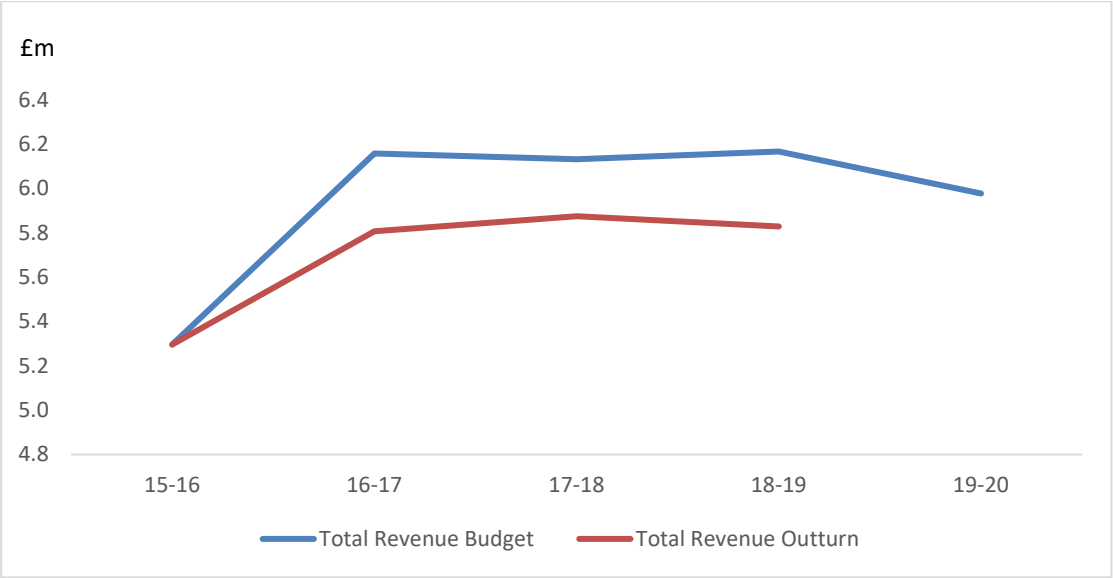
(This includes services that were retained by the Council as well as the cost of Cardiff SRS services, core and authority specific.)



Source: Wales Audit Office Delivering with Less - Review of Environmental Health Services 2015, Cardiff City Council and SRS.

16 The SRS provides the majority of the Council's environmental health services, except for dog control, pest control and littering and fly-tipping enforcement. Exhibit 4 below illustrates the cost of the SRS for all three councils, showing a trend in reduction in overall costs since the creation of SRS. As the SRS began on 1 May 2015, costs for 2015-16 only reflect 11 months of the year.

Exhibit 4: Total Cost of SRS, for all three councils combined (including core and authority specific services)



Source: Cardiff City Council and SRS.

17 The creation of SRS delivered an immediate and significant saving in comparison to the total of the previous service budgets for the participating organisations. The SRS has agreed to deliver 5% budget reductions on an annual basis from 2018-19 to 2020-21. This represents a core budget reduction of £830,000 (of which £476,000 relates to Cardiff's contribution). These figures include all SRS services, including those outside the scope of this review, such as trading standards.

18 When the SRS was established, administrative costs and overheads, such as building costs remained with the individual councils. These overheads are not included within the financial information for the SRS (Exhibit 4) but are included within Exhibit 3.

19 The SRS achieved an underspend of £496,000 in 2018-19, of which it could retain £200,000. This was achieved due to staff vacancies and restructuring of the service during 2018. The Joint Committee has agreed that this underspend can be retained by the SRS to invest in initiatives to address the current vacancies, rather than being returned to participating councils. This demonstrates that the three councils value the role of the SRS. The remaining underspend will be returned to the councils based on the agreed funding formula.

20 The 2018-19 provisional outturn position for the SRS is illustrated in Exhibit 5 below.

Exhibit 5: 2018-19 provisional outturn position for the SRS

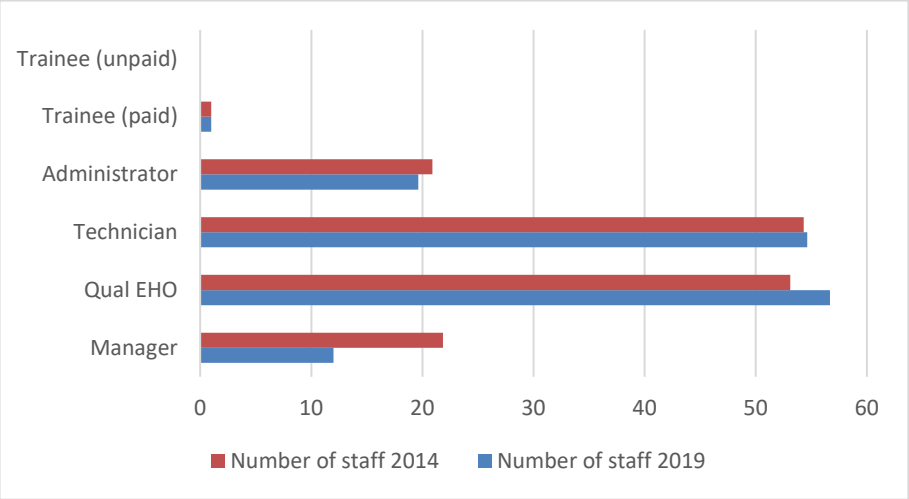
Council	Gross budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance £000
Cardiff	**4,978**	**4,789**	**189**
Bridgend	1,774	1,602	172
Vale	1,752	1,617	135
Total	**8,504**	**8,008**	**496**

Source: Joint Committee papers 11 June 2019. These figures are for all services provided by SRS and includes services outside the scope of this review, such as Trading Standards.

21 Staff numbers have reduced from 2014 to 2019. In 2014, the three councils together employed 151.15 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) compared to 143.92 FTEs employed by the SRS and councils combined in 2019. There is a significant reduction in the number of management posts, as the number of qualified officers and technicians has increased. This is illustrated in Exhibit 6 below.

22 The percentage decrease in budget savings is comparatively higher than the percentage decrease in staff numbers. Through undertaking a detailed review of proposed staff cuts the SRS has been able to maintain its service provision whilst significantly reducing costs.

Exhibit 6: Staff numbers (FTEs) employed by the SRS and the three councils combined (Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend), 2014 compared to 2019



Source: 2014 figures – Wales Audit Office Delivering with Less - Review of Environmental Health Services. 2019 figures – Cardiff City Council and the SRS.

23 We found some evidence of cost benefit impact analysis being undertaken to enable decision-making in relation to these budget reductions. However, whilst some consideration was given to the impact of staffing restructuring over the period between 2018-2021, it was also acknowledged amongst officers and members that the real impact of this on services and therefore local residents and businesses will be largely unknown until the £498,000 savings removed from the budget in 2019-20 begin to impact. Any future service changes should be subject to a transparent and thorough analysis of costs, benefits and impacts in order to anticipate and manage the risks arising.

24 The Council can demonstrate stable or improving performance over time on the majority of its performance indicators, despite the reduction in resources.

25 The SRS reports to the Joint Committee on ten indicators relating specifically to the Council's services, excluding trading standards. Of these ten in 2018-19, eight achieved their target, of those eight achieving their target one demonstrated an improvement in performance and two a deterioration.

Whilst the Council and SRS are confident that environmental health obligations are being met, neither has explicitly assessed whether this is the case. The Council and SRS would benefit from working together to distinguish between statutory and non-statutory services to help inform decision making around any future budget reductions

26 The SRS Joint Working Agreement commits the SRS to providing legally mandated statutory requirements as well as discretionary non-statutory services. The Joint Working Agreement sets out the activities to be undertaken for each service area but does not identify those which are statutory.

27 The officers interviewed were generally able to articulate statutory and non-statutory service requirements in relation to their areas of responsibility within environmental health services.

28 From its own perspective, the Council has not explicitly assessed whether it or the SRS is meeting its statutory environmental health duties.

29 We note that, in certain instances, the Council has elected to continue provision of non-statutory services in order to meet wider public health objectives, for example, the pest control service provided by the Council.

30 It is acknowledged amongst officers and members interviewed that the Council may not be able to maintain the same range of non-statutory service provision in the future when faced with further financial pressures.

31 Neither the SRS nor the Council has assessed whether the Best Practice Standards[1] are being met, although local performance targets have been set.

32 The Council adopts an outcomes-based approach to service delivery and has elected to maintain priority non-statutory services to assist in delivering wider corporate and public health objectives, such as pest control provided by SRS.

33 However, we note that the Council has not undertaken a review to assess the extent to which it is meeting statutory environmental health obligations, and neither the Joint Working agreement nor the SRS performance reports distinguish between statutory and discretionary services.

34 Clearly defining statutory services, as well as the baseline/upper acceptable standards of performance, would support the Council to adopt a risk-based approach to decision-making around any future changes to services, balancing statutory requirements against strategic priorities relating to non-statutory services.

Governance and performance management frameworks are robust, but arrangements for review and challenge of performance information could be formalised

35 Overall, there is a robust quarterly performance monitoring and management system in place for the SRS, with scrutiny and challenge provided through the Management Board, Joint Committee and the Environmental Scrutiny Committee.

36 The SRS Business Plan sets out the vision and priorities for the service, how these contribute to the seven wellbeing goals and each council's corporate priorities and outcomes.

37 SRS environmental health objectives are aligned to the Council's overall strategic objectives. Officers interviewed could articulate how the environmental health service contributes to achieving these. Officers and members interviewed represented that to date there have been no instances of conflicting interests between the Council and the SRS or with participating council members.

38 The Joint Committee has delegated authority for decisions relating to the SRS and monitors the performance of the SRS, avoiding duplication whilst enabling political representation and transparency.

39 The Management Board and the Joint Committee receive quarterly and annual performance reports, which is a requirement under the Joint Working Agreement. Performance reports are predominantly Key Performance Indicator (KPI) based,

[1] Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Wales and all-Wales Heads of Environmental Health Group, best practice standards. The standards are subject to regular review and update to take account of changes in statutory guidance; the impact of new legislation or case law; and to reflect new ways of delivering services. The standards define activity in each of the service areas and set out the characteristics that constitute: a minimum standard service; a good standard of service; and best practice in each of the areas.

supplemented by qualitative information, such as public complaints or client surveys. The performance reports cover individual Council performance, as well as SRS as a whole, and provide trend analysis for up to four preceding years. We consider the reports to be comprehensive and the breadth and coverage of data sufficient to enable informed internal decision-making.

40 Management information is used to provide a holistic view of the level and quality of service provision. Where possible, performance against internal targets is also compared against a set of national benchmarks.

41 The SRS has been able to maintain or improve performance in most areas. Where performance is shown to have deteriorated, the reasons behind this and corrective action are clearly stated.

42 Outside of the quarterly performance review cycle, monthly meetings take place between the Head of SRS, Operational Managers and individual Council officers and members. Specific operational and performance issues are often discussed informally at these meetings.

43 The Council also has corporate performance management arrangements, and this includes relevant Public Accountability Metrics. We were able to confirm that the performance indicators reported within the SRS Annual Report were consistent with those reported and held on the Council's corporate information system (CIS).

44 For those services provided by the Council, not SRS, such as pest and dog control, performance is monitored by the head of service and reported to the Director. Any key performance issues are addressed through the corporate performance framework. We did not identify any performance issues relating to these services during our review.

45 Officers and members feel that the arrangements described above are effective. However, we note that current arrangements for review and challenge of performance information are relatively informal and rely on positive working relationships between SRS and Council officers and members. Whilst this approach works well at the moment, there is a risk that it might not be resilient in the event of unforeseen circumstances, such as a significant service failure or a change in the key personnel involved.

There is scope for the Council to improve the level of independent challenge and oversight it exercises in relation to environmental health services provided to it by the SRS

46 Environmental health issues relating to the SRS and directly provided services are scrutinised by the Council's Environmental Scrutiny Committee. This committee meets 11 times per year and considers the SRS Annual Report and Business Plan as well as specific task and finish issues, such as air quality and pest control. Minutes show that recommendations were made as a result of these reviews. The Head of SRS and Operational Managers attend these meetings as required.

47 The Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee considers environmental health matters relating to housing.

48 The documentation provided to members is comprehensive and enables them to assess the performance of SRS against the Business Plan and understand the challenges it faces going forward.

49 The Council has an induction programme for new members and mandatory training for those members involved in the licensing committee. Officer support will also be provided through pre-meetings. Short 15-minute pre-meetings are held where members are able to ask questions. The Council should consider introducing more structured and targeted development and training for relevant members, as this may be beneficial to get new members familiar with the service and areas experiencing changes in legislation, eg pollution/food safety/infectious diseases.

50 The Head of the SRS has separate monthly meetings with the Cabinet Member and Licensing Committee Chair in their role as Joint Committee members. Ad hoc meetings and support will be provided should individual members request this. Councillors and members interviewed felt this was a positive, two-way relationship.

51 Scrutiny chairs and committee members interviewed feel that the ad hoc support provided by the Head of SRS and Operational Managers is sufficient to enable them to effectively discharge their duties.

52 Scrutiny of SRS performance information is currently performed by individuals heavily involved in the service and in preparation of the performance information itself, creating a separation of duty/self-interest risk. It is, therefore, recommended that the Council introduces more independent review and challenge of SRS performance against agreed service standards as should be the case for any third-party provider of services on behalf of the Council.

53 Internal audit is a further source of independent assurance to the member councils. A review of the SRS Governance and Financial Controls was undertaken by the Bridgend and Vale of Glamorgan Shared Internal Audit Service in 2019-20, dated June 2019. The review provided substantial assurance.

The Council has consulted key external stakeholders on significant changes to environmental health services, but should more carefully consider the impact of future changes on residents and businesses and undertake direct consultation where appropriate

54 In our 2014 national report on environmental health services report, we recommended that councils improve engagement with local residents over planned budget cuts and changes in services (see Appendix 1). In order to make an informed decision, officers and members need to understand the impact of any changes on all stakeholders. For environmental health services a range of

stakeholders could be affected, both external, such as businesses, local residents and other agencies and internal, staff and trade unions.

55 The Council undertook extensive consultation in 2013-14 prior to the SRS being established. This included staff, trade unions, elected members and other stakeholders, such as the Food Standards Agency. An equality impact assessment was also undertaken. Similarly, staff and trade unions were consulted about the staff reductions in the SRS in 2018.

56 In 2019-20, the Council increased its fixed penalty charges for littering from £80 to £100. Prior to implementing this specific increase, the Council consulted members of the public through its annual budget consultation process.

57 With the above exception, given that the Council has broadly provided the same range of environmental health services since 2015, it has not done any public consultation relating to environmental health services since the inception of SRS.

58 We acknowledge that the SRS has chosen not to undertake public consultation for administrative changes where frontline delivery of services is not expected to be affected.

59 The SRS has established its own brand and website and provides a wide range of information on services. The website enables residents to access services, report food hygiene issues as well as key documents such as the SRS business plan. However, it does not currently invite comments and feedback from the public or businesses.

60 The SRS makes active use of social media to inform a wide range of stakeholders and on a monthly basis reviews any information and feedback received in response through social media channels. This feedback is considered in operational management discussions.

61 As resources become more constrained, the Council may have to make decisions on how environmental health services will be delivered which may impact residents. Local residents should be aware of and consulted on these decisions.

The Council and the SRS must continue to innovate and transform services in order to help mitigate any future funding reductions

62 Due to the initial budget reductions achieved through the inception of the SRS, as well as ongoing staffing cuts, the Council is yet to explore further possibilities of commercialisation through the environmental health services, beyond some income generation activity in pest control.

63 For example, other authorities have outsourced contracts, looked to introduce means-based charges for non-statutory services or set up trading companies to make use of council assets and generate revenue. This is something that it may be helpful to consider in the near future, as resources become more stretched.

64 The continued need to make savings means that the SRS needs to continue to look for innovative and new ways of providing services and consider the future shape of services.

65 Potential areas for future innovation and opportunities to increase income could include:

- new commercial and collaborative delivery models for services or for SRS as a whole;
- use of data to predict service need and target responses rather than maintain universal service provision; and
- further strategic support and integration with the councils' wider service agendas including public health, community safety, health and social care, planning and economic growth.

66 The SRS has begun to look at digital initiatives and is trialling a Noise app to report issues. However, this work is at an early stage and is not yet having a material impact on service costs or quality.

Appendix 1

Auditor General's recommendations – Delivering with less – the impact on environmental health services and citizens, October 2014

As part of his 'delivering with less' series of Local Government Improvement Studies, the Auditor General published his report – **Delivering with less – the impact on environmental health services and citizens**, in October 2014. The report contained six recommendations that are set out below:

Exhibit 7: Auditor General's recommendations

Recommendation	Responsible Partners
R1 Revise the best practice standards to: • align the work of environmental health with national strategic priorities; • identify the wider contribution of environmental health in delivering the strategic priorities of the Welsh Government; and • identify the benefit and impact of environmental health services on protecting citizens.	Councils, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Cymru
R2 Provide scrutiny chairs and members with the necessary skills and support to effectively scrutinise and challenge service performance, savings plans and the impact of budget reductions.	Councils, Welsh Local Government Association
R3 Improve engagement with local residents over planned budget cuts and changes in services by: • consulting with residents on planned changes in services; • using the findings to shape decisions; • outlining which services are to be cut and how these cuts will impact on residents; and • setting out plans for increasing charges or changing standards of service.	Councils, Welsh Local Government Association

Recommendation	Responsible Partners
R4 Improve efficiency and value for money by: • identifying the statutory and non-statutory duties of council environmental health services; • agreeing environmental health priorities for the future and the role of councils in delivering these; • determining an 'acceptable standard of performance' for environmental health services (upper and lower) and publicise these to citizens; • improving efficiency and maintaining performance to the agreed level through: – collaborating and/or integrating with others to reduce cost and/or improve quality; – outsourcing where services can be delivered more cost effectively to agreed standards; – introducing and/or increasing charges and focusing on income-generation activity; – using grants strategically to maximise impact and return; and – reducing activities to focus on core statutory and strategic priorities.	Councils, Welsh Local Government Association, Welsh Government

Recommendation	Responsible Partners
R5 Improve strategic planning by: • identifying, collecting and analysing financial, performance and demand/need data on environmental health services; • analysing collected data to inform and understand the relationship between 'cost: benefit: impact' and use this intelligence to underpin decisions on the future of council environmental health services; and • agree how digital information can be used to plan and develop environmental health services in the future.	Councils
R6 Clearly set out the expectations of council environmental health services under new housing and health legislation and agree how these new duties will be delivered.	Welsh Government Welsh Local Government Association

Appendix 2

Council's progress in addressing the Auditor General's recommendations 2 to 5

A summary of the Council's progress in addressing the Auditor General's recommendations 2 to 5 in **Delivering with less: The impact on environmental health services and citizens** (October 2014).

Exhibit 2: Council's progress in addressing the Auditor General's recommendations

Recommendation	Council's progress in addressing recommendation
R2 Provide scrutiny chairs and members with the necessary skills and support to effectively scrutinise and challenge service performance, savings plans and the impact of budget reductions.	The Council has an induction programme for new members and mandatory training for those members involved in the licensing committee. Officer support will also be provided through pre-meetings, a short 15-minute meeting held where members are able to ask questions. Other than licensing it does not have a tailored training programme for environmental health. The Head of the SRS has monthly meetings with the scrutiny chair and cabinet lead. Ad hoc meetings and support will be provided should individual members request this. Although no concerns were raised during our meetings, we consider that members would benefit from the introduction of a more structured development/training programme.

Recommendation	Council's progress in addressing recommendation
R3 Improve engagement with local residents over planned budget cuts and changes in services by: • consulting with residents on planned changes in services and • using the findings to shape decisions; • outlining which services are to be cut and how these cuts will impact on residents; and • setting out plans for increasing charges or changing standards of service.	The Council undertook extensive consultation in 2013-14 prior to the SRS being established. This included staff, trade unions, elected members and other stakeholders such as the Food Standards Agency. An equality impact assessment was also undertaken. Further changes and budget reductions to the SRS have taken place in 2018-19 and 2019-20, which included reduction in staff numbers. Consultation has been undertaken and included staff and the trade unions. However, the consultation processes for both these changes did not include local residents and service users. The Council has consulted on the increase in fixed penalty notices for littering. We acknowledge that the SRS has chosen not to undertake public consultation where frontline delivery of services is not expected to be affected but would recommend that the likely impact on the full range of stakeholders should be considered and documented. We recognise that it may not be appropriate to consult residents and service users for all changes, but that the rationale for this decision should be documented and the likely impact considered.

Recommendation	Council's progress in addressing recommendation
R4 Improve efficiency and value for money by: • identifying the statutory and non-statutory duties of council environmental health services; • agreeing environmental health priorities for the future and the role of councils in delivering these; • determining an 'acceptable standard of performance' for environmental health services (upper and lower) and publicise these to citizens; • improving efficiency and maintaining performance to the agreed level through: – collaborating and/or integrating with others to reduce cost and/or improve quality; – outsourcing where services can be delivered more cost effectively to agreed standards; – introducing and/or increasing charges and focusing on income-generation activity; – using grants strategically to maximise impact and return; and – reducing activities to focus on core statutory and strategic priorities.	The Council has improved efficiency and value for money. It has maintained performance through collaboration with others and the introduction of the SRS. Through working in partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend Councils it can deliver its services in a more flexible and sustainable way and has not had to restrict its service provision, although it does look to deliver things in new and innovative ways. The SRS provides legally mandated statutory requirements as well as optional non-statutory services. The Joint Working Agreement sets out the functions for each service area and lists the tasks but does not identify those which are statutory. When considering how environmental health services may need to change in the future, the Council should ensure that the distinction between statutory and non-statutory services is clearly documented and understood by decision-makers. This will help to ensure that statutory responsibilities and powers are weighed and prioritised appropriately alongside discretionary services.

Recommendation	Council's progress in addressing recommendation
R5 Improve strategic planning by: • identifying, collecting and analysing financial, performance and demand/need data on environmental health services; • analysing collected data to inform and understand the relationship between 'cost: benefit: impact' and use this intelligence to underpin decisions on the future of council environmental health services; and • agree how digital information can be used to plan and develop environmental health services in the future.	The SRS Business Plan sets out the vision and priorities for the service, how these contribute to the seven well-being goals and each council's corporate priorities and outcomes. The SRS work collaboratively with the services provided by each individual council outside of the Joint Working Arrangement, eg Cardiff's pest control service. Environmental health objectives are aligned to the Council's overall strategic objectives and officers interviewed could articulate how environmental health services contribute to achieving these. Financial and performance data is reviewed on a quarterly basis and we have observed evidence of appropriate scrutiny and challenge. Some digital initiatives are being trialled to improve future delivery of services. We found some evidence of cost-benefit-impact analysis being undertaken to enable decision-making in relation to these budget reductions. However, whilst some consideration was given to the impact of staffing restructuring over the period between 2018-2021, it was also acknowledged amongst officers and members that the real impact of this on services and therefore local residents and businesses will be largely unknown until the £498,000 savings removed from the budget in 2019-20 begin to impact. Any future service changes should be subject to a transparent and thorough cost, benefit and impact analysis in order to anticipate and manage the risks arising. The SRS uses social media to engage with stakeholders, but the use of digital information to plan and develop environmental services in the future is limited.

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WAO Delivering with Less - Environmental Health Services – Follow Up Audit

Cardiff Action Plan

Ref	Proposals for Improvement	Action/Completion Date
P1	The Council should subject any future changes to environmental health services to a more rigorous analysis of costs, benefits and impacts. We found some evidence of cost/benefit/impact analysis being performed to enable decision-making around savings and changes to services. Whilst some consideration was given to the impact of staffing restructuring over the period between 2018-2021, members and officers acknowledged that the real impact of this will be largely unknown until £498k of savings begin to take effect.	This proposal for improvement comments upon the delivery of SRS savings across the three Councils only and not budget reductions from the other services within Cardiff. Future SRS changes/savings will undergo rigorous analysis across the three Councils. That process will begin again in May 2020, as the SRS sets out its next three year financial programme covering 2021 to 2024. Proposals will be considered by the SRS Management Board, Elected Members, through the review mechanisms at each Council, the Trade Unions and SRS officers. Changes to the other Environmental Health services delivered by the Council will also be assessed through the established Council mechanisms and that process will pay heed to the requirements of this proposal. Both processes will also take into account the recommendation presented in Proposal 8.
P2	The Council should investigate further possibilities for commercialisation and income generation for environmental health services in order to provide additional financial capacity if funding reduces in the future.	The SRS will as part of the budgeting process for 2021/24 undertake a full assessment of existing income streams and determine what additional income might be generated without impacting upon service delivery to local people. Income generation on Environmental Health functions is an important part of the SRS model. SRS has generated new, and increasing, income arising through training and the operation of the Primary Authority scheme. However, Income Generation has limitations, while it will provide some respite if funding for service

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		delivery reduces in the future, it is not a complete panacea for the challenges facing service delivery in the future.
P3	When considering how environmental health services may need to change in the future, the Council should ensure that the distinction between statutory and non-statutory services is clearly documented and understood by decision-makers. This will help to ensure that statutory responsibilities and powers are weighed and prioritised appropriately alongside discretionary services.	Understanding the distinction between statutory and non-statutory services will provide elected members with some insight into which service are legally mandated. However, to date, the SRS business plans are geared toward outcomes; achieving those outcomes involves using all the tools available. This includes statutes that bestow powers upon the Council, but not duties. When the Joint Working Arrangement was created, it defined services in terms of ensuring public health, helping customers to access information and knowledge and securing a safe, healthy, fair, environment. From the outset, the Councils agreed that this required the use of both statutory and non-statutory legislation to achieve service and corporate goals. Going forward the SRS will incorporate into the Business Plans an indication of the "status" of the services being delivered and a rationale for the prioritisation of those activities. Additionally, when the actions identified in Proposal 1 above are undertaken, officers will ensure that decision makers are apprised of the nature of the service being delivered.
P4	The Council should introduce greater challenge of the level and quality of environmental health services provided by third parties, including the SRS under the Joint Working Agreement.	We will continue to build on our existing mechanisms to further strengthen scrutiny and accountability of environmental health services and those provided by third parties. We intend to: • Ensure that the following Scrutiny Committees have oversight and input into the SRS Business Plan and Work programme: o Environment o Economy & Culture and

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		○ Community and Adult Social Services • Develop the initial discussions held with our counterparts in the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend to explore the establishment of a more collaborative approach to the scrutiny of the SRS. This will include: ○ Exploring options for the use of Performance Panel(s) which may enable us to scrutinise performance in greater detail and add greater value. ○ Establishing a mechanism for enabling the Scrutiny Committees to consider reports presented to the SRS Joint Committee including the Business Plan, and performance reporting to identify any key issues/challenges that could be reviewed/scrutinised in greater detail and form part of the scrutiny's work programme. • Enhance the mechanisms whereby: ○ The recommendations of the 3 authorities be collated and fed back to the SRS Joint Committee. ○ The SRS Joint Committee can refer items to the relevant Scrutiny Committee of each authority for their consideration (as appropriate).
P5	The Council should work with SRS to undertake a review of business continuity and succession planning arrangements in relation to the SRS to mitigate the risk of overreliance on key individuals, such as the Head of SRS and operational managers.	In 2020, the SRS will produce a four year review of the service to supplement the Annual reports. That review will examine trends in service delivery and service demand since inception in 2015. It will also look forward to the likely delivery mechanisms for the next three years, in line with the budget proposals. An examination of the robustness of the operating model and succession planning arrangements will form part of that review.

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P6	The Council should strengthen accountability and elected member oversight of its environmental health services, for example through more regular scrutiny of services provided by third parties, including the SRS.	Actions identified in improvement proposals P4 above and P7 below will support the achievement of this improvement proposal.
P7	The Council should consider introducing more structured and targeted development and training opportunities for relevant members, which may be beneficial in the event of changes in personnel and in areas experiencing changes in legislation, e.g. air pollution/food safety/infectious diseases.	The Head of Shared Regulatory Services will work closely with the Heads of Democratic Services to identify and deliver a programme of briefing sessions/e-learning opportunities that would benefit members across the footprint of the SRS in relation up and coming legislative and policy developments. These briefing sessions/workshops will be incorporated as part of the Member Development Programme.
P8	The Council should more clearly link any future decisions on changes to service levels to an assessment of impact on relevant stakeholders, including service users and residents. Whether consultation is necessary, and the most appropriate means of consulting should be decided on a case-by-case basis. However, where changes are likely to impact service users, businesses and local residents, they should be aware of and consulted on these decisions.	Currently, dialogue with stakeholders in delivered through the annual consultation on the SRS Business Plans where the programme of activities is articulated and developed through that engagement exercise. This process does not currently extend to residents and businesses. It is proposed to extend the customer satisfaction process to include the opportunity to comment upon any proposed changes in service delivery and to engage the corporate consultation mechanisms to collect more information to form part of the decision making process.
P9	The Council needs to build on initiatives such as the Noise app, to ensure that future funding reductions can be mitigated by innovation and transformation in service delivery and that environmental health services are able to benefit from new technologies.	The SRS is undertaking an ICT review in 2020 that will examine how technology can be deployed further to improve service delivery and where possible make financial savings.

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Ref: RDB/RP/MM/07.05.2019

14 May 2019

Councillor Michael Michael,
Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment,
County Hall,
Atlantic Wharf,
Cardiff CF10 4UW.

Dear Councillor Michael,

Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 7th May 2019

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank you and the officers for attending the Committee meeting on Tuesday 7th May 2019 to discuss the items on the 'Planning, Transport & Environment – Directorate Delivery Plan – 2019/20' and the 'Draft Shared Regulatory Services – Business Plan 2019/20'. The comments and observations made by Members on the areas relevant to your portfolio of responsibility are set out in this letter.

Planning, Transport & Environment – Directorate Delivery Plan – 2019/20

The Committee asked for a progress update on the delivery of ward based action plans. They were told that these would be delivered within six months, however, they would be area based rather than ward based. An officer went on to explain that the roll out had been delayed to ensure that the area based action plans were developed using accurate information. I would be grateful if you could confirm a start date for the area based action plans, along with details on the services involved and geographical boundaries allocated for each action plan. In addition to this the Committee asks that you make the roll out of the scheme available for scrutiny before the end of 2019.

Members asked during this item what could be done to improve the accuracy and speed of waste data collected for both commercial and domestic waste streams. An officer explained that it was possible to tell immediately how much overall waste was collected, however, waste data flow needed actual quantities for specific materials – to make this more complicated, for the

material to count towards recycling figures it had to be supported by a processing receipt. Members then asked if it was possible to provide recycling statistics by ward and were told that it was not. This created some confusion during the way forward as several Members seemed to think that they had been shown ward based recycling rates in the past. To resolve this confusion I would be grateful if you could confirm if it is still possible to provide ward based recycling rates, and if it isn't to provide an explanation as to what has changed since ward based recycling rates were published in the past.

A Member commented on the importance of producing local food and then asked what the Council was doing to encourage local food production. An officer explained that a Food Strategy was being developed and that it would be presented to Cabinet in the summer. With this in mind it would be appreciated if you could ask officers to liaise with Scrutiny Services to arrange pre decision scrutiny on Cardiff's new Food Strategy.

One of the Members asked a question about the large number of missed collections that recently took place on a Saturday after the bank holiday in North Cardiff. In particular, he referred to the fact that after raising a query on the matter it took 12 days for an officer response. He was told that there had been issues with vehicle breakdowns, staff availability and sickness, with the officer then explaining that an action plan was being developed to prevent such an event happening in future. To help provide the Committee with assurance that this will not be repeated I would be grateful if you could provide them with a copy of the action plan once it is completed.

Draft Shared Regulatory Services – Business Plan 2019/20

Members were concerned to hear that the service had experienced some recent issues around recruitment and retention, particularly for the Food Hygiene Service that is in the process of recruiting five new officers to replace staff who had left to pursue other employment opportunities. They hope that the current recruitment process is successful and that the temporary reduction in staff does not have a negative impact on the Food Hygiene Service's ability to carry out all of the necessary visits. They ask that the Shared Regulatory

Service undertakes a short review to assess what can be done to prevent such a sudden loss of staff in future, and that they share any findings and future actions from this work with the Committee.

During the meeting officers explained that the Shared Regulatory Service had a supply of ‘cold calling zone stickers’ that they could make available to any councillors who wanted them to distribute in their wards. The Committee thought that this would be very popular with local councillors and have asked for a supply to be sent to Cardiff Council’s Member Services. On arrival, Member Services could send out a short email explaining that they are available to all councillors for collection and distribution.

At the meeting a Member expressed his frustration at the outcome of a recent illegal tobacco investigation in his ward in which the Shared Regulatory Service had played a major role. He commented that they had caught the shop owner selling illegal tobacco, confiscated the contraband and then fined him £2,000. Despite this, it was obvious that the shop owner had quickly restocked and continued with the illegal trade. The fine and inconvenience were merely ‘a part of the business plan’. The Member felt that the service needed to be able to apply more sanctions and pressure, but was told that this would not be possible as a dedicated resource would be required. This is something that is not affordable within the constraints of the current Shared Regulatory Service budget. An officer went on to explain that such an operation would only work if new powers were introduced in Wales, it was properly funded and supported by trading standards professionals. On this basis, the Committee ask that you work with the Shared Regulatory Service to lobby Welsh Government for more powers and money to tackle the illegal tobacco trade, because without such an investment the problem will persist.

The Committee is concerned that the future of the ‘Out of Hours’ service looks uncertain due to financial and other pressures. Members believe that this is an important service, which if lost would make it difficult to tackle a wide range of late night anti-social behaviour. Should a proposal be put forward to close the ‘Out of Hours Service’, then I would ask that you inform the Committee

directly before a decision is taken so that scrutiny can be undertaken on the matter.

I would be grateful if you would consider the above comments and provide a response to the content of this letter. Some of the information in this letter has been included in the letters to Councillors Wild, Mackie and Thorne, therefore, I am happy to receive a combined response to the relevant parts.

Regards,

Councillor Ramesh Patel
Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee
Cc:

- Andrew Gregory - Director of Planning, Transport & Environment
- Matt Wakelam – Assistant Director, Street Scene
- Jane Cherrington - Operational Manager, Waste Strategy & Enforcement
- Dave Holland – Head of the Shared Regulatory Service
- Christina Hill – Operational Manager, Commercial Services
- Helen Picton – Operational Manager, Enterprise & Specialist Services
- Will Lane – Operational Manager, Neighbourhood Services
- Davina Fiore - Director of Governance & Legal Services
- Members of Cardiff's Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Ref: RDB/RP/NM/07.05.2019

14 May 2019

Councillor Norma Mackie,
Chair of Licensing & Public Protection,
County Hall,
Atlantic Wharf,
Cardiff CF10 4UW.

