

## ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 DECEMBER 2022

Present: Councillor Owen Jones(Chairperson)  
Councillors Derbyshire, Green, Lancaster, Lewis, Lloyd Jones,  
Jackie Parry and Wood

### 45 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor De'Ath.

### 46 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest.

### 47 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September and 10 November 2022 were approved as a correct record.

### 48 : ONE PLANET CARDIFF, ANNUAL UPDATE

The Committee received a report providing an opportunity to scrutinise the One Planet Cardiff Strategy Annual Review report which was due to be considered by the Cabinet on 15 December 2022.

Members were advised that the Cabinet declared a climate emergency in 2019. In response the One Planet Cardiff (OPC) Strategy was developed and published in 2021 along with an action plan. The Strategy sets out how the Council will respond to the climate emergency and aims for Cardiff to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Since its publication the new administration has published their 'Stronger, Fairer, Green' Strategy placing climate change at the heart of the Council agenda. Furthermore, in September 2022 the Council debated and passed a motion in relation to climate injustice which called for the Council to become more 'globally responsible' in tackling climate change. The Cabinet report is the first review of the OPC strategy and action plan and the report notes the inclusion of the first annual Operational Carbon Analyses findings from the Welsh Government's ambition for a Carbon Neutral public sector in Wales.

The report provided a summary of the main issues identified in the Cabinet report and progress made against the OPC action plan. The Cabinet report concluded that good progress had been made but there were a number of issues that still need to be addressed. It is also uncertain what Government funding support will be available to the public and domestic sector to enable decarbonisation of buildings. Additionally, global issues have impacted on the availability and price of components and vehicles to move forward with elements of the strategy.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Gareth Harcombe, Operational Manager - Energy and Sustainability to

the meeting. Councillor Wild made a statement and the Committee received a presentation on the One Planet Cardiff Annual Review 2022.

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

- Officers were asked to respond to comments received regarding the protection of bio-diversity in the City. Members asked what was currently being done to protect the existing bio-diversity in the city and what more could be done given the resources available. Officers advised that there is lots of work being done across service areas in terms of protecting bio-diversity. However, whilst many of the areas covered in the OPC Strategy crossed over on bio-diversity, for example SUDs, flood defences and Coed Caerdydd, a view was taken that the challenge was to reduce carbon. Separately, there was a bio-diversity strategy and powers to enhance bio-diversity in place. Officers accepted that the OPC Strategy could be clearer in signposting those linkages.
- The Cabinet Member was asked to comment on the suggestion that Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on protection green spaces be introduced. Councillor Wild stated that the new Local Development Plan (LDP) is expected to be supported by strong SPGs providing protection for green open space given the objectives and vision of the new LDP. The Council's Coed Caerdydd initiative aims to increase canopy cover from 19% to 25% and this will only be possible if land is set aside for that purpose by protecting green open space and by adding to it.
- Members asked whether green open spaces in the city were being used to offset carbon emissions. Officers advised that offsetting is taken into account in the strategy, but only in terms of the Council's land.
- Officers were asked to provide further details on the proposed HR policy changes referred to in the presentation. Members were advised that this could potentially relate to car allowance claims – for example staff might be asked to demonstrate that they cannot walk, cycle or take public transport.
- Members asked whether there has been a reduction in the number of car journeys. Officers stated that the statistics are positive and the number of active travel journeys are increasing but the question related more to the Transport White Paper.
- The Committee asked about the Cardiff Circular Economy Network project and how impact of the circular economy will be measured. Officers commented that this was subject to complex calculations. Ideally, the public need to 'buy the right things' initially; items that can be reused or repaired.

