



County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2000

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2000

AGENDA

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Committee | ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE |
| Date and Time of Meeting | TUESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2022, 3.00 PM |
| Venue | REMOTE VIA MS TEAMS |
| Membership | Councillor Patel (Chair) Councillors Derbyshire, Owen Jones, Lancaster, Jackie Parry, Parkhill, Owen, Sandrey and Wong |

*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** (*Pages 5 - 18*)

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 7 December 2021 and 13 January 2022.

4 **Draft Corporate Plan 2022-2025 & Draft Budgetary Proposals 2022/23 - to follow**

To carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the Draft Corporate Plan 2022-2025 and Draft Budgetary Proposals 2022/23, prior to consideration by Cabinet.

4a Corporate Overview

3.05 pm

Councillor Chris Weaver, Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance will be invited to make a brief statement.

An officer from the Resources Directorate to then deliver a presentation on the Draft Budget Proposals 2022/23 - Corporate Overview.

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

Following the presentation, officers from the Resources Directorate and Councillor Chris Weaver, Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance will be available to answer any Member questions.

4b Strategic Planning and Transport Portfolio 3.45 pm

Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport will be invited to make a brief statement on the parts of the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate relevant to his portfolio of responsibility.

Councillor Caro Wild and officers will be available to answer Member questions on the areas of Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate relevant to the Strategic Planning & Transport portfolio.

4c Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment Portfolio 4.45 pm

Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment will be invited to make a brief statement on the parts of the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate and Recycling & Neighbourhood Services relevant to his portfolio of responsibility.

Councillor Michael Michael and officers will be available to answer Member questions on the areas relevant to the Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment Portfolio.

5 **Urgent Items (if any)**

6 **Way Forward** 5.45 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.

7 **Date of next meeting**

7 March 2022 at 4.30pm via Microsoft Teams

Davina Fiore

Director Governance & Legal Services

Date: Wednesday, 16 February 2022

Contact: Graham Porter, 02920 873401, g.porter@cardiff.gov.uk

WEBCASTING

This meeting will be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items, and the footage will be on the website for 6 months. A copy of it will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy.

Members of the public may also film or record this meeting.

If you make a representation to the meeting you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed. By entering the body of the Chamber you are also consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you do not wish to have your image captured you should sit in the public gallery area.

If you have any queries regarding webcasting of meetings, please contact Committee Services on 02920 872020 or email [Democratic Services](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 DECEMBER 2021

Present: Councillor Patel(Chairperson)
Councillors Derbyshire, Owen Jones, Lancaster, Jackie Parry,
Parkhill, Owen, Sandrey and Wong

36 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Parkhill.

37 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

38 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2021 were approved by the Committee as a correct record.

39 : MEMBER BRIEFING REPORT - DRAFT RECYCLING STRATEGY 2021-25 AND WASTE MANAGEMENT AND COLLECTIONS UPDATE

The Committee received a briefing report providing Members with an update on Cardiff's draft recycling strategy and an opportunity for officers to respond to the Committee's requests from it meeting in July.

The Cabinet will consider a report at a future meeting on the draft Recycling Strategy 2021-25. The report would seek Cabinet's approval to begin consultation on the draft strategy and an associated resident survey on improving recycling performance. The report would also seek approval for the following:

- To support a pilot of 3 stream segregated collection for glass, mixed containers (plastic and metal) and paper / cardboard; alongside the use of reusable bags.
- To retain the Recycling Centre booking system and 'no black bag' policy.
- To cease the provision of red and white striped bags for residents living in properties unable to store 140litre residual bins on the property and allowing residents to present three refuse bags from January 2022.

Members were advised that the Recycling, Preparation for Re-use and Composting Targets (Monitoring and Penalties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 impose a requirement for the Council to measure the tonnage of waste and recycling of both households and commercial business serviced by Cardiff Council. The target set by Welsh Government was for the Council to achieve a recycling rate of 64% by 2019/20 and 70% by 24/25. The recycling rate for 2019/20 was 58.10% and the Council has reported a recycling rate of 55.80% in 20/21 which is still to be validated by Natural Resources Wales.

Members were asked to note that due to changes in waste and recycling collections during Quarter 1 of the year, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, all waste and

recycling collected from residents was sent to the Energy from Waste plant. This impacted on the overall performance for the year resulting in the 64% statutory recycling performance target not being achieved. Welsh Government has chosen not to enforce financial penalties upon the Authority for failing to meet its statutory targets. However, there is a requirement for immediate intervention to ensure targets are met moving forward.