Dear Councillor Mackie,

Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 7th May 2019

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee, I would like to thank you and the officers for attending the meeting on Tuesday 7th May 2019 to discuss the item on the 'Draft Shared Regulatory Services – Business Plan 2019/20'. The comments and observations made by Members of the Committee on this item are set out in this letter.

Draft Shared Regulatory Services – Business Plan 2019/20

Members were concerned to hear that the service had experienced some recent issues around recruitment and retention, particularly for the Food Hygiene Service that is in the process of recruiting five new officers to replace staff who had left to pursue other employment opportunities. They hope that the current recruitment process is successful and that the temporary reduction in staff does not have a negative impact on the Food Hygiene Service's ability to carry out all of the necessary visits. They ask that the Shared Regulatory Service undertake a short review to assess what can be done to prevent such a sudden loss of staff in future, and that they share any findings and future actions from this work with the Committee.

During the meeting officers explained that the Shared Regulatory Service had a supply of 'cold calling zone stickers' that they could make available to any councillors who wanted them to distribute in their wards. The Committee thought that this would be very popular with local councillors and have asked for a supply to be sent to Cardiff Council's Member Services. On arrival,

Member Services could send out a short email explaining that they are available to all councillors for collection and distribution.

At the meeting a Member expressed his frustration at the outcome of a recent illegal tobacco investigation in his ward in which the Shared Regulatory Service had played a major role. He commented that they had caught the shop owner selling illegal tobacco, confiscated the contraband and then fined him £2,000. Despite this, it was obvious that the shop owner had quickly restocked and continued with the illegal trade. The fine and inconvenience were merely 'a part of the business plan'. The Member felt that the service needed to be able to apply more sanctions and pressure, but was told that this would not be possible as a dedicated resource would be required. This is something that is not affordable within the constraints of the current Shared Regulatory Service budget. An officer went on to explain that such an operation would only work if new powers were introduced in Wales, it was properly funded and supported by trading standards professionals. On this basis, the Committee ask that you work with the Shared Regulatory Service to lobby Welsh Government for more powers and money to tackle the illegal tobacco trade, because without such an investment the problem will persist.

The Committee is concerned that the future of the 'Out of Hours' service looks uncertain due to financial and other pressures. Members believe that this is an important service, which if lost would make it difficult to tackle a wide range of late night anti-social behaviour. Should a proposal be put forward to close the 'Out of Hours Service', then I would ask that you inform the Committee directly before a decision is taken so that scrutiny can be undertaken on the matter.

I would be grateful if you would consider the comments above and provide a response to the content of this letter. This information has also been included in a letter to Councillors Michael and Thorne, therefore, I am happy to receive a combined response.

Regards,

Councillor Ramesh Patel

Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc:

- Andrew Gregory - Director of Planning, Transport & Environment
- Dave Holland – Head of the Shared Regulatory Service
- Christina Hill – Operational Manager, Commercial Services
- Helen Picton – Operational Manager, Enterprise & Specialist Services
- Will Lane – Operational Manager, Neighbourhood Services
- Davina Fiore - Director of Governance & Legal Services
- Members of Cardiff's Environmental Scrutiny Committee

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CYNGOR CAERDYDD
CARDIFF COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **20 NOVEMBER 2019**

MANAGING BIODIVERSITY & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN CARDIFF – DRAFT TASK & FINISH REPORT

Background

1. At the Environmental Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 19th March 2019 the Committee agreed to undertake the Managing Biodiversity & Natural Environment task & finish exercise. This report provides background information about the inquiry and outlines the next steps in the process.

2. The agreed terms of reference for the inquiry were:

To provide Members with the opportunity to explore and consider how the Council can support and help improve the biodiversity in Cardiff. In particular this will include scrutiny of:

- *The development of Cardiff's Biodiversity Forward Plan, for example, its structure, aims and objectives;*
- *The ongoing implications of Cardiff's Biodiversity Forward Plan, for example, future reporting and monitoring of the document;*
- *The approach taken by other Welsh local authorities to develop biodiversity forward plans and to identify best practice in this area;*
- *The Council's current role, obligations and statutory / legislative requirements for supporting and improving biodiversity;*
- *The importance of Cardiff's biodiversity and ecosystems;*
- *The resources available to support and improve biodiversity in Cardiff;*

- *Community collaboration and other partnership working approaches to understand how they help support and enhance biodiversity in Cardiff;*
- *The importance of raising awareness of biodiversity issues in Cardiff – internally, with key stakeholders and the public;*
- *Cardiff's Green Infrastructure Strategy – including the benefits of green infrastructure and ecosystem services;*
- *Green Infrastructure Management – including the Green Infrastructure Group;*
- *Cardiff Green Infrastructure SPG and Planned Development;*
- *The Green Infrastructure Spatial Strategy;*
- *Green Infrastructure Implementation Programme (Pollinators Action Plan, Individual Park Management Plans, Local Nature Plan, River Corridors, Tree Strategy, Cross border initiatives, other plans & projects);*
- *Sustainable drainage – links with the SuDS Approval Body process.*

3. Members of the Task & Finish group were:

- Councillor Ramesh Patel (Chair);
- Councillor Peter Wong;
- Councillor John Lancaster;
- Councillor Bob Derbyshire;
- Councillor Jaqueline Parry;
- Councillor Owen Jones;
- Councillor Jane Henshaw.

4. During the Task & Finish Exercise the following people provided support and evidence:

- Councillor Michael Michael - Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment
- Councillor Caro Wild - Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport

- Councillor Peter Bradbury - Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure
- James Clemence - Head of Planning
- Simon Gilbert - Operational Manager, Development Management (Strategic & Place Making)
- Caryn Le Roux – Welsh Government
- Geoff Robinson – Welsh Government
- Matthew Harris – Ecologist, Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate
- Nicola Hutchinson - Parks Conservation Officer, Parks Services
- Kerry Rogers - Conservation Manager, Wildlife Trust
- Mark Tozer, Parks Development Officer, Parks Services
- Alan Abel - Complete Weed Control Limited
- Heather Galliford – Natural Resources Wales
- Geoff Hobbs – Natural Resources Wales
- Adam Rowe - South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC)
- Lucie Taylor - CLAS Cymru
- Colin Cheesman – Plant Life
- Clare Dinham – Bug Life
- Jazz Austin – RSPB
- Councillor Peter Jones – Swansea City Council
- Siobhan Wiltshire - Welsh Government
- Jo Smith – Welsh Government

5. The draft report titled Managing Biodiversity & Natural Environment in Cardiff' has been attached to this report as **Appendix 1**; the draft report makes a series of recommendations across the following areas:

- Biodiversity & Natural Environment – Context Setting;
- Council Resources;
- Commitment, Structure & Process;
- Communication & Engagement;
- Baseline & Focus;
- Best Practice & Practical Applications.

Legal Implications

6. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers of behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

7. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Take account of the information received at the meeting;
2. Agree the content of the report subject to any alterations as required by the Committee;

3. To delegate authority to the Chair to agree any minor alterations to the report after this meeting.

DAVINA FIORE
Director for Governance & Legal Services
14th November 2019

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APPENDIX A

Scrutiny Report of Cardiff's Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Managing Biodiversity & Natural Environment in Cardiff

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September 2019

CARDIFF
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Cardiff Council

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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

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Councillor Ramesh Patel

Chairperson – Environmental Scrutiny Committee

INQUIRY METHODOLOGY

Cardiff's Environmental Scrutiny Committee reviewed the management of biodiversity and natural environment in Cardiff to better understand how it can be better supported by the Council. In doing this the inquiry considered the current position of biodiversity in Cardiff and across Wales; the resources being allocated by the Council to support this area; existing commitment, structures and processes; proposed future plans; communication and engagement; baseline information and best practice / practical applications. In reviewing the information the task group drew upon a number of witness contributions and information sources including:

- Cardiff Council's Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment;
- Officers from Cardiff Council's Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate;
- Natural Resources Wales;
- Welsh government;
- RSPB;
- CLAS Cymru;
- SEWBReC;
- Bug Life;
- Plant Life;
- Swansea City Council;
- Wildlife Trust;
- Planning & Biodiversity Forum.

From this body of evidence the Members drew key findings and a series of recommendations that are contained within this report.

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INQUIRY TERMS OF REFERENCE

The aim of the inquiry is to provide Members with the opportunity to explore and consider how the Council can support and help improve the biodiversity in Cardiff. In particular this will include scrutiny of:

- The development of Cardiff's Biodiversity Forward Plan, for example, its structure, aims and objectives;
- The ongoing implications of Cardiff's Biodiversity Forward Plan, for example, future reporting and monitoring of the document;
- The approach taken by other Welsh local authorities to develop biodiversity forward plans and to identify best practice in this area;
- The Council's current role, obligations and statutory / legislative requirements for supporting and improving biodiversity;
- The importance of Cardiff's biodiversity and ecosystems;
- The resources available to support and improve biodiversity in Cardiff;
- Community collaboration and other partnership working approaches to understand how they help support and enhance biodiversity in Cardiff;
- The importance of raising awareness of biodiversity issues in Cardiff – internally, with key stakeholders and the public;
- Cardiff's Green Infrastructure Strategy – including the benefits of green infrastructure and ecosystem services;
- Green Infrastructure Management – including the Green Infrastructure Group;
- Cardiff Green Infrastructure SPG and Planned Development;
- The Green Infrastructure Spatial Strategy;

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- Green Infrastructure Implementation Programme (Pollinators Action Plan, Individual Park Management Plans, Local Nature Plan, River Corridors, Tree Strategy, Cross border initiatives, other plans & projects);
- Sustainable drainage – links with the SuDS Approval Body process.

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KEY FINDINGS & RECOMENDATIONS

Section 1 – Biodiversity & Natural Environment – Context Setting

During the 8 meetings and 14 witness presentations the task group was provided with a range of submissions that provided background information and context to the state of biodiversity, both locally and nationally. Some of the key background points that relate to the state of biodiversity are set out in this section.

❖ State of Nature

1. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019) –** The Cardiff Council presentation explained that the Wales 'State of Nature Report 2016' had identified the following:

   - Over the long term, 57% of vascular plant species declined and 43% increased. This pattern was unchanged over the short term.
   - 60% of butterfly species declined and 40% increased over the long term.
   - Over the short term, 58% of bird species declined and 42% increased.
   - Over 5,000 of the species that are known to occur in Wales have been assessed. 354 (approximately 7%) of these are at risk of extinction from Great Britain.

2. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** – Explained that overall diversity is declining, which is shown by loss of habitats and species. The extent of some habitats has also declined significantly while connectivity has greatly reduced. All ecosystems have problems with one or more attributes of resilience. This means that their capacity to provide ecosystem services and benefits may be at risk. No ecosystem, on the basis of recent assessment, can be said to have all the features needed for resilience.

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3. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - The United Kingdom National Ecosystem Assessment identified the following key points:

- The natural world, its biodiversity and its constituent ecosystems are critically important to our well-being and economic prosperity, but are consistently undervalued in conventional economic analyses and decision-making.
- Ecosystems and ecosystem services, and the ways people benefit from them, have changed markedly in the past 60 years, driven by changes in society.
- The United Kingdom's ecosystems are currently delivering some services well, but others are still in long-term decline.
- The United Kingdom population will continue to grow, and its demands and expectations continue to evolve. This is likely to increase pressures on ecosystem services.

4. **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation – (04/07/2019)** - The presentation delivered by RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life made reference to the pressures placed upon biodiversity and the impact that these have had. In doing this it made the following points:

- The presentation made reference to a recent IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) report. This concluded that biodiversity is being lost at an alarming rate and predicts that one million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction. This is predominantly due to human factors including land use change for intensive agriculture and urbanisation, hunting and the direct exploitation of animals, climate change, pollution and invasive species.

- Simultaneously, the global community is becoming increasingly disconnected from nature and nearly half of the world's population live in urban areas. Re-connecting people with the natural world and creating opportunities for regular interactions has the potential to ignite public support to protect native wildlife.

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- Since the Second World War, the UK has lost at least 97% of its wildflower meadows. In the United Kingdom, 23 bee and flower visiting wasp species have become extinct since the 1850s, primarily caused by habitat loss and fragmentation, the introduction of inorganic nitrogen-based fertilizers and pressures on land use (i.e. industry and farming). Each year the United Kingdom imports 65,000 bumblebee colonies to support agricultural productivity due to wild pollinator declines. Re-establishing and stabilising wild pollinator populations in the UK is vital for pollination services to both wild and agricultural systems.

- In Wales, swift numbers have declined by over 60% since 1995. If numbers continue to fall at the same rate, we might lose them as breeding birds altogether in the next 20 years.

- Feeding on midges, moths, beetles and spiders, the lesser horseshoe has declined nationally in both population and distribution, but in Cardiff there are a number of protected roost sites for this threatened species.

- 56% of species in the United Kingdom have suffered a decline in numbers since 1970, with 15% of species on the endangered list.

5. **Welsh Government Presentation (18/06/2019)** – This emphasised the importance of biodiversity in supporting everything that we do, and went on to provide a diagram **(Diagram 1 below)** to illustrate the importance of the relationship between atmosphere, soil and water cycle.

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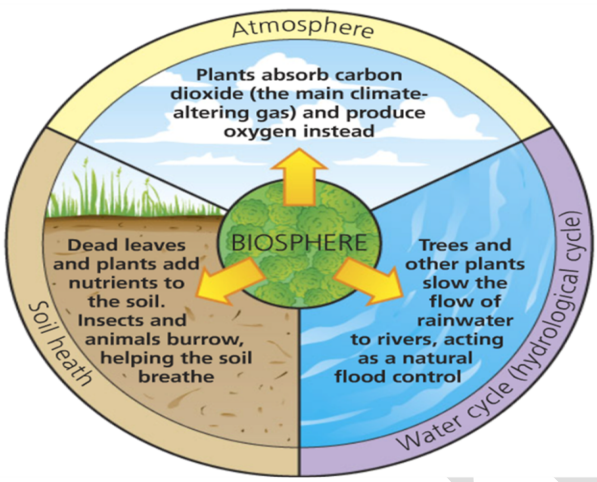
- **Diagram 1 – Environmental relationship between the atmosphere, soil and water cycle**



❖ Legislation & Local Authority Duties

6. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - The presentation identified the main roles of the Council in relation to biodiversity as:

   - Staff must comply with the same legislation in the exercise of their functions, as the public is required to do.
   - Some legislation introduces specific duties upon the Council as a Public Body.
   - New duties were placed upon all Public Bodies under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
   - The Council is well placed to act as facilitator to others in positive action.

7. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - The presentation provided examples of legislation that had been created to support biodiversity and the natural environment, this included:

   - Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 – most highly protected species and sites in Europe;
   - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural

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Communities Act 2006) – protected sites and species in the United Kingdom;

- Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- Deer Act 1991;
- Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

8. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** – The presentation provided the following practical examples of how the Council and its staff should comply with legislation:

- Planned maintenance to Council buildings – may disturb bat roosts or nesting birds;
- Cutting hedges – may disturb birds nests or dormice;
- Tree work – may disturb bats or nesting birds;
- Highways schemes may affect roadside verges, hedgerows and trees, and the protected species they contain;
- Footpath and cycleway schemes may cause habitat fragmentation or affect protected species, especially if lighting is introduced;
- Cutting roadside verges – may harm reptiles and chop flowering plants;
- Use of herbicides may affect aquatic habitats or other habitats;
- Failure to control invasive non-native species such as Japanese Knotweed or Himalayan Balsam affect biodiversity;
- Disposal of land with ecological constraints may incur liabilities.

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9. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** – Reference was made to the various pieces of planning policy that the Council uses to support biodiversity, these include:

   - The Local Development Plan (LDP) includes a series of policies, for example: KP 16 - Green Infrastructure; EN 5 – Designated Sites; EN 6 – Ecological Connectivity; EN 7 – Protected and priority habitats and species.

   - A Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has been approved and is in use. It contains a series of Technical Guidance Notes, one of which is Ecology and Biodiversity.

10. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 placed a new duty on all public bodies, this includes the Council. In particular Section 6 of the Act sets out a Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty, which means that:

   - 'A *public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions*'.

11. **Welsh Government Presentation (18/06/2019)** – The Welsh Government presentation also commented on Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, by mentioning the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty. They reiterated that - '*Public Authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions*'.

12. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - In complying with subsection Section 6 of the Environment Wales Act, a public authority must take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following aspects:

   - Diversity between and within ecosystems;

- The connections between and within ecosystems;
- The scale of ecosystems;
- The condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning);
- The adaptability of ecosystems.

13. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a duty on public bodies to:

- Prepare and publish a plan setting out what it proposes to do to comply with subsection (1) of Section 6.
- A public authority must, before the end of 2019 and before the end of every third year after 2019, publish a report on what it has done to comply with subsection (1) of Section 6.
- However, enacting legislation and imposing sanctions for non-compliance, whilst important, are not the most productive means of furthering nature conservation.
- Working in partnership with the public and with other organisations such as RSPB and Wildlife Trusts often adds more value nature conservation than legal deterrents.

14. **Wildlife Trust Presentation (18/06/2019)** – They highlighted the benefit of SUDS, and that Cardiff was now the local reporting authority. This has benefited from being built into legislation, and illustrates the importance of building other key environmental goals into legislation.

❖ Cardiff's Green Assets

15. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - The presentation provided a summary of Cardiff's GI (Green Infrastructure) and Biodiversity Assets. This included the following statements:

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- Cardiff has a wealth of Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Assets that are under significant pressure in the urban environment, for example, from recreation and development.

- Assets include all habitats, for example, grasslands, woodlands, wetlands, ponds, scrub which are home to a variety of species.

- Many of these assets are on Council owned land. Parks and open spaces are obvious examples, but these assets can also be found on land belonging to Estates, Highways and Housing.

- Biodiversity assets can be found on Cardiff's large stock of private land.

- There are over 400 parks and open spaces in Cardiff. These contain 488 hectares of natural and semi natural green spaces, which include 236 hectares of woodland.

- Cardiff has 58 locally designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC's); seven Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's); one Special Area of Conservation (SAC); two Country Parks and four Local Nature Reserves.

- Less obvious sites in Cardiff can support biodiversity assets, for example, road verges, areas around buildings and housing, private land, gardens.

❖ Area Statements

16. **Natural Resources Wales Presentation (27/06/2019)** – The presentation addressed 'Area Statements' and made particular reference to the 'South Central Area Statement' that includes Cardiff. They explained that they provided a mechanism to value the natural environment and that the South Central Area Statement aims to recognise the intrinsic worth of and to maximise the multiple benefits of the natural environment to wellbeing and economic prosperity.

17. **Natural Resources Wales Presentation (27/06/2019) -** Building Equitable Partnerships – Natural Resources Wales emphasised the importance of

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building relationships that lead to equitable partnerships, giving a voice to and opening doors for partners by balancing empirical and qualitative evidence. This is particularly relevant in relation to developing the 'Area Statements'. They also believe that it is important to put the environment at the heart of decision making. To do this 'Area Statements' spearhead the 'new ways of working' and will help to put the local environment at the heart of decision making.

18. **Natural Resources Wales Presentation (27/06/2019)** – As a part of the development of area statements Natural Resources Wales will set out an Area Profile describing the natural resources in that particular area, as well as the benefits they can provide and how the national priorities, risks and opportunities for the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR) are reflected in that place.

❖ Green Infrastructure

19. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019) -** Expertise in biodiversity and ecosystem resilience exists within Cardiff Council in the form of a cross-service area collaboration forum referred to as the 'Green Infrastructure Group'. This group includes staff from several services including parks, planning, public rights of way, trees, environmental quality, drainage and flood risk management. The aim is to deliver natural resource management in a coordinated and holistic way, which better reflects the current 'Ecosystem Approach' to natural resource management.

20. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019) -** The Green Infrastructure Group has drafted a Green Infrastructure Plan, and this will be merged into Cardiff's proposed biodiversity forward plan. The Draft Green Infrastructure Plan includes the following information:

- What Green Infrastructure is and why is it important;
- Six objectives, setting out how green infrastructure can contribute to: Protection of the natural environment; Climate change mitigation &

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adaptation; Supporting the local economy; Improving people's physical & mental health; Creating opportunities for community engagement; volunteering & training and Placemaking;

- How green infrastructure is protected and enhanced in Cardiff;
- An Action Plan which would deliver this protection and enhancement, incorporating an implementation Programme setting out a list of ongoing and potential projects;
- Critical to this Action Plan is working with all service areas within the Council to raise awareness of this duty and to develop Service-area Action Plans to maintain and enhance biodiversity.

21. **Natural Resources Wales (27/06/2019)** – They have made a climate change and biodiversity commitment, this is different to Cardiff Council that has only declared a climate change emergency. They also believe that it is very important for a public body to embed delivery of its biodiversity forward plan into its well-being objectives. Natural Resources Wales has built the idea of 'managing today's natural resources for tomorrow's generations' into its Corporate Plan to 2022.

- **Context Setting: Recommendation 1 – Declare Biodiversity & Climate Change Emergency**

  Many of the actions linked to the cause of climate change relate directly to habitat and biodiversity loss, therefore, protecting, supporting and enhancing biodiversity will help in addressing climate change. Organisations like Natural Resources Wales have declared joint climate change and biodiversity emergencies, therefore, the task group recommends that the Council declares a biodiversity emergency to sit alongside the climate change emergency. When declaring the joint emergency, the Council should publish a list of actions that it proposes to take to deliver the aims of the joint declaration.

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Section 2 – Council Resources

During the 8 meetings and 14 witness presentations the task group was provided with a range of information about the level of resource that the Council and associated partners allocate towards supporting and enhancing biodiversity in Cardiff. Some of the key points that relate to resource allocation are set out in this section.

❖ Council Resources

22. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - Resources allocated by the Council for supporting and enhancing biodiversity in Cardiff are limited. The allocated resource is mainly focused upon providing advice and management of biodiversity on the Council estate. The main staff resources are allocated as follows:

- A County Ecologist (Strategic Planning);
- Community Ranger Team – this team consists of a Conservation Officer and eight other FTE posts (Park Services).

23. **Cardiff Council Information** – Information provided explained that the Community Ranger Team consists of nine FTE posts and is based at Forest Farm in Cardiff. The Community Ranger Team is reliant on grant funding and volunteer / partner support for the delivery and development of projects.

24. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - The Community Ranger Team delivers a wide range of work including: habitat /site management; habitat creation; events; environmental education / working with schools; working with Community and Friends Groups; working with NEETS and Community Service; working with volunteers; timber recycling; survey work; footpaths and access.

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25. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - As referenced above the Community Ranger Team undertakes site management across Cardiff. This typically includes:

- The Community Ranger Team undertake practical management work of habitats across the city for biodiversity in the natural open spaces. This includes SSSI's SAC's and LNR's.
- They work under licence for European Protected Species.
- Involvement in projects in more urban parks, for example, pollinator planting.

26. When a Member asked what the Council could do to better support the work of the Community Ranger Team, he was told that the best way to improve things and better support biodiversity was to provide more resources for the team.

27. **Cardiff Council Information** - The County Ranger Team contains individuals who between them hold a considerable wealth of experience and knowledge on Cardiff's biodiversity and natural environment. Such a resource is massively valuable to the Council. At the time of the inquiry the average age of the County Ranger Team was 51, with the youngest member being 39. This presents a workforce planning risk, since the experience and knowledge of the team is not being passed down to younger generations. If parts of the collective knowledge were lost then it could take many years to regain. Unlike other parts of the Parks Service, the Community Ranger Team does not have any apprentices.

28. **Cardiff Council Information** - During the years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 the Community Ranger Team has directly bid for or supported 16 grant applications. Collectively these grant applications have raised £1,471,680 of funding for schemes across Cardiff. This means that the Community Ranger Service has helped to raised significantly more in three years than it would have cost to run the team for the same period.

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29. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019) -** The current County Ecologist is based in the Planning Service and spends the vast majority of his time dealing with and providing advice on planning applications. The Council previously employed two Ecologists, with one of the posts being deleted several years ago as a result of budget cuts. Having one County Ecologist who has to focus on planning matters means that there is limited expertise in dealing with other ecology matters.

❖ Herbicides & Pesticides

30. **Glyphosate Presentation (18/06/2019)** – During the task & finish exercise several witnesses stressed the importance of limiting the use of herbicides and pesticides on the Council estate, and made particular reference to the use of glyphosate. Council officers and other witnesses explained that there were circumstances where glyphosate had to be used by the Council as there were no other practical alternatives, for example, along the public highway. However, it was suggested that the Council should review how and where glyphosate is used, and whenever possible to restrain from using it on Council land.

31. **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** – The presentation suggested that the Council should dramatically reduce the use of herbicides and pesticides in Council managed green spaces. Chemical control often harms wildlife beyond the targeted species. Many species targeted through chemical control are not harmful or can be effectively controlled using other measures such as encouraging natural predators and companion planting. Many of the species targeted by chemical control, such as slugs and caterpillars, are fundamental parts of the food chain for birds and mammals.

32. **Glyphosate Presentation (18/06/2019)** – In 2017 the EU licence came to an end and was reviewed. The licence was only extended until 2021. All of the glyphosate products that Cardiff uses are approved. It is unlikely that there will be any move beyond that until after Brexit. Pesticides and herbicides are overseen by the Chemical Research Directorate, which is a part of the HSE.

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33. The Vale of Glamorgan Council has become the first local authority in Wales to eliminate the use of Glyphosate in its parks. Foamstream herbicide-free technology for managing unwanted vegetation, is being used by the Vale of Glamorgan Council across several parks, making them greener, cleaner and safer for visitors to enjoy. Keep Wales Tidy recently awarded Green Flag status – the mark of a top-quality outdoor space – to 10 sites maintained by the Council. Romilly Park, Alexandra Park and Windsor Gardens, Barry Island Seafront and Friars Point, Belle Vue Park, Central Park, The Knap Gardens, Victoria Park, Gladstone Park, Cosmeston Country Park, Porthkerry Country Park all received the accolade, and all are maintained with Foamstream. Foamstream works by using the extreme heat in boiling hot water to kill the vegetation. The water is insulated by a biodegradable foam that prevents the heat escaping into the surrounding atmosphere. Keeping heat on the unwanted plant for longer ensures a more effective kill of the plant. Foamstream also helps sterilise surrounding seeds and spores, reducing overall regrowth.

❖ Volunteering

34. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - During 2017/18 the Community Ranger Team supported 15,221 volunteer hours; based on the living wage this is the equivalent of £101,621. This increased in 2018/19 when they supported 16,278 hours; based on the living wage this is the equivalent of £137,549. As stated, the work delivered by the Community Ranger Team is very reliant on grants and supporting volunteers.

35. **Wildlife Trust Presentation (18/06/2019)** – The Wildlife Trust emphasised that Friends Groups and other volunteer based groups were a great free resource that the Council should embrace. They explained that the Council should aim to have a Friends Group in every park, but to remember that volunteers don't just happen, they need to be supported, organised and developed. This requires resource. Supporting parks and volunteering can provide great health and economic value for a city, therefore, the Council should do what it can to support this.

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36. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** – This emphasised the importance of community collaboration. The task group was told that working with friends and community groups helped to engender a sense of ownership, helped to source funding, encouraged volunteer involvement, provided networking opportunities and fostered a wider sharing experience.

❖ Biological Engineering

37. **Newport Biological Engineering Visit – Salix River & Wetland Services Ltd (02/07/2019) -** The Task Group visited Riverside Walk in Newport on the 2nd July to look at the biological engineering remediation work that had taken place along the banks of the River Usk. During the visit Members were told that the natural habitats of estuaries are often missing, especially in urban areas. The absence of the soft edges (where wildlife is most abundant) impacts on the ecological recovery of our rivers and estuaries.

38. **Newport Biological Engineering Visit – Salix River & Wetland Services Ltd (02/07/2019) -** Salix River & Wetland Services Ltd use bioengineering engineering techniques that work with natural processes and plant species in order to provide long term bank stability whilst creating vital missing habitats. Inter-tidal rivers offer a unique challenge for bioengineering solutions due to the water quality, noticeably higher salinity, and the highly variable water levels and long periods of inundation that occurs with the tidal influence. In addition, the nature of the fine alluvial soils in estuaries, the turbulent flows and wave action means that erosion is prevalent where no vegetation occurs. Vegetation establishment is often more difficult in this environment as is the construction of bioengineering solutions due to the soft soils and tidal restrictions for working on the river.

39. **Newport Biological Engineering Visit – Salix River & Wetland Services Ltd (02/07/2019) -** The Newport scheme applied a soft engineering solution that used brushwood fascines and rock rolls as a direct alternative to large rock. The approach was described as:

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- A low carbon solution (bioengineering has a carbon footprint of 2 tonnes of CO2 per 25m of riverbank; while hard engineering with blockstone has a carbon footprint of 30 t tonnes of CO2 per 25m of riverbank).
- Bioengineering absorbs the energy of the river, while hard engineering deflects the energy of the river causing erosion to happen further down the river.
- A scheme that allows natural vegetation to establish.
- A scheme that recreates saltmarsh and mud flat habitats.

40. Cardiff Council and Natural Resources Wales is currently developing a flood defence scheme along the foreshore of South East Cardiff. This scheme includes the river mouth and lower estuary area of the River Rhymney that has some characteristics similar to those seen on the River Usk. Members have been told that the Cardiff flood defence scheme will require remediation work once parts of the basic structure have been constructed. It is hoped that this remediation work will support biodiversity and the natural environment.

- **Council Resources: Recommendation 2 - Additional Ecologist / Section 6 Officer**

  The Council needs to employ an additional Ecologist or Section 6 Officer. He or she should work across all service areas to ensure that the Council is doing what is needed to meet the requirements of the Section 6 Duty of the Environment Act Wales. This would support the work of the current Ecologist who spends the majority of his time dealing with planning related work. Tasks to be covered by this post should include:

  - To co-ordinate, support and promote a range of environmental projects across Cardiff being delivered to meet the requirements of the Section 6 Duty.
  - To provide support for volunteer groups that are engaged in work that relates to the Section 6 Duty of the Environment Act Wales.
  - Liaison with partner organisations and other third party groups that are

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working with or supporting the Council to deliver projects that relate to the Section 6 Duty of the Environment Act Wales.

- **Council Resources: Recommendation 3 - Cardiff Ranger Team Apprentice**

  The Council should employ, train and develop an apprentice to work with the Cardiff Ranger Service. Given the current age profile of the Cardiff Ranger Service, the post would help preserve the extensive knowledge and experience of the team within the Council. The length and structure of the apprenticeship scheme should reflect the amount of knowledge and skill that the apprentice would need to become a fully trained member of staff.

- **Council Resources: Recommendation 4 - Biological Engineering – River Rhymney**

  Where possible, the Council should use the biological engineering techniques similar to those applied on the banks of the River Usk when undertaking remediation work on sections of the River Rhymney as a part of the new flood defence scheme. Taking this approach would provide biodiversity and reduced carbon footprint benefits when compared against hard engineering alternatives.

- **Council Resources: Recommendation 5 - Herbicides & Pesticides - Glyphosate**

  Where practically possible, the Council should limit the use of pesticides such as glyphosate across its estate. Local authorities such as the Vale of Glamorgan have managed to become herbicide free in a number of parks by using alternative weed control and management practices. The Council should look to learn from this and publish details of how, where and why herbicides and pesticides will be applied across the Council estate.

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- **Council Resources: Recommendation 6 – Volunteer Support**

  The Council does a good job in providing support to volunteer groups who carry out lots of work to help enhance Cardiff's natural environment; this is evidenced by the 16,278 volunteer hours that were supported by the Cardiff Ranger Service in 2018/19. However, Members feel that if more resource were invested into volunteering then volunteer contributions would be even greater. On this basis, task group recommends that the Council should invest additional resources to encourage, recognise and expand support from volunteer groups for work that relates to the Section 6 Duty of the Environment Act Wales. Specifically, they believe that this resource would be maximised if it focused on volunteer co-ordination and in applying for grant funding.

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Section 3 – Commitment, Structure & Process

During the 8 meetings and 14 witness presentations the task group was provided with a range of information about the commitment, structure and process that the Council and associated partners allocate towards supporting and enhancing biodiversity in Cardiff. Some of the key points raised on these topics are set out in this section.

❖ Section 6 - Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

41. **Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty** – Several bodies explained that public authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. Public bodies should also:

- Embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into their early thinking and business planning, including any policies, plans, programmes and projects, as well as their day to day activities.
- In complying with the Section 6 Duty, must have regard to the Section 7 list of habitats and species of principal importance for Wales.
- Ensure that decisions are evidence-based.
- This duty is in addition to the requirement to consider EU and UK legally protected species.

42. **Welsh Government Presentation (18/06/2019) -** The Duty to Maintain & Enhance Biodiversity **-** The actions to do this should, as far as possible, be guided by the 6 objectives of the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales (NRAP) which have been identified to contribute to reversing the decline of biodiversity in Wales:

- **Objective 1:** Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision-making at all levels.

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- **Objective 2:** Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management.
- **Objective 3:** Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation.
- **Objective 4:** Tackle key pressures on species and habitats.
- **Objective 5:** Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring.
- **Objective 6:** Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery.

These objectives address the strategic goals of the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity https://www.cbd.int/sp/elements/default.shtml.

43. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019) -** The Duty to Report – It was explained that a public authority must, before the end of 2019, and before the end of every third year after 2019, publish a report on what it has done to comply with the duty. This does not be a standalone report – it can be included in the annual report on well-being objectives, or another report. It can include:

- Identifying what steps have been taken to incorporate biodiversity measures into other areas of policy, strategies or initiatives;
- Identifying practical actions taken on the ground;
- Outlining any partnership initiatives on biodiversity have been set up and what they have achieved;
- What the organisation has done to help raise awareness of and communicate the importance of biodiversity.

44. Virtually all of the witnesses providing evidence to the task group (for example, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and Swansea Council) felt that biodiversity should be an integral part of a public authority's business or corporate planning processes, i.e. it should play a key role in all future decision making. It was suggested that to comply with the Section 6 duty, public authorities should embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into their early thinking and business planning, including any

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policies, plans, programmes and projects, as well as their day to day activities.

45. **Welsh Government Presentation (18/06/2019) –** The Welsh Government presentation set out a number of key actions that they felt were important for any organisations that were looking to embed the principles of the Biodiversity Duty, these were:

- Make a commitment to biodiversity and embed this into your corporate or business plan or sustainability statement, for example, as in the Swansea Corporate Plan;
- Raise awareness across the organisation about how biodiversity contributes to our well-being, for example, Public Health Wales and the Biodiversity Duty;
- Think about how enhancing biodiversity can help deliver across your organisation's activities, not just what you may think of as biodiversity activities, for example, to support active recreation, education, flood prevention, regeneration and local food growing.
- Reduce, re-use and recycle materials, but where products such as paper are bought, ensure that supplies come from sustainable sources, for example, paper from sustainable forests.

