

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 APRIL 2019

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

77 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Philippa Hill-John and Lancaster.

78 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

79 : HIGHWAYS RESURFACING PROGRAMME

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport, Andrew Gregory Director Planning Transport & Environment and Gary Brown Operational Manager Planning Transport & Environment to the meeting.

Members were advised that they have the opportunity to consider the Highways Resurfacing Programme for 2018/19. This would provide the Committee with the opportunity to review the Planned Maintenance Identified Scheme List and consider the methodology applied when creating this document.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

Members asked about the Matrix, how it was formulated and whether it was inputted manually or there were pre-set measurements used. Officers explained that the Matrix sets out the forward plan for the year and lots of information is fed into it, including information from the scanners on principle routes, the SCRIM survey, AEI, Complaints, Member enquiries etc. The information is all fed in to enable decision making in order of condition i.e. Reconstruction/Inlay/Preventative Work. Each job is given a weighting or score of 100 to 0 based on condition.

Members noted that different roads are used in different ways and have a different level of use; asking if there is differentiation between them when considering the weighting. Officers explained that it was one of the factors, traffic counts and local knowledge were useful to determine which roads are busiest. Examples were given including the A4232 being taken out of the system as a whole road as its too long and needed to be sectioned; also cul-de-sacs that may have a low traffic use but can get left untreated for years. Officers explained that usage is a telling factor but this has to be balanced with budget spend in a phased approach.

Members asked if Officers are reliant on people reporting problems; Officers explained that the vast majority of roads in Cardiff are inspected at least 12 monthly, but reported complaints are also taken in account.

Members asked how much weight was added to the complaint if it was reported by a Member or reported many times and were advised that as Members represent many residents it does give extra points, multiple reporting adding priority would depend what needed to be done and the suitability /usability of the road. Officers added that there is an Officer in the team who picks up Member enquiries, responds and sends officers out to inspect.

Members noted that they used to receive a job list for all the roads in Cardiff, whereas they now only receive the roads in their wards, asking why this has changed. Officers noted that there is a published list of works on the website; the annual list to Members has been done differently this year, but they welcomed the feedback and Member engagement in the construction of the list. Officers added there may have been an oversight in how the information was shared this year and they would look into it.

Members asked what safeguards are in place to ensure all Members are informed if a road is in more than one ward. Officers explained that it is standard practice to inform all Ward Members if the road is in more than one ward.

Members referred to the quality of resurfacing in the North of Cardiff and asked what safeguards were in place to check the work once it has been completed. Officers explained that works are inspected but if there were any issues with the quality, Members were urged to report it. Officers explained that some treatments did need a number of weeks to settle.

Members asked if any special attention was given to roads in Conservation Areas and were advised that it was not but there was special attention given to the footways through Conservation Areas.

Members asked what happens when planned works are not able to be carried out due to cars being parked there and how this affects that roads place on the list. Officers explained that parked cars are a huge problem, the road should remain on the list but further information on the particular street mentioned would be sought.

Members asked how bad a road needs to be to become a priority and how often this happens and roads bump up on the list. Officers stated that this doesn't happen very often, its usually things like diesel spills that mean a road needs to be treated as a priority, emergency repairs were very rare as the cost would be enormous. Members noted this and asked how Officers ensure that roads are not perpetually delayed. Officers explained that reconstruction takes a huge chunk of the budget, they prioritise on condition and use local works to keep then useable in the interim.

Members asked if the programme for 2019/2020 would be available for pre-decision scrutiny and were advised that Officers would be starting the process soon; funding was available to look into longer contracts if performance is good. Officers added that they would share information as early as possible when it was produced at the right level. It was noted that lists can be changeable and a degree of flexibility was needed.

Members asked if the Cabinet Member inspected roads with Officers as they had done previously and were advised that the Officers had undertaken the inspections.

Members urged Officers to inform local Members when they are out inspecting roads as Members would be able to point out other problem areas. The Cabinet Member stated that officers are happy to discuss any issues with local Members at any time, but officer time couldn't be tied down to meeting members on the visits.