A summary of the key issues identified in the briefing report was provided including:

- that Cardiff has a high number of people living in flats and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) at circa 30% of total properties. These types of properties have a disproportionately high level of non-participation in recycling and where recycling does take place, there are high levels of contamination within the co-mingled recycling;
- that performance for trade waste is significantly lower than that for the residential sector. Trade waste represents circa 9% of the total of waste collected by Cardiff Council and the poor performance of this sector drags down the Council's overall recycling performance;
- the briefing report details a series of proposed changes to be introduced in addition to the strategy including a proposed pilot for a 3-stream segregated collection of glass, mixed containers (plastic and metal) and paper/cardboard, alongside the use of reusable bags. This approach is being proposed to prevent the loss or reject of recycling material as a result of contamination and has been weighed up against a kerbside sort model;
- the pilot also aims to reduce single use plastics. As highlighted, the use of reusable bags will address the 24 million single use green bags per annum for dry mixed recycling (DMR) and will reduce the cost significantly from the £800,000 that is currently spent on purchasing and distributing green recycling bags each year;
- retaining the Recycling Centre booking system that was introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic and the 'no black bag' policy, which resulted in a large reduction in residual waste and in turn an improvement in the recycling recovery rate.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment; Neil Hanratty, Director of Economic Development and Graham Harris, Head of Recycling and Neighbourhood Services to the meeting.

Councillor Michael Michael was invited to make a brief statement. Members were then invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members noted the difficulties associated with the collection of commercial waste in the city. Members asked whether Welsh Government is planning to require all commercial waste collectors operating in the city to recycle all the waste that they collect. The Cabinet Member advised that Welsh Government are aware of this issue and discussions are ongoing. Commercial waste accounts for 30% of the service and if that counted towards recycling targets then the authority would have a 3.5% to 4% higher recycling rate. Officers advised that Welsh Government had recently published Non-Domestic Waste Regulations which will

come into force next year. These regulations require businesses to separate their waste at source. It was anticipated that trade waste would then become a positive contributor towards the recycling target.

- Members asked whether, under the proposed collection method, waste would still be collected if residents put the wrong item in the wrong container. The Cabinet Member stated that most Authorities in Wales apply this method. There were some reservations when wheeled bins were first introduced but they ultimately lead to improvements. There were similar reservations when food waste collections were first introduced. The Cabinet Member was confident that the introduction of two separate containers will be successfully adopted by the public. Officers considered that recycling in the city has plateaued at around 58% and without a fundamental change in the way recycling is collected the 70% target would be unachievable. The pilot will inform decisions around contamination.
- Officers stated that should residents use the household collection service there should be no need for them to take recyclable materials to the Recycling Centres because they have a weekly collection. Streamlining the types of materials brought to Recycling Centres has helped to improve the recycling rate at the centres from 79% to between 87% and 90% and that puts Cardiff amongst the best performing recycling centres in Wales. The service was also considering the potential for increasing opportunities to recycling within the Recycling Strategy also. For instance, by providing mobile recycling facilities and facilities at local hubs.
- Members considered that Newport was a city comparable to Cardiff and that Newport Council currently operates a kerbside collection service that was performing very successfully. Members asked whether officers have consulted with colleagues in Newport to establish what works well. Officers stated that Newport Council has outsourced its collections and now operates a kerbside sort model. This option has been explored but it was considered that the pilot proposal was a better fit for Cardiff.
- A Member noted that the areas identified to participate in the kerbside collection pilot were not areas that have a lot of HMOs and flats. The Member asked officers to clarify how the pilot would be useful in addressing the waste collection issues recognised in residences of that type. Officers advised that in Cardiff 30% of housing stock are flats and HMOs. This is higher than comparable Welsh Authorities and recycling performance from these properties diminish the recycling rate. The pilot is not intended to be a 'one size fits all' solution and different options are being considered for flats and HMOs.
- A Member stated that evidence suggests that a single waste collection stream achieves a higher recycling rate than a segregated waste collection stream, whereas a segregated stream realises an uplift in revenue by producing better quality recyclable materials. Officers were asked to explain how the likely fall in the recycling rate would be countered. The Cabinet Member stated that it was anticipated that the new method would increase both the recycling rate and the quality of recycled materials. At present 30% of co-mingled recycling bags are contaminated and that needs to be addressed. Officers stated that contaminate reject accounts for around 8% of the co-mingled waste collected compared to a

Welsh average of 2%. Reducing the amount of co-mingled waste that is rejected will help Cardiff to achieve its 70% recycling target.