46. **Wildlife Trust Presentation (18/06/2019)** – They felt that it was important for an organisation like Cardiff Council to work with Public Service Boards to deliver the aims of the Biodiversity Duty. All public services are required to adhere to the Biodiversity Duty, and so linking common goals across the Public Service Board parties would help maximise overall benefits for Cardiff. They also explained that green spaces need to feel safe and welcoming to encourage public use; public bodies need to be mindful of this and work towards creating such spaces.

47. **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation – (04/07/2019)** - The first part of the presentation referenced the Duty and the importance of linking this to decision making. In doing so the presentation explained the following:

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- By putting nature and the environment at the heart of all decisions that Cardiff Council makes, there is an opportunity for Cardiff to become a forerunner in the sustainable city movement and work towards the Welsh Governments targets of creating a 'resilient Wales'. By implementing some of the simple steps and examples shown in this report, Cardiff Council can help conserve existing areas for biodiversity, create and connect communities of Cardiff with nature.

48. **Councillor Peter Jones, Swansea City Council Presentation** (24/07/2019) - Members were told that it was important to make a commitment to biodiversity and then to embed it into the Council's corporate / business plan or sustainability statement, this is something that has happened in Swansea's Corporate Plan. Once this statement has been put in place then it is essential that the message is clearly communicated to the public.

49. **Councillor Peter Jones, Swansea City Council (27/07/2019)** - The monitoring of the work will be measured by Swansea's Scrutiny Performance Panel when they look at the natural environment.

50. **Natural Resources Wales Presentation (26/06/2019)** – The presentation stressed the importance of focusing on the Section 7 responsibilities of the Environment Wales Act, which extends protection and support towards special, protected and rare wildlife. This relates to a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which are of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in Wales. The information in this list needs to be supported by a solid data source.

❖ Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

51. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - A public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions (Environment (Wales)

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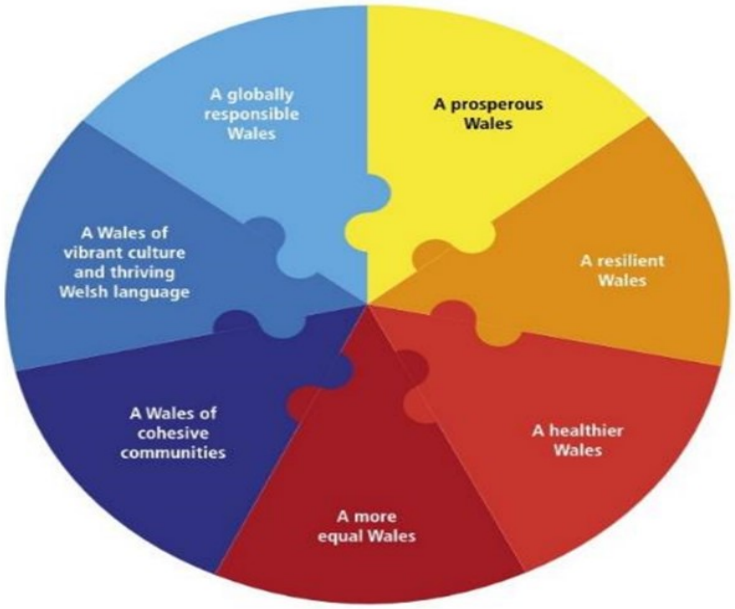
Act 2016). This ties in with the core principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015), these are illustrated in **Diagram 2** (below).

Diagram 2 - Core principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)



52. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** – The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) has been created to drive well being and long term sustainability in Wales. The presentation provided a quote which described the Welsh ambition as - "*A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change)*."

53. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - The whole Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty is driven by the Well Being of Future Generations legislation. The seven primary goals (and descriptions) of this legislation are set out below:

- **A prosperous Wales** - An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities,

allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

- **A resilient Wales** - A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

- **A healthier Wales** - A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

- **A more equal Wales** - A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

- **A Wales of cohesive communities** - Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language** - A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

- **A globally responsible Wales** - A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

54. **Natural Resources Wales (26/06/2019)** – It views 'a resilient Wales' as the primary Well Being of Future Generations goal that it needs to work to achieve. In response to this Natural Resources Wales has '*set objectives to achieve a biodiverse natural environment with health functioning ecosystems, and take all reasonable steps to achieve those objectives*'. They felt that the current Cardiff Corporate Plan could have included more information setting out how it aims to address its biodiversity duty.

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❖ Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity Forward Plan

55. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019) -** The Green Infrastructure Strategy for Cardiff is based on the 'Ecosystem Approach'. An 'ecosystems approach' draws on the Convention of Biological Diversity definition. The Green Infrastructure Strategy for Cardiff is described as '*a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way*'. The Green Infrastructure Strategy for Cardiff puts an emphasis on maintaining the health of ecosystems as well as the sustainable human use of the environment, for present and future generations.

56. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019) -** Green Infrastructure: Instead of referring to biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, Cardiff Council uses the term 'Green Infrastructure' to reflect a more holistic approach which incorporates:

- Ecology and biodiversity;
- Trees, soils and landscaping;
- Access, public open space and recreation;
- Sustainable drainage;
- Use of vegetation to ameliorate pollution.

57. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - Green infrastructure is about multi-functional, connected green spaces that make the best use of land - at the same time providing green open space for all, helping wildlife to flourish, and delivering a wide range of economic, health and community benefits. This is as important to the city as its 'grey' infrastructure of roads, buildings and power lines (CABE 2009), and helps to address many of the social and environmental issues linked to urban life.

58. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** – Cardiff's Green Infrastructure Plan Objectives are:

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- **Objective 1**: To protect and enhance Cardiff's ecosystems to ensure that they continue to support diverse habitats and species, allowing them to adapt to change;

- **Objective 2**: To ensure that Cardiff's green infrastructure is enhanced and managed in a way that increases resilience to the changing climate and provides protection for people and places;

- **Objective 3:** To maximise the contribution that green infrastructure makes to Cardiff's economy by enhancing the city's attractiveness for business, tourism and living;

- **Objective 4:** To increase the potential physical and mental health benefits from a good quality, natural environment by improving, promoting and creating connected, multi-functional green infrastructure in Cardiff;

- **Objective 5:** To use Cardiff's green infrastructure to provide opportunities for people to access the outdoor environment and to participate in learning, training and volunteering to foster social inclusion and equality and improve life chances;

- **Objective 6:** To build upon Cardiff's reputation as a vibrant, green and attractive city by continuing to enhance and sustain the green infrastructure that underpins the city's unique qualities and sense of place.

59. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019) -** As part of the Implementation Programme, a 'Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Action Plan' had been drafted. The Green Infrastructure Plan and the BRED Action Plan was the subject of a Cabinet Report that had the intention of securing approval of these documents to discharge the Council's duty to prepare and publish a forward plan. The Green Infrastructure Plan was approved on the 26th September 2019, and the document sets out the following vision for the city:

- '*Cardiff's distinctive natural heritage will provide a network of Green Infrastructure which will be protected, enhanced, developed and managed*

to ensure that its integrity and connectivity is sustained for the economic, social and environmental benefit of the City and the Region.'

60. **Cardiff Council Presentation (03/07/2019)** - As a part of this inquiry, the Committee considered the draft document and sent a letter to the responsible Cabinet Member which set out the comments, observations and recommendations of the task group in relation to the draft Green Infrastructure Plan. This was received by the Cabinet Member in advance of the Cabinet meeting on the 26th September 2019. A copy of this letter is attached to this report as **Appendix 1**.

61. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** - The Green Infrastructure Plan is supported by the Green Infrastructure Implementation Programme. The key projects / plans identified for delivery within this Green Infrastructure Implementation Programme are:

- Pollinator Action Plan;
- Site Management Plans;
- Local Nature Plan;
- River Corridors;
- Tree Strategy;
- i-tree Cardiff;
- Cross departmental and cross border initiatives, for example, PRoW;
- Green Infrastructure Plan.

62. **Welsh Government Presentation (18/06/2019) –** The presentation explained the duty of a Local Authority Biodiversity Forward Plan as:

- A public authority must prepare and publish a plan setting out what it proposes to do to comply with the duty.
- This need not be a standalone plan - it can be included in your well-being statement as to how your well-being objectives will be met, or another plan.

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- It can include how biodiversity will be incorporated into policies and strategies; what initiatives are being introduced to raise awareness within organisation; what programmes are being introduced to improve connectivity, condition and diversity; and what partnerships will be developed.
- If it hasn't already, the plan should be produced as soon as possible.
- It can align with corporate planning cycles, including Well Being of Future Generations planning.

❖ Partnership Working

63. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** – Identified the importance of partnership projects, for example, those delivered by the Cardiff Rivers Group, Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales. These had supported river clean up projects in 2019.

64. **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019)** – The presentation emphasised how important community collaboration was in terms delivering projects to support biodiversity and the natural environment. The task group was told that working with friends and community groups helped to engender a sense of ownership, helped to source funding, encouraged volunteer involvement, provided networking opportunities and fostered a wider sharing experience.

❖ Planning

65. **Cardiff Council Presentation (03/07/2019) -** A Cardiff Planning Officer explained that any policy decision needs to be backed up and explained within the Local Development Plan. You can't create a Supplementary Planning Guidance document without having a relevant policy hook in the Local Development Plan. Developers will challenge any planning related proposal that isn't referenced in the Local Development Plan, and any unsupported Council decision would be thrown out on appeal.

66. **Planning & Biodiversity Forum (10/09/2019)** – At the meeting it was explained that Cardiff Council officers had not attended the Planning & Biodiversity Forum. Members felt that this was a missed opportunity since

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Planning Policy Wales Edition 10, the Environment (Wales) Act and the Well Being of Future Generations had all had an impact on biodiversity related planning practice in the last twelve months. They felt that the profile and influence of the Planning & Biodiversity Forum would benefit from Elected Member involvement.

67. A review of Cardiff's Local Development Plan is scheduled to begin in 2020. This will provide Cardiff with an opportunity to review its Local Development Plan in the light of recent changes, for example, Planning Policy Wales Edition 10, the Section 6 Duty of the Environment (Wales) Act and the Well Being of Future Generations legislation. It will also allow the Council an opportunity to enhance the environmental policies and goals that underpin its Local Development Plan.

68. **Planning & Biodiversity Forum (10/09/2019)** – Following the meeting with the representatives from the Planning & Biodiversity Forum, the task group concluded that a lack of detail was the biggest weakness in environment related planning guidance, meaning that developers were consistently able to win on appeal and offer 'mitigating measures' to comply with planning conditions.

69. **Planning & Biodiversity Forum (10/09/2019)** – After a discussion Members concluded that the Council should focus on measuring tree coverage instead of the number of trees in the city. They felt that the environmental benefits of established tree coverage were far greater than those provided by newly planted trees; which are often provided as an environmental mitigating measure. They agreed that accurately measuring Cardiff's tree coverage would be a good future performance indicator.

70. During the task & finish exercise the task group was provided with information on a range of features that could be built into new developments to support biodiversity, for example, bat bricks and hedgehog holes. The cost of these features is relatively small; for example, a single bat brick costs less than £20.

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- **Commitment, Structure & Process: Recommendation 7 – Building Biodiversity into Decision Making & Governance –** During the task & finish exercise several witnesses raised the importance of building biodiversity and the Section 6 obligation into Council governance, policy documents and the wider decision making process. This would ensure that biodiversity becomes a corporate responsibility. Members supported this idea and based on the evidence provided recommend the following:

  - **Recommendation 7 (a)** – The Council should build a biodiversity well-being commitment into Capital Ambition, alongside the other four well-being objectives. This would ensure that biodiversity becomes a corporate responsibility and policy objective.

  - **Recommendation 7 (b)** - Ask the Cardiff Partnership Board adopt a biodiversity well-being objective into its Well-Being Plan. This would help provide consistency in approach for all of Cardiff's public sector organisations who are, by definition, subject to the new responsibilities created by Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

  - **Recommendation 7 (c)** - Build biodiversity and climate change into the Council's decision-making process so that it is considered when all decisions are taken. This should include a Well Being, Climate Change, Biodiversity & Natural Environment Implications section in all Council, Cabinet and Committee reports / papers.

  - **Recommendation 7 (d)** - Build responsibility for biodiversity into the key Council business planning documents, for example, Directorate Delivery Plan and Personal Review Documents. This should place biodiversity on a similar footing to Equalities and the Welsh language.

  - **Recommendation 7 (e)** - Ensure the Green Infrastructure Plan (including the Biodiversity Forward Plan) links into the new well-being biodiversity objective, and other relevant cross organisational policies at a strategic level, for example, the Local Well-being Plan and Area

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- **Recommendation 7 (f)** - Appoint a dedicated biodiversity and climate change champion to represent the Council. The task group felt that the title should be clear enough for the public to instantly understand the purpose of the role, for example, the 'Champion for Nature' was suggested. The task group felt that the champion should: i) become the Council spokesperson for biodiversity and climate change announcements; ii) act as Chair for a re-established Cardiff Biodiversity Partnership; iii) have sufficient status within the Council to ensure that he or she has regular access to the Cabinet and Senior Management; iv) have the support and responsibility to deliver an annual biodiversity and climate change report to Cabinet or Full Council setting out the progress achieved during the year against a set of agreed targets.

- **Recommendation 7 (g)** - The Council's biodiversity and climate change responsibilities should be built into one Cabinet portfolio to ensure clear lines of responsibility and accountability. The range of responsibilities are currently split across three Cabinet portfolios; Members felt that this division of responsibility created a barrier in terms of accountability and delivery.

- **Recommendation 7 (h)** - Develop a clear and enthusiastic vision for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity to ensure a consistent 'buy-in' from each service. Once established this should be circulated across the Council and if possible to all of the other partners on the Cardiff Partnership Board.

- **Recommendation 7 (i)** - The Council should identify and create a series of biodiversity and natural environment performance indicators that would sit alongside the Biodiversity Forward Plan and feature in the Council's Performance Reporting. The indicators should be meaningful and directly relate to the positive outputs that support biodiversity in the city, and should be included in an annual biodiversity

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and climate change report.

- **Recommendation 7 (j)** - Identify funding for a dedicated officer to support the reincarnation of the Cardiff Biodiversity Partnership. This post could either be held within the Council or delivered by one of its partners. Tasks would include arranging meetings, collating information, producing reports and reporting on performance. Ideally the individual would work with the Council and all of its partner bodies.

- **Commitment, Structure & Process: Recommendation 8 – Planning**

The task group received evidence relating to the planning system and the part that it could play in protecting biodiversity and the natural environment. Members shared concerns that development priorities were continually being put ahead of nature, with developers regularly overturning planning decisions on appeal thanks to insufficiently detailed planning guidance. This in turn meant that Cardiff was regularly losing valuable pieces of green infrastructure, for example, mature trees, which were then replaced by 'mitigating measures', for example, saplings. Members felt that the cumulative effect of these decisions had been huge over the years. The task group also had concerns about the lack of participation by Cardiff with the Planning & Biodiversity Forum, and that the Council should do more to ensure that developers did more to support biodiversity and the natural environment on new developments. Cardiff's first Local Development Plan review is due to begin in 2020, and this ties in neatly with the recently updated Planning Policy Wales review and the shift towards all policy linking into the Well Being of Future Generations. Members felt that now is a good time to align and improve this suite of policies for the long-term benefit of the environment. Considering the summary of planning information above, the task group recommends the following:

- **Recommendation 8 (a) - Planning & Biodiversity Forum** – To date Cardiff Council officers have not attended the Planning & Biodiversity Forum. Members felt that this was a missed opportunity, particularly as

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the direction of travel for supporting the environment has shifted in the last twelve months under Planning Policy Wales Edition 10, the Environment (Wales) Act and the Well Being of Future Generations. The task group, therefore, recommends that an officer from Cardiff attends future meetings of the Planning & Biodiversity Forum. They also feel that the profile and influence of the Planning & Biodiversity Forum would benefit from Elected Member involvement, and so ask the Council to approach the group to ask if it could be expanded to include councillor representatives from each of the represented local authorities.

- **Recommendation 8 (b) - Review of Cardiff's Local Development Plan** – A review of Cardiff's Local Development Plan is due to begin in 2020. Given the importance of recent changes within Planning Policy Wales Edition 10, the Section 6 Duty of the Environment (Wales) Act and the Well Being of Future Generations legislation, the task group recommend that now is an excellent opportunity to enhance the environmental policies and goals of Cardiff's Local Development Plan. Strong and detailed environmental policy that link to the Council's main corporate objectives could be used as a 'hook' to develop stronger supplementary planning guidance, which in turn could provide greater protection for Cardiff's valuable green infrastructure.

- **Recommendation 8 (c) - Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 – Greater Detail** – Following the meeting with the representatives from the Planning & Biodiversity Forum, the task group concluded that a lack of detail was the biggest weakness in environment related planning guidance, meaning that developers were consistently able to win on appeal and offer 'mitigating measures' to comply with planning conditions. The task group asks that the Council raises these concerns with Welsh Government, and asks them to increase the level of detail around the suite of planning guidance that is used to ensure environmental protection.

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- **Recommendation 8 (d) - Measuring Tree Coverage** – Members believe that the Council should focus on measuring tree coverage instead of the number of trees in the city. The environmental benefits of established tree coverage far outweigh that provided by newly planted trees, which are often provided as an environmental mitigating measure. As a consequence, the task group recommends that the Council should identify a way of accurately measuring Cardiff's tree coverage, and then report on this annually.

- **Recommendation 8 (e) - Supporting Nature in new Developments**

  The task group was provided with information on a range of features that can be built into new developments to support biodiversity, for example, bat bricks and hedgehog holes. The cost of these features is relatively small; for example, a single bat brick costs less than £20. On this basis the task groups recommends that the Council asks developers to install nature supporting features on all new build properties as standard, and if necessary identify a policy 'hook' within the new or revised Local Development Plan to use to create supplementary planning guidance to support this aim.

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Section 4 – Communication & Engagement

During the 8 meetings and 14 witness presentations the task group was provided with a range of information about communication and engagement issues relating to biodiversity and the natural environment. Some of the key points that relate to communication and engagement are set out in this section.

71. **Councillor Peter Jones, Swansea City Council Presentation (24/07/2019)** - Members were told that more communication and engagement were key in getting people to be more understanding towards biodiversity issues. They were told that the message needs to get out there, and that Council service areas have to properly engage on the matter. For example, reducing the amount of cutting in parks can help biodiversity, but at the same time it can generate lots of complaints from the public. This is why clean communication on what and why the Council is doing is important.

72. **Wildlife Trust Presentation (18/06/2019)** – The task group was told that it was important to raise awareness across the organisation about how biodiversity contributes to our well-being. This would help contribute to the Public Health Wales objectives and the Council's Biodiversity Duty.

73. **Wildlife Trust Presentation (18/06/2019)** – Commented that good clear communication and engagement was essential in changing the public attitude towards biodiversity, which is essential to achieve real change. Communication and engagement is also vital in helping to give people the skills to enjoy the experience of nature.

74. **Wild life Trust Presentation (18/06/2019)** – When it comes to education it is important to catch children when they are young. Local authorities need to embrace this idea. It is beneficial to focus education facilities on sites, for example, Dow Corning has a very good site reserve that welcomes visitors.

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75. **Wildlife Trust Presentation (18/06/2019)** - Suggested a list of things to do for schools, this included making willow bird feeders; pond dipping; beach clean & rock pooling; clay footprints; bug hunts; reptile rambles; bird watching; tree identification.

76. **Wildlife Trust Presentation (18/06/2019)** – The Council should think about how enhancing biodiversity can help deliver its services and activities, and not just what you may think of as biodiversity activities. Examples of where better biodiversity supports Council activities include supporting active recreation, education, flood prevention, regeneration and local food growing.

77. **Natural Resources Wales Presentation (27/06/2019)** – The organisation plans to audit biodiversity awareness and action across all departments in 2019/20. In carrying out this audit it will undertake the following:

- All staff questionnaire;
- Targeted research and group discussions – particular functions;
- Recommendations and next steps for training, info and guidance develop and role out from 2020 onwards.

78. **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** - The second part of the presentation provided a summary of the Giving Nature a Home project that is being delivered in Cardiff. It explained that the Giving Nature a Home is a partnership project delivered by RSPB Cymru, Bug Life Cymru and Cardiff Council's Community Park Rangers. The project is supported from funding by the National Lottery Community Fund between 2017 to 2022. Until July 2019 it received additional funding from ALDI to deliver the free school outreach programme. The project came to life because of a report that found that only one in eight children in Wales have a reasonable connection with nature. The project aims to connect children and families with nature and support communities to act for nature. Childhood experiences of nature have been associated with more positive environmental attitudes and behaviours as adults. These aims have been predominantly achieved in the following ways:

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- **Free Schools Outreach** - Since 2017, they have provided 11,599 connections to nature through our free schools outreach programme for primary schools, nurseries and early years settings.

- **Events** – Since 2017, they have delivered events in Cardiff's parks, libraries, community centres, festivals and fetes to provide 5,955 connections to nature through a variety of Wild Challenge activities including bug hunts, investigating the weather, listening to bird song and finding the signs of spring.

- **Urban Buzz** – They are currently working with 14 groups across Cardiff to help them improve their urban green space for pollinators. These sites include Llandaff North Allotments, the National Assembly, Rumney Hub and Llanishen Fach Primary School. There are 100 Urban Buzz sites in Cardiff and the scheme supports pollinators, training and workshops. Urban Buzz is working in eight cities across the United Kingdom.

- **Volunteering** – They provide numerous opportunities for volunteers to get involved with the project from independently delivering schools outreach sessions to supporting long-term internships for those looking to gain relevant employment skills. They also run family volunteering sessions where they provide the opportunity for families to complete practical conservation tasks either in Cardiff's parks or at Urban Buzz sites.

- A 'connection to nature' is measured as a minimum of 30-minute hands on experience with nature. In addition, the Giving Nature a Home in Cardiff project is working with several other key groups to help connect communities in Cardiff with wildlife.

- The Giving Nature a Home in Cardiff project has been a partner on the Glamorgan Bird Club's swift project with Cardiff Council's harbour authority to install a swift tower at Cardiff Bay and run an annual swift survey. This year they have 30-40 people taking part in the survey.

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- The project is also working with Cardiff Council's Flat Holm: A walk through time project to help connect communities in Cardiff with the natural heritage of this unique island which is so close to the city.

- The Giving Nature a Home in Cardiff project has confirmed funding until 2022 to continue to deliver the above, however, there are numerous other ways that biodiversity can be improved in the city for future generations.

79. **Councillor Peter Jones, Swansea City Council Presentation (24/07/2019)** – Change involves explaining to people what we are doing and why we are doing it. The expectations of people need to change and education is a key part of that. Some authorities have explained the changes as they go along, for example, not cutting sections of parks or highway verges – complaints at the outset are inevitable.

- **Communication & Engagement: Recommendation 9 - Embed New Biodiversity Well Being Objective**

  The Council should embed the new biodiversity well-being objective into the organisation by developing and delivering relevant training to all Council staff. Suggested examples of how to do this include:

  - Through the use of e-learning, various staff communications and staff questionnaires;
  - Building the new biodiversity well-being objective into the Personal Development Review (PDR) process;
  - Targeted research and group discussions – particular functions.

  It should also encourage other public organisations to roll out similar training within their organisations.

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- **Communication & Engagement: Recommendation 10 - Promote the Council's Drive to Support Biodiversity**

  Make information available to the public to encourage participation and understanding, for example, by publishing information on the Council webpages; sharing information with partner organisations and other key stakeholders; communicating the message through social media and running wider communications promotions.

- **Communication & Engagement: Recommendation 11 - Regular Liaison Meetings**

  Invite environmental voluntary groups and Community Council representatives to attend regular liaison meetings – these could link into Cardiff Biodiversity Partnership meetings to ensure that all parties are kept informed. The meetings would allow them to access additional support to specialist advice from relevant officers.

- **Communication & Engagement: Recommendation 12 - Schools & Governors**

  Create environmental link Governors on school governing bodies who can take relevant information and projects to their school. Encourage better use of school grounds and local wildlife sites for biodiversity.

- **Communication & Engagement: Recommendation 13 - Mandatory Biodiversity Training for Members**

  The Council should introduce mandatory Member training to improve knowledge on biodiversity and the natural environment.

- **Communication & Engagement: Recommendation 14 - Dedicated Outdoor Learning Officer** – The Council should either employ a dedicated outdoor learning officer, or identify funding to deliver this role and designate responsibility to a third party with existing experience to

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deliver this work. This would provide tailored support, training and delivery to enable Cardiff schools to:

- Fully realise the potential of outdoor learning;
- Deliver educational and wellbeing benefits from the varied natural resources that Cardiff possesses.

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Section 5 – Baseline & Focus

During the 8 meetings and 14 witness presentations the task group was provided with some information about the importance of accurately establishing baseline data for monitoring biodiversity levels in Cardiff. They were told that having a good understanding of the current position would place the Council in a position to focus resources to the best effect. Some of the key points of that relate to baseline and focus are set out in this section.

80. **SEWBReC Presentation (03/07/2019)** - The Council should be making decisions and plans based on the best available evidence, and contributing to our body of knowledge where possible, for example, by supporting citizen-science initiatives. It is important to link this in with existing evidence sources.

81. **Councillor Comment** - During one of the meetings a Member stated that it is important to understand what you have, because without knowing this how can you direct effort and resource to address the problem.

82. **SEWBReC Presentation (03/07/2019)** - South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) is the centre for the collation, management and dissemination of biodiversity data for South East Wales. Their aim is to make appropriate local biodiversity information available to all those who need it, to help ensure that decisions which affect local biodiversity are made using best available data. They achieve this aim by:

- **Observation & Identification** - Supporting the local biological recording community and helping them to manage and mobilise the wealth of information they gather.

- **Collaboration** - Working with a wide range of organisations (from Welsh Government departments to Wildlife Trusts) to collate and computerise the data they hold. SEWBReC spends a significant amount of time working with volunteer groups.

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- **Building Evidence** - Collating and managing these diverse data sets in a central location. SEWBReC currently holds over three million species records and are constantly working to improve the quality and quantity of our data holdings. All evidence / data recorded on the SEWBReC database is, in statistical terms, independently verified.

- **Building Skills** - Delivering a range of innovative and tailored biodiversity information products, training and services to meet the needs of its users.

83. **SEWBReC Presentation (03/07/2019)** - SEWBReC is one of four environmental records centres in Wales – between them they provide 100% coverage across all of Wales. No other part of the United Kingdom is able to provide this level of coverage (Scotland, England and Northern Ireland only average 75% coverage). Welsh Government is very keen on the development and growth of a good evidence base to support the protection and recovery of biodiversity across Wales.

84. **SEWBReC Presentation (03/07/2019)** - Having access to, and making use of, the best available biodiversity evidence base is likely to be considered essential when Welsh Government judge performance of public bodies against the requirements of Section 6 of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016.

85. **SEWBReC Presentation (03/07/2019)** - The SEWBReC database could be used as a part of the planning process to quickly and easily identify the types of species that are within the vicinity of a proposed planning application. It could also be used to check / verify independent ecological reports that developers commission as a part of the planning process. Access to the SEWBReC database would provide the Council with the most comprehensive source of information on biodiversity in Wales (and Cardiff). Better understanding how and where there are biodiversity issues would provide the Council with an opportunity to direct its limited resources to areas that most need / benefit from support.

86. **SEWBReC Presentation (03/07/2019)** - A full SLA with SEWBReC would cost the Council between £8,000 and £10,000 per annum. This should be a

long-term, sustainably-funded arrangement. Cardiff is the most reported against area on the SEWBReC system - the Council doesn't currently subscribe to or use the service.

87. **SEWBReC Presentation (03/07/2019)** - SEWBReC is the best evidence source for biodiversity and the natural environment in the South East Wales region, therefore, it is the best tool to establish a baseline for biodiversity and the natural environment in the area.

- **Baseline & Focus: Recommendation 15 – SEWBReC Service Level Agreement**

  The Council should enter into a service level agreement with the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) for 2019/20 and beyond. This would provide the Council with the best available data on local biodiversity, so that the Council is better informed about the natural resources that it has, and at the same time is in a good position to allocate its limited resources into the area of most need.

- **Baseline & Focus: Recommendation 16 – Ward Based Mapping**

  Complete and publicise a ward mapping exercise. This would provide each ward and the Councillors with information specific to that ward. It would include information about important species, protected sites and other relevant ecological information as well as potential opportunities for improving biodiversity within the ward. This could be developed using information from the SEWBReC database.

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Section 6 – Best Practice & Practical Applications

During the 8 meetings and 14 witness presentations the task group was provided with some information on best practice and practical applications that can be used to support biodiversity and the natural environment. Some of the key points of that relate to best practice and practical application are set out in this section.

❖ Connectivity

88. Several organisations stressed the importance of maintaining and supporting connectivity; this would allow the movement of wildlife and plant life between areas and support diversity and growth. Comments made in relation to connectivity included:

- **Councillor Comment** – A Councillor provided information on a seven-mile long “bee corridor” of wildflowers that Brent Council is growing in an effort to boost the numbers of pollinating insects. They are sowing 22 wildflower meadows in the borough’s parks and open spaces, which together will form 50,000sq m of new flowering spaces and stretch seven miles in length. It is the first initiative of its kind in London. Brent council announced its bee corridor plans just after a major UN report detailed the devastating impact humans are continuing to have on the natural world. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) said wild mammals had declined by 82 per cent since 1980, space for natural ecosystems had halved, more than 97 per cent of the UK’s wildflower meadows had disappeared and one million species were now at risk of extinction because of human action. Insect pollinators are vital for the maintenance of ecosystem health and for global food security. Insects are required to maintain the existence of 75 per cent of crop species, 35 per cent of global crop production and up to 88 per cent of flowering plant species.

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- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** - The Giving Nature a Home group stressed that the connectivity of habitats and sites across Cardiff (and wider) was essential for many species as it provides dispersal routes and access to areas to breed, shelter, over-winter and forage. This is particularly important in cities and other built up areas where roads, building and other infrastructure can pose barriers for wildlife. They suggested that making connectivity corridors created opportunities including: i) promoting the growth of wildflower verges; ii) protecting and creating connected areas of habitat; ii) building wildlife friendly measures into new and renovated building developments.

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** - The Giving Nature a Home group suggested that the Council and its partners should investigate where there may be disused space in the form of disused railways, roads or even private back gardens that can be used to ensure that Cardiff's green spaces are well connected. This would involve a mapping exercise.

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** - The Giving Nature a Home group suggested that the Council should adopt a landscape-scale approach to pollinator conservation. In 2012, Buglife and a range or partner organisations established the 'B-Lines' initiative. B-Lines are effectively opportunity maps, identifying key areas where habitat connectivity can have the greatest impact for pollinators. B-Lines have been mapped for all of Wales and could be utilised by Cardiff Council to identify and prioritise areas for habitat connectivity across the city.

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** - Hedgehog Highways - The Giving Nature a Home group felt that it was important that all new builds and existing properties should create hedgehog highways by cutting a small 13cm x 13cm hole in garden fences to allow hedgehogs to travel to feed and mate.

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- **Cardiff Council Presentation (23/04/2019) -** In complying with subsection Section 6 of the Environment Wales Act, a public authority must take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following aspects:

  - Diversity between and within ecosystems;
  - The connections between and within ecosystems;
  - The scale of ecosystems;
  - The condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning);
  - The adaptability of ecosystems.

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** – Identified protecting and creating connected areas of habitat as a quick win opportunity that could be achieved with limited resources.

❖ Supporting & Developing Habitats

89. Some of the witnesses emphasised the importance of protecting existing and developing new habitats in Cardiff. Comments and suggestions relating to protecting and developing new habitats included:

- **Welsh Government Presentation (18/06/2019) -** Support the creation of new habitats, such as local orchards, native hedges, wildflower meadows or other areas of wildlife-friendly green space that is accessible to local communities – either on your own land, or in partnership with others – this could be linked to green infrastructure strategies.

- **CLAS Cymru (03/07/2019)** – Explained that it was important for the Council to provide support for the development of community managed spaces. If the Council did this then CLAS Cymru could provide policy perspective and a link to the type of tools that can be accessed to develop such schemes. 90% of the schemes that they support rely on wildlife to make them work.

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- **CLAS Cymru (03/07/2019)** - 'Social Farms & Gardens' describe creating 'a haven for wildlife' as a priority in most schemes. They made reference to 'The Earth Friendly Garden' which explained that '*our gardens can be a haven for wildlife, provide food, reduce carbon emissions, bring people together and make us healthier and happier*!' They identified a number of features that they like to see in gardens, including: rain water harvesting; composting; healthy no dig soil; mulch; plants for pollinators; bees; insect hotel; compost loo; a pond; forest garden planting; wild edges; people working, relaxing and playing together; growing from seed in peat free compos; reusing pots; fresh organic local food; permaculture principles; reusing pallets; natural predators controlling pests.

- **CLAS Cymru (03/07/2019) –** They provided information on pocket parks and made specific reference to Northampton's Pocket Parks. Pocket Parks are local public green spaces that are owned, looked after and cherished by local communities for peaceful enjoyment and the protection of wildlife. From the early 1980s to 2015 Northamptonshire County Council worked in partnership with other organisations and local authorities to help local volunteer groups create over 70 Pocket Parks across Northamptonshire for people to enjoy. The pocket parks can vary in size from 0.04 hectares to 35 hectares and are found in all types of locations from town centres to quiet villages.

- **CLAS Cymru (03/07/2019) –** They provided the task group with a case study that looked at Newtown Green Spaces. Newtown and Llanllwchaiarn Town Council transferred 130 acres of land into community ownership in a 99-year lease to community land trust Open Newtown. Town Councillor Richard Edwards, said: "*This project started after a consultation with residents that highlighted how important the green spaces and parks are as a place for leisure and recreation; a space for nature and a means to promote health and wellbeing, with most residents saying they made use of green spaces frequently. Wishing to protect and enhance the open spaces the council led a call for action, enabling the community to come together to form Open Newtown*."

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- **Wildlife Trust Presentation (18/06/2019)** – Wild Gardening - Witnesses explained that Cardiff's private gardens were an excellent resource for nature. Members were told that if the Council and its partners could help to promote wild gardening and its benefits to the public, then this would be a big boost to biodiversity and the natural environment in the city.

