

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 OCTOBER 2021

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

18 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Owen, Michael and Wild

19 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of interest were received.

20 : FIFTH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a report on the draft Cabinet report entitled 'Fifth Cardiff Local Development Annual Monitoring Report' which was due to be considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 14 October 2021. Members were advised that Cabinet would be asked to consider the findings of the report and endorse the report for submission to the Welsh Government by 31 October 2021.

The report provided Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the performance of the Council against its current Local Development Plan (LDP); how the Local Development Plan policies are being implemented; how the findings of the Annual Monitoring Report can help inform the Local Development Plan review process; and whether there are any associated risks to the Council.

Members were advised that the current LDP was adopted on 28 January 2016 and the Council is required to prepare an annual monitoring report by 31 October each year. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) process provided the basis for monitoring the effectiveness of the LDP and also helps to inform whether any revisions of the LDP are necessary. The AMR aims to demonstrate whether LDP strategies and objectives are being achieved and whether policies are functioning effectively. It also allows the Council to assess the impact the LDP is having on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the County and identifies any significant contextual changes that might influence the Plan's implementation or review.

Members were asked to note that due to the Covid pandemic Welsh Government did not require Local Planning Authorities to submit and publish an AMR by the 31st October 2020. However, where possible, data was still collected and was included the report. The data provides a baseline for future comparative analysis.

The Chairperson invited Andrew Gregory, Director of Planning, Transport & Environment to present the report. The Chairperson invited Members of the Committee to comment, raise questions or seek clarification on the report. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members referred to the indicator within the LDP relating to the active A1 retail units in district and local centres remaining the predominant use. Members noted that the target set was 40% which did not equate to predominant use. Officers stated that the targets were set in 2016 and were agreed with the inspectors. At that time 40% was considered to be high. The indicator would be reviewed as part of the process towards a new LDP and the point raised would be considered as part of that exercise. Members considered that the existing target did not support the indicator and the impact would be felt in district shopping centres. The Director stated that the critical issue was the mix of uses applied within district shopping centres. Officers are working towards better understanding the appropriate mix of uses in viable city and district centres.
- Members raised concerns regarding the saturation of some areas with a particular type of premises – for example take away fast food outlets, HMOs or student accommodation. Members considered that the LDP should pre-empt those issues by having the correct policies in place. The Director accepted the point. The objectives are to achieve a balanced mix of uses but the underlying policies take time to shift as part of the LDP process. Members considered that the current LDP is reviewed annually therefore the LDP could be adjusted to incorporate those policies. A Member noted that this hasn't happened under the current LDP and also questioned whether the review process was working properly. Officers advised that evidence-based work is being undertaken to support the development of more robust policies in the renewed LDP. For example, all A3 takeaways and fresh food outlets have been mapped across the city. Officers stated that the AMR process provides an opportunity to evaluate how the current LDP was performing. There was no mechanism to change the policies within the LDP until the formal review is undertaken.
- Members asked whether population predictions take account of the increase in inward migration within the UK currently as people move away from metropolitan areas to places that are perceived to be more affordable. Officers stated that the latest population projections issued by Welsh Government were 2018 based, prior to the pandemic, and these show a downward trend. Since 2008 Welsh Government population projections have generally shown a downward trend because outward internal migration has resulted in a net loss in population of Cardiff.
- A Member considered that the definition of affordable housing needed to be adjusted to reflect housing market values. It was noted that house prices in Cardiff have on average increased by £24,000 during 2021. New house building is not keeping up with demand or price increases and this has effectively locked more people out of homeownership. Officers advised that despite the pandemic there has been an increase in house building in the city. There are currently 2,100 houses under construction and completions for the two year period to 2021 were over 2000. Affordable housing completions have also increased with 2,500 completions in the two year period to April 2021.
- Members noted that whilst gross weekly pay in Cardiff has increased by 23% between 2006/7 and 2018/19, average house prices have increased by 52% during the same period. Members asked whether this was sustainable and whether this would have an effect on housing completions and other aspects of

the LDP. Officers advised that house prices are considered but there is no direct correlation between house prices and an increase in the supply of houses. The aim of the LDP is to plan a level of growth across the city that is sustainable and that meets the needs of the city, including affordability.