- Members asked how many reusable bags and boxes would be issued to each household participating in the pilot. The Cabinet Members stated that sufficient receptacles will be provided and households can request additional receptacles.
- Members asked officers to comment upon how the changes to segregated collection might impact upon collection times. The Cabinet Member stated that the move to a 4-day week has improved collection rates across the city. Officers advised that time and motion and the methodology around collections will be captured as part of the pilot. It was accepted that rounds would take longer as crews will need to spend longer at each property. The appropriate times will be built into the rounds to make them achievable.
- A Member raised concerns about the logistical issues associated with residents storing a number of different receptacles and questioned whether they would choose not to recycle instead. Officers advised that a lot of research has historically shown that where recycling methods are more complex recycling rates go down. However, Members were asked to note that we are now operating within a different context in Wales, where recycling has been growing. Data is now indicating that recycling performance increases when new schemes are introduced because new schemes are supported by communication and education. Therefore, the pilot and any rollout will ultimately need to be supported. The changes will be phased in, and lessons will be learned from the pilot and from the experience of other Authorities.
- A Member asked whether local ward Councillors in those wards participating in the waste separation trial would be given an opportunity to provide feedback on the trial. The Cabinet Member confirmed that local Members would be able to provide feedback. The Chairperson asked what would be done during the consultation process to get feedback from those sections of the community that have less access to online consultations, such as the elderly, disabled and BAME communities. Officers stated that communication is key to getting the message across in some communities. The Chairperson considered that leaflets and other printed materials would be less effective. Support was given to the Cabinet Member's suggestion that officers make personal visits to residents in some instances. Officers agreed to reflect on the Committee's comments.
- Officers stated that any contamination in the co-mingled collections is often not picked up until the bags reach the materials recycling facilities (MRF). The new system of kerbside sort will allow for those issues to be picked up at the kerbside. Therefore, those issues can be addressed with householders directly.
- Members raised concerns at the low level of recycling from flats and HMOs in comparison with regular households. The Recycling Strategy provides for a composition analysis of waste from flats and HMOs to be undertaken. Members asked what the proposed timescale was for this. Officers stated that the composition analysis has been completed and it has confirmed that the amount of recycling generated in flats is far lower than the amount generated in households. The analysis also showed that there was still a

large amount of food contamination from both flats and households. Data from the composition analysis, the aperture trial and a trial of litter bin sensors will be used to inform decisions on the waste collection model from flats moving forward. Officers are also working with colleagues in private sector housing to change the terms and conditions on licences to require landlords to provide receptacles for waste and recycling.

- Members referred to the tool kit for property management companies, particularly in relation to flats and HMOs. Members asked whether the strategy could link to the planning application process in a joined-up approach and to allow for recycling design to be considered in new planning applications at the planning approval stage. The Cabinet Member and the Director of Economic Development agreed with the point made and accepted that planning permission has been granted without much consideration being given to storage facilities. Waste Management will need to have better input into the planning process and those issues will need to be discussed with colleagues in the Planning Department. The Cabinet Member stated that blocks of flats that have large bins remain a challenge for the service. Considerable effort will also need to be made in educating residents in those properties to play their part in what Cardiff is trying to achieve.
- Members supported proposals to change the striped waste bags collections. A Member stated that in their experience the striped bag scheme has led to problems in areas of the city with high transient populations.
- Members asked why Community Protection Notices (CPN), that aim to address anti-social behaviour, result in a fine of only £100. Officers stated that enforcement fines are benchmarked with other Authorities on an annual basis and Cardiff is at the higher end of that spectrum. However, there are a range of powers available for Enforcement Officers. Problems with mis-presented waste can be addressed in a number of ways. For example, a small-scale fly-tipping fine is £400 and commercial waste enforcement allows for a fine of £300. Fines are capped under legislation and the Authority can only apply the maximum fine permitted.
- Members asked whether there was a systemic problem with bulky waste collections being collected on the correct date. A Member provided anecdotal evidence of problems they had experience with the service. Officers stated that the covid pandemic has resulted in a large increase in demand and there was a backlog. Extra resources have been provided to the service during October and November and the backlog has now been cleared. Monitoring of the service is ongoing.
- A Member stated that the blanket application of Section 46 notices in streets where there are large concentrations of HMOs often result in residents who do not have any problems with the presentation of their waste misunderstanding the notice. The Member asked whether Section 46 notices could be reworded to ensure that, whilst capturing all the necessary statutory information, the notice isn't misunderstood. Officers agreed to reflect on those comments.