❖ Community Growing

90. **Community Growing Policy** - Some witnesses mentioned the benefits that could be produced by developing a community growing policy. The comments and suggestions that relate this are set out below:

- **CLAS Cymru (03/07/2019) –** Provided the 'Monmouthshire Community Growing Policy' as an example of good practice in terms of getting the community to grow more produce whilst supporting nature. The Monmouthshire policy was created to allow the Council to make underutilised land in its ownership available for the community to grow food. This demand has been created through the lack of available allotment space, prevailing economic conditions and the need to develop more resilient communities. Monmouthshire County Council developed a policy and license that allows the use of small bits of council owned land to grow food on. They have done this to support and promote the 'Incredible Edible' movement. This is where groups of people get together to grow produce on easily accessible land – then the produce can be taken away freely by anyone not just those who have worked to make the produce grow. Monmouthshire is the first Council in Wales to have such a policy. There are hundreds of groups doing this throughout the world.

❖ Verge Cutting & Wildflower Planting

91. **Roadside Verge Cutting & Wildflower Planting -** Witnesses emphasised the importance of proper roadside verge cutting and wildflower planting. Some of the comments and suggestions that relate this are set out below:

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- **Councillor Comment** – A Councillor provided information on a seven-mile long “bee corridor” of wildflowers that Brent Council is growing in an effort to boost the numbers of pollinating insects. They are sowing 22 wildflower meadows in the borough’s parks and open spaces, which together will form 50,000sq m of new flowering spaces and stretch seven miles in length. It is the first initiative of its kind in London. Brent council announced its bee corridor plans just after a major UN report detailed the devastating impact humans are continuing to have on the natural world. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) said wild mammals had declined by 82 per cent since 1980, space for natural ecosystems had halved, more than 97 per cent of the UK’s wildflower meadows had disappeared and one million species were now at risk of extinction because of human action. Insect pollinators are vital for the maintenance of ecosystem health and for global food security. Insects are required to maintain the existence of 75 per cent of crop species, 35 per cent of global crop production and up to 88 per cent of flowering plant species.

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** - The Giving Nature a Home group stressed the importance of promoting wildflower verges and creating designated wild areas. They explained that globally we need to help create and protect pollinator friendly habitats to reverse the monumental decline of insect populations. A recent and high-profile report, found that more than 40% of insect species are declining and the rate of extinction is eight times faster than that of mammals, birds and reptiles.

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** - The Giving Nature a Home group explained that the Council needed to reduce the amount of mowing of verges and other areas where possible. Verges should only be cut in the early spring and in the early autumn, after the seeds have dispersed.

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** - The Giving Nature a Home group suggested

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that the Council should consider investing in cut and collect machinery to reduce fertility, reduce the amount of vegetation and its composition. This could be enhanced further by seeding with Yellow Rattle to reduce dominance by grasses and produce lower and more floristic swards.

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** - Plant Life has been asked to re-write the highway verge cutting process and approach for Cardiff's Highway Asset Management Plan. Members thought that this was a positive thing and asked if they could see a copy of this once it is completed. Dorset Council is an example of a local authority that has taken the verge cutting approach advocated by Plant Life, i.e. they have stopped cutting verges intensively. This change was described as relatively straight forward.

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** - The Giving Nature a Home group explained that it was important to restore meadows or create new ones. They then referenced the Cardiff Meadows Project that aims to provide essential habitat for threatened pollinators and declining mammals such as hedgehogs. The Cardiff Civic Society is running the scheme in partnership with Cardiff Council.

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** – Identified promoting the growth of wildflower verges as a quick win opportunity that could be achieved with limited resources.

❖ Biodiversity Friendly Buildings

92. **Biodiversity Friendly Buildings -** Witnesses emphasised the importance of biodiversity friendly buildings. Some of the comments and suggestions that relate this are set out below:

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** - The Giving Nature a Home group stated that

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a range of buildings infrastructure would support biodiversity in Cardiff and make the city a more pleasant and innovative city. For example, green roofs, green walls, sustainable urban drainage, planting more trees and creating low nutrient habitats that avoid the use of imported topsoil would make Cardiff a more pleasant and innovative city. Green roofs act as a carbon sink and helps a property adapt to weather in the winter and summer. They can be used to foster quite important habitats.

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** – The Council should promote the retro-fitting of existing buildings to install green roofs and ensure that, where possible, all new builds should have a green roof incorporated. Bug Life has produced a comprehensive guide of how to install a green roof called 'Creating a Green Roof for Invertebrates – A Best Practice Guide'.

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** - Ensure that building new homes need not to be at the expense of the natural world by ensuring that all new builds retain greenspaces, allow for habitat connectivity, for example, through hedges, trees and hedgehog highways, water, installing bat and swift boxes as standard.

- **Giving Nature a Home (RSPB, Bug Life & Plant Life) – Joint Presentation (04/07/2019)** – Identified building wildlife friendly measures into new and renovated building developments.as a quick win opportunity that could be achieved with limited resources.

❖ Tree Planting

93. **Councillor Peter Jones** – Tree Planting - Provided an example of when they door knocked in a relatively affluent area in his ward – they offered residents an opportunity to have a mature tree planted outside their property for £56, and a staggering number of people agreed to pay up. They are trying to use the community budget to plant trees in less affluent areas.

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- **Best Practice & Practical Applications: Recommendation 17 – Connectivity** – Improving connectivity of habitat across Cardiff represents a big step towards enhancing biodiversity in the city. Section 6 of the Environment Wales Act states that a public authority must take account of the resilience of ecosystems, and makes specific reference to maintaining '*connections between and within ecosystems*'. Organisations such as the RSPB, Bug Life and Plant Life also advocate enhancing connectivity, while Councils such as Brent are running projects to improve nature connectivity. Members support this idea and recommend that the Council works with partner organisations and volunteer groups to:

  - **Recommendation 17 (a)** - Adopt a landscape-scale approach to pollinator conservation, i.e. to look at the challenges that biodiversity and supporting ecosystems face across a wide area. This should involve working with partner organisations and volunteers to map nature connectivity so that it can identify how best to improve connectivity across the city. A good starting point would be to use the Cardiff 'B-Lines' data that was established in 2012, and to map out disused space, for example, abandoned railway lines.

  - **Recommendation 17 (b)** - Where connectivity gaps are identified, the Council should work with partners and volunteer groups to establish localised projects to bridge the gaps. Suggested projects or approaches include promoting the growth of wildflower verges and building wildlife friendly measures into new and renovated building developments.

  - **Recommendation 17 (c)** - The Council should work with property developers and the wider community to better support hedgehog highways. This would involve cutting 13cm x 13cm holes in garden walls and fences to allow hedgehogs to travel, feed and mate.

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- **Best Practice & Practical Applications: Recommendation 18 - Supporting & Developing Habitats**

The task group received lots of evidence that highlighted significant habitat decline, which in turn has had a negative impact on ecosystems and biodiversity. Reversing this trend requires developing more and supporting existing habitats, and witnesses such as the Welsh Government and CLAS Cymru identified a number of practical actions that they felt would help enhance natural habitats in Cardiff. Based on the comments made during the task & finish exercise the task group recommends that the Council:

- **Recommendation 18 (a) - Create Accessible New Habitats** – The Council should support the creation of new habitats, such as local orchards, native hedges, wildflower meadows or other areas of wildlife-friendly green space that is accessible to local communities. This can either be done on Council land or in partnership with other organisations. This approach should be built into Cardiff's Green Infrastructure Strategy.

- **Recommendation 18 (b) - Community Managed Spaces** – The Council should provide support for the development of community managed spaces. If the Council did this then CLAS Cymru could provide policy perspective and a link to the type of tools that can be accessed to develop such schemes. 90% of community managed spaces that are supported by CLAS Cymru rely on and support wildlife. Features that are common to community managed spaces include rain water harvesting; composting; healthy no dig soil; mulch; plants for pollinators; bees; insect hotels; compost toilets; ponds; forest garden planting; wild edges; fresh organic local food and natural predators for controlling pests.

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- **Best Practice & Practical Applications: Recommendation 19 - Community Growing**

  The 'Monmouthshire Community Growing Policy' was cited to Members as an example of good practice in terms of getting the community to grow more produce while supporting nature. It was created to allow the Council to make underutilised land in its ownership available for the community to grow food. This demand has been created through the lack of available allotment space, prevailing economic conditions and the need to develop more resilient communities. Monmouthshire County Council developed a policy and license that allows the use of small bits of Council owned land to grow food on. The creation and roll out of this policy has supported the 'Incredible Edible' movement, i.e. where groups of people get together to grow produce on easily accessible land and the produce can be taken away freely by anyone not just those who have worked to make the produce grow. The task group like this policy, and feel that the community growing approach produces added benefits for local biodiversity. They recommend that Cardiff follows suit by creating and publishing a community growing policy.

- **Best Practice & Practical Applications: Recommendation 20 - Verge Cutting & Wildflower Planting**

  The task group received evidence on the importance of proper roadside verge cutting and wildflower planting. They provide a much needed space for nature, enhance local ecosystems, support connectivity, are very beneficial to pollinators and can be very cost effective to deliver. Based on the evidence provided the task group recommends that:

  - **Recommendation 20 (a) - Highway Verge Cutting Process –** Plant Life explained that they have been asked by the Council to re-write its Highway verge cutting process. This has worked well in Dorset where they have stopped cutting verges as intensively, and has benefited local biodiversity. The task group recommends that the Council follows

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this approach, ensuring that service areas and contractors are made to follow the new process.

- **Recommendation 20 (b) - Highway Verge & Wildflower Areas Connectivity –** In conjunction with Recommendation 17, the task group recommend that highway verges and wildflower areas should be included into connectivity mapping. Where possible, the Council should also identify new pieces of land that are suitable for wildflower planting and work with volunteer or community groups to develop these areas, for example, in a similar way to the scheme that is being developed with the Cardiff Civic Society.

- **Best Practice & Practical Applications: Recommendation 21 - Biodiversity Friendly Buildings**

During the task & finish exercise witnesses emphasised the importance of biodiversity friendly buildings in urban areas. They provide a valuable habitat for nature, are able to act as a carbon sink, help buildings adapt to seasonal weather changes and are generally cost effective to deliver. It is also felt that they can make cities feel more pleasant and innovative. Examples of features included in biodiversity friendly buildings include green roofs, green walls, sustainable urban drainage and planted trees. Given the wider decline in natural habitats, Members recommend that the Council should do more to encourage the development of biodiversity friendly buildings in Cardiff. This could be done by:

- Talking to developers, local architects and surveyors about the benefits of the features of biodiversity friendly buildings;
- Promoting the approach and providing advice through the planning process;
- Documenting good practice and advice on delivering such schemes into planning guidance or policy, for example, including relevant information into supplementary planning guidance;
- Taking a lead in developing biodiversity friendly features on Council buildings and promoting the benefits of this approach.

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- **Best Practice & Practical Applications: Recommendation 22 - Tree Planting**

  Tacking climate change means that we will have to find effective ways of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The simplest and most effective way to do this is to plant trees, as they store carbon dioxide naturally. When Councillor Peter Jones from Swansea addressed the task group in July, he explained that he and a few colleagues had decided to knock some doors in the ward that he represented to find out if local residents would like the opportunity to have a mature tree planted outside their property for £56. He was staggered by the response, with a large number of people agreeing to pay for a tree. Members were encouraged by this proactive approach, and felt that there was merit to replicating a similar scheme in Cardiff. The task group recommends that the Council works with Elected Members, partner organisations, volunteer groups and the public to develop a 'Plant a Tree Scheme'. The scheme could encourage the public to buy trees, and help to identify funding to pay for or offset the cost of the trees. In turn this would reduce Cardiff's carbon footprint, contribute to Cardiff's climate change emergency agenda and help increase tree coverage across the city.

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WITNESSES TO THE INQUIRY

94. During the inquiry the task group was grateful to the following witnesses who provided support, verbal evidence or written contributions:

- Councillor Michael Michael - Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment
- Councillor Caro Wild - Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport
- Councillor Peter Bradbury - Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure
- James Clemence - Head of Planning
- Simon Gilbert - Operational Manager, Development Management (Strategic & Place Making)
- Caryn Le Roux – Welsh Government
- Geoff Robinson – Welsh Government
- Matthew Harris – Ecologist, Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate
- Nicola Hutchinson - Parks Conservation Officer, Parks Services
- Kerry Rogers - Conservation Manager, Wildlife Trust
- Mark Tozer, Parks Development Officer, Parks Services
- Alan Abel - Complete Weed Control Limited
- Heather Galliford – Natural Resources Wales
- Geoff Hobbs – Natural Resources Wales
- Adam Rowe - South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC)
- Lucie Taylor - CLAS Cymru
- Colin Cheesman – Plant Life
- Clare Dinham – Bug Life
- Jazz Austin – RSPB
- Councillor Peter Jones – Swansea City Council
- Siobhan Wiltshire - Welsh Government
- Jo Smith – Welsh Government

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LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

95. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without modification. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet / Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal power of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. standing orders and financial regulations; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

96. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

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12 September 2019

Councillor Caro Wild,
Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport,
County Hall,
Atlantic Wharf,
Cardiff CF10 4UW.

Dear Councillor Wild,

Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems (BRED) Forward Plan

As you will be aware the Environmental Scrutiny Committee is currently in the process of finishing off a task & finish exercise titled 'Managing Biodiversity & Natural Environment in Cardiff'. As a part of this work they received a presentation on the 'Cardiff Green Infrastructure Plan' on the 27th June 2019; this document was structured around the 'Green Infrastructure Plan' and the 'Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Action Plan'.

Members are aware that Cabinet is due to receive a paper titled 'Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems (BRED) Duty' at its meeting on the 26th September 2019. As this refers to the 'Cardiff Green Infrastructure Plan' they have asked me to write to you in advance of this meeting to provide feedback, comments and observations on the content of the document. These are set out below:

- Members are supportive of the publication of the 'Cardiff Green Infrastructure Plan'. They believe that it will act as an important co-ordinating document that will help the Council and its partners to deliver a wide range to vital biodiversity projects, and in doing so contribute towards wider well-being objectives. They particularly welcome the introduction of the 'Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Action Plan' that contains information on projects being delivered in Cardiff to help meet this objective.

- The Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems (BRED) Duty Action Plan includes a table called the 'Green Infrastructure Implementation

Programme 2016 to 2019'. This table includes a number of columns including 'Action' and 'Delivery focus' that are designed to explain what the projects are and how they will be delivered. Members agreed that the structure of the table was sound; however, the key columns lacked detail. They felt that each project documented in the table required:

- A detailed explanation of what the project involved;
- A starting point for the basis of the work;
- An explanation on reporting and monitoring for the project;
- The aims and objectives for the project;
- Who would be responsible for the delivery of the project;
- Detail of the resources available to support the project.

- After reviewing the 'Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Action Plan', it became clear how important the contribution of volunteers and partnership working was to the delivery of the projects. Volunteer contributions do not happen by accident, they need the Council and other key partners to provide support and resource. It is not obvious from this document how support and resources will be made available to ensure that the projects are delivered. Members believe that if the Council is serious about delivering the volunteer projects, then it needs to confirm the support and resources that will be available to deliver each project.

- To support the delivery of the 'Cardiff Green Infrastructure Plan', the Members recommend that the Council should re-establish the Cardiff Biodiversity Partnership. This group could be tasked with overseeing the delivery of the projects contained within the 'Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Action Plan', and could provide Cabinet with regular updates. Some Members felt that the title of the group could be changed to 'Partnership for Nature' to better define its purpose, and that the partnership could be chaired by a Council appointed nature and biodiversity champion.

- Section 3.2.3 of the 'Green Infrastructure Plan' makes reference to urban 'brownfield' habitats and the importance that these can have on supporting

biodiversity in Cardiff. Given the pressure to develop 'brownfield' sites in the city, Members would like to understand what the Council can do in practical terms to support the range of biodiversity that relies upon these sites.

- Section 3.3.4 of the 'Green Infrastructure Plan' makes reference to a various forms of green infrastructure and the mitigating impact that these can have against climate change; this includes an acknowledgement of the contribution that trees can make. Members support this, however, feel that the document should go further and highlight current and potential future policies that the Council can use to protect and enhance tree coverage in Cardiff.

- Section 3.1.1 of the document makes reference to the six objectives of the 'Green Infrastructure Plan', these are:

  - Protecting the natural environment;
  - Protecting people and places;
  - Supporting the local economy;
  - Improving health;
  - Creating opportunities for people;
  - Enhancing local character and sense of place.

  Members welcome the creation of these objectives, however, recommend that the document sets out who will be responsible for each of the objectives and supporting actions. The task group would also welcome greater detail on how the supporting actions will be delivered, for example, timescales and actions for each delivery action.

I would be grateful if you would consider the above comments and provide a response to the content of this letter.

Regards,

Councillor Ramesh Patel

Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc:

- Andrew Gregory - Director of Planning, Transport & Environment
- James Clemence – Head of Planning
- Simon Gilbert – Operational Manager - Development Management (Strategic & Place Place Making)
- Matthew Harris - Ecologist
- Members of Cardiff's Environmental Scrutiny Committee

CYNGOR CAERDYDD

CARDIFF COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 NOVEMBER 2019

MEMBER BRIEFING NOTE: NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION

Reason for the Report

1. To provide Members with an opportunity to note the content of the Cabinet response to the Welsh Government's National Development Framework 2020-2040.

Background Information

2. The National Development Framework (NDF) is a new development plan which will set the direction for development in Wales from 2020 to 2040. It is being prepared by the Welsh Government and will represent the highest tier of statutory development plans in Wales.

3. It will provide a framework which will be built upon by Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) at a regional level and Local Development Plans (LDPs) at a local authority level. SDPs and LDPs will be required to be in conformity with the NDF.

4. The NDF is a spatial plan which means that it sets a direction for the future provision of infrastructure and development. It does not allocate exact locations for development but, in the case of SDPs, sets out the policies and key issues the Welsh Government requires the regions to take forward.

5. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 influences the content of the Plan which seeks to maximise contributions to the wellbeing goals and well-being objectives. The NDF also gives a spatial expression to Welsh Government policies of national importance and is intended to be read alongside 'Planning Policy Wales' (PPW), which provides planning policy on an all-Wales basis.

Issues

6. A copy of the Consultation Draft NDF is included in Appendix1 of this report. The front portion of the document outlines the scope of the NDF and sets out 11 overarching ambitions based on national planning principles and sustainable placemaking outcomes as outlined in PPW.

7. This is followed by the NDF Spatial Strategy which sets out a guiding framework for where large scale change and nationally important developments will be focused over the next 20 years. It contains a Spatial Strategy Key Diagram along with 15 policies based on three components:

- Where in Wales growth should be focused;
- How growth should be planned and managed;
- How we should power and heat places using renewable energy.

8. Particular attention is drawn to the final section of the document which sets out policies for the three regions in Wales including six policies relating to South East Wales. Relevant extracts from policies and their supporting justification set out below:

- ***Policy 27 – Cardiff -*** *Cardiff will retain and extend its role as the primary national centre for culture, sport, leisure, media, the night time economy and finance. The Welsh Government supports regional development which addresses the opportunities and challenges arising from Cardiff's geographic location and its functions as a Capital City. The Welsh Government supports Cardiff's status as an internationally competitive city and a core city on the United Kingdom stage.*

- ***Policy 28 – Newport -*** *The Welsh Government supports Newport as the focus for regional growth and investment and wants to see the City play an increased strategic role in the region. The strategic emphasis should be focussed on achieving growth in the city. Strategic and Local Development Plans across the region should recognise Newport as a focus for strategic housing and economic growth; essential services and facilities; transport and digital infrastructure; and consider how they can support and benefit from Newport's increased strategic regional role. Development in the wider region should be carefully managed to*

support Newport's growth and to provide a focus for regional planning. The Welsh Government will work with authorities within the region and in England to promote Newport's strategic role and ensure key investment decisions in Wales and England support Newport and the wider region.

- ***Policy 28 supporting text:*** *Cardiff is currently experiencing a period of growth in population and employment, but the city cannot continue to expand indefinitely without major consequences for the environment. It is a compact city nearing its physical limits, which include Caerphilly and Garth mountains to the north and the Bristol Channel to the south. Cardiff must generate and support regional growth throughout the south east while enhancing its status as a vibrant capital city of Wales.*

- *The Strategic Development Plan will need to consider the interdependence between Cardiff and the wider region. Regional transport infrastructure reflects the significance of Cardiff and has consolidated its role as the main focal point of the region. The potential to reach central Cardiff quickly and conveniently using the Metro generates opportunities for development in settlements outside the city. The cultural and economic strength of Cardiff must generate region-wide prosperity and well-being.*

- *The Welsh Government is determined to see development and growth in Newport, allowing the city to fulfil its potential as a second focal point for the region. It has significant brownfield development opportunities to provide new housing and employment areas. There are emerging highly skilled employment opportunities in the transport and digital communications sectors which should be catalysts for further economic investments. The Metro will improve the city's public transport system, especially within the city and to surrounding towns. It benefits from established road and rail links with Cardiff, Bristol and London.*

- *Growth at Newport will help manage the development pressures in Cardiff and provide a strategic focus for the eastern part of the region. Strategic growth should be focussed in and immediately adjoining Newport itself, to support brownfield regeneration.*

- ***Policy 30 – Green Belts in South East Wales -*** *The Welsh Government requires the identification of green belts through a Strategic Development Plan to manage urban form and growth in South East Wales, particularly around Newport and the eastern part of the region. Regional plans should consider the relationship of any new green belts with the green belt around Bristol.*

  - ***Policy 30 supporting text:*** *Strategic decisions on the location of development, key services and infrastructure should support the region's cities and Valleys communities and be taken on a regional basis, ensuring they are located in the most accessible and sustainable locations within the context of the whole region. The Welsh Government supports the use of green belts in the South East region in managing and planning urban growth. Planning Policy Wales sets out the policy context for them. The Strategic Development Plan must identify a green belt that includes the area to the north of the M4 from the Severn Crossings to North Cardiff.*

Cabinet Response

9. In response to the details set out in the National Development Framework 2020 – 2040: Consultation Draft (attached to this report as **Appendix 1**) the Cabinet report made the following comments:

- *The Cabinet welcomes a strategic approach to development in Wales and recognises the opportunities for using the planning system to address national and regional priorities. Clearly, a strategic approach can play an important role in informing the infrastructure investment and developments needed to deliver in areas relating to economic growth, decarbonisation, resilient ecosystems, health and community well-being. As a major urban area, Cardiff particularly welcomes Policy 1, which explicitly supports sustainable urban growth given it is uniquely positioned to deliver on this.*

- Of particular relevance to Cardiff are statements which recognise and support the key role played by cities and large towns by:

  - Encouraging sustainable and efficient patterns of development;

- Co-locating homes with jobs and vital services and the efficient use of resources;
- Focussing on cities and large towns as the main development areas;
- Creating concentrations of jobs, services and amenities;
- Creating a critical mass to support and sustain good public transport services and encourage active travel.

- *For this approach to function effectively however, the National Development Framework must be informed by, and respond to, the major demographic, economic, housing and transport trends across Wales. This is particularly relevant for Cardiff, given that its size and scale is of regional and national significance.*

- *For example, Cardiff is projected to be the fastest growing UK Core City and over the next 20 years is projected to grow by more than every other Welsh Local Authority combined. Cardiff is also the economic powerhouse of Wales with 82% of net new jobs created in Wales over the last 5 years created in the capital city. The regional significance of the capital city is further underlined by the fact that over 100,000 commuters travel into Cardiff rom outside the local authority boundary every day. Cardiff's population and economic growth therefore represents a major opportunity for Wales that the National Development Framework, as currently drafted, significantly underplays, placing a disproportionate emphasis on the challenges associated with growth.*

- *For example, Policy 28 recognises the capital city's growth but states that "the city cannot continue to expand indefinitely without major consequences for the environment." The Council's LDP which is underpinned by a robust detailed evidence base demonstrates clearly that significant capacity exists for Cardiff to grow sustainably and in accordance with place-making principles for the duration of the plan period. Furthermore, significant brownfield contributions over recent decades have played a key role in delivering sustainable growth in Cardiff and there is no new evidence within the NDF to suggest that further contributions may not be achieved beyond the current plan period. Policy 28 therefore fails to recognise the sustainable city paradigm where critical mass and agglomeration effects can have major advantages for both the economy and the environment.*

- *The National Development Framework identifies "Newport as the focus for regional growth and investment." Cardiff Council fully supports the growth of Newport- as well as any other major conurbation area within the region in line with the principles expressed in Policy 1 of the Framework. However, the Council is very concerned that rather than promoting and supporting economic and population growth in Cardiff and Newport the Framework is instead proposing a dispersal of growth from Cardiff to Newport.*

- *Cardiff Council would argue that such a policy of dispersal could undermine Cardiff's role as the economic driver of the Welsh economy, and run counter to delivering sustainable long-term economic growth in Wales. A policy of dispersal runs the real risk that the jobs and investment currently attracted into Wales by the capital city will not be deflected to Newport but instead would be directed to Bristol and other core cities, and thus not come to Wales at all. The Council would instead argue that the Framework should respond to the national trends outlines in paragraph 12 through seeking to support the Cardiff's population and economic growth, and the unique role the city economy plays in the national economy, whilst ensure that the benefits of this growth are felt across the wider Capital Region.*

- *In supporting the proposal that 'the cultural and economic strength of Cardiff must generate region-wide prosperity and well-being,' the Council would also urge the Welsh Government to ensure that national policy recognises the significant inequalities that exist within Cardiff. For example, if the 'Southern Arc' of Cardiff, Ely in the West to Trowbridge in the East, and area with a greater population than Newport, was a single local authority it would be by far the most deprived in Wales. The economic growth in the city centre must lead to improved outcomes for deprived and disconnected communities within the city and the wider city region.*

- *The Council is very concerned that the statements above (para 8) appear in the Framework devoid of reference to any evidence base. It is in the Council's view considered inappropriate for the National Development Framework to include unqualified statements, for example relating to Cardiff's growth potential, in the absence of robust evidence in the form of urban capacity studies and other*

relevant data that would be expected in the development of LDPs and in any future SDP. Given the role that the National Framework will play in informing both the Strategic Development Plan and Local Development Plans it is imperative that it is underpinned by the same rigorous and detailed evidence base expected at local and regional levels. The Council is concerned that this is not currently the case.

- *This report in the main limits our comments to those parts of the NDF dealing directly with Cardiff. Nevertheless, we have significant concerns about other aspects as well. These derive broadly from the incompatibility of having an evidence-weak NDF which would in turn form the basis of SDPs an LDPs which must be evidence-led. We reserve the right to make further comments as appropriate on aspects beyond Cardiff.*

- *The Council would also argue strongly that the proposals such as those in Policy 28 do not belong in a National Development Framework, but is instead a decision for Strategic and Local Development Plans.*

- *In summary, while Cardiff Council welcomes a great deal in the National Development Framework for the reasons outlined above the Council cannot support the NDF as currently drafted.*

- Cardiff Council would therefore welcome further dialogue with Welsh Government to more fully demonstrate how the city is uniquely positioned to deliver on the 11 outcomes of the National Development Framework, and how this role can be more clearly expressed in the final version of the document. This dialogue could also explore how robust local evidence can help inform the development of the National Framework to ensure that any national plan benefits from the same rigorous assessment as local plans.

Report Recommendations

10. In response to the report, the Cabinet was '*recommended to approve the proposed response to the NDF Consultation Draft as set out in paragraphs 9-20 of the Cabinet report and seek further dialogue with Welsh Government to address the issues raised'*.

Way Forward

11. Members are to note the contents of the Member Briefing Note.

Legal Implications

12. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

13. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

i. Note the content of this Member briefing note.

DAVINA FIORE
Director of Governance & Legal Services
25 September 2019

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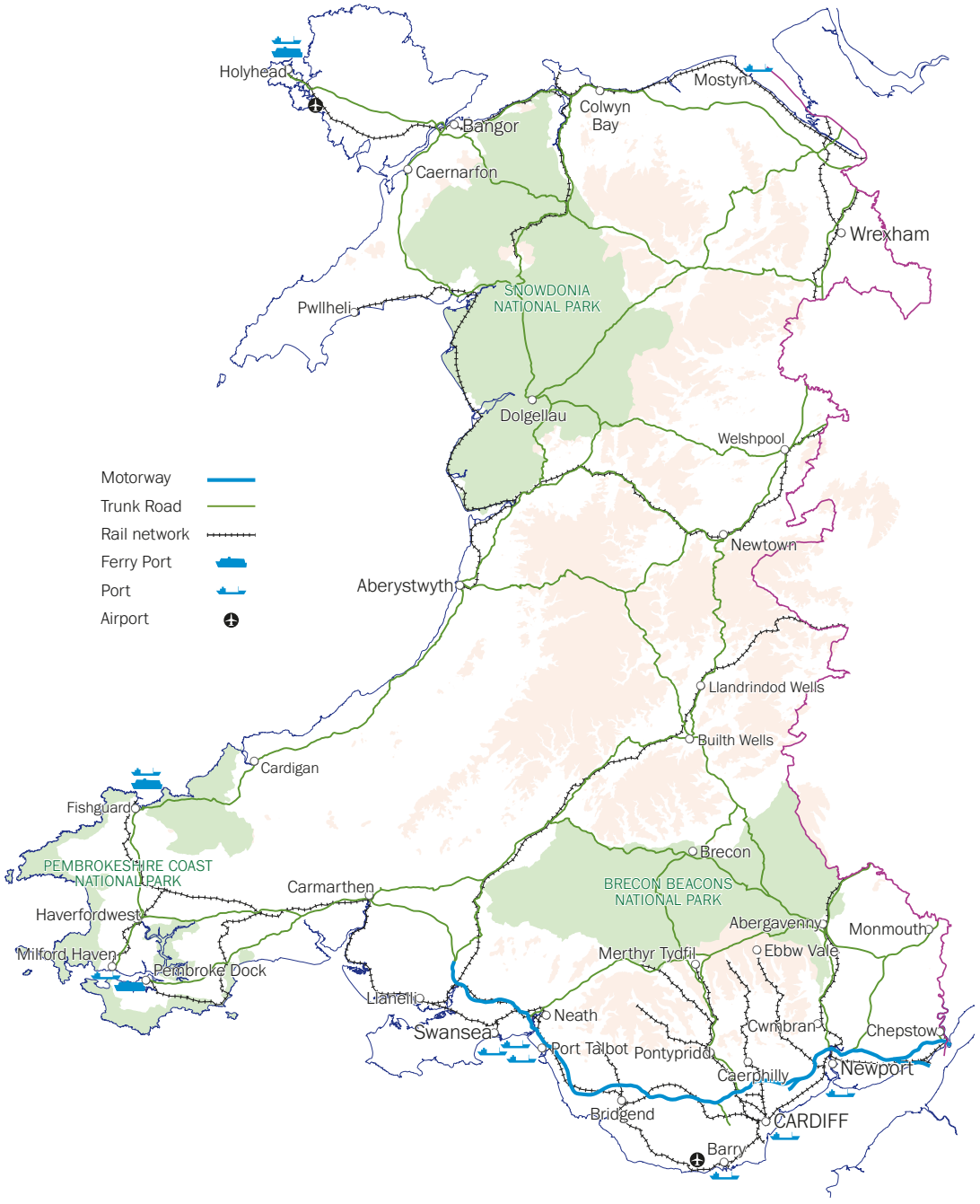
National Development Framework 2020-2040

Consultation Draft: 7 August – 1 November 2019

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. / This document is also available in Welsh.

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Foreword by Mark Drakeford

This National Development Framework sets out where we think we should try to grow and the types of development we need over the next twenty years to help us be a sustainable and prosperous society.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act means the Welsh Government and other public bodies must think about the long-term impacts of the decisions we make today, and this ethos is clear throughout the National Development Framework.

It is difficult to imagine how the world might look in 2040. We know there are significant challenges to meet, not least in tackling climate change. It is the globally defining challenge of our time and it is why we have declared a climate emergency. Tackling the causes and mitigating the effects of climate change is a key consideration in our plans and hopes for Wales.

The National Development Framework is another building block in making Wales a fair, green and prosperous place. It complements and builds on our national strategy, Prosperity for All, our Economic Action Plan and our plan for a Low Carbon Wales. The Well-being of Future Generations Act also commits us to the creation of a more equal Wales. We know from the UK2070 Commission that there are deep-rooted inequalities across the UK. The Commission concluded that in the UK "we are not taking full advantage of the economic potential that all parts of the UK have to offer". The National Development Framework has combatting inequality at its core.

It covers a range of issues and challenges, including energy supply, transport, the natural environment, housing and industrial development. We can't pretend that a long-term plan will eliminate all the tensions which are an inevitable part of policy making, but it will give us a basis for our decisions and help explain how decisions are reached. The National Development Framework is clear about what kind of place we want Wales to be by 2040 and that clear vision will be priceless as we take big decisions that affect the future of our country.

A great deal of collaboration from stakeholders and communities across Wales has gone into the preparation of this document and I am grateful for your continued support. The consultation on this draft National Development Framework is open until 1st November and I encourage you to get involved.

Mark Drakeford AM
First Minister of Wales

Foreword by Julie James

I am delighted to launch this consultation on the National Development Framework. It's an exciting responsibility to be putting forward the Welsh Government's twenty year spatial vision for development and I am confident it can support our ambition to make Wales a healthier, fairer and more prosperous place.

We know the next twenty years will see huge changes to the way we currently live our lives. We can expect the way we travel to be revolutionised with the growth of electric vehicles and the potential emergence of automated vehicles. The internet is already making us more flexible in where can do our work and it is likely that the role and function of town centres has changed forever. We also know that climate change demands different attitudes about energy and a long-term mind-set in all our planning.

The challenge for a plan like the NDF is not necessarily to predict how Wales might change over the next twenty years, but to make sure we can build a society and an economy that is flexible and resilient, to enable all of us to benefit from the changes in a sustainable way. It means the NDF has a strong focus on sustainable travel, with policies on Metro systems and charging infrastructure for low emission vehicles. It sets a clear vision for more renewable energy, coupled with a commitment for more and better green infrastructure.

One of my personal priorities as a Minister is to ensure everyone has access to a good home. As a country we have not provided the homes that meet all our needs. Market led housing provision has failed to meet the needs of far too many people. I look forward to future housing development that includes far more houses to rent from local authorities and other registered social landlords. I want a planning system that consistently delivers the homes that meet all our needs and a system that makes it easier to live active and healthy lives.

I hope the policies in the NDF, complemented by the strong leadership set out in the new Planning Policy Wales, will help make this a reality.

A really important feature of this document is the regional policies. Across the Government we are committed to enabling bespoke approaches that suit the different parts of Wales to be developed. We are proposing the same regional footprint as the Economic Action Plan, so that local planning authorities and their stakeholders have a consistent basis for regional working and are encouraged to move ahead with developing Strategic Development Plans.

I firmly believe our plan-led system will work most efficiently and deliver the best results when we have a complete coverage of plans across three tiers – national, regional and local. We are close to a full suite of Local Development Plans in local authority and National Park areas, and we can look forward to having the National Development Framework in place next year.

This is the first version of the NDF. It has benefitted hugely from the involvement and contribution of stakeholders throughout its preparation. The Welsh Government will review and update the NDF every 5 years, but I am very keen that we use this first opportunity to set an ambitious path towards making sustainable places that work for everyone in our society.