- Officers provided details of the City Car Club and how it operates. Members were advised that the City Car Club is working successfully. The Car Club consists of around 20 vehicles at present but the Cardiff City Region is potentially looking to expand provision and the possibility of utilising the Council's fleet vehicles outside business hours to extend provision.
- Members asked if there was a mechanism in place to purchase land in order to plant more trees. Officers stated that the objective of Coed Caerdydd is the planting of trees on Council owned land, however, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board have offered land at the University of Wales Hospital site and stated they will also maintain stewardship of any trees planted. Officers also confirmed that there is insufficient land in Council ownership to meet the target of increasing the City's tree canopy by 25%.
- Members sought clarification on how the carbon footprint from someone homeworking as opposed to them commuting to work is calculated. Officers stated that a Welsh Government reporting framework is used to make those calculations. Members were asked to note that the reporting framework uses averages and assumptions to make those calculations. All local authorities use the same framework.
- Officers were asked to comment on the step change in public perception that will be required to achieve net zero carbon. Officers stated that this issue was identified during early stages. A group of local universities that form a centre of excellence in change and social transformation suggested that climate change is a large concept and they recommend that the best way to address public engagement would be to break climate change down into 'bit size' topics – such as travel, waste, energy, etc. Welsh Government are developing their national strategy along the same lines.
- Members noted that only one new build school aimed to be net zero. Members asked why this was not the requirement for all new build schools. Officers indicated that building a net zero school is more costly and therefore the zero carbon new build was being used as a 'path finder' project to inform future developments. It was also necessary to resolve issues such as storage of energy from solar panels during the summer when the school is closed for a long periods. Members were asked to note that Strategic Estates are looking at a plan to retrofit solar panels where appropriate. This technology is evolving quickly and some buildings may need site specific solutions.
- The Committee noted that there are some large developments being proposed, i.e. the replacement of a cycle track with a velodrome and a new conference centre to replace an existing one. The production and use of concrete produces significant

carbon emissions and therefore, Members questioned whether retrofitting and upgrading existing facilities been considered in an effort to minimise emissions. Officers advised that an Estates Strategy has been developed with a view to retrofitting Council buildings to become more energy efficient. The Welsh Government has made funding available in the form of a loan that is repayable from the savings accrued.

- Members asked if carbon emissions will have a greater weighting than 'cost' in future tendering processes. Officers responded that carbon emissions will become an evaluation factor however they noted that the supply chain is not ready for large scale changes. However, the Council is working with suppliers to prepare them for these changes.
- Officers stated that a programme to increase the number of electric car vehicle charging points in the city is underway. Charging facilities are being focussed in areas where residents do not have access to drives or garages in the main. A pilot scheme is also looking at providing charging facilities from lampposts.
- Members asked whether Council staff were provided with a subsidy to use public transport. Members were advised that if staff use a bus or a train whilst on Council business then it is possible to reclaim those costs. HR provides incentives for staff to use public transport and that is currently being refreshed.
- Officers were asked to comment on representations received from Friends of the Earth and in particular the scores given to the Council by the website run by Climate Emergency UK. The Cabinet Member stated welcomed the scorecard and advised that the organisation was looking to rearrange their scoring to shift away from the emissions of the Council as an organisation towards the significant policy levers that the Council has available and its work with the public to encourage behaviour change in order to reduce emissions across the city as a whole.
- Problems in relation to supply of many items, due to demand or global issues, were noted. Officers advised that Welsh Government are aware of the supply issues facing all local authorities and are investigation 'national procurement' to create greater buying power.

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.

#### 49 : LOCAL AIR QUALITY MONITORING REPORT, ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received a report providing Members with background information to aid scrutiny of the report to Cabinet regarding Cardiff Council's Local Air Quality Annual Progress Report which was due to be considered by the Cabinet. The report provided background and a summary of the main issues identified in the Cabinet report.

Following a brief statement from the Cabinet Member Helen Picton, Head of Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) and Jason Bale, Programme Manager, Clean Air were invited to present the report.

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

- Members asked what options were being considered for Castle Street. Members were advised that monitoring was ongoing based on the interim scheme which was introduced pre-covid. The results of that monitoring will inform the full assessment which will be considered by the Cabinet in due course.
- Members requested an update on the roll out of the Welsh Government's EV Taxi scheme in Cardiff. Members noted that of the 5 vehicles made available none were operating in the city. Officers stated that costs of the scheme, licensing of the vehicles and the limited range of the vehicles were acting as disincentives.
- Members asked whether it was possible to make the real time monitoring of air quality data publicly available. Officers stated that monitors used are a low-cost sensor and they do not have the functionality to upload live cloud-based data. The intention is to potentially provide monthly reports and trend data in the near future.
- Members requested clarification of some of the terminology used in the air quality monitoring report.
- Officers confirmed that odours that form a statutory nuisance are not covered by air quality monitoring.
- In response to a question the Cabinet Member stated that he would report back to the Committee details of any Equality Impact Assessments carried out as part of the safer routes to schools scheme, in particular the impact on disabled pupils.

**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.

50 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Principal Scrutiny Officer provided an update on the Cabinet's responses to recommendations made by the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

51 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items.

52 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 12 January 2023.

The meeting terminated at 6.45 pm