- Members asked how work is progressing with landlords and the universities in addressing the problems commonly associated with student flats and student accommodation. Members were advised that officers continue to work closely with the universities and their representatives. Considerable outreach work has been undertaken including speaking directly with students at the residences to ensure that waste is presented correctly.
- Members queried how long separate collections would take if rolled out across the City. Officers stated that modelling has been undertaken and there was an acceptance that rounds will be slower and more vehicles will be required. It was anticipated that the pilot will provide more accurate data in terms of how long rounds are likely to take. The full business case will also take account of the increased income likely to result from the separation method.
- Members noted that residual waste also contained items that are recyclable. Members asked whether there was any viability in creating a sorting facility at the Energy from Waste plant to remove recyclables from the waste streams. The Cabinet Member considered that it would not be practicable to sort residual waste in this fashion.
- Member asked whether there were plans to engage with schools and increase recycling in schools. It was reported that the service does have plans to engage with schools as part of the One Planet Cardiff Strategy.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee to convey any comments, observations and recommendations made during the way forward.

40 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Committee received a report providing an update on the Work Programme 2021/22 and the proposed recommendations of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

Members were asked to note the proposed items on the Work Programme for January to March 2022 as set out in Appendix A to the report. A number of other potential items for the March meeting were detailed in Appendix B. The Committee requested that progress reports be brought to the March meeting on the Castle Street Modelling,, Highways Resurfacing and LED Street Lighting.

Members were also asked to consider and agree the RLDP Joint Task and Finish Group recommendations in Appendix E of the report.

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) the Committee approves its a final work programme for the remainder of 2021-22;
- (2) approves the Committee Forward Work Plan attached at Appendix D, for publication on the Council's internet.

- (3) approves the recommendations of the RLDP Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group that are contained within the draft Chair's letter attached at Appendix E for submission to the Cabinet Member, Strategic Planning and Transport.

41 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were received.

42 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 13 January 2022.

The meeting terminated at 6.15 pm

This page is intentionally left blank

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 JANUARY 2022

Present: Councillor Patel(Chairperson)
Councillors Derbyshire, Owen Jones, Lancaster, Jackie Parry,
Owen and Sandrey

43 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Parkhill and Wong.

44 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

45 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2021 were approved by the Committee as a correct record.

46 : MANAGING BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN CARDIFF

The Committee received a report providing an update on the Cabinet response to recommendations made by the Committee's Task and Finish Inquiry entitled 'Managing Biodiversity and the Natural Environment in Cardiff' which was presented to the Cabinet on 23 January 2020.

A full response to the report was agreed by the Cabinet on 19 November 2020. The response was considered at the Environmental Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2 March 2021. This resulted in a series of observations and requests from the Committee. The report included a total of 39 recommendations; 18 recommendations were accepted; 17 were partially accepted; 3 recommendations were rejected; and one recommendation was noted.

Members were advised that the findings and key recommendations were based around the following six themes:

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

The Committee received a further update on progress made against the inquiry's recommendations.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment; Councillor Peter Bradbury, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning

and Transport; and officers from the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate and the Economic Development Directorate. Following statements from the Cabinet Members, the Chairperson invited comments and questions from the Committee. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members welcomed the progress made against the recommendations and the work being undertaken to improve biodiversity in the City.
- A Member considered that the Authority's former ecologist was under a great deal of pressure in terms of his role in the planning application process. Officers were asked to comment on how the Authority's new ecologist could contribute in other areas given that the role will still be within the Planning Department. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure accepted that, whilst the ecologist post is within Planning, it is an aim of the One Planet Cardiff Strategy to embed ecologists within other Directorates so the role is not seen as just a planning issue. The Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment stated that any decision that requires an ecological report will be accompanied by one. The Operational Manager Parks and Harbour Authority advised that there was considerable collaboration between Council departments in terms of ecological issues. For example, the Park Rangers team have ecological skills.
- Members sought further details in terms of the Cardiff Partnership Board adopting a biodiversity objective and also the work ongoing to embed climate resilience into reports and decision making as part of One Planet Cardiff. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure stated that the motion passed by Council recently will direct Cabinet to take more account of biodiversity when making decisions. The Head of Planning advised that work is being undertaken with partners to produce a Well-Being Plan which meets the requirements of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act. The plan is being progressed, updated and reviewed. There are also Business Delivery Plans within each Directorate that include a focus on the delivery of green infrastructure and diversity, including various key performance indicators. Therefore, biodiversity is embedded within the Council's policy framework.
- Members asked for clarification on the response to recommendation 8(a) in relation to Council officers attending the Planning and Biodiversity Forum. The Head of Planning stated that posts are being repurposed within the Planning Department to satisfy the requirements of the One Planet Cardiff Strategy and the replacement LDP. The department is also seeking to review the evidence base used to inform policy and decision making, for example data on trees, tree preservation orders, and species. In terms of the Planning and Biodiversity Forum, Members were advised that officers from Planning, Parks, Highways and Environment meet on a monthly basis as part of the One Planet Cardiff Strategy. The Director agreed to provide confirmation of that in writing.
- Members noted the improvements made in terms of volunteering, particularly litter picking. Members asked what more could be done to further increase participation from volunteer groups. The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture stated that efforts are continuing to increase engagement with Friends of Parks groups. It was suggested that the release of further resources could potentially