I look forward to hearing what you think of it.

Julie James AM
Minister for Housing and Local Government

1 Introduction

Managing change and planning development that will last for generations is one of the most important responsibilities of government. This document is the Welsh Government's twenty year plan for shaping the future growth and development of our country.

What is the National Development Framework?

The National Development Framework (NDF) is a new development plan which will set the direction for development in Wales from 2020 to 2040. It sets a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, decarbonisation, developing resilient ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

The NDF is a *spatial* plan, which means it sets a direction for where we should be investing in infrastructure and development for the greater good of Wales and its people. The NDF sets the challenge of delivering these improvements to public, private and third sectors. It makes clear the importance of *planning* new infrastructure and development in such a way they are complementary rather than competing priorities, ensuring opportunities are maximised and multiple benefits are achieved.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 influences the way we plan for new development; it demands that development and use of land contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Under the commitment to delivering sustainable development we will maximise our contribution to each of the well-being goals. Choosing where to invest or considering whether a development is suitable in a certain place are difficult decisions where a balance often has to be found between competing priorities. We must strive to find solutions which maximise our contribution to the goals and well-being objectives. The NDF provides leadership and strategic direction for taking these decisions.

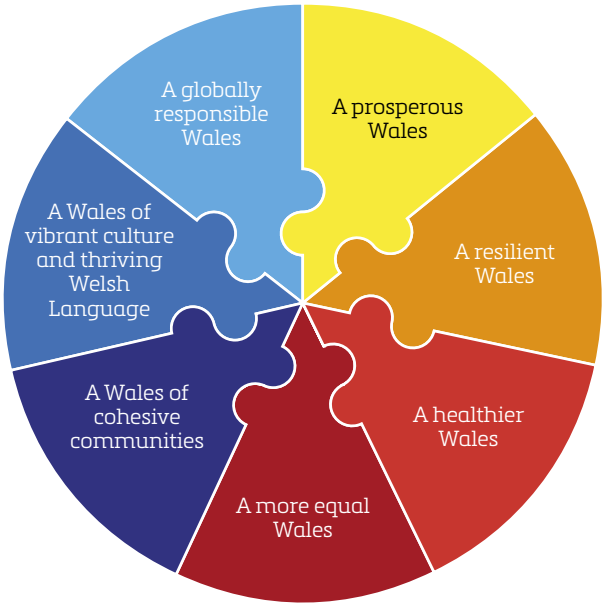
The NDF is the highest tier of **development plan** and is focused on issues and challenges at a national scale. Its strategic nature means it does not allocate development to all parts of Wales, nor does it include policies on all land uses. It is a framework which will be built on by Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) at a regional level and Local Development Plans (LDPs) at local authority level. These plans will identify the location of new infrastructure and development. SDPs and LDPs are required to be in conformity with the NDF and must be kept up to date to ensure they and the NDF work together effectively. Planning decisions at every level of the planning system in Wales must be taken in accordance with the development plan as a whole.

WILLMOTT DIXON

Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and the National Development Framework

The Act gives a legally-binding common purpose – the seven well-being goals – for national government, local government, local health boards and other specified public bodies. It details the ways in which these bodies must work, and work together, to improve the well-being of Wales. It is through the Act that Wales will make its contribution to the achievement of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

In developing the NDF, we have recognised our obligations under the Act. Embedding the principles of the Act, including the 5 ways of working (long-term thinking, prevention, collaboration, integration and involvement), within our strategic thinking and policy development has informed, influenced and shaped the NDF. We have carefully considered how the NDF reflects, aligns with and maximises its contribution to the well-being goals, objectives and ways of working.



Document Structure

The document follows a sequential structure, with each section building on the previous one.

Introduction	Challenges and Opportunities	NDF Outcomes	Spatial Strategy	The Regions

The first chapter explains how the NDF fits within wider Welsh Government policy objectives and the purpose of the NDF. Key challenges and opportunities facing Wales over the next 20 years are highlighted in Chapter 2. It also introduces the three regions of Wales and provides a background to the economic, environmental, cultural and social conditions in each region:

North Wales | Mid and South West Wales | South East Wales

The challenges and opportunities inform the **NDF outcomes**, which taken together are a vision for change over the next 20 years. These outcomes, set out in Chapter 3, form the basis and the context for the remaining chapters.

A spatial strategy is presented in Chapter 4. The strategy focuses on the major patterns of development and areas of change on which the planning system at a national scale will focus to achieve the NDF outcomes. The spatial strategy is the overarching framework for deciding where to locate nationally significant developments, in order to maximise their contribution to the well-being goals. A strategic diagram shows the main components of the spatial strategy.

Chapter 4 also provides a policy framework for all-Wales issues of national importance, including renewable energy, affordable housing, mobile communications, ecological networks and charging infrastructure for electric vehicles.

Chapter 5 sets the Welsh Government's ambitions and policies for nationally important growth and development in the three **regions**. It highlights the key locations for development, identifies opportunities for developing infrastructure and sets a framework for regional and local planning.

How does the NDF fit with wider Welsh Government policy?

The NDF gives a spatial expression to Welsh Government policies of national importance. Policies and strategies on wide-ranging matters such as housing, transport, energy, natural resources and health have implications for all parts of Wales and can be supported if the planning system is aligned to deliver their aims. The NDF ensures the aims of the planning system across Wales are consistent with, and support the delivery of, Welsh Government policies.

The role and purpose of the NDF is defined by legislation and by the Programme for Government. The NDF is highlighted in *Prosperity for All: the national strategy* as holding an important role in driving sustainable growth and combating climate change by guiding strategic development over the next 20 years.

The NDF should be read alongside *Planning Policy Wales* (PPW) which provides planning policy on an all-Wales basis. The NDF complements PPW, with a shared commitment to placemaking and by setting out the spatial priorities for planning and development where national-level consideration is required. In combination, and supplemented by

Technical Advice Notes and procedural guidance, the NDF and PPW ensure the planning system across Wales is fully aligned in working towards national ambitions and well-being goals. The NDF does not repeat PPW nor cover all of the same policy areas. Together they set out how the planning system responds to and addresses national challenges and opportunities.

The NDF will be used to guide both public and private investment. Our aim is to ensure investments and developments – whether large or small in scale – contribute to the broader ambitions of the Welsh Government and to the well-being of communities. A broad range of Government strategies and policies have helped shape the NDF, including the Welsh National Marine Plan, the Transport Strategy and the Low Carbon Wales plan. The relationship is two-way with the NDF taking strategic direction and providing a means of delivery and a framework for maximising the potential outcomes.

We will lead the way with our own investments. The NDF will complement the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan and Regional Economic Development Plans by enabling development that maximises the impacts of our investment. The scale of ambition for change outlined in the NDF reflects the ability of the public sector to deliver new development. The NDF spatial strategy will inform the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan in determining our capital investment priorities, aligning the planned programme of infrastructure investments in Wales with the NDF's spatial approach.

The Welsh National Marine Plan is the first marine plan for Wales and represents the start of a process of shaping our seas to support economic, social, cultural and environmental objectives. Marine planning will guide the sustainable development of our marine area by setting out how proposals will be considered by decision-makers. The NDF and Marine Plan work together to provide a framework for the management of change around our coast. Co-ordination between marine and terrestrial planning is important to sustain and facilitate the development of port, harbour and marina businesses and associated enterprises; coastal communities; tourism opportunities; energy generation; and seascapes. The emerging Welsh National Marine Plan has informed the preparation of the NDF and, where relevant, should inform Strategic and Local Development Plans and decisions made through the development management process.

The NDF replaces the Wales Spatial Plan.

The NDF and Habitats Regulation Assessment

Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (and Regulation 102 of the Habitats Regulations), an assessment is required where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect upon a Natura 2000 (European designated) site. Specific mitigation measures have been recommended in the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the NDF to provide a strong guide to lower-tier plans and projects. It concludes that, on the assumption that these mitigation measures are adopted at the lower-tier planning or project scales, significant effects would be avoided. The Welsh Government therefore expects the findings of the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the NDF to be taken into consideration during their preparation and implementation of all development plans, including Strategic and Local Development Plans.

How does the NDF fit with Strategic and Local Development Plans?

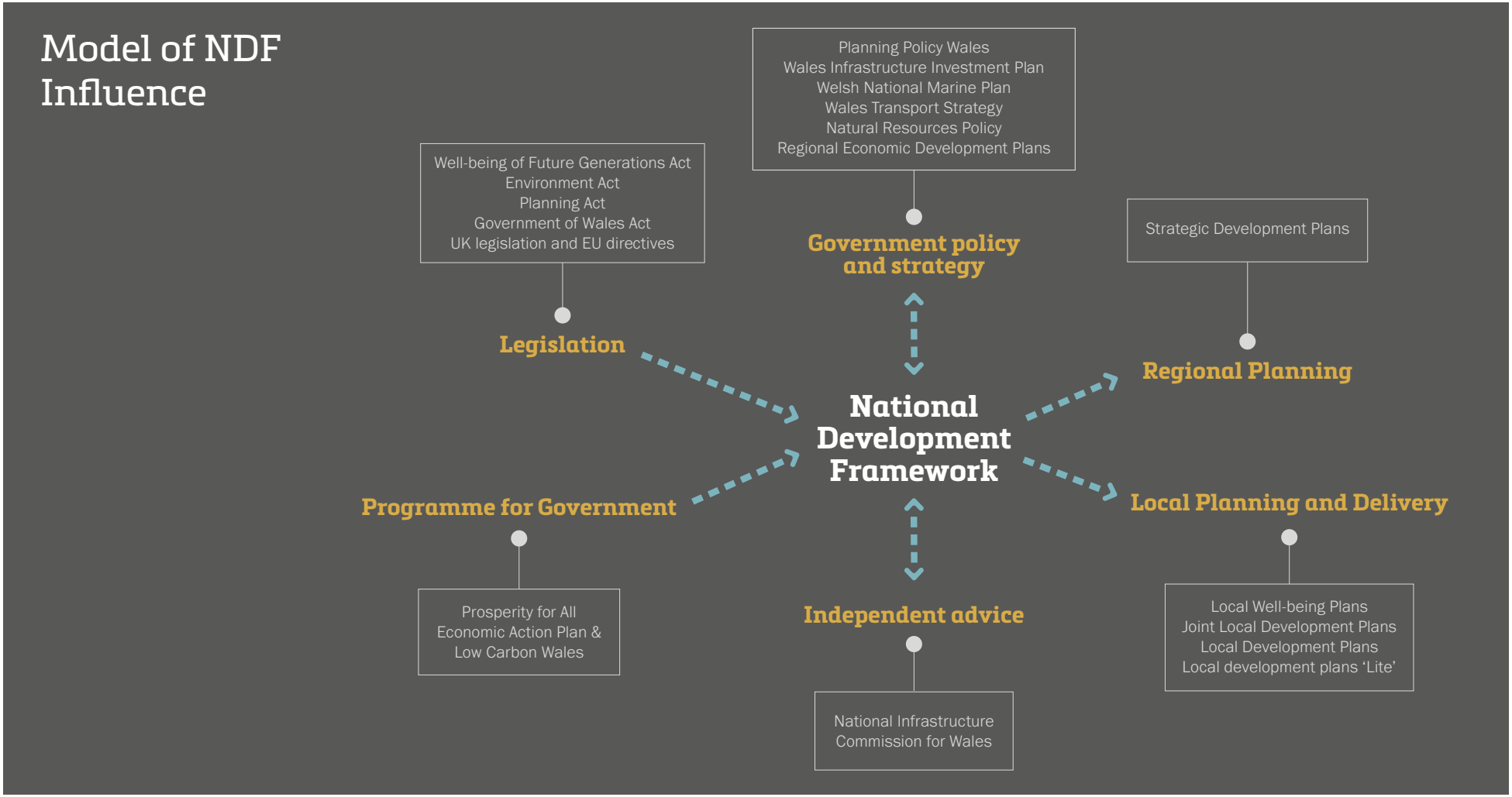
There are three different tiers to the development plan in Wales – the NDF, Strategic Development Plans and Local Development Plans. The NDF is all Wales; Strategic Development Plans are prepared at a regional level covering more than one local planning authority area; Local Development Plans are prepared by each individual local planning authority.

Strategic and Local Development Plans must support the implementation of the NDF, and the strategic decisions they take must conform with the direction provided by the NDF.

The role of each development plan is to plan and manage land use at its spatial scale. The NDF therefore considers issues at the national scale, Strategic Development Plans cover regional or sub-regional scales and

Local Development Plans consider issues at the local scale. All three tiers are important and it is the collective effect of all tiers working together that is the strength of the planning system in Wales.

The NDF and its spatial strategy has been prepared in the context of the three tiered development planning system. The NDF does not seek to take decisions that are most appropriately taken at the regional or local level. It provides direction and in the case of Strategic Development Plans, sets out the policies and key issues the Welsh Government requires the regions to take forward. It does not seek to identify the exact location for new development, the scale of growth in individual settlements or prescribe precise boundaries of areas where development should not take place. The regional and local tiers are the most appropriate level at which to take these decisions, involving communities as they do so.



2 Wales: An Overview – Challenges and Opportunities

Wales is a nation with a long and proud history and a rich social and cultural heritage. We face challenges and opportunities and are committed to protecting the well-being of our future generations.

Changing population

We are a nation of over 3 million people, whose population has grown by 8% between 1997 and 2007 and are projected to rise by a further 4% between 2018 and 2038. We are an ageing nation, reflecting wider UK and European trends, and will have a third more people aged 65 and over by 2038. We are living longer but life expectancy is below the UK as a whole. Communities are spread across Wales from the populated northern and southern areas to sparsely populated mid Wales.

A living, thriving Welsh language

Welsh is a living language, with over 562,000 speakers across all parts of the nation. Our ambition for the Welsh language is to reach a million Welsh speakers, as well as increase the percentage of people who speak Welsh daily by 10% by 2050. Communities in the Welsh speaking heartlands in the north-west and west of Wales continue to live everyday life through a language spoken in our nation for 1,500 years.

Natural resources

Natural resources and resilient biodiversity and ecosystems support our well-being and prosperity; they have shaped our past and will shape our future. Welsh coal, steel and iron drove the industrial revolution, and our wind, solar and tidal resources point forward to a clean, sustainable future. We depend on high quality natural resources to fuel our industries, provide our food, clean air and water and create jobs and wealth. We are committed to living within our means, using only our share of the planet's resources and using them efficiently.

A living landscape

Our landscapes are amongst the best in the world and tell the story of our nation from volcanoes, glaciers, mountains and river valleys to castles, farms, industrial heritage and ports. A quarter of our country is covered by our three national parks and five areas of outstanding natural beauty. We have a number of World Heritage Sites and nature conservation areas, and our coast on three sides connects communities and people to the sea.

Industrial legacy

Our economy changed profoundly in the late 20th Century and will change again through the 21st. Wales' main population centres in south and north Wales were strongly tied to the traditional heavy industries they grew up around, and as these industries declined, so too did the local economies and the communities that relied upon

them. On average, economic activity, wages and productivity in Wales are lower than the UK average. Gross Value Added (GVA) per head in Wales in 2017 was £19,900 compared to the UK average of £27,300.

A changing economy

Our economy now is more service-based and there is an increasing focus on technology and the digital sector. Over the last 10 years the fastest growing parts of our economy in terms of employment have been in the information and communication sectors. Small and medium sized enterprises are an important part of our economy and grew more in Wales in 2018 than within the UK as a whole. Research and innovation are recognised as twin drivers for competitive economic advantage and driving productivity. The importance of developing an innovative and knowledge based society, built upon research and innovation, is an integral factor for driving our global competitiveness and supports our sustainable economic and social improvement ambitions.

Our visitors

We attract visitors from all over the world, with 10% of our overnight visitors coming from outside the UK. There were 96 million tourist day visits in 2018, 10 million overnight stays and around £6.3 billion generated from tourism for the Welsh economy.

A connected nation

We are an increasingly connected nation. 93% of homes and businesses have access to a superfast fixed broadband speed, though only 38% of homes in Wales use the service. The next stage is to develop access to ultrafast fixed broadband speeds. In 2018, ultrafast coverage rose by almost 20 percentage points, to cover 29% of Welsh homes and businesses. This figure remains behind the UK average, which is a consequence of our dispersed settlements and distinctive topography, and increasing coverage is a key goal.

Our place in the world

We live alongside our neighbours, with close ties across the border in north, mid and south Wales. There are almost 8 million people living within 50 miles of the Wales-England border. More than a fifth of our population was born in England. People travel daily in both directions to work, to shop, to socialise and access services and institutions. We visit and trade with Ireland, Europe and beyond and our ports, roads and rail lines are key connections into wider European networks. We are well connected to Europe but peripheral in a wider geographic context and will strive to maintain and enhance these connections.

Diverse regions

The **North Wales** region comprises Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, the Isle of Anglesey and Wrexham and is home to almost 700,000 people, of whom over 200,000 speak Welsh. Its dramatic landscape includes low lying coastal plains, mountain ranges and industrialised former coal fields. The population is concentrated in an arc along the coast from the Menai Straits to the border with England. The main concentration of population is in the east around Wrexham-Deeside.

The **Mid and South West Wales** region comprises Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys and Swansea and has a population of over 900,000 people, of whom over 200,000 speak Welsh. This large and diverse region includes some of the most rural and sparsely populated parts of the UK, and the urban, industrialised areas around Wales' second city, Swansea. The region has a renowned coastal environment and it includes two of Wales, three national parks.

The **South East Wales** region is geographically the smallest. It comprises Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan and is the most populous region of Wales, with over 1.5 million residents, of whom over 150,000 speak Welsh. The region includes the coastal cities of Cardiff and Newport and the former industrial heartlands of the South Wales Valleys.

Challenges & Opportunities

We face a number of challenges and opportunities and these have shaped our first NDF.

Climate change and the decline in biodiversity are global challenges and the biggest issues faced by our nation. Addressing these is our greatest responsibility when considering the legacy we will leave for future generations and as a consequence we have declared a Climate Emergency. In response to the challenge, we are committed to decarbonising Wales and to delivering healthy, resilient ecosystems. The NDF, together with Planning Policy Wales, will ensure the planning system nationally, regionally and locally focusses on delivering a decarbonised and resilient Wales through the places we create, the energy we generate and use, a circular economy, the houses we live in and the way we travel.

Wales can become a world leader in renewable energy technologies. Our wind and tidal resources, our potential for solar generation, our support for both large and community scaled projects and our commitment to ensuring the planning system provides a strong lead for renewable energy development mean we are well placed to support the renewable sector, attract new investment and reduce carbon emissions.

Wales has a rich variety of nature conservation sites, protecting a diverse range of important and unique habitats and protected species. **Ecosystems** underpin our well-being, health, economy, culture and identity. We depend on them to provide us with food, raw materials and clean water, and to regulate our climate and air quality. Many of our key industries such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, water and tourism rely on healthy, functioning ecosystems to prosper and to support communities across Wales. Ensuring the resilience of our ecosystems provides an opportunity to promote green growth and innovation to create sustainable jobs, sustain a more resource efficient economy and maintain healthy, active, sustainable and connected communities.

As our climate changes, pressure on **water resources** is predicted to increase. The supply and management of water will be of increasing importance. Currently, Wales can meet its water needs and we are able to transport water from source to areas of demand. The location of future growth provides an opportunity to consider where we will need water and how we safeguard our resources in the future. Focussing development in existing built-up areas reduces the likelihood of a need for significant new sources of water, but we must recognise the potential impact of climate change on the supply and availability of water.

The management of our **coasts** is important for all regions in Wales. The built-up coastal areas are where the majority of people live. In coastal areas Shoreline Management Plans identify opportunities to build ecosystems resilience and inform spatial choices in relation to development, taking into account erosion and current and future flood risks.

Travel across Wales is shaped by our topography and the distance between the main built-up areas in the north and south. Connections between North Wales and South Wales are fragmented and it is not possible to travel by train without leaving the country. East-West connections are better, but the road and rail networks can be congested. Significant investment in public transport, including Metro schemes and active travel infrastructure, including the walking and cycling routes being developed as a result of the Active Travel Act, provide an opportunity to re-think how our places work. Growth should be shaped around sustainable forms of transport and deliver places that make us and the environment healthier. The National Cycle Network is an important part of our national infrastructure and its planned improvements are supported.

Aggregates underpin economic growth, providing construction related products essential for the delivery of placemaking, housing and infrastructure. When construction leads to a spike in demand, caused for instance by major infrastructure projects, pressures are placed on

the minerals industry to provide the necessary materials. Effective planning ensures a good stock of permitted reserves is available to supplement existing productive capacity at any given time. A reliable supply of minerals, capable of meeting demand in all regions of Wales simultaneously, is vitally important.

The pace of change in **technology** is a challenge and opportunity for all nations. The jobs that future generations will do may not have been invented yet. Automation and Artificial Intelligence technologies will impact on all occupations. Advancements in technologies like electric vehicles, coupled with mobile applications which provide bespoke transport services, have the potential to re-shape the way we travel, the vehicles we own, public transport and the places we will live in. Work patterns have the potential for change too, becoming more flexible in terms of location and hours. The NDF and Planning Policy Wales support the provision of the infrastructure required to support new technologies and to ensure the places we create in the future can support our changing society.

The NDF has been prepared at a time when the UK is changing its relationship with Europe. Since 2016 **Brexit** has been central to public debate and has given rise to profound uncertainty on our future relationship with Europe and a wide-range of well established policy frameworks, which impact all aspects of our lives. As a nation, we are especially vulnerable to the impacts of Brexit. Both agricultural funding and regeneration programmes are areas of major public policy which have been shaped by wider European policies and funding. In response the NDF seeks to provide a positive, proactive framework to give certainty and direction on where Wales will grow and where we will invest. It also provides a framework responsive to changing circumstances to ensure that we are able to take decisions on future policy issues that are still to be defined.

Prosperity and reducing inequality remain the priorities Welsh Government policies. Prosperity is not equal across all parts of Wales, and West Wales and the Valleys continues to be recognised within Europe as one of the less developed regions. Health varies across Wales, with our poorest communities experiencing pronounced differences in health outcomes. The NDF provides a framework for regional planning to tackle regional inequalities and ensure that the most prosperous parts of Wales play a role in supporting their wider regions. It will ensure we take action to meet the needs of those struggling to access housing and that the places we create make us happier and healthier.

Good quality **affordable homes** are the bedrock of communities and form the basis for individuals and families to flourish in all aspects of their lives. The NDF provides evidence of the need for housing across Wales at both a national and regional level. In particular, this evidence demonstrates the need for a focus on increasing the delivery of affordable homes. The Welsh Government is targeting its housing and planning interventions towards achieving this aim within the broader context of increasing supply and responding to different needs.

Our society is **ageing** and we need to think about the type of houses in which we will live in the future; where they are; the social and healthcare services that will support us; and the type of places that we as an ageing population would like to live in. It is also a reminder that we need to retain and attract young people and promote active lifestyles. The NDF, together with Planning Policy Wales, places a strong focus on the places we create through our planning system. Building new houses or infrastructure is not an end itself; we are determined to create places that support our well-being across the whole of our lives.

The NDF will help us prepare for the future. The NDF Outcomes set out the Wales we wish to pass on to future generations.

3 NDF Outcomes

Identifying what we want to achieve is an important step in preparing a strategy for a development plan. The NDF Outcomes are overarching ambitions based on the national planning principles and national sustainable placemaking outcomes set out in Planning Policy Wales. The 11 outcomes are collectively a statement of where we want to be in 20 years time. Every part of the NDF, from the spatial strategy to regional policies, is concerned with achieving the NDF Outcomes. Most policy areas will contribute to multiple outcomes.

Through the NDF, we will develop:

A Wales where people live....

1. and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places
2. in vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services
3. in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth
4. in places with a thriving Welsh Language
5. and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth
6. in places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted
7. in places where travel is sustainable
8. in places with world-class digital infrastructure
9. in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution
10. in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems
11. in places which are decarbonised.

The 11 Outcomes can be achieved over the next 20 years if the planning system – through the NDF and other development plans – is focussed on the long-term and provides quality development in the right places for the right reasons. These Outcomes are inter-related and inter-dependent, and will improve places and well-being across Wales.

Colwyn Bay
Abergele
Towyn
Rhyl

Outcome

1	**Our cities, towns and villages will be physically and digitally well connected, offering good quality of life to their residents.** High-quality homes meeting the needs of society will be well-located in relation to jobs, services and accessible green and open spaces. Places will meet and suit the needs of a diverse population, with accessible community facilities and services.
2	**In rural areas, job opportunities and community services will be supported to help attract and retain people.** A balance will be found between development and preserving the character of rural Wales, ensuring our small towns and villages have bright futures as attractive places to live and work. There will be support for the agricultural sector and its supply chains to boost resilience through diversification.
3	**The regional approach will recognise that different parts of Wales work differently to each other, with distinct underlying characteristics and challenges.** The three regions will address inequalities by building stronger links between public services, communities and business. Each region will be encouraged to build on their existing strengths and pursue opportunities to achieve greater prosperity and well-being.
4	**We aim to have a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 – an increase of almost 80% on current levels.** Where Welsh is the everyday language of the community, development will be managed to ensure there are jobs and homes to enable the language to remain central to those communities' identities. Elsewhere education authorities will lead in developing infrastructure to enable the language to develop as a natural, thriving part of communities.
5	**Cities and large towns are magnets for jobs and investment, while people are drawn to live and work there for the economic and social opportunities they provide.** Development plans will enable and support aspirations for large towns and cities to grow, founded on sustainability and urban design principles, active travel and investment in key built and green infrastructure to enable population and economic growth whilst reducing pollution. Areas outside the urban centres will benefit directly from the strength of our large towns and cities, through improved connectivity and additional investment in new homes, jobs and services.
6	**Development Plans will have a forward thinking, positive attitude towards enabling economic development, investment and innovation.** Increased prosperity and productivity will be pursued across all parts of Wales, building on current activity and promoting a culture of innovation, social partnership, entrepreneurialism and skills-development in sustainable industries and sectors. The culture, heritage and environment of Wales will play a positive, modern role in the economy by attracting the interest and expenditure of tourists, and providing a distinctive and trusted brand for Welsh businesses.

7	**All methods of travel will need to have low environmental impact and low emissions, with ultra low emission vehicles and public transport replacing today's petrol and diesel vehicles.** Active travel and public transport will be a significant part of the transport mix, allied with a reduced reliance on private vehicle use, with sustainable transport infrastructure embedded within new developments to enable easy and convenient access from one place to another for commuting, business, tourism and leisure purposes.
8	**Broadband provision will develop and evolve, beginning with comprehensive coverage of superfast and progressing to ultra-fast fibre, which will help businesses to be more productive, resilient and innovative.** Better digital communication will enable changes to the economy and way of life, and ensure Wales can lead and keep pace with the latest global technological advancements.
9	**Wales' natural resources, including its minerals, coast, water, forests and landscape, support a range of activities and sectors and are assets of great value in their own right.** The environmental, social and cultural value of our resources will be managed, maintained and enhanced, while economic benefits will be utilised sustainably and appropriately by promoting nature-based solutions and a circular economy. Across Wales better resource choices will be reflected in more sustainable places, which benefit from reductions in levels of pollution, and be healthier and more liveable.
10	**The variety of flora and fauna found across Wales make Wales a special place.** Biodiversity underpins the functioning of healthy resilient ecosystems and the multiple benefits they provide. While biodiversity has declined in recent decades, we will reverse these losses and enhance the resilience of ecosystems. The planning system will ensure wildlife is able to thrive in healthy, diverse habitats, both in urban and rural areas, recognising and valuing the multiple benefits to people and nature.
11	**The challenges of climate change demand urgent action on carbon emissions and the planning system must help Wales lead the way in promoting and delivering a competitive, sustainable decarbonised society.** Decarbonisation and renewable energy commitments and targets will be treated as opportunities to build a more resilient and equitable low-carbon economy, develop clean and efficient transport infrastructure, improve public health and generate skilled jobs in new sectors.

4 Strategic and Spatial Choices: the NDF Spatial Strategy

A spatial strategy sets a structure for the type and location of development across the plan area. It highlights the key settlements in which development will be focussed and the infrastructure, transport, actions and resources required to support the strategy.

The NDF spatial strategy is a guiding framework for where large scale change and nationally important developments will be focused over the next 20 years. The strategy blends the existing settlement patterns and the distribution of jobs and homes with a vision of managing change and future trends for the benefit of everyone in Wales.

The spatial strategy supports the NDF Outcomes. Decisions taken at a national level, including Welsh Government investment choices, will reflect the principles of the strategy and make positive contributions towards the national placemaking objectives.

Our strategy is to build on existing strengths and to consolidate advantages. It encourages sustainable and efficient patterns of development, based on co-locating homes with jobs and vital services and the efficient use of resources. It contributes to achieving decarbonisation and biodiversity objectives and supports national ambitions for improving health. It enables the creation of thriving, sustainable communities and is aligned with the Welsh Government's broader goal of encouraging a million people to speak the Welsh language by 2050.

Co-locating homes, jobs and services means focusing on cities and large towns as the main development areas. Developing our urban areas to enhance their performance will be challenging, but we firmly believe it is the right ambition for Wales and supports the Welsh Government's commitment to social justice. Choosing to develop new towns and enabling sprawling greenfield development would be to ignore the untapped potential of places which already have town centres, universities and colleges, public transport infrastructure and a good range of public services. It would also squander key assets in the form of productive countryside and natural resources.

The focus on growing urban areas will create concentrations of jobs, services and amenities and a critical mass of people to sustain good public transport services and a range of economic activities. An urban growth focus enables more people to walk and cycle for everyday journeys and, with good urban design, can create positive impacts on public health, air quality and well-being.

Sustainable growth will involve setting an ambitious strategy for achieving biodiversity and green infrastructure enhancement in our urban areas. Effective and innovative nature-based solutions to the challenges of urban form, design and density will be required in order to reap the well-being rewards of living and working in exemplar, future-resilient settlements.

In all parts of Wales, the strategy supports sustainable growth. Any place without jobs, homes, community spaces and wildlife has no prospect of having a thriving and cohesive community, Welsh language or economy. There is such a thing as too much development or the wrong type of development, whereas sustainable development should foster a stable or growing population to ensure a healthy natural environment and economic and social stability.

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Growth and new development must be in the right place, undertaken in the right way and make efficient use of our resources to achieve the NDF Outcomes. The spatial strategy has three components and sets out:

- where in Wales growth should be focused;
- how growth should be planned and managed
- how we should power and heat places using renewable energy and district heat networks.

Spatial Strategy: Where Wales will grow

Population trends in Wales have historically reflected economic fortunes, with people drawn to the areas where jobs were available. Over two centuries this has resulted in the development of three main urban clusters of cities and towns:

- Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys;
- Swansea Bay and Llanelli; and
- Wrexham and Deeside.

Each of these urban areas is economically distinctive, supporting a range of businesses, enterprises and universities, and offering culturally rich lifestyles to residents and visitors. They are nationally significant places and this strategy promotes their continued growth and regeneration. As a result, new large-scale employment opportunities and housing growth will occur predominantly, though not exclusively, in these urban areas.

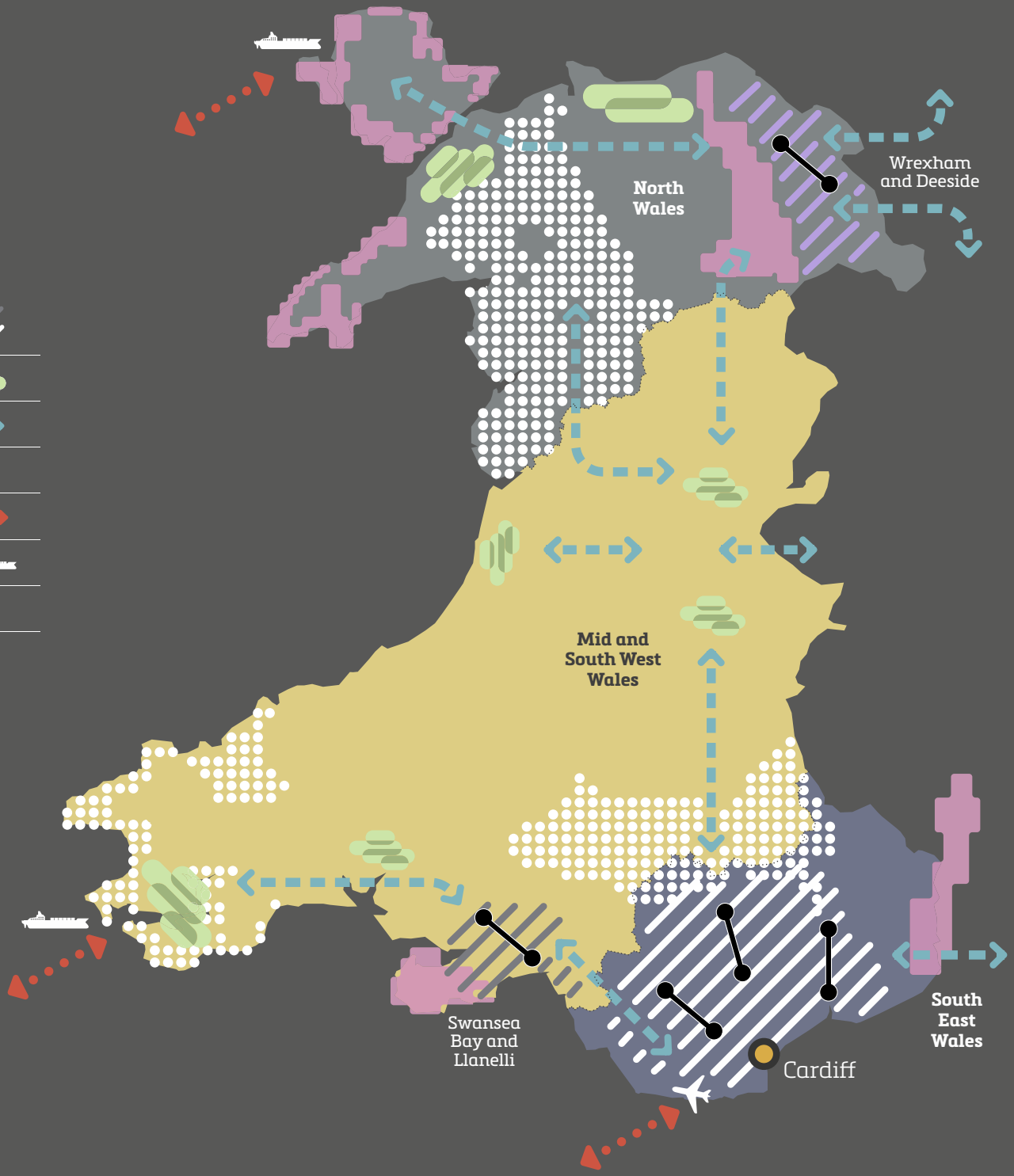
Outside of these areas are a mix of smaller towns and villages and large areas of countryside. Many towns are traditionally market towns and have retained the function of being gathering places for people living and working in rural places. Along the coast our maritime and resort towns remain popular places in which to live and visit, though there is a need for regeneration in some places. Development in towns and villages in rural areas will support local aspirations and need, complementing rather than competing with efforts to grow our cities and towns.

