

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 MARCH 2024

Present: Councillor Owen Jones(Chairperson)
Councillors Derbyshire, Gibson, Green, Lancaster, Lloyd Jones,
Proctor and Wood

55 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

56 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

57 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

58 : ONE PLANET CARDIFF - ANNUAL REVIEW

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Wild, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Andrew Gregory, Director, Planning, Transport & Environment and Gareth Harcombe, Head of Climate Emergency Response to the meeting.

The purpose of the item was to hear feedback on the progress of the One Planet Cardiff Strategy, to report annual carbon reduction statistics over the previous year, and to update and refine the delivery and action plan for the coming period.

The Cabinet Member delivered an opening statement followed by a short presentation by Gareth Harcombe which provided an overview of the One Planet Cardiff Strategy and Action Plan.

Members were advised that the vision was for a net zero Carbon Council by 2030 (Welsh Government Target) and a Net Zero Carbon City by 2030 (Partnership Pathway). Information was provided about the reduction in emissions from Council activities and highlighted the areas of concern as Council buildings and procurement. It was noted that since the declaration of the Climate Emergency there had been little evidence to support the behaviour change by the public.

The urgency needed to address the climate crisis was stressed and the reality of the funding required to make the necessary changes as being huge. The potential wider economic benefits to driving forward this agenda were also commented on.

There was a need for a green paper that built on the Local Energy Action Plan, the positive progress that had been made to date, a review of funding and investment opportunities [local and regional] and public consultation to refocus and renew the actions required to meet targets.

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

- Members discussed the risk of the Council not meeting the 2030 Net Zero Carbon emissions target and asked how it could be prioritised when there was so little support from central government. The Cabinet Member added that net zero needed to be embraced nationally with the levels of investment decided on and viewed as an economic investment in jobs as well as a green future.
- Members noted the pressure on the public in terms of domestic retrofit and the difficult choice between spending £5k on a heat pump or a holiday and whether that impacted on how the Council was factoring that into its targets and providing support for domestic property retro-fitting. Officers advised that certain measures were in place such as building regulations requiring an energy upgrade as part of an extension build. Members were updated on the LA Flex scheme which allowed the Council to access energy company obligation money. (Each of the energy companies being required to place a small amount of money aside to grant fund energy improvements for those people in fuel poverty). It was suggested that a conversation to broaden the eligibility would be beneficial. Officers noted that the supply of gas was finite and by that stage the technology would be cheaper and hopefully better understood. Members noted that it was the Council's role to pilot this in a leadership/stewarding role bringing confidence to the market.
- Officers added that out of the 155k homes in Cardiff a large percentage had a very poor carbon and insulation rating with the most disadvantaged living in cold dark homes that were poorly insulated. Members noted that the issue needed to be subject of national and regional conversations around the benefits of low carbon use supporting the most disadvantaged and supporting businesses.
- Members asked what measures were contained in the Local Development Plan (LDP) to help drive the net zero targets and in terms of retrofitting what was being done to tackle the issues with the steel framed homes in Cardiff which were poor in terms of insulation and damp and if any assistance was being provided by the Welsh Government. Officers responded that work had been ongoing for several years on a grant funding scheme in relation to steel frame buildings in Cardiff. Members noted the cost which was around £50/60k per home. Officers were close to signing a grant agreement with the Welsh Government and it was envisioned that this would come to fruition shortly.
- Members discussed the role of the replacement Local Development Plan in the Climate Emergency. It was noted that the current Local Development Plan was still allowing developments to put in gas boilers which could be obsolete soon.
- Members asked if, when planning infrastructure changes, the Council calculated the carbon costs. Officers responded that operational carbon costs were known but in the case of embodied carbon there was currently no requirement in the Welsh Government reporting carbon framework to calculate

those costs. It was recognised that there was a need for further information relating to the calculation of embodied carbon i.e. the carbon emissions produced to provide facilities and infrastructure that reduced carbon emissions in the long term, for example building cycle paths or demolition before rebuilding.