increase engagement with local sports groups. The Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment stated that he had recently met representatives of the Cardiff Rivers Group who undertake extensive voluntary clean-ups of waterways across the city. There are also approximately 20 voluntary groups engaged under the 'Love Where You Live' scheme. The Operational Manager Parks and Harbour Authority advised that there are in excess of 20,000 volunteer hours undertaken in the City each year and the volunteers are involved in a broad range of activities. The Coed Caerdydd programme received funding to recruit a volunteer co-ordinator specifically for the purpose of getting volunteers and community groups to become involved with the planting and aftercare of trees.

- Officers provided a summary of the processes in place to ensure volunteer groups are able to lock parks in a safe manner. The replication of keys is not permitted.
- A Member referred to the response to recommendation 8(c) and in particular 'action towards securing the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems and green infrastructure assets must be demonstrated as part of development proposals'. The Member asked whether there were any examples of this taking place. The Head of Planning advised that this was Welsh Government policy. Further guidance is anticipated in this regard. However, all developments seek to mitigate any adverse impacts on environmental grounds. In Wales there is a separate national framework beyond planning that requires developers to consider biodiversity and nature within SUDS legislation.
- Members noted the partially accepted recommendations 15 and 16. Members asked for further details of the work being undertaken under the review of the LDP. The Head of Planning advised that the replacement LDP has a range of policies in it and there are a range of constraints identified, including a number of constraints that are environmental in terms of national and local designations. As part of the LDP review the Council is obliged to review local designations for nature conservation. That process is ongoing and will form part of the evidence base that will be submitted to Welsh Government through the Deposit Plan. The intention is to consult on the Deposit Plan in late 2023, and this will be followed by a public inquiry in 2024. A lot of the survey work is yet to be undertaken.
- Members asked whether the ward mapping exercise has been completed and when the results will be shared with ward members. The Head of Planning understood that ward maps have been updated and he gave an undertaking that the results would be shared with local Members.
- A Member noted the comments made previously in respect of local litter picking groups. The Member considered that the groups in question care about their communities and are frustrated that those who cause litter problems stubbornly refused to change their behaviour. The Member requested comments on that point and what engagement there has been with those groups in terms of managing biodiversity and the natural environment. The Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment accepted that those local groups do a great deal for the City and agreed that it was frustrating when litter appears in areas that have recently been cleared of litter. Behavioural change was difficult and the Council can do more in terms of enforcement action. Prior to the

pandemic an event was planned for local litter picking groups and it was hoped that that could be revisited in the future. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure agreed that local groups are able to advocate for why the Council is taking decisions for the benefit of biodiversity in the local environment.

- The Operational Manager Parks and Harbour Authority provided an overview of the National Park City initiative which aims to support groups who want to do more in their communities. National Park City status is awarded by the National Park City Foundation and Cardiff is considering applying. In order to gain National Park City status, cities must pass 10 key milestones. In November a stakeholder workshop was held with a view to forming a committee to work towards National Park City Status. There were currently 80 expressions of interest. Cardiff is also working in partnership with Glasgow on a National Lottery Heritage Fund Bid to establish a co-ordinator post for National Park City application.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee to convey any comments, observations and recommendations made during the way forward.

47 : WEED CONTROL TRIAL

The Committee received a report providing an update on the weed control trial that has been undertaken by Officers within the Economic Development Directorate in response to a Scrutiny recommendation to Cabinet from the Environmental Scrutiny Committee's Inquiry into 'Managing Biodiversity and Natural Environment in Cardiff'.