The NDF identifies a range of important regional centres which, through specific policies in Strategic and Local Development Plans, should retain and enhance the commercial and public service base that make them focal points in their areas. This will apply in places like Carmarthen, the Pembrokeshire Haven towns, Aberystwyth, Llandrindod Wells, Newtown, Caernarfon, Bangor and the coastal towns from Llandudno to Prestatyn.

By focussing large scale growth on the urban areas, development pressures can be channelled away from the countryside and productive agricultural land can be protected. Rural areas have an important function as providers of food, energy and mineral resources. Communities in rural areas are strongly supported; the aim is to secure sustainable economic and housing growth which is focussed on retaining and attracting working age population and maintaining and improving access to services. In areas designated for their landscape or ecological importance, protection against inappropriate development remains in place.

The spatial strategy empowers local policy and decision-makers to develop the national priorities through Strategic and Local Development Plans and identify areas and issues of significance to their particular areas.

Spatial Strategy



Policy 1 – Sustainable Urban Growth P1

Urban growth should support towns and cities that are compact and orientated around urban centres and integrated public transport and active travel networks. Higher density and mixed use development on sites with good access to urban centres and public transport hubs, including new and improved Metro stations, will be promoted and supported.

Spatial Strategy: Planning and managing growth

We want places to be healthy, prosperous, vibrant and cohesive, and to support well-being. How we shape places will determine how we respond to climate challenges and make use of our resources. It is important that places are well planned and have strategies for ensuring our needs and demands are met and managed in a sustainable way. Sustainably planned places reduce the need to travel by car; encourage walking, cycling and public transport; embed green infrastructure; and take action to ensure air is clean. They ensure homes and businesses are connected to essential services such as energy, water and broadband and provide different spaces for all our daily activities.

Planning is fundamental to achieving liveable, successful places. We set out in the preceding section those parts of Wales which will accommodate strategic growth. This section, which applies to all parts of Wales, sets out how this growth should be planned and managed to create sustainable places.

Supporting our urban areas

P1 The growth aspirations of the NDF are an opportunity to shape and grow, renew and regenerate our cities and towns and create sustainable, healthy places which embed green infrastructure. The Welsh Government wants towns and cities that are compact and organised around urban centres and public transport hubs.

Density is a key factor in shaping how places grow and function. Higher density development makes efficient use of land, requires less land to be developed and protects rural areas from loss of countryside. Higher densities provide the necessary intensity of people and activity to animate streets and public spaces, support high streets and sustain good public transport services.

Successful, healthy towns and cities have a rich mix of residential, commercial and community uses within close proximity to each other. This creates activity throughout the day and enables people to walk and cycle to school, work or the shops, rather than being reliant on travelling by car.

The density and mix of uses of development should reflect the site and area's wider context, particularly the proximity to an urban centre and the public transport accessibility. This variety will result in different areas having different characteristics, including some lively and busy areas and some quieter and more secluded areas, which will result in places that cater for varied lifestyles. However, low density and mono-functional development in areas with the potential for greater densities and a mix of uses, misses the opportunity to allow more people to live closer to transport hubs, jobs, services and cultural destinations and fails to create more sustainable places.

The Welsh Government promotes Transit Orientated Development, which involves the above mentioned principles of compact, higher density, mixed use development around transport corridors and stations. The Metro projects, which

Policy 2 – Supporting Urban Centres P2

Proposals for new public service facilities of a significant scale should be located in town and city centres. A sequential approach must be used to assess development plan allocations and to determine planning applications for developments. Only in exceptional circumstances should public service facilities of a significant scale be approved outside of town and city centres.

are at different stages of progress, all offer significant and timely opportunities to identify locations for Transit Orientated Developments around new and existing stations. Land in close proximity and with good access to Metro stations is an important and finite resource and will play a key role in delivering sustainable urban places.

Good planning and a commitment to excellence in urban design are required to successfully accommodate higher density developments. High density does not necessarily mean high rise and it should not be achieved by squeezing standard design houses closer together or by reducing internal living space. Urban solutions to the layout and design of development, including compact forms of development, are capable of integrating higher densities in a way that creates vibrant places, with a high quality public realm and a good quality of life. Incorporating green infrastructure, in particular, will require innovative design solutions to deliver wider well-being benefits.

These principles are applicable to towns and cities with good public transport links throughout Wales. They are scalable, with the definition of higher density and mixed use development varying in different places. Further guidance will be produced to support the implementation of the policy in different parts of Wales.

P2 The principle of 'town centres first' is well established in planning policy in relation to retail developments. However, good planning can help us re-think the future of town and city centres, which are moving away from their traditional retail roles. They remain important focal points of communities and are increasingly becoming places to live and work, centres of community and cultural activity, and the focus for public services such as health and education.

Public service facilities include hospitals, primary healthcare facilities, libraries, universities and colleges and any public sector organisation building which attracts significant numbers of workers and visitors. Local planning authorities, both urban and rural, should be confident in defining what constitutes development of 'a significant scale' for their area. Appropriate definitions can be produced through an understanding of the type and scale of development an area can expect, the quality of the public transport services they will rely upon and with local consultation.

Public investment and land

Investment by the public sector and the decisions it takes regarding its land can make a major contribution to shaping places. The Welsh Government and the wider public sector must lead the way in shaping sustainable places. Public services and facilities are central to our lives and support society best when they are accessible to all.

Major public buildings and facilities serve large populations, often well beyond the boundaries of the settlement. These include general hospitals, large government buildings, council offices, transport hubs, colleges and universities. Smaller developments which serve part of a city or town, including

Policy 3 – Public Investment, Public Buildings and Publicly Owned Land P3

Welsh Government investments and land holdings will support the delivery of sustainable places. We will work with all public land owners and investors to ensure that new development of a significant scale is located in town and city centres which are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.
Strategic and Local Development Plans should review publicly owned land, both redundant and in current use, to identify potential sites for development and re-development, including for mixed use and affordable housing developments that will support the creation of sustainable places.

schools and GP surgeries, may be more appropriate in accessible locations within neighbourhoods, particularly in or adjacent to local centres, where they can better meet the needs of communities.

P3 Policy P3 applies to major trip-generating developments, such as public service facilities, sport stadia, cultural venues and exhibition spaces which have the potential to drive regeneration and often rely on public funding.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act means all public sector bodies in Wales have a duty to deliver the well-being goals. This will require consideration of the wider implications of decisions in relation to the sale, re-use and development of publicly owned land.

In assessing the cost or value of the potential development of publicly owned land, either by the public sector or following a sale to a private or third sector interest, all potential costs should be considered. These include costs to the environment, climate change targets and wider society. A development in an unsustainable location that results in increased car trips, that is poorly served by public transport, that is inaccessible to the least mobile or poorest members of society, that fails to make a contribution to supporting vibrant town and city centres will have negative impacts on both current and future generations. A short term capital receipt or a cheaper development cost is unlikely to offset these longer term costs.

The Welsh Government, UK Government departments, local authorities and other public landowners should undertake strategic reviews of their land holdings in Wales and consider the NDF Outcomes and spatial strategy. Where publicly owned land could support sustainable places, positive consideration should be given to the future use of this land and whether it could, for example, support new mixed use development, including affordable housing and new commercial activities, or transport infrastructure.

Supporting our rural areas

Large parts of Wales are rural in character. Rural areas are sparsely populated, with 40% of the population living in settlements of less than 10,000 people in Wales, and they are integral to the health and livelihood of our nation. Like our urban centres, rural areas are diverse, with both prosperous and deprived communities, innovative businesses, essential resources and distinctive histories and cultures. They draw visitors to Wales from around the world and they play a major role in meeting our water, food and energy needs. They also include places where Welsh is the main language of the community.

It is important the challenges faced by the rural economy, in particular the agricultural sector, are at the fore when considering the future of rural areas and that the planning system responds to these challenges, facilitating appropriate new development and diversification.

Policy 4 – Supporting Rural Communities P4

The Welsh Government supports sustainable rural communities and appropriate proportionate growth in rural towns and villages.
The future for rural areas are best planned at the regional and local level. Strategic and Local Development Plans should plan positively to meet the needs of rural communities with regard to housing, transport, businesses, services and diversification in the agricultural sector.

Strategic and Local Development Plans should ensure people living in rural areas have access to jobs, services and social infrastructure of appropriate scale. They should support strong and resilient rural areas, with a positive framework for economic development, diversification and meeting local housing needs. Strategic spatial decisions must ensure the needs of the dispersed rural population are met.

P4 Rural towns are integral to their surrounding areas and should be supported. It is important that rural communities have appropriate access to wider job and economic markets, and decisions on regional economic development and transport infrastructure and services should consider the needs of all parts of Wales. It is also important that rural communities are able to develop stronger economies and support enterprise. Strong rural economies support strong and resilient communities, can reduce the need to travel, and reduce the reliance on a small number of larger economic centres. Priority should be given to economic activities with strong links to rural areas, including food and drink processing, energy generation, tourism and leisure, the environmental economy and businesses ancillary to farming, forestry and other rural economic activities. The improved provision of broadband in rural Wales supports an increasingly diverse business base.

The Welsh Government wants rural areas to sustain themselves and meet the needs of those living there and it also wants the Strategic and Local Development Plans prepared in rural areas to develop strong, ambitious policies that support rural areas. Where these plans identify growth in rural settlements, this will be supported where it is appropriate, proportionate to the needs of the settlement and the wider rural area they serve and where it has been planned through the evidence based, consultative development plan process.

In the preparation of development plans and in determining proposals through the Development Management process, decision makers should be confident in identifying which areas constitute ‘rural’ in the context of this policy. A rural location within proximity of the major urban areas experiences a different set of issues in terms of access to housing, employment, essential health, education and transport services than a rural location in central mid Wales and it may not be appropriate for rural focussed policy to be applied to both types of location equally. Through an understanding of the issues and geography of an area and through the preparation of development plans, appropriate definitions can be prepared.

The policies in this section on supporting urban centres, delivering affordable homes, supporting communities through the use of publicly owned land, mobile action zones and the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure all apply to Wales’ rural areas. They should be considered as priority issues for the preparation of Strategic and Local Development Plans across the whole of Wales.

Delivering Affordable Homes

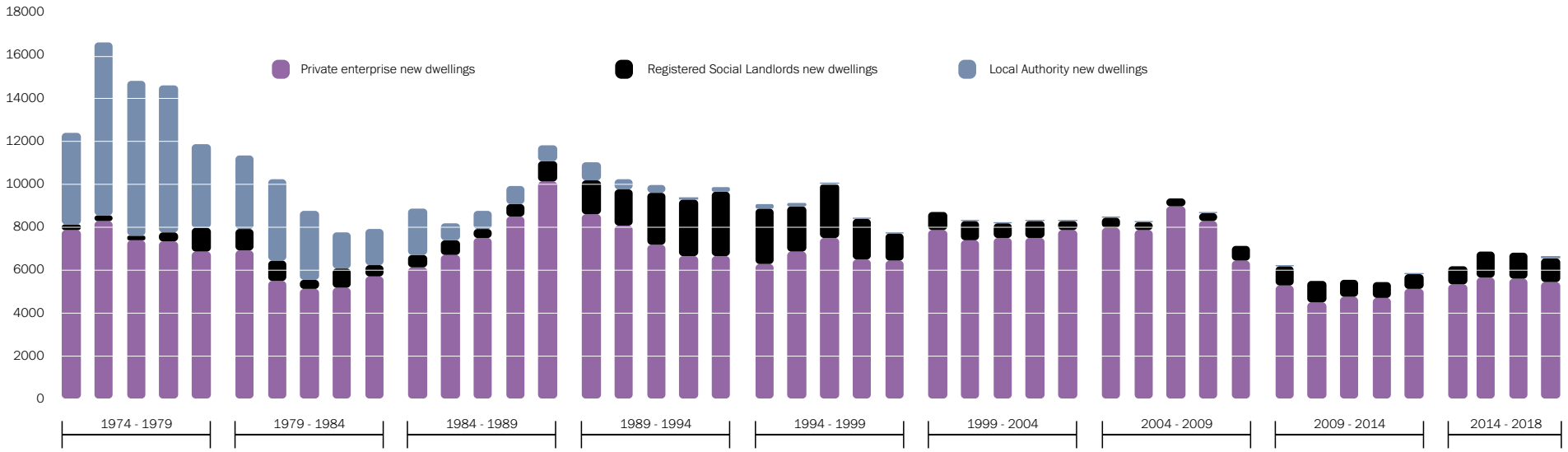
Providing housing in Wales at levels which meet our needs is a priority. There is a complex picture of provision and the opportunities people have vary significantly depending on income and where they live in Wales.

The Welsh Government has published a range of 'Estimates of housing need in wales' based on different demographic scenarios. The central estimate suggests a need for an additional 114,000 homes across Wales up to 2038. During the initial five years (2018/19 to 2022/23) it is estimated that on average 8,300 additional homes will be required annually, with more than half (57%) of these homes needed in South East Wales, almost a quarter (24%) in Mid and South West Wales and 19% in North Wales.

These estimates also indicate that the provision of affordable homes should become a key focus for housing delivery. It is estimated under the central estimate that on average 47% of additional homes should be affordable housing (social housing or intermediate rent) throughout 2018/19 to 2022/23, with the remaining 53% being market housing. This represents an average of approximately 3,900 affordable homes and 4,400 market homes per year over the five year period.

The scale of the housing challenge is illustrated in the Chart below, which demonstrates that delivery of new homes over the last ten years has not reached the level of additional homes that it is now estimated are required over the next five years.

Housing completions 1974-2018: Wales



Source: Information on new dwelling completions by financial year by tenure in Wales are based on the reports of local authority building inspectors and the National House Building Council (NHBC). It is sometimes difficult for building control officers who record the data to identify the intended final tenure of the property (the basis for the tenure information). This may lead to an under-count of social sector new house building and an over-count for the private sector. Therefore the tenure breakdown should be treated with caution.

Policy 5 – Delivering Affordable Homes P5

The Welsh Government will increase delivery of affordable homes by ensuring that funding for affordable homes is effectively allocated and utilised. Strategic and Local Development Plans should develop strong evidence based policy frameworks to deliver affordable housing, including setting development plan targets based on regional estimates of housing need and local assessments. In response to local and regional needs, they should identify sites for affordable housing led developments and explore all opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing.

To address both the 'delivery gap' and housing need in Wales, a shift in the delivery model is required by building affordable homes at scale and pace. The gap has widened since greater reliance has been placed on the private sector to meet this basic human need. To address this we will support a more balanced approach with local authorities, registered social landlords and Small and Medium sized construction and building enterprises encouraged to build more homes. The reuse of publicly owned land will be important to the delivery of these homes.

P5 The planning system has a long established role in the delivery of affordable housing. We are committed to ensuring that new housing meets the needs of all members of society especially those unable to afford to buy on the open market. Sustainable places are inclusive and welcoming to all; they do not exclude sections of the community or create ghettos of the affluent and the poor. The Welsh Government is committed to increasing the delivery of affordable housing in the areas where it is needed and will use its funding, land, planning and housing policies to drive delivery. We recognise that the affordability of housing is not uniform across Wales and different responses will be needed in different parts of Wales to meet the needs of local communities.

The Welsh Government will work with everyone involved in the planning and delivery of affordable housing, including those in the public, private and third sectors to achieve these aims.

Policy 6 – Planning in Mobile Action Zones P6

In Mobile Action Zones, local planning authorities and telecommunications operators will work together to increase mobile coverage collaboratively by identifying suitable sites and buildings for new equipment and infrastructure.

Considerable weight will be given to the need to increase mobile phone coverage, along with its associated economic benefits. Accordingly, there is a presumption in favour for new mobile telecommunications infrastructure, provided that there are no significant adverse landscape impacts.

Policy 7 – Ultra Low Emission Vehicles P7

The Welsh Government supports the increasing use of ultra low emission vehicles. We will work with the UK Government, local authorities, the energy sector and businesses to plan for and implement the roll out of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, including the creation of a network of rapid charging points to enable longer distance travel by electric vehicles throughout Wales.

Changing Technology: Mobile Communications

Mobile phones are an essential tool in our everyday lives. In addition to making calls, for many of us they are how we access media, e-mails, entertainment, services and information. They are becoming means of payment, tools to make transport arrangements, order our food and shopping and keep in touch with schools, public services and employers. Good mobile communications coverage is important to economic and social wellbeing.

P6 We are committed to ensuring all parts of Wales are supported by the telecoms infrastructure they need. We will identify Mobile Action Zones, focusing on areas of little or no coverage and where there is demand for new infrastructure, to provide a focus for our actions. We will work with mobile network operators, infrastructure providers and local authorities to increase digital connectivity in the Mobile Action Zones we identify.

Changing Technology: Ultra Low Emission Vehicles

Sustainable places will support a reduction in the need to travel, particularly by private vehicles, and a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport. A transition away from petrol and diesel vehicles to ultra low emission (including electric) vehicles is also crucial to the achievement of the Welsh Government's carbon reduction targets.

P7 It is important that we plan and deliver the infrastructure, and in particular the charging infrastructure, that electric vehicles will rely on. We expect business and industry to drive much of the roll out of charging infrastructure. There is also an important role for the public sector and the Welsh Government will set out a strategy for electric charging infrastructure. We will keep under review the pace and geography of the delivery of charging infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, to ensure that no parts of Wales are left behind in this transition.

Changes in transport technology also offer the opportunity to change the way in which we travel. The advent of driverless cars will inevitably present new challenges and opportunities and could, in the future, completely transform the current concepts of private car ownership, especially within and close to our major urban areas.

Policy 8 – Strategic framework for biodiversity enhancement and ecosystem resilience P8

To ensure the enhancement of biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems, the Welsh Government and its key partners will identify:

- **areas which could be safeguarded as ecological networks for their potential importance for adaptation to climate change or other pressures, for habitat restoration or creation, or which provide key ecosystems services, to ensure they are not unduly compromised by future development; and**
- **opportunities where strategic green infrastructure could be maximised as part of development proposals, requiring the use of nature based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and public well-being.**

Planning authorities should include these sites in their development plan strategies and policies in order to promote and safeguard the functions and opportunities they provide.

In all cases, cumulative action towards securing the enhancement of biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems should be demonstrated as part of development proposals through innovative, nature-based approaches to site planning and the design of the built environment.

Supporting Strategic Green Infrastructure

The Welsh Government is committed to reversing the decline in biodiversity and increasing the resilience of our ecosystems. In collaboration with our partners, including Natural Resources Wales and local authorities, we will take strategic action to secure biodiversity enhancements, to safeguard ecological networks, and to maximise the use of green infrastructure and nature based solutions. Effective action is generally best undertaken at a regional or local level reflecting individual opportunities.

Planning Policy Wales sets out a range of policies to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems, including the stepwise approach. The NDF's strategic focus on urban growth requires an increased emphasis on biodiversity enhancement in order to ensure that the approach is sustainable.

P8 We need to expand and make connections between our designated sites to increase the ability of species and ecosystems to adapt to the pressures of climate change and pollution. Strategic and Local Development Plans should consider how designated sites fit within the wider network of habitats, and assess what action needs to be taken to safeguard land which may be needed to connect or enlarge those sites in order to contribute to their long-term resilience, to contribute to the wider resilience of ecological networks, or to protect and enhance ecological services.

Safeguarding is intended to ensure that areas of land that are potentially important for expanding or connecting ecological networks, adapting to climate change or other pressures, or which provide key ecological services, are not unduly compromised by development. Safeguarding does not necessarily prohibit development, but sets out a requirement to consider both the long-term future land needs of the habitats and species it is intended to protect and improve, and the present and predicted future needs for particular ecosystem services and functions. Areas may be safeguarded for a wide variety of reasons, including the need to increase the resilience or connectivity of certain habitat types, such as species rich meadows.

Local authorities and Natural Resources Wales should work together to ensure that appropriate action is taken to safeguard sites both within and beyond their administrative boundaries. Safeguarded areas should be identified through the Green Infrastructure Assessment, and set out in the development plan.

Strategic green infrastructure in and around urban areas

Urban ecosystems play a vital role in supporting physical and mental well-being. There are significant positive links between mental well-being and access to green space in urban areas, and we receive benefits not only by being more active, but also just through **being in and near** green spaces. Even limited open green space in dense urban areas can provide benefits to large numbers of people, provided that it is high quality and accessible.

As the population of Wales becomes increasingly urban, the opportunity to optimise well-being benefits from ecosystems will be greatest in these areas. Through the innovative use of nature-based solutions, and by increasing well-integrated green infrastructure in and around urban areas, development can restore natural features and processes into cities and landscapes, maintain and enhance the strategic functioning of our natural resources and ecological networks, and provide locally accessible, high quality green spaces and corridors.

Strategic Green Infrastructure mapping

Natural Resources Wales have produced indicative maps to illustrate national biodiversity themes. They provide the starting point for considering enhancement as part of green infrastructure assessments and a means of ensuring that cumulative action is taken to secure enhancement through development proposals.

Area Statements will develop this approach by identifying key challenges and opportunities to strengthen ecological networks and ecosystem services. They will provide a local scale evidence base and mapping of key environmental themes, and will identify areas where taking action at the right scale can maximise benefits. Any priority areas for action identified in Area Statements are a material planning consideration, and development plans should set out appropriate policies to safeguard and connect these areas, and to protect and enhance their identified key ecological functions and features.

Regional and local interventions can collectively contribute towards increasing the resilience of our national ecological networks. The Welsh Government expects Strategic and Local Development Plans to set out strategies that contribute to these aims through their Green Infrastructure Assessments, and form an appropriate policy response.

Woodlands provide a wide range of benefits for society, from abating carbon emissions and reducing flood risk in sensitive locations, to being increasingly important as community resources, and providing places for active recreation, education and lifelong learning. Our woods and forests underpin many economic activities and sectors and have a key role to play in replacing fossil fuels, storing carbon and helping us to cope with the effects of a changing climate. The ‘right tree in the right place’ plays a key role in realising these benefits.

Policy 9 – National forest P9

The Welsh Government is committed to developing a national forest, and will identify appropriate delivery sites and mechanisms to achieve this aim. Action to safeguard proposed locations for the national forest will be supported.

P9 An increase in woodland cover is needed to help build the resilience of our ecosystems, to secure the delivery of our climate change and decarbonisation aspirations, and to ensure that the productive potential of Welsh woodlands is maintained.

The Welsh Government has therefore set a target to increase woodland cover in Wales by at least 2,000 hectares per annum from 2020. A national forest will help achieve this target and improve well-being for people and communities.

The forest will be a national asset which could provide jobs in timber, leisure, tourism and other sectors. It is likely to be dispersed across a number of locations, and could act as a catalyst for improving land in need of regeneration. Any sites or development proposals, which require planning permission and forming part of this project, should be supported where appropriate. There is an opportunity for the national forest to be linked by green infrastructure incorporating active travel facilities and to become an important asset for local people and tourists.

Spatial strategy: Powering and heating places with renewable energy and District Heat Networks

The spatial strategy provides a long term context and framework for infrastructure investment and the protection of the environment and places a strong emphasis on the requirement to make the best use of our resources.

Growing our towns and cities will require clean energy and an efficient means of providing heat and power to homes and workplaces. This section sets out the spatial implications of our energy and heat needs.

Renewable Energy

Wales is abundant in opportunities to generate renewable energy and the Welsh Government is committed to maximising this potential. Generating renewable energy is a key part of our commitment to decarbonisation and tackling the causes of climate change.

We have set the following ambitious targets for the generation of renewable energy:

- For 70 per cent of electricity consumption to be generated from renewable energy by 2030.
- For one gigawatt of renewable energy capacity to be locally owned by 2030.
- For new renewable energy projects to have at least an element of local ownership by 2020.

Proposals for large scale energy development are classed as Developments of National Significance and are determined by Welsh Ministers. Proposals below the threshold for Developments of National Significance are determined by local planning authorities. Large scale energy developments include:

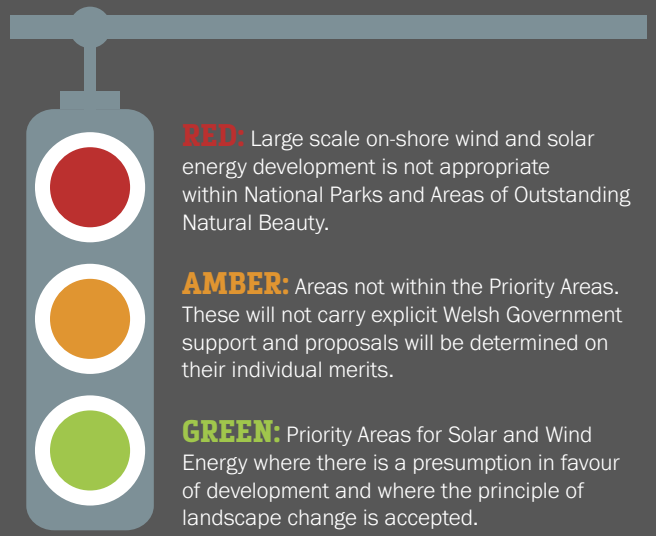
- All on-shore wind generation over 10 mega watts.
- Other renewable energy generation sites with generating power between 10 mega watts and 350 mega watts.

Our spatial priority is for large scale wind and solar development to be directed towards Priority Areas for Wind and Solar Energy shown on page 42. There is a presumption in favour of large scale on-shore wind and solar energy development in these areas, an acceptance of landscape change and a focus on maximising benefits and minimising impacts. Communities will be protected from significant cumulative impacts to avoid unacceptable situations whereby, for example, smaller settlements could be potentially surrounded by large wind schemes.

The Welsh Government will use its policy levers to assist in the delivery of renewable energy projects in these areas. The development of Priority Areas will assist in co-ordinating strategic action, bringing a critical mass of new renewables developments together to build the case for new or reinforced grid infrastructure. We will work with relevant stakeholders to help unlock the renewable energy potential of these areas and the economic, social and environmental benefits they can bring to communities.

The Welsh Government adopts a clear traffic light based approach to its policy on large scale wind and solar renewable energy projects.

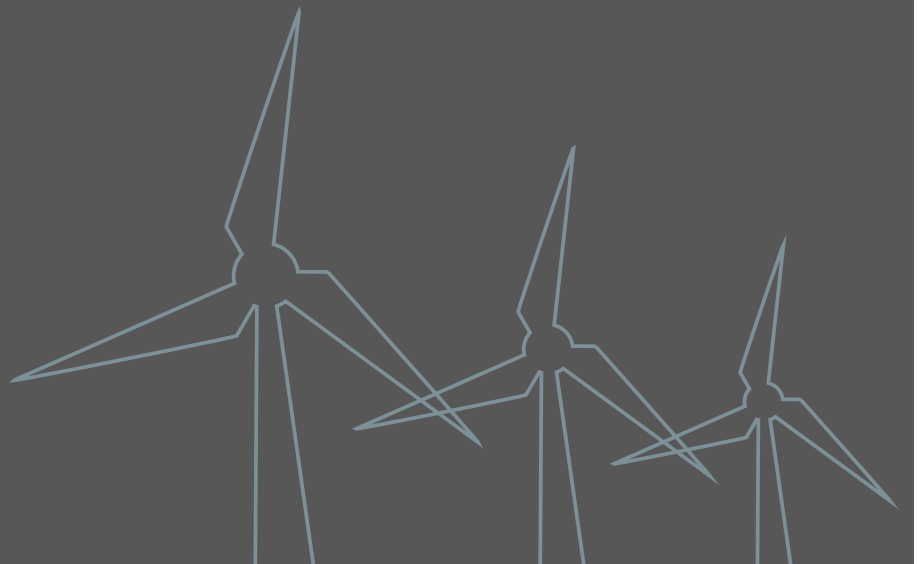
These technologies are viable and deliverable, and have the greatest ability to make positive contributions to our renewable energy targets in the short-to-medium term:



RED: Large scale on-shore wind and solar energy development is not appropriate within National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

AMBER: Areas not within the Priority Areas. These will not carry explicit Welsh Government support and proposals will be determined on their individual merits.

GREEN: Priority Areas for Solar and Wind Energy where there is a presumption in favour of development and where the principle of landscape change is accepted.



Large scale wind and solar renewable energy development can be visually prominent. A strategic review of landscape and visual impact identified the Priority Areas for Solar and Wind Energy as the most appropriate locations to accommodate landscape change. There is, therefore, an acceptance of landscape change in these areas. However, the design and micro siting of proposals must minimise the landscape and visual impact, particularly those in close proximity to built-up areas.

Policy 10 – Wind and Solar Energy in Priority Areas P10

The Welsh Government supports large scale on-shore wind and solar energy development in the identified Priority Areas for Solar and Wind Energy. There is a presumption in favour of development for these schemes and an associated acceptance of landscape change.

When determining planning applications for large scale on-shore wind and solar energy development in Priority Areas, significant weight will be given to the proposal's contribution to reducing Wales' greenhouse gas emissions and meeting our decarbonisation and renewable energy targets.

Planning applications must demonstrate how local social, economic and environmental benefits have been *maximised* and the following adverse impacts have been *minimised*:

- **landscape and visual impacts;**
- **cumulative impacts;**
- **the setting of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;**
- **visual dominance, shadow flicker, reflected light or noise impacts;**
- **electromagnetic disturbance to existing communications systems; and**
- **the following identified protected assets:**
  - **archaeological, architectural or historic assets;**
  - **nature conservation sites and species;**
  - **natural resources or reserves.**

Suitable access to the site for construction and maintenance purposes must be provided. Plans must also be in place for the end of the development's lifetime, including the removal of all infrastructure as soon as their use ceases and the appropriate after-use of the site.

P10 Not all of the area within the Priority Areas for Solar and Wind Energy is suitable for the generation of renewable energy. Natura 2000 sites within the Priority Areas are excluded. Careful consideration will be given to the siting of schemes, particularly the cumulative impacts. Further guidance on the development of on-shore wind and solar energy schemes in Priority Areas will be produced to assist in the development process. The implementation of developments within the Priority Areas will be monitored against the Welsh Government's renewable energy targets.

Policy 11 – Wind and Solar Energy Outside of Priority Areas P11

Outside of the Priority Areas for Solar and Wind, planning applications for large scale wind and solar development must demonstrate the proposal is acceptable, in accordance with the criteria below.

Planning applications must demonstrate how local social, economic and environmental benefits have been maximised and that there are *no unacceptable adverse effects* on, or due to, the following:

- **landscape and visual impacts;**
- **cumulative impacts;**
- **the setting of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;**
- **visual dominance, shadow flicker, reflected light or noise impacts;**
- **electromagnetic disturbance to existing communications systems; and**
- **the following identified protected assets:**
  - **archaeological, architectural or historic assets;**
  - **nature conservation sites and species;**
  - **natural resources or reserves.**

Suitable access to the site for construction and maintenance purposes must be provided. Plans must also be in place for the end of the development's lifetime, including the removal of all infrastructure as soon as their use ceases and the appropriate after-use of the site.

Policy 12 – Wind and Solar Energy in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty P12

Large scale on-shore wind and solar energy development is not acceptable within National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

P11 Outside the Priority Areas, large scale on-shore wind and solar energy developments may be appropriate. Applications will be determined based on the merits of the individual proposal and the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that a proposal will not have an unacceptable impact on its surroundings.

P12 Large scale on-shore wind and solar energy development is not appropriate within National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Proposals close to the boundaries of these designated areas must demonstrate that the development will not undermine the objectives that underpin the purposes of the designation.

Policy 13 – Other Renewable Energy Developments P13

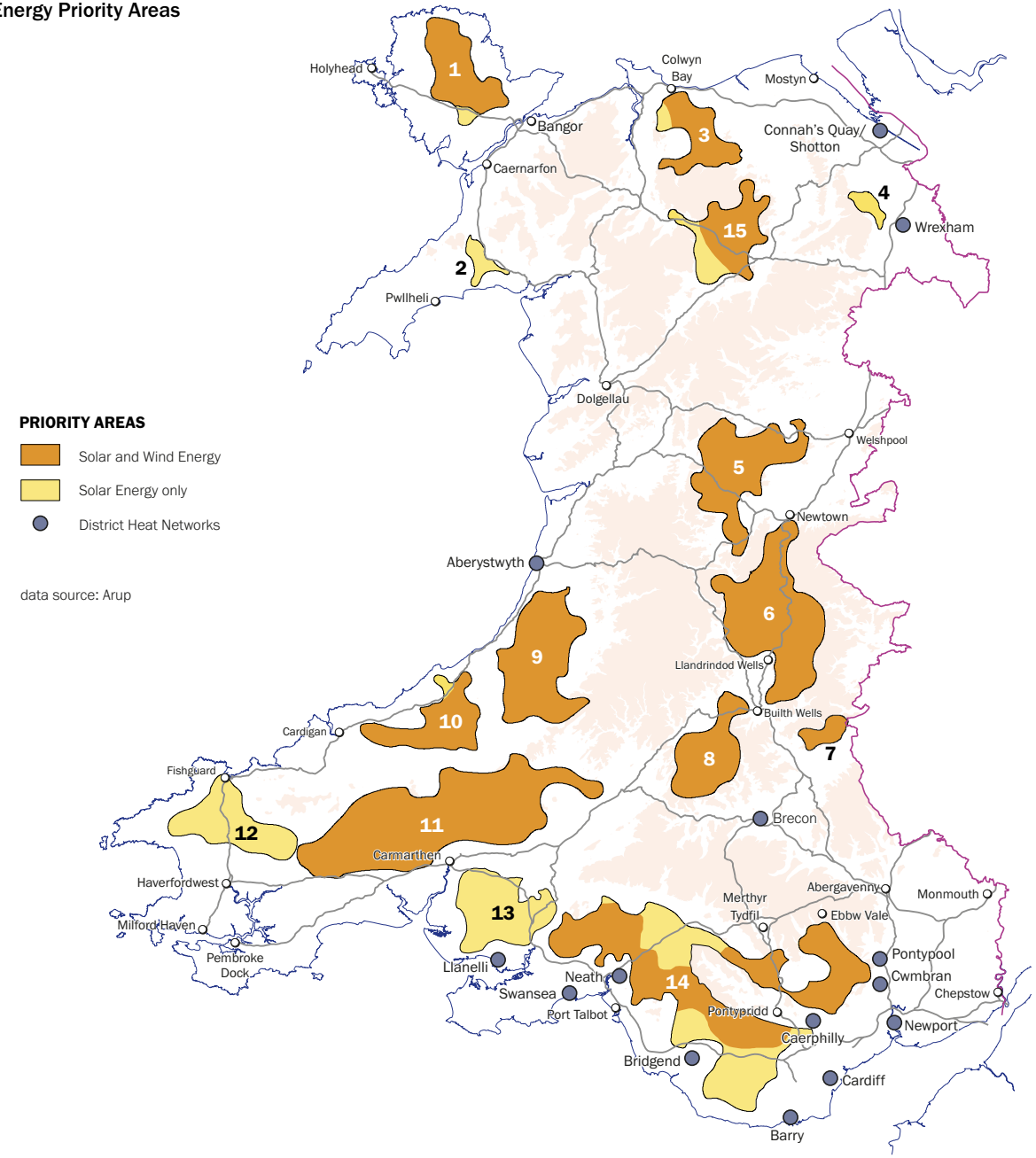
Proposals for other large scale renewable energy generation will be determined in accordance with the criteria of policy P11.