- Members asked what levers were available within procurement and specifications for products/works. Officers responded that in order to address procurement issues the Council had adopted a Socially Responsible procurement strategy, however it was noted that the carbon reduction associated with the strategy had not been evaluated. The Council expected suppliers to have a carbon reduction strategy in place. It was also noted that 'smarter' specifications could also help.
- Members referred to sourcing locally produced low carbon food and asked what support was available for local farmers and businesses. Officers responded that funding had been made available from the city region which was a challenge fund on testing or stimulating the market to come up with healthier and lower carbon solutions. This would favour local supply chains and fewer air miles without having to break any procurement rules.
- Members asked about progress on piloting and use of heat pumps in schools. Officers referred to the One Planet School Pledge with schools able to develop their own plan of action in terms of the climate emergency. Members were advised that heat pumps were already being piloted in schools. Reference was made to Lisvane Primary which had solar panels installed on the roof and was featured in the One Planet Schools Newsletter. Members also heard that an event had taken place earlier in the year where the various schemes in place in schools had been showcased.
- Members asked if there were any more plans in place for solar farms in Cardiff. Officers responded that one of the targets was to develop a pipeline of new renewable schemes. Parcels of land owned by the Council were in the process of being identified for such use.
- Members asked if the Council should be providing information to the public about solar panels and other schemes. Officers responded that there were already resources in place such as the Energy Savings Trust and Carbons Trust that provided information. The Welsh Government was another good source of information. The Council's role was seen as signposting individuals to those organisations as it would be difficult for the Council to recommend suppliers and installers.
- Members discussed the Western Gateway Severn Estuary tidal project which would be of great value for the region in terms of economic growth and Cardiff being involved in major renewable schemes. It was noted that the current electricity usage could account for 7% of the UK's electricity. Members were advised that the technology for tidal schemes was becoming more proven. Officers agreed to circulate information on the tidal scheme to the Committee.

- Members asked about sequestered carbon from trees. Officers referred to Coed Caerdydd – a programme of trying to increase the canopy. It was noted that sequestered carbon was from a range of plants (such as hedgerows and brambles), not just trees. Officers advised that a tree had to be about 10 years old before it reached its maximum sequestration capabilities.
- Members asked about alternative forms of commuting. Officers responded that steps were being taken to look at procurement around car clubs. The issue of charging points for electric vehicles was also being investigated.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations captured during the way forward.

59 : BUS PRIORITY STRATEGY

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr De'Ath, Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning & Environment, Andrew Gregory, Director, Planning & Environment, Claire Moggridge, Head of Transport and Gethin Shields, Transportation Programme Manager to the meeting.

This item was to hear about the need for Cardiff to have a bus priority strategy that aligned with aspirations in the Transport White Paper, and the key corridors, routes and infrastructure items that could be used to form a programme for bus priority delivery.

The Cabinet Member delivered an opening statement which was followed by a short presentation delivered by Gethin Shields providing an overview of the Bus Priority Strategy.

Members were advised that the Bus Priority Strategy outlined the proposal to develop a number of bus corridors to improve the reliability and quality of bus services into and out of the city, using a range of infrastructure designs.

It was emphasised that this strategy did not address the provision of bus services and intended to look at bus corridors holistically as part of an integrated transport network.

The committee was informed that having a robust plan in place would allow bids for funding to be sought, as some corridors are more progressed than others as funding has been secured.

The Chairperson reminded Members that Appendix 4 contained confidential legal advice which was exempt from publication pursuant to paragraph 16 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and stated that if there were any questions that related to this the Committee would need to go into a closed session.

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

- Members asked for clarification around the proposed bus corridors, including the Northern Corridor and the corridor crossing the Rhymney river. Officers advised that in the case of the Northern Corridor this was at an optioneering

stage. Officers were analysing issues around the route, surveys and opportunities for priority and compiling a package of work best suited for the route. When that was in place engagement would occur. In the case of the Rhymney River Bridge officers were looking at this corridor as it was a key corridor from Cardiff to Newport and possible options such as it being widened and lower cost options for bus accessibility.

- Members enquired how equalities and wider consultation and engagement with disability, including neurodivergent groups was being addressed. Officers responded that engagement had recently started on a more regular basis with Sight Life, RNIB and Guide Dogs to discuss some of the issues. Each phase would be subject to consultation and an autism assessment and access was being improved via physical infrastructure measures. Members asked if other organisations and Non Governmental Organisations about disability could be included also. It was noted that Disability Wales was an organisation undertaking work around neurodiversity and other organisations in connection with autism. Officers responded that there was also a monthly access group which took place in Cardiff and all the schemes were subject to consultation with this group.
- Members asked for clarification in relation to the targets for modal shifts between different elements. In the case of the walking targets this was 24%.
- Members queried the scale of cross border working with neighbouring authorities. It was noted that local authorities were required to develop a Bus Action Plan and to ensure smooth running with other local authorities. Officers responded that Cardiff Council was engaging with Transport for Wales, on many corridors and Cardiff Capital Region and some of the local authorities that bordered Cardiff eastern bus corridor. Similarly, Newport City Council was doing the same with the aim of joining up into one corridor from Cardiff City Centre to Newport City Centre. It was funded by the Capital Region and engagement was taking place with all Council wards. There was also some engagement with the Vale of Glamorgan bus corridors in the west.
- Members asked about the availability of accurate, real-time information and security at bus stops. Officers responded that there was a separate budget on bus stops and information. Bus stops would not be established without units installed providing information in respect of the key corridors. Members were advised that, as part of the strategy around the immediate areas around the city centre, engagement with the police would help inform where the bus stops were located. Buses also had CCTV installed and security features.
- Members enquired as to the overall cost of the schemes and the corresponding impact on reliability. Officers responded that detailed analysis would need to be undertaken to ascertain the cost of the schemes. Funding for the next year amounted to £3.5m and the detail would follow. In terms of journey time improvement Members were advised that journey time modelling would take place but this was more related to journey time quality. Officers noted that buses tended to drop out of the system because of congestion or driver reliability. The key aim was to provide consistent journey times whether during peak or off-peak hours or during an event or non-event day. It was

about reliable, consistent journey times whatever time of the day. There was a clear target to increase journeys on buses to 20% by 2030.