The Committee agreed to undertake the inquiry at its meeting held on 19 March 2019. The report was presented to Cabinet on 23 January 2020 and the Cabinet response was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 2 March 2021. The report made a series of recommendations including one on the use of herbicides and pesticides. Cabinet partially accepted the recommendation and subsequently committed to undertake a review of the weed control products available as an alternative to the glyphosate-based herbicide that is currently used.

A trial was undertaken during 2021 to investigate the viability of the alternative weed control applications that are currently licenced for use to control weeds on hard surfaces, in partnership with the Council's Specialist Weed Control Contractor. A number of data sets were collected through the year which have been made available to an independent consultant to allow an assessment of each type of application against key factors. That assessment will be used to produce a detailed report expected in February 2022 which will inform decision making moving forward.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment; Councillor Peter Bradbury, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure; Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport; Jon Maidment, Operational Manager, Parks, Sports and Harbour Authority; Mark Tozer, Parks Development & Asset Management Officer and Dr Dan Jones of Advanced Invasives.

Members also received a brief presentation on the weed control trial. Members were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members asked for further details on the cost of each weed control method.
- Members noted that Vale of Glamorgan Council have become herbicide free in a number of their parks. Members asked why Cardiff was unable to do this. The Operational Manager Parks and Harbour Authority stated that Vale of Glamorgan had trialled the foam stream method but it was not widely used in their area. Dr Dan Jones advised that some local authorities have begun to use the foam stream method in some very localised areas, such as children's play areas. It was not widely used due to the prohibitive costs associated with that method.
- Dr Dan Jones stated that in his opinion glyphosate was the safest of the herbicides licenced for use. The European Union has recently confirmed that glyphosate is non-carcinogenic. In Cardiff it would be limited to control of weeds on pavements and infrastructure. Glyphosate has been proven to be safe and highly effective. Glyphosate also has a very low environmental impact when compared to the high carbon emissions associated with the foam stream method. Officers stated that the full report and data will be available in February. Any decision on a preferred method will take account not only of cost, but also of environmental impact, customer satisfaction and effectiveness. There was also external interest in the report's findings from other local authorities and the Association of Public Service Excellence. The Cabinet Member Culture and Leisure stated that customer satisfaction was an important consideration. The Cabinet would weigh up all the information available on the various methods and the Cabinet would welcome the Committee's comments.
- Members asked whether there was any distinction made between weeds that were unsightly but on the periphery against those weeds that are encroaching onto the highway and are becoming a hazard and whether these would be prioritised differently. The Operational Manager Parks and Harbour Authority stated that herbicide is not applied in grassed areas, other than sports pitches and bowling greens, where selective weed control measures are used. In shrub beds and bedding areas hoeing, weeding and mulches are used. Officers advised that all highway areas receive the same weed control treatments.
- A Member welcomed the finding that glyphosate has a lower environmental impact than the other methods as this was the only herbicide that will remove invasive species. The Member requested confirmation that glyphosate would still be used where it is needed. Officers confirmed that glyphosate would still be used to manage invasive species.
- Members asked whether precipitation before and after application of herbicides was monitored. Officers stated that the application of 'new-way weed spray' requires an extended period of dry weather post-application, which is one of the limitations of that particular product. Timing of applications was carefully planned to ensure that precipitation would not impact on the trial.

- Members asked whether the small sample of complaints that have been received were sufficient to inform customer satisfaction. The Cabinet Member accepted that point. Complaints received were not the only consideration – customer expectation, repeat visits, Members enquiries and Member satisfaction would also be considered.
- Members asked whether other types of weed control had been considered other than the three methods evaluated during the trial. Officers confirmed that there are other methods but the purpose of the trial was to look at alternative chemical treatments. The cost and environmental impact of other methods is high. Dr Dan Jones stated that studies have been conducted in Holland on the environmental impact of more manual methods. The wire brush method, for example, had a high environmental impact due to the manufacture of the brushes, and also caused damage to infrastructure. Therefore, some form of cost/benefit analysis is necessary. Dr Jones considered that the best method to reduce problem weeds in a sustainable way is through good design and to build infrastructure that has weed control built-in from the start of the development.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee to convey any comments, observations and recommendations made during the way forward.

48 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS

RESOLVED – That

- (1) Councillors Patel, Lancaster, Sandrey and Wong be approved as Members of the Task and Finish Group 'When and how to use Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG);
- (2) The Terms of Reference attached at Appendix 1 of the report be agreed.

49 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were received.

50 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 22 February 2022.

The meeting terminated at 6.30 pm