P13 Renewable energy technologies other than wind and solar are supported in principle. The Welsh Government is preparing an Energy Atlas to identify opportunities for all types of renewable projects. Proposals should ensure there is no significant unacceptable detrimental impact on the surrounding natural environment and local communities and that the development brings with it positive social, environmental and economic benefits.

Large scale renewable energy schemes can generate direct social and economic benefit to local communities across the country. Local ownership of projects in whole or part can ensure these benefits are accrued over the long-term, generating funds to develop community facilities and help address fuel poverty.

Renewable energy projects can also provide environmental benefits, such as contributing to resilient ecological networks, restoring degraded peatlands and restoring semi-natural grasslands on post-agricultural land. The Welsh Government encourages active consideration of how these benefits can be realised in all renewable energy developments. With all projects, provisions for access to the site for construction and maintenance of the scheme should recognise and respond to the environment in which they are located. The careful removal of infrastructure as soon as their use ceases and the appropriate after-use of the site will also ensure environmental benefits are realised.

Wales Energy Priority Areas



Policy 14 – Priority Areas for District Heat Networks P14

Within Priority Areas for District Heat Networks, planning authorities should identify opportunities for District Heat Networks and ensure they are integrated within new and existing development.

Policy 15 – Masterplanning for District Heat Networks P15

Large scale mixed used development should, where feasible, have a District Heat Network. Planning applications for such development should prepare an Energy Masterplan to establish whether a District Heat Network is the most effective energy supply option and, for feasible projects, a plan for its implementation.

District Heat Networks

District Heat Networks are a method of delivering heating and hot water to multiple buildings from a central heat source and, particularly in urban areas, can be the most effective way to provide low carbon heat. The Welsh Government supports the establishment of District Heat Networks, as part of delivering the urban growth focus of the Spatial Strategy.

P14 Our spatial priority is for the suitability and viability of District Heat Networks to be investigated in the towns and cities identified as Priority Areas for District Heat Networks shown on page 42. These are the areas in Wales considered to have the greatest potential for District Heat Networks. They have been identified on the basis of having a sufficiently high heat density to make them viable. They take into account settlement size, mix of uses, development potential and any existing work being undertaken to develop District Heat Networks. In principle, they are supported wherever they are viable.

P15 Planning authorities should explore and identify opportunities for District Heat Networks, particularly in the Priority Areas, and, where possible, seek to develop city or town-wide District Heat Networks in as many locations as possible.

As a minimum, proposals for large scale, mixed use developments of 100 dwellings or more should consider the potential for a District Heat Network. There is also potential for them below this threshold.

The design of new development should maximise the opportunities to accommodate a District Heat Network. Particular consideration should be given to the form, density, mix of uses and phasing of development.

5 The Regions

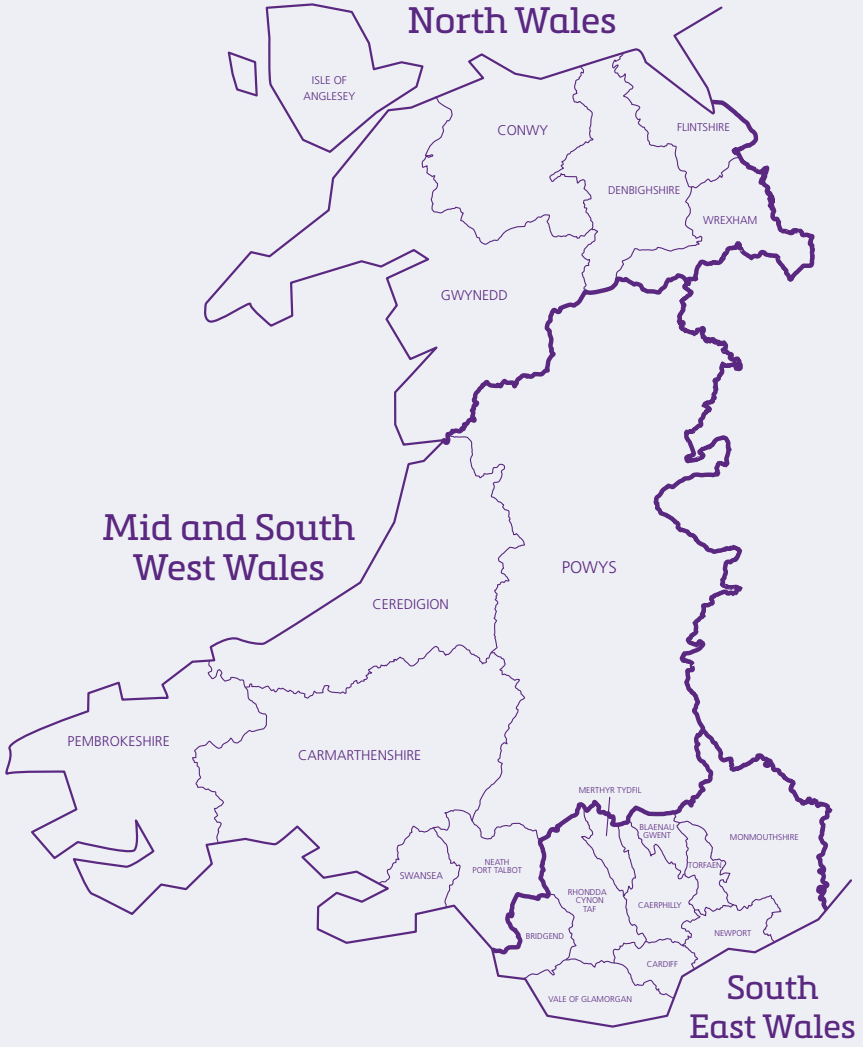
Wales' three regions provide a focus for Welsh Government policy and future investment. Each region has its own distinctive opportunities and challenges. Embracing these through more effective regional collaboration will lead to better outcomes for all parts of Wales and create a fairer distribution of wealth and opportunity.

The planning system has an important role to play in shaping regional development by co-ordinating and managing development across each region and by ensuring that wider than local issues are tackled collaboratively and strategically.

Strategic Development Plans are prepared at a regional scale. They consider strategic regional issues in relation to future growth areas, housing demand, economic development, transport and green infrastructure which cut across local planning authorities and require a regional, integrated planning response.

Informal regional arrangements including commitments to work together through traditional Local Development Plans or approaches to regional planning that do not result in the preparation of a Strategic Development Plan, do not constitute the form of regional planning required by the NDF.

The Development Plans Manual provides guidance on the preparation and revision of Strategic Development Plans and Local Development Plans.



Policy 16 – Strategic Policies for Regional Planning P16

Strategic Development Plans should embed placemaking as an overarching principle and should establish for the region (and where required constituent LDPs):

- **a spatial strategy;**
- **a settlement hierarchy;**
- **the housing provision and requirement;**
- **the gypsy and traveller need;**
- **the employment provision;**
- **the spatial areas for strategic housing and employment growth, renewable energy and the identification of green belts, green corridors and nationally important landscapes;**
- **the location of key services, transport and connectivity infrastructure;**
- **a framework for the sustainable management of natural resources and cultural assets;**
- **ecological networks and opportunities for protecting or enhancing the connectivity of these networks; and**
- **a co-ordinated framework for minerals extraction and the circular economy, including waste treatment and disposal.**

The Welsh Government requires Strategic Development Plans to come forward in each of the three regions to deliver the requirements of this policy.

P16 Strategic Policies for Regional Planning

Many policy areas are best considered at the regional scale and the role of a regional plan is to develop a clear policy framework that identifies these issues; develops a strategic policy response; and provides direction for decision makers in accordance with the plan-led system.

Local authorities and national, regional and local partners in the public, private and third sectors all have a contribution to make to the development of Strategic Development Plans and these plans can include other policy issues that are important at the regional scale. The preparation of Local Well-being Plans, Area Statements (Natural Resources Wales); regional transport models and plans (Transport for Wales); and the Welsh Government's Housing Need Assessment are examples of work that can directly support the preparation of Strategic Development Plans.

To deliver direction for their region, it is important that Strategic Development Plans are prepared. Local planning authorities should determine their geographical footprints. The Welsh Government will work with local planning authorities to support the establishment of Strategic Development Plans.

Alignment of Regional Development Plans and Strategies

It is important that Strategic Development Plans both shape and are shaped by other regional strategies, including the Welsh Government's Regional Economic Development Plans and City and Growth Deals. If key outcomes are not aligned or do not support one another, the region's ability to deliver will be undermined. Although different regional strategies will operate to different timeframes and may be revised at different times, regional plan makers should explore with regional partners how evidence and consultation activities can be joined.

NDF Review & Regional Planning

The Welsh Government requires progress on regional planning across Wales and as part of the monitoring of the NDF, will monitor formal progress on the preparation of Strategic Development Plans.

The Three Regions

The following sections set out the NDF policies for each region and provide direction for the preparation of Strategic and Local Development Plans and decisions to be taken on planning proposals.

North Wales

The west is an area of **high landscape** and environmental quality.

A northern arc of built up areas runs across the region where population, deprivation, key services, facilities, commuting and economic activity are concentrated.

There is a large **rural hinterland**.

The east is part of a much larger **cross-border** built up area, which includes Liverpool and Manchester.

The **risk of flooding** is significant on areas of the northern and western coasts.

Settlement sizes are generally small. Over 80% of the population live in **settlements of fewer than 25,000 people**. In Anglesey and Gwynedd the majority of the population live in settlements of less than 2000 people.

There is **good connectivity** by road and rail along the northern coast.

North-south connections are weaker and **influenced by topography**.

There are over **200,000 Welsh speakers**

Population is spread across the region. **More than 310,000 people** live in Anglesey,Gwynedd and Conwy.

Only Wrexham, Rhyl and Colwyn Bay have **more than 25,000 people**.

Policy 17 – Wrexham and Deeside P17

The Welsh Government supports Wrexham and Deeside as the primary focus for regional growth and investment. Wrexham and Deeside's role within the North region and the wider cross-border areas of Cheshire West and Chester and Liverpool City Region should be maintained and enhanced.

Strategic and Local Development Plans across the region should recognise Wrexham and Deeside as the focus for strategic housing and economic growth; essential services and facilities; advanced manufacturing; transport and digital infrastructure; and consider how they can support and benefit from Wrexham and Deeside's regional role.

The Welsh Government will work with cross border authorities to promote Wrexham and Deeside's strategic role and ensure key investment decisions support Wrexham and Deeside and the wider region.

Overview

The **North Wales** region comprises Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, the Isle of Anglesey, Snowdonia National Park and Wrexham and is home to almost 700,000 people. Its dramatic landscape includes low lying coastal plains, mountain ranges and industrialised coal fields. The population is concentrated in an arc along the coast from the Menai Straits to the border with England and the main concentration of population is in the east around Wrexham-Deeside.

The regional issues that local planning authorities should work together to plan for, are set out below alongside the spatial policy areas that the Welsh Government will focus on from a national perspective to support the North region.

A collaborative, holistic approach

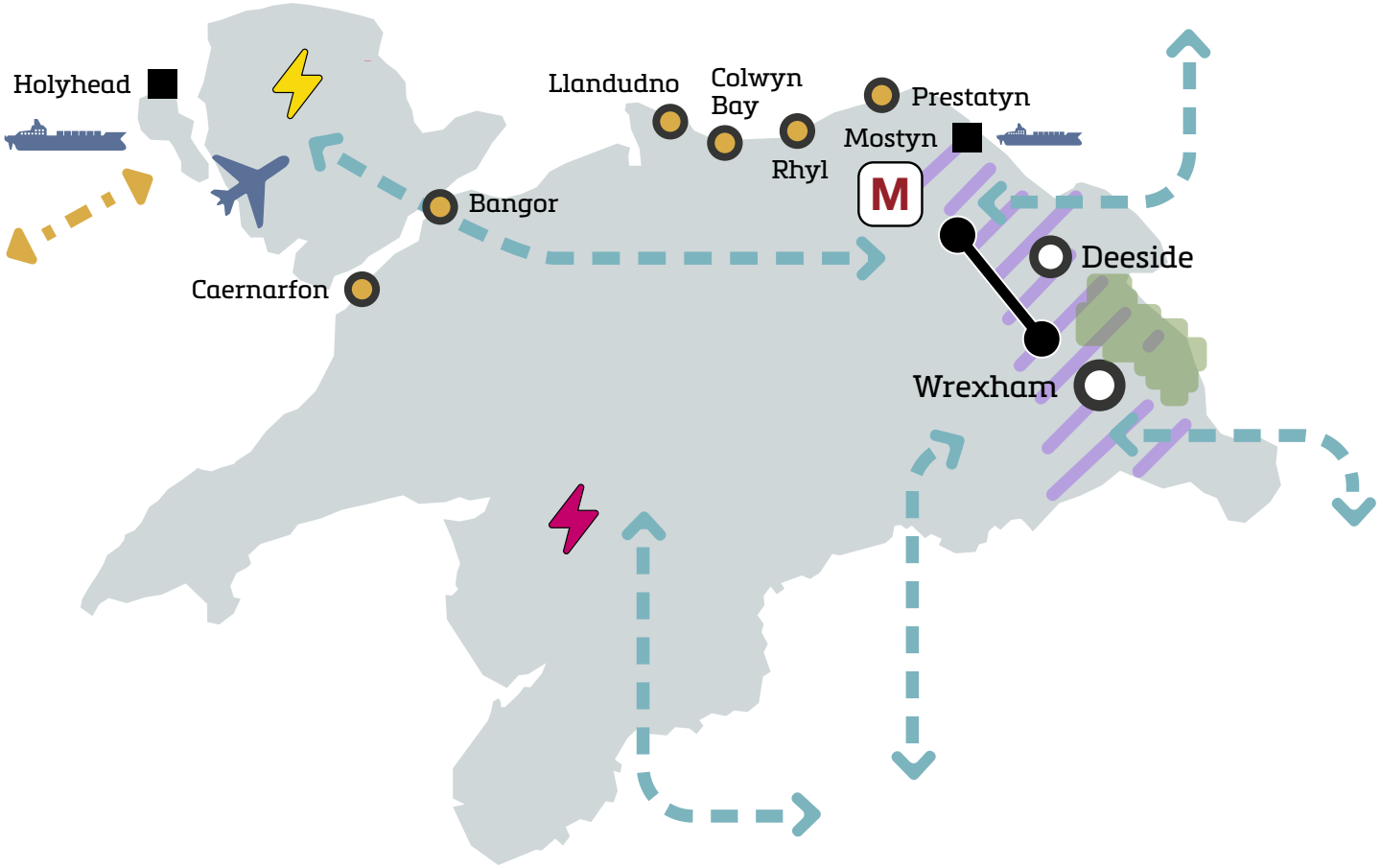
Across North Wales, there are a range of strategic issues that need to be considered. Many of these issues have national, regional and local dimensions and will be delivered through co-ordinated action at all levels.

Housing, economic growth and connectivity infrastructure should be co-ordinated and planned on the basis of the whole region. The management of natural resources and flooding and the protection and enhancement of areas of environmental and landscape importance should inform strategic decisions on locations for growth and new infrastructure. Decarbonising society and responding to the threats of climate change should be central to all regional planning.

The region should work together to consider the connections with Mid & South West Wales, Cheshire West and Chester and North West England. Promoting accessibility and inter-linkages between these areas, based on an understanding of their roles and functions, will ensure these areas operate as a cohesive whole, and do not compete against each other or take strategic decisions in isolation.

Focus for growth

P17 In accordance with the NDF Spatial Strategy, growth in the North region should be focussed on the main existing built-up areas of Wrexham-Deeside. The Wrexham and Deeside area includes Wrexham (and Wrexham Industrial Estate), Broughton, Buckley, Deeside (and Deeside Industrial Park).



National Growth Area

Regional Connectivity

Intra-urban Connectivity

International Connections

Ports

Green Belt

Anglesey Airport

Centres of National Growth

Centres of Regional Growth

Anglesey Energy Island

Trawsfynydd

North Wales Metro

Policy 18 – North Wales Coastal Settlements P18

The Welsh Government supports the built up coastal arc from Caernarfon to Deeside as the focus for managed growth, reflecting this area's important sub-regional role supporting the primary growth area of Wrexham and Deeside.

Strategic and Local Development Plans across the region should recognise the role of this corridor as a focus for housing, employment and key services.

Policy 19 – Green Belts in North Wales P19

The Welsh Government supports the role of Strategic Development Plans identifying and establishing green belts to manage urban form and growth in North Wales, particularly around Wrexham and Deeside.

The Strategic Development Plan should consider the relationship of any new green belts with the green belt in Cheshire West and Chester.

P18 The built-up corridor along the North Wales coast from Caernarfon to Deeside includes Bangor, Llandudno, Colwyn Bay, Rhyl and Prestatyn. The Welsh Government expects the built up areas in this arc to continue to play an important role within the region, providing jobs; leisure and retail; cultural opportunities; education, health and services. It is important this corridor maintains its regional role and supports a managed growth approach that allows these roles to be enhanced. Regeneration opportunities in this corridor are strongly supported. Strategic and Local Development Plans across the region should recognise the role of this corridor as a focus for housing, employment and key services.

Flooding from rivers and sea is a major issue across the region. The potential for flooding around Wrexham and Deeside and along the North Wales coast will have implications for the delivery of growth in this area. Strategic decisions on flood management and related investment must be co-ordinated with decisions to direct development to growth areas.

Planning and co-ordinating the delivery of new housing to meet identified needs will be an important task for the regional planning process. Under the Welsh Government central estimates 19,400 additional homes are needed in the region until 2038 and over the initial five years (2018/19 to 2022/23) 51% of the additional homes needed should be affordable homes. These estimates provide part of the evidence and context on which Housing Requirements for Strategic Development Plans can be based.

P19 Strategic decisions on the location of key services and infrastructure should support existing built-up areas and be taken on a regional basis, ensuring they are located in the most accessible and sustainable locations and support actions to address inequality and deprivation and improve links to neighbouring areas of England. The Welsh Government supports the use of green belts in the North region in managing and planning urban growth. Planning Policy Wales sets out the policy context for them. Strategic development plans must identify a green belt that includes the area to the north east of Wrexham.

Welsh language

With over 200,000 Welsh speakers across the region and with concentrations of settlements where Welsh is the first language for many people, it is important that development plans consider the relationship between strategic housing, transport and economic growth and the Welsh language.

A strong economy

The Regional Economic Development Plan prepared by the Welsh Government in partnership with local authorities, communities, business and key stakeholders, will set out the priorities for future regional economic development. The planning system, through its Strategic and Local Development Plans and the decisions it takes, will have a major role to play in shaping the places that support and strengthen the regional economy.

The Strategic Development Plan should be informed by and seek to facilitate the delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal and ensure support for a smart, resilient and connected North Wales. It will provide a framework to take the strategic locational decisions that will support the long term ambitions of the Growth Deal in relation to housing, economic growth, key services and essential infrastructure. They should also consider the importance of key economic sectors across the region.

Tourism is an important sector to the economy across North Wales. Strategic and Local Development Plans should consider the main tourism areas, the type of visitors they attract and the infrastructure required to support existing areas and future growth.

Universities have an important presence in the region, providing further education, undertaking research and supporting innovation, providing employment, attracting students to Bangor and Wrexham and supporting the local businesses and communities around them.

The Strategic Development Plan should seek to maximise opportunities arising from investment in high value manufacturing sectors. Supported by the Welsh Government, the Advanced Manufacturing Research Institute at Broughton, when built in 2020, will be a collaboration between the University of Sheffield's Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre, Deeside Enterprise Zone Advisory Board, Swansea University and Coleg Cambria. It will support Airbus and other key high value manufacturing companies and will focus on R&D in advanced manufacturing techniques and skills development, for high value manufacturing aerospace, automotive, nuclear and food sectors.

The Welsh Government strongly supports resilient and prosperous rural communities, as set out by policy P4, and expects to see development plans across the region responding positively to the aims of this policy.

Policy 20 – Port of Holyhead P20

The Welsh Government will work with port operators, local authorities and investors to support the development of the port and facilitate new investment in order to ensure that its strategic gateway role is maintained and enhanced. Investment to improve the port's capacity to accommodate cruise ships is supported. New development around the port should be carefully managed to ensure that future expansion and change at the port is not constrained or compromised.

Policy 21 – Transport Links to North West England P21

The Welsh Government will work with local and regional authorities in North Wales and North West England to ensure transport investments, including in the North Wales Metro, strengthen cross-border transport links.

Strategic and Local Development Plans should support improved transport links between North Wales, Chester, Liverpool and Manchester and plan growth to maximise the potential opportunities arising from better regional connectivity.

A connected, accessible region

P20 The region is served by ports at Holyhead and Mostyn. The Welsh Government recognises the importance of the port at Holyhead to Anglesey, North Wales, Wales, the wider UK and Ireland. Holyhead is a major regional asset and an important gateway to Wales and can be the first experience people have of visiting Wales. It is important they have a positive experience. Strategic and Local Development Plans should consider and plan for its future development needs and maximise the opportunities it provides to support growth across the region. A new cruise terminal can provide enhanced facilities for ships and passengers and be a gateway for visitors to the north of Wales. Mostyn plays an important role in supporting the off-shore renewable energy sector.

P21 Proposals for a North Wales Metro provide an opportunity to improve accessibility across the region and are supported by the Welsh Government. In accordance with P16, Strategic Development Plans must ensure that long term strategic decisions maximise the opportunities in areas that will benefit from improved accessibility and investment in public transport services. There are strong functional relationships between settlements and regions in North Wales and North West England, with people travelling daily in both directions to access jobs, services and facilities in neighbouring regions.

Strategic and Local Development Plans should be confident in seeking to align areas of need with areas of opportunity, including where areas of opportunity are across the border and resulting investment and action is focussed on improving the links between Welsh communities and economic opportunities in England.

The Welsh Government will maintain its commitment to tackling congestion on the A55 including through its Pinch Point Programme of small scale interventions aimed at addressing congestion pinch points on the main road network. Where connectivity corridors between North Wales and England are identified, the potential for these corridors to become green infrastructure will be explored.

Policy 22 – North West Wales and Energy P22

The Welsh Government supports North West Wales as a location for new energy development and investment.

New energy-related development should support local and regional communities; provide jobs and investment in training and skills; and work with universities and businesses across the region and North West England to co-ordinate and maximise new investment to support the wider region.

In determining any applications for nuclear energy generating stations in this region, consideration should be given to the need for further non-renewable energy generation, their contribution towards Wales' energy mix, their impacts on the natural and historic environment and the economic benefits they would bring to the region.

A unique region

Managing the North's outstanding natural resources, which include the coast, two world heritage sites, a national park, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and minerals is a priority for the region and it should be ensured they can be enjoyed by future generations and help provide economic benefits for the region's communities. The region's distinctive heritage should be preserved and enhanced by high quality development.

P22 The planning system has a key role in supporting renewable energy and ensuring the North plays its part in decarbonising society. The region has strong potential for generating wind, solar and tidal energy.

The Welsh Government supports the North West Nuclear Arc initiative which is a shared vision (with the UK Government, universities and the National Nuclear Laboratory) of realising the potential positive impacts the nuclear sector can bring to an area in terms of investment, skills and training. The Anglesey 'Energy Island' Programme also seeks to co-ordinate action around new energy developments to maximise the benefits for the area.

The potential Wylfa Newydd nuclear power station development could provide significant employment, training and other associated economic benefits across the whole region if a decision is made to proceed with the scheme. Small Modular (nuclear) Reactors could also potentially provide low carbon energy generation in the region. Trawsfynydd is currently being promoted by the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone Advisory Board as a potential site for a Small Modular Reactor, building on the existing sector-specific technical capacity and expertise available locally.

The potential economic benefits of new nuclear developments, particularly in terms of their high-value job creation may provide a catalyst for regional development. However, these considerations will need to be balanced against the long-term impact these large-scale developments can have on sensitive areas and the surrounding environment.

The region's concentration of population, its historic and future growth and proximity to markets in North West England mean it is a high consumer of materials and natural resources. It is vital the region makes the best use of material resources, promotes resource efficiency and is ambitious in supporting innovative ways of promoting a circular economy.

Within the region sand and gravel extracted primarily from Wrexham and Flintshire and crushed rock aggregates from Flintshire, serve both local markets and those in North West England. Whilst similar deposits exist in North West Wales, particularly in Gwynedd, these are less well-placed to serve the main markets and production is therefore more limited. Conwy and Denbighshire play an important role providing limestone for development and infrastructure projects along the North Wales coast. The quarrying of slate aggregate is largely constrained by National Park and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designations and, where extracted, it is generally used locally or for high value developments further afield.

Mid and West Wales

The region contains **two national parks and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**.

There are **universities** at Lampeter, Carmarthen, Swansea and Aberystwyth.

Northern and western parts of region **are largely rural**.

330,000 live in Powys, Ceredigion & Pembrokeshire.

The region has significant **renewable energy potential**.

There are no settlements in Powys, Ceredigion or Pembrokeshire of more than **25,000 people**.

Undulating topography across mid Wales limits ease of movement and digital connectivity.

67% of people in Ceredigion and 60% in Powys live in settlements of **fewer than 2000 people**.

Swansea-Neath Port Talbot – Llanelli is part of the **larger South Wales coastal-valleys built-up area** running east.

574,000 live in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot & Carmarthenshire.

There is **relatively good connectivity** along the southern coast by road and rail.

Outside of the southern coastal area, **travel by train is limited**.

Overview

The **Mid and South West Wales** region comprises Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Swansea and the Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast National Parks and has a population of over 900,000 people. This large and diverse region includes some of the most rural and sparsely populated parts of the UK and the urbanised, industrialised built up areas around Wales' second city, Swansea. The population is concentrated in the south around Swansea Bay and Llanelli, with a secondary cluster of towns around the Milford Haven waterway and across the region's larger towns which include Aberystwyth, Carmarthen, Llandrindod Wells and Newtown.

The regional issues that local planning authorities should work together to plan for are set out below, alongside the spatial policy areas the Welsh Government will focus on from a national perspective to support the Mid and South West region.

A collaborative, holistic approach

Across Mid and South West Wales, a range of strategic issues need to be considered. Many of these issues have national, regional and local dimensions and will be delivered through co-ordinated action at all levels.

Housing, economic growth and connectivity infrastructure should be co-ordinated and planned across the whole region. The management of natural resources and flooding and the protection and enhancement of areas of environmental and landscape importance should inform strategic decisions on locations for growth and new infrastructure. Decarbonising society and responding to the threats of climate change should be central to all regional planning.

The size and diversity of this region, which includes Wales' second city, two national parks and some of the most rural areas of the UK, means that the region does not have the degree of interconnectedness of other regions. From a high level national perspective, there are two broad spatial sub-regions – the built up areas around Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, southern Carmarthenshire and the Haven towns, and the dispersed settlements in a wider rural hinterland across north Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion, Powys and northern Carmarthenshire.

There will be common strategic issues for the region and issues which are specific to sub-regions. It will be for local planning authorities to determine how regional planning should be undertaken across the region. It may be that a combination of a Strategic Development Plan and one or more Joint Local Development Plans are required. The Welsh Government will support approaches that define and focus on sub-regions, rather than a single full region, where it is demonstrated this is appropriate.

Focus for growth

In accordance with the NDF Spatial Strategy, growth in the Mid and South West Region should primarily be focussed in the Swansea Bay and Llanelli area and in a secondary role, the Haven Towns, Carmarthen, Llandrindod Wells, Newtown and Aberystwyth.

National Growth Area

Regional Connectivity

Intra-urban Connectivity

International Connections

Ports

Swansea Bay Metro M

Centres of National Growth

Centres of Regional Growth

Policy 23 – Swansea Bay and Llanelli P23

Swansea Bay and Llanelli will be the main focus for regional scale growth and investment.

Regional and local development plans should recognise Swansea Bay and Llanelli as the focus for strategic growth; essential services and facilities; transport and digital infrastructure; and consider how they can support and benefit from their strategic regional role.

The Welsh Government will promote Swansea Bay and Llanelli's strategic role and ensure key investment decisions support it and the wider region.

Policy 24 – Regional Centres P24

The towns of Carmarthen, Llandrindod Wells, Newtown, Aberystwyth and the four Haven Towns will be the focus for managed growth, reflecting their important sub-regional functions.

Regional and local development plans should recognise the roles of these settlements as being a focus for housing, employment and key services within their wider areas and consider how they continue as a focal point for sub-regional growth.

P23 The Welsh Government supports the Swansea Bay and Llanelli area (comprising Neath, Port Talbot, the City of Swansea and Llanelli) as the primary growth area for the region. This area is the main existing centre of population, employment and services and is served by the main connectivity infrastructure. The area can accommodate new growth in a planned and co-ordinated way, to support the needs of the wider surrounding region.

P24 The Welsh Government supports the role of the regional centres of Carmarthen, Llandrindod Wells, Newtown, Aberystwyth and the four Haven Towns (Milford Haven, Haverfordwest, Pembroke and Pembroke Dock). These places play important sub-regional roles, providing jobs; leisure and retail; education and health services; and connectivity infrastructure that is used and relied on by both their own populations and communities around them. It is important that these settlements maintain their regional role and support a managed growth approach that allows their roles to be enhanced.

Planning and co-ordinating the delivery of new housing to meet identified needs will be an important task for the regional planning process. Under the Welsh Government central estimates 23,400 additional homes are needed in the region until 2038 and over the initial five years (2018/19 to 2022/23) 44% of the additional homes needed should be affordable homes. These estimates provide part of the evidence and context on which Housing Requirements for Strategic Development Plans can be based and should be considered at the regional scale.

Strategic decisions on the location of key services and infrastructure should support existing communities and be taken on a regional basis, ensuring they are located in the most accessible and sustainable locations and support actions to address inequality and deprivation. In the east of the region, links to the English Midlands provide an opportunity to build upon existing functional relationships, particularly in relation to housing, employment markets and public services. Joint planning and infrastructure delivery is supported where it contributes to the well-being of the region's communities. Strategic and Local Development Plans should be confident in seeking to align areas of need with areas of opportunity, including where areas of opportunity are across the border and resulting investment and action is focussed on improving the links between Welsh communities and economic opportunities in England.

Policy 25 – Haven Waterway P25

The Welsh Government supports continued operations and future development at Haven Waterway.
Strategic and Local Development Plans should support its growth and seek to maximise the benefits it provides to the region and Wales. The Welsh Government will work with operators, local authorities and investors to support and facilitate appropriate new development.

Welsh language

With strong Welsh speaking heartlands in the region, it is important that Strategic and Local Development Plans consider the relationship between strategic housing, transport and economic growth and the Welsh language.

A strong rural Wales

The Welsh Government strongly supports resilient and prosperous rural communities, as set out in policy P4, and expects to see development plans across the region responding positively to the aims of this policy.

Regional plans should provide a strong and positive framework to support rural communities across the Mid and South West region. They should consider how jobs, services and homes can be provided within rural communities, so that rural settlements are able to sustain themselves and grow. Regional plans should also consider how people will access the jobs and services they rely on outside their community. Accessibility and inter-linkages between settlements, based on an understanding of their roles and functions, is an important component of strategic planning and key locational decisions should be fully informed by the needs of rural communities and how they will access jobs and services.

The Growing Mid Wales Partnership have set out an important framework for action to grow productivity, innovation and jobs across Mid Wales and are making the case for a regional growth deal. Regional plans will have a key role to play in facilitating the infrastructure that will support economic growth and co-ordinating it with the delivery of new homes and services.

A strong city region

The Regional Economic Development Plan prepared by the Welsh Government in partnership with local authorities, communities, business and key stakeholders, will set out the priorities for future regional economic development. The planning system, through Strategic and Local Development Plans and the decisions it takes, will have a major role to play in shaping the places that support and strengthen the regional economy.

The Strategic Development Plan should be informed by the Swansea Bay City Region City Deal and Economic Regeneration Strategy. They should ensure that key locational decisions on housing and employment sites, key services and essential infrastructure are planned to support and benefit from the investment and projects across the region; and consider the role of the universities in supporting growth and innovation.

The region is served by ports at Milford Haven, Port Talbot, Swansea and Fishguard and plays an important role supporting the maritime sector and the national economy. They are important national infrastructure and supporting their future role locally, regionally and nationally is a key consideration.

P25 The Haven Waterway has a unique combination of a natural harbour, long established industries and the potential for new strategic development. Development plans should recognise this and provide a framework for managing future growth.

Policy 26 – Swansea Bay Metro P26

The Welsh Government supports the development of the Swansea Bay Metro and will work with agencies to enable its delivery. Strategic and Local Development Plans should support the scheme and plan growth to maximise the potential opportunities arising from better regional connectivity.

P26 The Strategic Development Plan should seek to improve connectivity across the region and should consider long term proposals such as the Swansea Metro scheme, which can provide a basis for better integrating land-use and transport planning. The Metro provides an opportunity to improve accessibility across the region and is supported by the Welsh Government. In accordance with P16, development plans must ensure that long term strategic decisions maximise the opportunities in areas that will benefit from improved accessibility and investment in public transport services. Where new transport corridors are created by the Metro scheme, the potential for these corridors to incorporate green infrastructure must be explored. The Welsh Government will maintain its commitment to tackling congestion on the M4 and trunk road network including through its Pinch Point Programme of small scale interventions aimed at addressing congestion pinch points on the main road network.

A resource rich region

Mid and South West Wales has outstanding natural resources, which include the coast, two national parks, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, minerals, agricultural land, water and a high quality landscape. Development plans should provide a framework for their management and enhancement, enabling them to be enjoyed by future generations and to provide economic benefits for the region's communities.

It is vital the region plays its role in decarbonising society and supports the realisation of renewable energy. There is strong potential for wind, tidal and solar energy generation and development plans should provide a framework for generation and associated infrastructure.