- Members asked about Park and Ride provision and specifically Pentwyn. Officers responded that in previous years park and ride schemes had been sustainable. However currently they did not cover their costs on major event days. Pentwyn was currently used by the University Hospital Wales but the challenge was the long distance cost to get from the Park and Ride to City Centre. Members were advised that part of the work involved looking at Park and Ride in the whole and where it could be affordably installed from the beginning. It was noted that proposals for Junction 33 still featured a Park and Ride scheme. It was recognised that there was a need to feature Park and Ride into the city centre and steps were being taken to look at a Park and Ride system that serviced Cardiff and the local authorities.
- Members asked officers about the current reliability of services and if lost bus routes would be returned. Officers responded that the plan was in relation to infrastructure and not individual bus routes. It was noted that there had been challenges in the city centre caused by roadworks and there would be further delays as the schemes were built. Officers reassured Members that they would work closely with the bus operators to deal with bottlenecks but as the bus routes were built the bottlenecks would move to other places along the routes as they were constructed. Increased pedestrian linkage from some of the residential areas to the corridors was also important.
- The impact of active travel routes was discussed. Officers advised that cycle lines required an extra stage at a junction which had an impact on other transport. Members heard that by adopting a corridor approach schemes could be designed that included all modes of transport. Members noted that the report was trying to bring forward an integrated transport system responding to the needs of active travel.
- Members asked what approaches were being taken to deal with city centre congestion and bottlenecks, Llandaff being used as an example. Officers advised that they were aware of the bottleneck at Llandaff and a plan was being drawn up to look at measures to tackle the congestion and also improve the bus and walking environment. Members were advised the issues were not necessarily about the bus lanes but traffic flow and traffic movement. Officers would be analysing traffic flows and current bus stop locations. It would also be necessary to quantify bus stops to ensure they were in the right location where the major footfall was.
- Members asked what work was taking place to review interventions previously implemented if they were not working. The bus corridor at Llantrisant Road was used as an example of where the congestion had worsened. Officers responded that the plan was to look at bus corridors holistically as part of an integrated transport network which involved navigating signal junctions and displacement of traffic. In terms of Llantrisant Road it may be necessary to look at remodelling, reviewing the roundabout allowing busses to navigate the junction.

- Members asked how the interventions on the corridors would be prioritised. Officers responded that in conjunction with the Cardiff Bus and feedback received two key junctions were being looked at to the east and then the intention was to move from there to west and the rest of Cardiff. Members were advised that congestion was concentrated on the city centre and lessened further out but nevertheless there were pockets of congestion on certain roads such as Llantrisant and Cardiff Road.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations captured during the way forward.

60 : CARDIFF CROSS-RAIL - PHASE 1 TENDER

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr De'Ath, Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning & Environment, Andrew Gregory, Director, Planning, Transport & Environment, Claire Moggridge, Head of Transport and Gethin Shields, Transportation Programme Manager to the meeting.

This item was to hear about the next steps needed to progress the delivery of Cardiff Cross Rail given the spend deadline of mid 2026 on its UK Government funding contribution of £50m.

The Cabinet Member delivered an opening statement which was followed by a presentation delivered by Gethin Shields providing an overview of Cardiff CrossRail.

Members were reminded that Appendix 1 of this item was exempt information under paragraph 14 of Part 4 and satisfied the public interest test in paragraph 21 Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The Chairperson stated that if there were any questions that related to this the Committee would need to go into a closed session.

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

- Members sought clarification on whether the funding available covered the changes needed to the road infrastructure and the risks of overspend or underspending on the project. Officers responded that the funding would include everything required to deliver the infrastructure of the scheme. If it came under budget it was highly unlikely the Council would retain the money and if it went over budget extra funding would need to be sourced. In advance of that the Council was taking steps to design out as much risk as it could.
- Members asked about risks and risk management. Officers assured Members that the funding was in place and a letter had been received confirming the funding subject to the business case approval which was the most certainty that could be attained at this stage.
- Members enquired as to the impact on transport and travel around the Callaghan Square area during construction. Officers responded that the construction would not necessarily involve foreclosures. There was the benefit

of being able to use the northern carriage. It was not foreseen that there would be a situation where the full carriageway would require closure.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations captured during the way forward.

61 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

62 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for Thursday 18 April 2024 at 4.30 pm.

The meeting terminated at 7.00 pm