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**CABINET RESPONSE – ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT  
TITLED ‘MANAGING BIODIVERSITY & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN CARDIFF’**

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**Background**

1. The Environmental Scrutiny Committee agreed as part of their work programme to undertake an inquiry titled ‘Managing Biodiversity & Natural Environment in Cardiff’. As a result, the Committee agreed to set up a task & finish group inquiry. The terms of reference were agreed as follows:

*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;*
- *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.*

2. The task group Inquiry was informed by evidence and advice from the following:

- 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 (SEWBRcC);
- 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.
3. The report was presented to Cabinet on the 23 January 2020; a copy of the report has been attached to this report as **Appendix 1**. A full response was agreed by Cabinet on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020; a copy of the full response has been attached to this report as **Appendix 2**.

### **Cabinet Response to Recommendations**

4. The scrutiny report made a series of key findings and 22 headline recommendations, however, some of these contained more than one recommendation, making the total number of actual recommendations 39. The Cabinet response accepted 18 recommendations; partially accepted 17 recommendations; rejected three recommendations and noted one recommendation.
5. The key findings and recommendations were based around six themed sections that are listed below:
- **Section 1** – Biodiversity & Natural Environment – Context Setting;
  - **Section 2** – Council Resources;
  - **Section 3** – Commitment, Structure & Process;
  - **Section 4** – Communication & Engagement;
  - **Section 5** – Baseline & Focus;
  - **Section 6** – Best Practice & Practical Applications.
6. Full details of the response and future actions are contained in **Appendix 2** of this report.

### **Way Forward**

7. The Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment, and officers from the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate have been invited to attend the meeting. They will provide a summary of the Cabinet response and answer any questions that Members may have.

8. Members may consider the response contained in the attached **Appendix 2** and provide any comments, advice or recommendations relevant to the contents of this report.

### **Legal Implications**

9. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not making 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 the 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**

10. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not making 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**

11. The Committee is recommended to consider the Cabinet response, the information presented at the meeting and then provide the Cabinet Member with any comments, concerns or recommendations.

**Davina Fiore**

**Director of Governance & Legal Services**

**24 February 2021**