The region's minerals and aggregates play an important role in supporting development across Wales and England. There are active quarries in the region, primarily within Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and Ceredigion, supplying sand and gravel mainly for local markets. Powys is an important focus for sandstone and igneous rock extraction and fulfils demand both in and outside of Wales.

A diverse region

The Mid and South West region supports a large and diverse tourism industry. Development plans and decisions on planning applications should provide a positive framework to support growth and ensure that communities across all parts of the region are able to benefit from their landscapes, natural and historic environment, heritage assets and visitor attractions to support and grow their economies. It is important the region's distinctive heritage is preserved and enhanced by high quality development.

South East Wales

Almost half the population of Wales live in the region and there are over 150,000 Welsh speakers.

The region's population grew **by over 9% between 1997–2017**.

Population growth between 1997–2017 has been uneven, with the **largest growth in Cardiff**.

There are significant populations in built up areas **across the whole region**.

The valley topography in the north of the region has defined settlement and movement patterns.

Rural areas in the east and south of the regions are **well connected to main urban centres**.

The region is served by **Cardiff Airport and major ports** at Cardiff, Newport and Barry.

Connectivity is good east-west by road and rail in the southern part of the region.

Road connectivity is good east-west along the heads of the valleys.

Connectivity from the valleys to the coast is along the linear valley floors.

Major population centres are in the **Valleys and two cities**.

The majority of people live in settlements of at least **25,000 people**.

There are over **640,000 people** in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Caerphilly, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, and Merthyr Tydfil.

Continuous built up areas are a distinctive feature of the valleys.

Policy 27 – Cardiff P27

Cardiff will retain and extend its role as the primary national centre for culture, sport, leisure, media, the night time economy and finance.

The Welsh Government supports regional development which addresses the opportunities and challenges arising from Cardiff's geographic location and its functions as a Capital City.

The Welsh Government supports Cardiff's status as an internationally competitive city and a core city on the UK stage.

Overview

The **South East Wales** region comprises Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan and is the most populous region of Wales, with over 1.5 million residents. It is a major city region on a UK scale. The region is the smallest geographically of the three regions and includes the coastal cities of Cardiff and Newport and the former industrial heartlands of the South Wales Valleys.

The regional issues that local planning authorities should work together to plan for are set out below alongside the spatial policy areas that the Welsh Government will focus on from a national perspective to support the South East region.

A collaborative, holistic approach

Across South East Wales, there are a range of strategic issues that need to be considered. Many of these issues have national, regional and local dimensions and will be delivered through co-ordinated action at all levels.

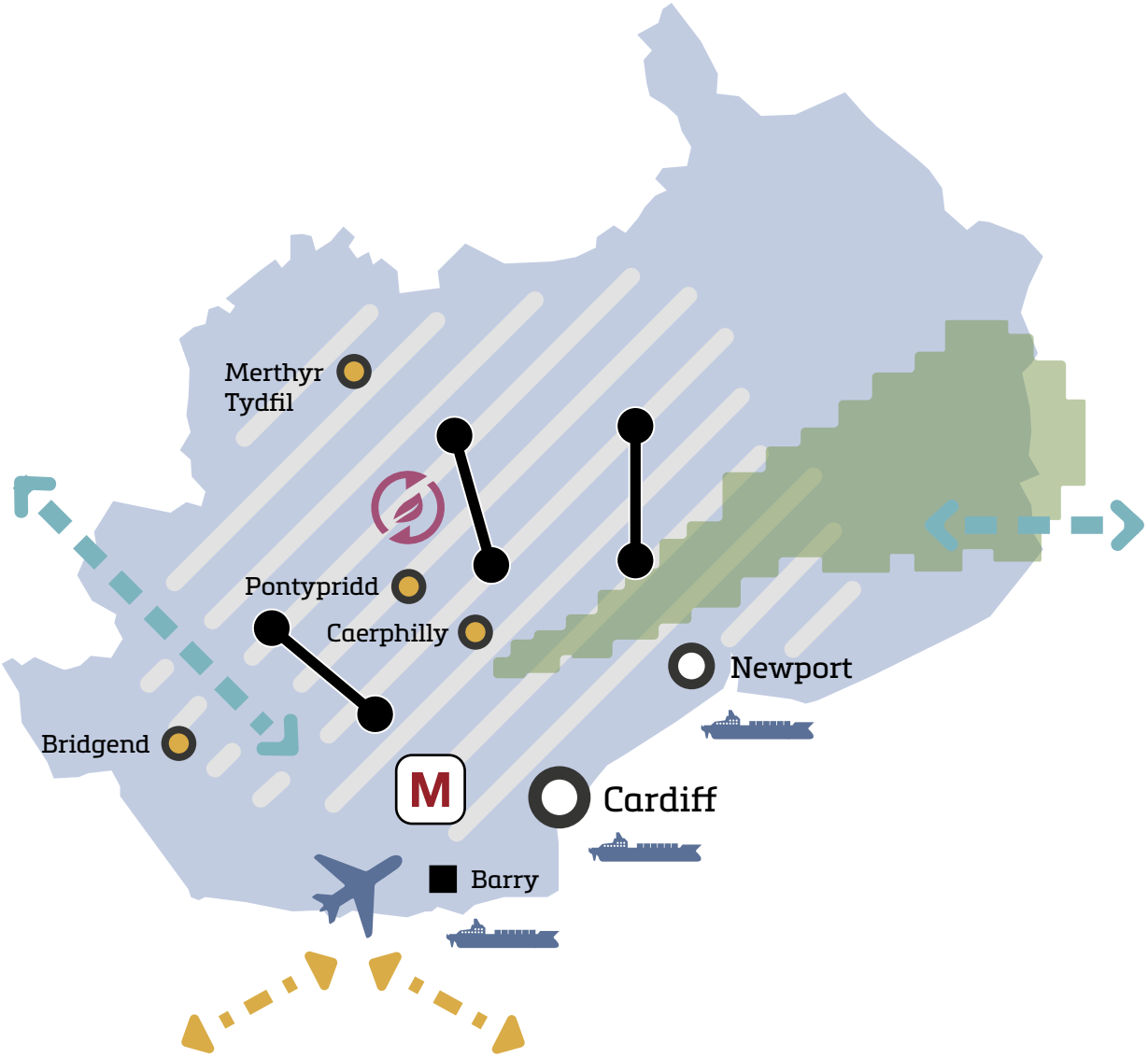
Housing, economic growth and connectivity infrastructure should be co-ordinated and planned on the basis of the whole region. The management of natural resources, flooding and the protection and enhancement of areas of environmental and landscape importance should inform strategic decisions on locations for growth and new infrastructure. Decarbonising society and responding to the threats of climate change should be central to all regional planning.

Clear decisions should be made on the scale and location of growth through the preparation of a Strategic Development Plan to ensure that all parts of the region are working together to achieve the region's goals. A Strategic Development Plan should focus on the movement of people across the region and support an integrated approach to strategic land-use and transport planning. Key locational decisions including for employment centres, strategic housing growth and services should focus on the most sustainable and accessible locations and seek to address congestion, reduce car based commuting and improve air quality.

Focus for growth

In accordance with the NDF Spatial Strategy, growth in the South East Region should primarily be focussed in Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys.

P27 Cardiff will remain the primary settlement in the region, its future strategic growth shaped by its strong housing and employment markets and it will retain its capital city role, accommodating higher level functions and attractions. Strategic and Local Development Plans will need to consider the interdependence of Cardiff and the wider region. Cardiff relies on people from across the full region and ensuring communities around the Capital are vibrant, prosperous and connected helps to support Cardiff.



National Growth Area

Regional Connectivity

Intra-urban Connectivity

International Connections

Ports

Green Belt

Valleys Regional Park

South Wales Metro

Cardiff Airport

Centres of National Growth

Centres of Regional Growth

Policy 28 – Newport P28

The Welsh Government supports Newport as the focus for regional growth and investment and wants to see the City play an increased strategic role in the region. The strategic emphasis should be focussed on achieving growth in the city.

Strategic and Local Development Plans across the region should recognise Newport as a focus for strategic housing and economic growth; essential services and facilities; transport and digital infrastructure; and consider how they can support and benefit from Newport's increased strategic regional role. Development in the wider region should be carefully managed to support Newport's growth and to provide a focus for regional planning.

The Welsh Government will work with authorities within the region and in England to promote Newport's strategic role and ensure key investment decisions in Wales and England support Newport and the wider region.

Cardiff is currently experiencing a period of growth in population and employment, but the city cannot continue to expand indefinitely without major consequences for the environment. It is a compact city nearing its physical limits, which include Caerphilly and Garth mountains to the north and the Bristol Channel to the south. Cardiff must generate and support regional growth throughout the south east while enhancing its status as a vibrant capital city of Wales.

The Strategic Development Plan will need to consider the interdependence between Cardiff and the wider region. Regional transport infrastructure reflects the significance of Cardiff and has consolidated its role as the main focal point of the region. The potential to reach central Cardiff quickly and conveniently using the Metro generates opportunities for development in settlements outside the city. The cultural and economic strength of Cardiff must generate region-wide prosperity and well-being.

P28 The Welsh Government is determined to see development and growth in Newport, allowing the city to fulfil its potential as a second focal point for the region. It has significant brownfield development opportunities to provide new housing and employment areas. There are emerging highly skilled employment opportunities in the transport and digital communications sectors which should be catalysts for further economic investments. The Metro will improve the city's public transport system, especially within the city and to surrounding towns. It benefits from established road and rail links with Cardiff, Bristol and London.

Growth at Newport will help manage the development pressures in Cardiff and provide a strategic focus for the eastern part of the region. Strategic growth should be focussed in and immediately adjoining Newport itself, to support brownfield regeneration.

The South East region includes some of the most distinctive landscapes in the country. Few areas in the UK have been as shaped by their natural resources as the South Wales Valleys, which in turn drove the growth of the coastal communities. The legacy of 20th Century industrial decline remains a major issue. The commitment to addressing these challenges has been strong and the work of local authorities, the third sector and businesses has delivered investment and supported large-scale regeneration initiatives. Strategic and Local Development Plans should focus on how further regeneration can be achieved; how sustainably located brownfield sites can be brought back into use; and how communities can access the homes, jobs and services they need. It is important to preserve and enhance the region's cultural heritage with high quality development.

Policy 29 – The Heads of the Valleys P29

The Welsh Government supports co-ordinated regeneration and investment in the Heads of the Valleys area to increase prosperity and address social inequalities. The Welsh Government will work with local authorities, businesses, the third sector, agencies and stakeholders to support investment, including in the manufacturing sector, and to ensure a regional approach is taken to addressing issues in the Heads of the Valleys area.

Strategic and Local Development Plans across the full region must identify how they can support, both directly and through a joined-up regional approach, the Heads of the Valleys area to deliver greater prosperity, support regeneration and improve well-being.

Policy 30 – Green Belts in South East Wales P30

The Welsh Government requires the identification of green belts through a Strategic Development Plan to manage urban form and growth in South East Wales, particularly around Newport and the eastern part of the region.

Regional plans should consider the relationship of any new green belts with the green belt around Bristol.

P29 The Heads of the Valleys area, covering the northern parts of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen, is a priority area for the Welsh Government and should be a priority for the Strategic Development Plan. The area, like the Valleys more generally, has one of the most distinctive urban settlement patterns in the UK; has seen significant investment in the A465, from EU funding programmes and in the future through the South Wales Metro. It has the potential to build on its tourism offer and proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park. National, regional and local strategies, plans and investment must be co-ordinated and focus on those interventions that can address the structural economic and social issues that impact upon communities' prosperity and well-being.

Planning and co-ordinating the delivery of new housing to meet identified needs will be an important task for the regional planning process. Under the Welsh Government central estimates 71,200 additional homes are needed in the region until 2038 and over the initial five years (2018/19 to 2022/23) 48% of the additional homes needed should be affordable homes. These estimates provide part of the evidence and context on which Housing Requirements for Strategic Development Plans can be based and should be considered at the regional scale. It is vital that housing is considered at the regional level and not on the basis of the aspirations of individual local planning authorities. Understanding and managing different development pressures across the region will be a key issue and Strategic Development Plans will need to consider housing need across the full region.

P30 Strategic decisions on the location of development, key services and infrastructure should support the region's cities and Valleys communities and be taken on a regional basis, ensuring they are located in the most accessible and sustainable locations within the context of the whole region. The Welsh Government supports the use of green belts in the South East region in managing and planning urban growth. Planning Policy Wales sets out the policy context for them. The Strategic Development Plan must identify a green belt that includes the area to the north of the M4 from the Severn Crossings to North Cardiff.

A growing, equitable region

The South East region accounts for 51% of the total economic output of the Welsh economy and accounts for over 55% of additional housing need in Wales during the next few years, with estimates suggesting this proportion will increase in the future. The Regional Economic Development Plan prepared by the Welsh Government in partnership with local authorities, communities, business and key stakeholders will set out the priorities for future regional economic development. The planning system, through Strategic and Local Development Plans and the decisions it takes, will have a major role to play in shaping the places that support and strengthen the regional economy.

The Strategic Development Plan should seek to maximise opportunities arising from investment in the compound semiconductor sector. Compound semiconductor technology lies at the heart of the next industrial revolution and is a technology growing rapidly in Wales. The technology underpins a range of products including smartphones, Wi-Fi, satellite communication systems, robotics and efficient LEDs. In Wales, industry, academia and Governments are working to develop a world class compound semiconductor cluster. By developing these capabilities in the region, Wales has established the core elements for a compound semiconductor ecosystem that will help bridge early stage research, applied industrial research and innovation through to high volume manufacturing and its supporting supply chain.

Prosperity is not uniform across the region. The Cardiff Capital Region City Deal has made progress in developing and strengthening a regional approach. Strategic and Local Development Plans should consider how prosperity can be spread across the region, how local economies can be strengthened and how growth in the strongest economic areas can benefit the whole region. They should consider social, health and environmental inequalities and ensure that strategic land-use choices contribute to tackling these issues. Improving accessibility and the movement of people and goods is a key strategic priority and can support actions to address economic, social, cultural and environmental inequality.

Welsh language

There are more than 150,000 Welsh speakers across the region and the number is growing. It is important that development plans consider the relationship between strategic housing, transport and economic growth and the Welsh language.

An integrated, connected region

The South East region has traditionally had a high degree of integration, with the relationship between the cities, the Valleys and adjoining rural areas shaping the roles and functions of settlements in the region. The opportunity to build on these relationships and re-establish them where they have weakened, will allow issues that are difficult to address at the local level, to be considered collectively at the regional level.

A Strategic Development Plan will need to consider where people live, work, shop and spend their leisure time now and in the future and the location of the key health, education and social infrastructure they rely on. It should consider how the energy the region requires will be generated and transported; how waste will be managed; and the digital infrastructure required to support the region's communities. By focussing on improving accessibility and identifying the most sustainable locations, a strategic development plan should make clear choices on strategic locations and plan for the region as a cohesive whole.

Policy 31 – Growth in sustainable transit orientated settlements P31

Development and growth in the region should be focussed in places with good active travel and public transport connectivity. Land in close proximity to existing and committed new mainline railway and Metro stations should be the focus for development.

Strategic and Local Development Plans should plan growth to maximise the potential opportunities arising from better regional connectivity.

The Welsh Government supports the development of the South Wales Metro and will work with agencies to enable its delivery.

Policy 32 – Cardiff Airport P32

The Welsh Government supports the growth and development of Cardiff Airport.

Proposals to expand the capacity of the airport; to provide new and improved airport facilities and passenger services; and to improve transport links to the airport are supported. Improvements to accessibility are supported and should prioritise a modal shift from the private car to sustainable transport modes including public transport.

Development of land adjacent to Cardiff Airport which is part of the Enterprise Zone is supported where it supports the functions of the airport.

New development around the airport should be carefully managed to ensure future expansion and change at the airport is not constrained.

P31 The relatively high population density in South East Wales means the region is well-suited to Transit Orientated Development, as set out in P1. The quality, variety and frequency of transport services will vary across the region and should be taken into account by local planning authorities in the preparation of the regional settlement strategy, in accordance with P16.

The South Wales Metro scheme provides a major strategic opportunity to improve rail, bus, cycling and walking infrastructure across the region and provide a focus for investment, regeneration and associated development. Development plans must ensure that long term strategic decisions maximise opportunities in areas that will benefit from improved accessibility and investment in public transport, including from the Metro.

The Metro reflects the importance of Cardiff to the region but also provides potential and opportunity for other parts of the region to function as key centres. Merthyr Tydfil, Pontypridd, Caerphilly and Bridgend will be strategically important locations on the South Wales Metro system. Regeneration and sustainable, inclusive economic growth in these towns will help deliver the ambitions of the Our Valleys, Our Future project. Where new transport corridors are created by the Metro scheme, the potential for these corridors to incorporate green infrastructure must be explored.

P32 Cardff Airport is an essential part of Wales' strategic transport infrastructure. It is an international gateway, connecting Wales to the world, and is a key driver within the Welsh economy. Proposals to expand airport operations and improve connectivity and accessibility are essential to the airport's future success and its ability to compete with other UK regional airports. There are ambitious plans to grow Cardiff Airport's passenger numbers from 1.6 million passengers per annum to three million and beyond by 2040. Proposed growth in the airport's capacity will require new and improved airport facilities and passenger services.

Policy 33 – Valleys Regional Park P33

The Welsh Government supports the establishment of the Valleys Regional Park.

Strategic and Local Development Plans should embed its principles into their planning frameworks. The Welsh Government will work with local authorities, the third sector and key partners to support the Valleys Regional Park and maximise opportunities for new development.

The region is served by ports at Newport, Cardiff and Barry. Each plays an important economic role and collectively they are key infrastructure within the region. Development plans should consider the role of the ports locally, regionally and nationally and establish frameworks to support their operation and potential expansion. The Welsh Government will maintain its commitment to tackling congestion on the M4 and trunk road network including through its Pinch Point Programme of small scale interventions aimed at addressing congestion pinch points on the main road network.

Rivers and valleys

P33 The Welsh Government, communities and partners have developed a positive framework through 'Our Valleys, Our Future' to drive change and regeneration. The Valleys Regional Park seeks to maximise the social, economic and environmental potential of the Valleys' natural and cultural heritage assets and it is important that the planning system supports its delivery.

The region's concentration of population and its historic and future growth mean that it is a high consumer of materials and natural resources. It is vital the region makes the best use of material resources, promotes resource efficiency and is ambitious in supporting innovative ways of promoting a circular economy. The region is heavily dependent upon marine aggregates from the Bristol Channel and the Severn Estuary and minerals from this area serves both Welsh and English markets.

The relationship between the NDF's policies and the 'Outcomes' it sets out to achieve.

OUTCOMES A Wales where people live ...	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	P15	P16	P17	P18	P19
and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●
in vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●
in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●
in places with a thriving Welsh Language			●	●	●	●	●									●	●	●	
and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●	●	●	●
in places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted	●	●	●	●						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
in places where travel is sustainable	●	●	●	●	●		●									●	●	●	
in places with world-class digital infrastructure				●		●										●	●	●	
in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution	●	●		●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	
in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems	●			●				●	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	
in places which are decarbonised	●	●		●			●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

OUTCOMES A Wales where people live ...	P20	P21	P22	P23	P24	P25	P26	P27	P28	P29	P30	P31	P32	P33
and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places		●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●
in vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services	●	●	●	●	●	●					●			
in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
in places with a thriving Welsh Language	●		●	●	●			●						
and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
in places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●				●	●
in places where travel is sustainable		●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●			
in places with world-class digital infrastructure				●	●				●					
in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution			●					●	●	●				
in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems							●							●
in places which are decarbonised		●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●		

CYNGOR CAERDYDD
CARDIFF COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 NOVEMBER 2019

MEMBER BRIEFING NOTE: RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (ROWIP) 2020-30

Reason for the Report

1. To provide Members with an opportunity to review the content of the report titled 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2020-30' that is due to be presented at the Cabinet meeting on the 21st November 2019.

Background

2. There was a legal obligation for all Local Authorities to make a 10-year ROWIP under Section 60 (1) of the CROW Act 2000. Cardiff published its first ROWIP in June 2008. Under section 60 (3)-(4) there is a legal obligation to review the first ROWIP and to make a new assessment and decide whether to republish a new ROWIP; this should be done every subsequent decade.

3. There have been many legal and policy changes in the last 10 years; consequently, Welsh Government (WG) issued guidance on what needed to be considered if a new ROWIP were made. Following due consideration of various legislative changes and an appreciation of current economic challenges, it was decided to produce a new Cardiff ROWIP for 2020-30.

4. Cardiff has approximately 200 km/124 miles of Public Rights of Way (PROW) footpaths and bridleways, most are in the north and north-west of Cardiff. Cardiff Council's PROW team is responsible for making sure the Rights of Way network is clearly mapped and the paths are maintained for safe use for the public to enjoy. In the built-up urban areas of the city, most other paths are pavements adjacent to

roads (adopted highway), including shared use or segregated pavements for pedestrians and cyclists.

5. Cardiff's ROWIP 2020-30 sets out how the PROW team will identify, prioritise and plan improvements across the network for the duration. Proposals for managing Cardiff's PROW network are detailed in the Statement of Action Key Strategies and Key Aims (described below). These were identified as a result of the evaluation process and are important for the future management and improvement of Cardiff's PROW network. The Statement of Action sets out what we plan to achieve over the course of 10 years and will help to identify priorities in the Delivery Plan, which will be tailored to available finance and staff resources.

6. The ROWIP is split into five sections:

- **Section 1** gives an Introduction and background to the ROWIP and the Cardiff Public Rights of Way (PROW) network.
- **Section 2** gives the reasons for making a new ROWIP for 2020-30.
- **Section 3** gives details of the **New Assessment**, which looks at 3 main points:
  - Reviewing ROWIP 1: 2008-18;
  - Evaluating the current network; and,
  - Evaluating the public's future needs and opportunities of the network.
- **Section 4** outlines the Statement of Action for ROWIP 2020-30, which has 5 Key Strategies for the long term aims over the 10-year period as listed below.
- **Section 5** The Key Aims provide a more detailed plan of the Council's priorities over the next 10 years, as listed below. These will inform the PROW team's Delivery Plan (annual work programme).

7. **Statement of Action – Details of ROWIP Sections 4 & 5:** The Statement of Action (SOA) is an overall 10-year outline plan of what we hope to achieve for Cardiff's PROW network. We considered all the information from the New Assessment; this helped identify the 5 Key Strategies for the ROWIP 2020-30. These strategies inform the 12 Key Aims and tasks for improvements and activities that will be considered over the next 10 years. The Key Aims will inform the Delivery Plan (Annual Work programme), which will have specific tasks that may change during the course of the

year, while other tasks may also be put forward which will be dependent on availability of funding and staff resources.

8. **Key Strategies**: The table below describe the 5 Key Strategies to achieve over the next 10 years, based on outcomes from the New Assessment. A full assessment of each key strategy, SWOT analysis and its links to the New Assessment.

- **Table 1 – The '5 Key Strategies'**

	Key Strategy	Description
1	**Develop a more efficient management system for statutory Rights of Way work**	Management of the PROW network will be fully supported by the ongoing development and data input to the Council's Digital Management System (DMS). It will provide key outputs for managing, maintaining and reporting any issues on the PROW network and its inventory. This includes signage, path clearance, surfacing and any work needed to ensure paths are fully available and fit for purpose. It also includes the need to take into consideration ecosystems and access for all. This strategy is the overarching strategy and will link to strategies 2-5.
2	**Increase access for all, through network improvements**	This is based on the need to provide the least restrictive access to PROWs and any improvements to the network will have this as a driver for change. For example, existing stiles could be replaced with gates or gaps.
3	**Improve and promote the PROW network and outdoor activities**	Encourage and support the public to access the PROW network and green spaces across the city, through various promotional materials including electronic, on site information boards and printed leaflets.
4	**Preserve and enhance the PROW network and ecosystems**	Effectively manage and update the Definitive Map and Statement and any changes to the network such as diversions, extinguishments and creations. Any opportunities to improve the PROW network will be pursued, such as consideration of new projects (e.g. bridleways), strategic links (e.g. cross-border), ways to enhance existing paths (e.g. access for all – see 2 above) and consideration of ecosystems and seasonal work. These will be dependent on funding.

5	**Be responsive to new legislation, revised local plans and strategies and emerging land developments**	Over the next 10-year period there will likely be unforeseen events that affect the PROW network. These will be addressed through the Delivery Plans to ensure the network is maintained and managed responsively to changes in legislation, plans and strategies. Particular attention will be paid to PROWs affected by new land developments to ensure they are preserved and enhanced.

9. **Key Aims:** The Key Aims provide a more detailed plan of how Key Strategies will be achieved over the next 10 years. These Key Aims have been specifically developed to inform the PROW team's Delivery Plan (annual work programme), which will have specific tasks and have sufficient flexibility to change during the course of the year depending on availability of funding and staff resources or changes in policy.

- **Table 2 – The 'Key Aims'**

No.	Key Aims
1	Improved management and ongoing maintenance of the PROW network
2	Maintain an up-to-date Definitive Map and process Legal Orders
3	Enhance Cardiff's ecosystems along PROW routes
4	Install waymarking across the PROW network to help the public find their way
5	Support the Cardiff Local Access Forum and work in partnership with interest groups and volunteers
6	Identify and improve strategic links and accessibility of the network
7	Improve and increase the bridleway network
8	Protect and enhance paths within new developments and on private land
9	Publicise information online to help the public 'Report a Problem' on the path network
10	Maintain and improve the Wales Coast Path (WCP), liaise with NRW
11	Improve information about trails, places to visit, outdoor activities and events
12	Promote Codes of Conduct for the public to respect the environment and other path users

10. **Delivery Plans:** The Delivery Plan sets out short, medium and long term projects and work tasks which demonstrate how we will apply the **Key Strategies** and **Key Aims** over a specified period of time. These plans will complement the Statement of Action and Key Aims in order to allow the new ROWIP to be more responsive to changing circumstances (staff resource, funding, etc.) without losing sight of the Council's commitments. **Diagram 1** below shows how projects will follow an annual

cycle of development, delivery and review. It is proposed that the first full delivery plan will be compiled and published for the 2020-21 period.

- **Diagram 1 – Statement of Action: Key Strategies & Key Aims**

11. If approved by Cabinet, the ROWIP 2020-30 will be published and publicly available in December 2019. Professionally printed hard copies of the document will be available for review at community hubs and other Council buildings. Electronic copies will be freely available to download from the Council website, with photocopy prints at a nominal fee upon request.

Issues

12. The first 10-year ROWIP was published in 2008. Welsh Government issued guidance in summer 2016 to Local Authorities to advise them about whether (and how) to make a new ROWIP. Cardiff Council's Public Rights of Way team took the view that the 1st ROWIP 2008-18 would need to be reviewed and a new ROWIP planned, however due to limited existing levels of staffing an additional temporary officer was required to undertake the task. The ROWIP officer was appointed in autumn 2017. The process of delivering the final ROWIP has progressed through several stages, resulting in publication of the ROWIP for the period 2020-30.

13. The ROWIP will provide a defined methodology for delivering PROW functions for the period 2020-30. As described above, the ROWIP has been designed using the New Assessment to inform Key Strategies and Key Aims that provide a framework to

establish annual Delivery Plans. However, as proposed the delivery plans will flex to suit the availability of funding and resource. At present the PROW team has two Officers managing and undertaking day to day tasks and two operatives delivering cyclic maintenance and repairs. For the 2019-20 period there are two main revenue budgets:

i. **£10,600** – to maintain the Taff Trail, Rhymney Trail and Ely Trail for shared use with cyclists.
ii. **£6,770** – to maintain the PROW network (footpaths & bridleways) and carry out any improvement works.

14. In addition to the revenue funding mentioned above, the following grant funded projects exist:

- £40k – Aftercare funding to realign the Wales Coast Path (WCP) near the coast through Lamby Way landfill site (additional funding would be required to install a pedestrian crossing on Lamby Way Road to link to Parc Tredelerch and the onward route).
- £4,366 (includes 25% Council contribution) – WCP Grant to clearly waymark the route and for general maintenance.
- £40k Green Trails Bridle & Bike Network Project – A partnership project between 5 neighbouring local authority areas (Bridgend, Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff & Merthyr). Currently at the feasibility study stage; its aim is to produce a plan for the delivery of long distance horse and mountain bike trails linking bridleways and access across the five Local Authorities.
- Approx. £60k Living Levels – A partnership project between PROW, Parks and other organisations (e.g. Bug Life, RSPB and Plant Life) to implement various projects to enhance biodiversity & habitats, access and education information.

Local Member Consultation – Consultee & Public Consultations:

15. The ROWIP Officer has attended regular Local Access Forum (LAF) meetings, informing them of progress regarding the ROWIP process. The LAF is a statutory advisory body created under the CROW Act 2000 (s 94-95). This is a group of appointed volunteers with a variety of interests in the PROW network, usually meeting quarterly. A ROWIP Sub-Group (with several members of the LAF and

neighbouring LAs) has been involved regularly. Various stakeholder groups and organisations were engaged during the ROWIP process as consultees, including current Councillors at key stages of the process.

16. **Initial Consultation (issued 27/10/17):** this was to inform consultees of our intention to review the current Rights of Way and to outline the process of delivering the new ROWIP. The Next Stages phase of ROWIP (sent 16.08.18), included:

i. **Review of 1st ROWIP**

ii. **ROWIP Survey**; this was conducted between 10/04/18 to 14/10/18 and had 1,018 responses (Compared to 673 in ROWIP 1 in 2005). It was sent to:

- Consultees;
- ROWIP web page;
- Ask Cardiff web page;
- Outdoor Cardiff web page;
- On social media;
- Internal face-to-face discussions;
- Hard copies available in Hubs and Libraries.

Lots of useful feedback was received; whilst there were pick lists for most answers, open questions were also asked where responders could comment freely. Comment topics included: maintaining paths; clearing vegetation; clear signage; and more information on routes. There were also several, often negative comments about shared use paths, most of which are not PROW; these have been discussed and shared with Transportation team for their consideration in future projects.

iii. The **New Assessment Report** links to ROWIP Survey and addresses the issues listed above in the 'Key Strategies' & 'Key Aims' in the ROWIP 2020-30.

17. **Draft ROWIP 2020-30:** This required a 12-week statutory consultation period, undertaken between 18/07/19 to 14/10/19 comprising of:

- Consultees were sent the draft on 18/07/19;
- Public Notices (Echo & Western Mail) on 22/07/19;

- On website (ROWIP, PROW & Outdoor Cardiff);
- Internal posts (Staff Info, Digigov, Intranet);
- Social Media campaign from 22/07/19;
- Sent to 380 people who requested updates (from the ROWIP Survey);
- Reminders were sent to consultees on 13/09/19. The consultation closed 14/10/19 and a press release (Echo & Western Mail) to remind people to respond was published approximately one week prior to this closing date.

18. **Website:** Background information and reports featured on our ROWIP page (and linked to PROW page), also Outdoor Cardiff.

19. **Social Media:** we have had regular posts at key stages on Twitter, Facebook & Instagram. We also conducted an Instagram photo competition with prize (organised by Comms); terms & conditions stated that submitted photos could be used on Cardiff Council publications and many will be featured in the ROWIP 2020-30.

Cabinet Report Recommendations

20. It is anticipated that the Cabinet report will recommend to:

- *Approve the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2020-30 for publication and as the service delivery template to manage and improve Cardiff's Public Right of Way network over the next 10 years.*

Way Forward

21. Members are to note the contents of the Member Briefing Note.

Legal Implications

22. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement

imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

23. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

i. Note the content of this Member briefing note.

DAVINA FIORE
Director of Governance & Legal Services
14th November 2019

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ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - DRAFT FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

3rd January 2020 to 3rd March 2020

If you would like to share your experiences or views regarding the items being considered please contact Scrutiny.viewpoints@Cardiff.gov.uk

Meeting Dates	Type of Scrutiny	Title and Description of Report	Invitees & Consultees	Directorate Contact Officer
(a)		(b)	(c)	(d)
7th January	**Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Report**	**Cabinet Response to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee report titled 'Improving Cardiff's Air Quality'** An item to receive the Cabinet response to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee report titled 'Improving Cardiff's Air Quality'. At the meeting Members will have an opportunity to comment on the response and provide feedback to the Cabinet Members. **It is planned that this item will be webcast.**	Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport Councillor Susan Elsmore, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Well-being Representatives from the Planning,	Richard Bowen Principal Scrutiny Officer RBowen@cardiff.gov.uk

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			Transport & Environment Directorate	
7th January 2020	**Pre Decision Scrutiny**	**Transport White Paper** An item to carry out pre decision scrutiny on the Council's Transport White Paper prior to it being presented at the January 2020 Cabinet meeting. Members will need to review the range of transport related themes and action plan contained within this document, before providing feedback to Cabinet. **It is planned that this item will be webcast.**	Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport Representatives from the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate	Richard Bowen Principal Scrutiny Officer RBowen@cardiff.gov.uk
(Date TBC) February 2020	**Pre Decision Scrutiny**	**Draft Corporate Plan 2020 to 2023 & 2020/21 Draft Cabinet Budget Proposals** To provide Members with the context for the scrutiny of those sections of the Council's Draft Corporate Plan 2020 to 2023 and Draft Cabinet 2019/20 budget consultation proposals as they relate to the Directorates which fall under the remit of this Committee. **It is planned that this item will be webcast.**	Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport	Richard Bowen Principal Scrutiny Officer RBowen@cardiff.gov.uk

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			Representatives from the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate	
3rd March 2020	**Monitoring Performance & Progress**	**Quarterly Performance Reports – Relevant to the Terms of Reference of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee** An item to review the Quarterly Performance Reports for 2019/20. This will relate to Council services relevant to the terms of reference of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee. In particular, the item will consider progress against key performance indicators; the challenges facing service areas and the achievements made in the period. **It is planned that this item will be webcast.**	Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment Representatives from the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate	Richard Bowen Principal Scrutiny Officer RBowen@cardiff.gov.uk

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3rd March 2020	**Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Report**	**Cabinet Response to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee report titled 'Litter & Fly Tipping in Cardiff'** An item to receive the Cabinet response the Environmental Scrutiny Committee report titled 'Litter & Fly Tipping in Cardiff'. At the meeting Members will have an opportunity to comment on the response and provide feedback to the Cabinet Member. **It is planned that this item will be webcast.**	Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment Representatives from the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate	Richard Bowen Principal Scrutiny Officer RBowen@cardiff.gov.uk
3rd March 2020	**Policy Development & Review**	**Reviewing the Impact of Fireworks in the Community** A scrutiny to review the impact that fireworks have on the local community, and to consider any actions that the Council could take to reduce these. Key areas for discussion could include public safety; littering and the impact that they have on pets.	For discussion - TBC	Richard Bowen Principal Scrutiny Officer RBowen@cardiff.gov.uk

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