Members asked if there was a pavement works list and were advised that there was and it could be provided if required.

Members referred to resurfacing works that had splashed on drain pipes and Officers advised that the contractor had been contacted on this issue and the works had been improved at the contractor's cost.

Members noted that it was costly to repair pavements with paving slabs and asked what was being done to look at using tarmac instead. Officers advised that they were looking at putting more money into footways as it is expensive, officers target areas locally but continuity is needed; constant breakages on slabs due to vehicle misuse was a real challenge.

AGREED: that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

80 : LAMBY WAY SOLAR FARM - PROGRESS UPDATE

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment and Andrew Gregory Director Planning Transport & Environment to the meeting.

Members were advised that they have the opportunity to consider a paper titled 'Lamby Way Solar Farm – Progress Update'. This would consider the progress made since a detailed business case was presented to Cabinet in June 2018, and review the next steps for the project.

The Chairperson invited Cllr Michael to make a statement in which he said that last July it had been decided that the Council should produce its own solar energy, the project needs to be deliverable and pay for itself. Lots of projects were being discussed around decarbonisation including LED lampposts and the Council was committed to this agenda. The Solar farm was in the planning process and hopefully by late summer/early autumn it would be up and running, contributing to the electric output of the Council and 1600 tonnes per year less carbon.

Members were provided with a presentation after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

Members were pleased with the project but asked if Brexit would have any impact on sourcing parts due to trading agreements potentially changing. The Cabinet Member stated that most components are made in China and there is a long enough lead in time so there shouldn't be any issue.

Members asked if any calculations had been undertaken with regard to the Euro/Pound and the impact of Brexit. The Cabinet member said there hadn't been as if the scheme relied on that it would be too fragile to be successful.

Members welcomed the scheme and asked what was being done to enhance Biodiversity in the area. Officers explained that there is an enhancement plan and an ecological management plan for the term of the farm and further information could be provided if required. It was added that the bottom area of the site is a SSSI, there is a whole life programme, the site wouldn't be sterile there would still be wildlife there but during development they would need to relocate the slow worms.

Members considered that there could be a link to the coastal path to enhance the area further adding to the solar benefits, noting that the local Members will want a big say in what happens to the rest of the site.

Members noted the partnership with Dwr Cymru and asked if there had been any organisations interested in the scheme. The Cabinet Member stated that the Council has worked with Dwr Cymru on plenty of projects over the years and the partnership works well; anyone else can be a partner if there is a good financial deal; the scheme won't be obsolete in 15 years' time, it will change over time and that may mean change in partners too. Officers added that there was also the opportunity to link with Lamby Way for the E.Vehicle fleet, as well as potential retail and leisure partnerships.

Members asked about the anticipated rate of return over 35 years; the Cabinet Member stated that he would rather not talk about financial information whilst they were still in the procurement stage.

Members asked about the extra megawatts that would be generated and asked how many homes this would generate power for. Members were advised it was approximately 600 homes.

AGREED: that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

81 : FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME - VERBAL UPDATE

The Principal Scrutiny Officer stated that he had previously been asked to bring information on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Information had been compared to 2017 and there was a general trend of improvement.

The key findings were outlined and it considered the scheme was working well.

The Chairperson considered that Members may wish to visit some premises with Officers to see how they are assessed.

82 : ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME
2018/19 - VERBAL UPDATE

The Principal Scrutiny Officer outlined the potential items for the work programme over the next few months. Members discussed items and prioritised what items they would like to see brought forward and when.

Members were advised that there had been a request for a Call-In on the Air Quality report; this was currently with the Monitoring Officer for a decision.

The Principal Scrutiny Officer advised Members that the Task & Finish group would take place on 23 April 2019 at 5pm in County Hall; the first meeting would be an overview on what the Council does on Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Approach/Planning.

83 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

84 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 7th May 2019 at 4.30pm in Committee Room 4, County Hall.

The meeting terminated at 6.00 pm

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