

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 MAY 2021

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

18 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors Parkhill and Wong.

19 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Derbyshire declared a personal interest as a member of the RSPB, Chair of the local nature partnership and local access forum.

20 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 23/02/21 and 02/03/21 were agreed as a correct record.

21 : ONE PLANET CARDIFF - A RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The Chairperson explained that Committee had the opportunity to consider the draft Cabinet Report which was entitled 'One Planet Cardiff – A Response to the Climate Emergency, Key Progress' which provided an update on the One Planet Cardiff Strategy.

The Chairperson welcomed the Leader, Chief Executive, Councillor Michael, Councillor Wild and officers from the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Leader, Chief Executive, Cllr Michael, Cllr Wild and the Director of Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate to make statements in which they outlined the Council's commitment to addressing these challenges going forward, the work that was already underway and how all the Council policies and strategies link together. It was noted that a final version of the strategy and action plan would be considered later in the year.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

Members asked what developers could do to help improve wildlife corridors. Officers explained that extensive conversations happen with developers on all major development sites, as well as with Natural Resources Wales and internal ecologists. Major developments will have elements to the scheme to assist biodiversity such as green spaces, and water features.

Regarding tree-planting, Members noted the plans for increasing the City's tree canopy but also noted tree felling happening across the City. The Leader explained that over the last 4 years there have been 10,000 trees planted across the City; the

Council are extending their programme of one mow regimes and this compliments the increasing biodiversity the Council seeks to nurture. He added that clearly in some cases there would be loss of trees but this is mitigated through the planning process. Members were also advised that some trees are felled due to natural processes such as die-back and floods.

Members asked about costs for retrofitting Council homes. Officers advised that there is a specific budget in the Housing Revenue Account for Council housing stock. Currently the focus is on homes in low rise blocks in Cardiff. Members were advised that the Council also work with Nest and Housing Associations with a focus on fuel poverty and low income families. The Chief Executive considered that there may be scope for a Cardiff Capital Region dimension, with conversations between local authorities to do something on a large scale and improve borrowing capacity as they are all working on the same agenda.

Members asked if there was any data available on how many trees planted reach maturity. The Leader explained he would ask the Parks service for this information but there was an expectation of longevity for the trees planted.

Members noted that there were lots of references to Electric Vehicles (EV's) but were concerned that electric charging points at resident's properties does not seem feasible in some streets/wards. The Leader agreed that the technology still has some way to go and that there is an impact on household electricity usage. A discussion took place around charging points, infrastructure that is needed and different charging tariffs. Members were advised that there is work underway with Welsh Government to trial different chargers as they are rolled out and Officers are looking at schemes for terraced housing and alternative solutions which they hope to launch later in the year while being cautious with public money. It was noted that fast charging points could be installed at places like Gyms but it was important not to be ahead of the technology.

Members referred to electric scooters being popular currently and were advised that these are illegal in the UK outside of pilot schemes and there are also concerns about an anti-social behaviour aspect.

Members asked where the One Planet Strategy stands among other Council priorities such as Castle Street and Cycle/Bus lanes. The Leader explained that Castle Street was out for public consultation and whatever is agreed will improve the past air quality of that street.

Referring to the consultation process, Members asked if any new ideas had been identified that were not in the original draft or if anything in the original draft had been de-prioritised as a result of the consultation. Members were advised that Appendix A detailed the consultation responses which were mainly positive. Officers added that the consultation had flagged up behaviour change both within the council and with the public; officers considered this was difficult to take action on as it needs to be motivational.

Members asked if the Taxi trade had been complaining about the price of EV's. The Cabinet member agreed this was an issue and explained that the Council is working with Welsh Government on the cost of EV Taxis.

Members considered that members of the public should be encouraged to plant trees in their gardens etc. to help increase the City's tree canopy and to improve biodiversity. The Cabinet Member referred to the National Parks City and agreed it was important for everyone to get involved and take responsibility for tree planting.

Members were concerned that there could be electricity surges with more people charging EV's. The Cabinet Member and officers agreed this was a challenge and Members were advised that master planning was an important element of this, also using the heat network and decreasing the reliance on electricity.

Members referred to City Car Club's and Car Pooling, asking whether residents should be encouraged to use these or public transport. The Cabinet Member explained that he had visited Hackney who have said they have seen a significant reduction in car ownership, especially second cars since the City Car Club scheme was introduced. There could be possibilities of sharing cars in a more linked up way such as the Next bike scheme but with EV cars; increasing the use of EV pool cars etc. He added that there was no obvious way forward as yet with regard to car-pooling.

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.

22 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Committee Members were provided with an update on Cardiff Council's Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish report entitled, 'Scrutiny Impact Assessment Model'.

The principal Scrutiny Officers advised that a draft report on this would be brought to Committee next month.

23 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

24 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 1 June 2021 at 4:30pm.

The meeting terminated at 6.00 pm

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