- Members asked what effect had the pandemic had on implementation and monitoring of the LDP and whether targets will be changed or missed as a result. Members were advised that the Authority was not required to submit an AMR in 2020. However, a draft monitoring report was completed and that data was included in this year's report. There has been some impact in terms of the transport indicators.
- Officers were asked to comment on sustainable appraisal monitoring objective 43 that indicated that local biodiversity actions plans are not being progressed. Members were advised that the Planning Department are currently recruiting a new ecologist and local biodiversity action plans will be progressed once staff are appointed.
- Members noted the target for functional open space was 2.43 hectares per 1000 population. Cardiff currently has 1.17 hectares per 1000 population. Members asked how this could be improved and whether there was budget available to do this. Members were advised that additional open space is being provided as part of the new housing developments in the city. Last year there was a net gain in open space of 6 hectares and this figure should increase as the strategic sites are developed.
- Officers agreed to check whether Flatholm has been classified as a functional open space for the city.
- Responding to a comment from the Committee, the Director stated that large scale functional open space schemes are not necessary as the new developments are more generous in terms of functional open space than some of the more traditional communities in the city.
- Members asked to clarify the target number for new Council houses and how many houses have been built against that target. The Leader, Councillor Huw Thomas, stated that the Council has a target of 1000 new homes, of which 500 have been built. The target of 1000 will be achieved by 2022. The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan highlights the Authority's ambition to increase the number being built to 2500 Council homes between 2017 and 2027.
- Members asked for an update on Gypsy Traveller site provision. Officers stated that in terms of the AMR, the Gypsy and Traveller Site assessment identified the need for 72 pitches across the city. Work has been undertaken to identify potential sites that can meet that need. It was confirmed that the Rover Way site will not need to be relocated in order for the flood defence scheme to be finalised in the vicinity.

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.

21 : ONE PLANET CARDIFF STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Committee received a report providing Members with an opportunity to scrutinise a draft report due to be considered the Cabinet on 14 October 2021 regarding the One Planet Cardiff Strategy and Action Plan. Members were advised that the Cabinet would consider the report and seek approval of the 2021 One Planet Cardiff Strategy (OPC). The Strategy sets out the Council's plan to deliver a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030 and to work with city-wide partners to develop a road map and action plan for a Carbon Neutral City by 2030.

In 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency and it has since been developing the One Planet Strategy setting out the Council's response to the emergency and become carbon neutral by 2030. In October 2020 the Cabinet approved the Draft One Planet Cardiff Strategy and authorised a period of public consultation to help shape the final strategy and action plan. The Council consulted with city-wide stakeholders, including the general public, businesses, key stakeholders and young people. A report containing a detailed appraisal of this consultation was published in May 2021.

The key results of the consultation were detailed as follows:

- Climate emergency response needs to be resourced
- Consultation, engagement, leadership and partnership all crucial
- Critical to effectively involve public / stakeholder groups
- A leadership board is essential
- Any final action plan needs to identify the projects that can be realistically delivered + timetable, costs and prioritisation
- Public behaviour change is the biggest challenge - needs to be well resourced, and continually in collaboration with partners long term.

A summary of the key themes and issues identified in the Cabinet report was also provided.

The Chairperson welcomed the Leader of the Council, Councillor Huw Thomas and officers from the Planning, Transport and Environment Directorate. Following a statement from the Leader, the Chairperson opened the debate of this item. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members welcomed the significant progress that has been made in addressing this issue to date. Members asked whether there was any project in addition to the solar farm that would enable the Authority to produce its own energy. The Leader stated that the Council now has a good understanding of its CO₂ emissions. There is a pathway to reduce those emissions by 60% across the corporate estate. A number of potential schemes are being considered to help

the Authority reduce emissions.

- A Member considered that there was still reluctance amongst members of the public to reduce private car usage, as demonstrated by the closure of Castle Street. Members asked how people would be encouraged to reduce reliance of journeys made by private cars by 2030. The Leader reminded Members that the decision to reopen Castle Street was taken as modelling indicated higher levels of pollution in surrounding areas as a result of Castle Street closing. Castle Street was to be reopened and the modelling exercise would continue in order to set how the position stabilises as the city emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic. Transport accounts for 41% of the city's CO₂ emissions and whilst that will be reduced by new technologies the Council will need to work with the national governments, however a significant proportion of the reduction needed in the city will come from the Transport Strategy published in 2020.
- The Director started that work is being undertaken to identify the commitments and actions required across the city from businesses and individuals to make effective behavioural changes and use less carbon.
- Members requested further details of the schemes being considered in terms of behavioural change. The Leader stated that, in terms of transportation, the Authority's ambition is to achieve a modal shift towards 60% of all journeys not being by car. Other initiatives will require support at a national level, such as retro-fitting housing.
- Members asked when the Carbon Impact Evaluation Tool would come into use. Officers advised that the evaluation tool was already being used and there were references to it within the One Planet Cardiff Strategy. A baseline figure for current carbon emissions has been set for the purposes of the report using the 2019/20 emissions avoiding any anomalies from the pandemic. This evaluation will be carried out annually and any emissions from new developments will be included. The tool is also used to evaluate where carbon can be removed. Responding to comments made on the indoor arena development, officers stated that the project will need go through the planning process. The building will be a low-carbon building and a connection to a district heat network will provide low-carbon energy.
- Members asked what role community groups and residents would play in terms of governance. A Member considered that it was important to engage residents and involve them in the governance process. Officers stated that this would be crucial in terms of the public engagement work which is currently being scoped. There will be a full range of measures for the Council, key partners and the city as a whole. The general advice is not to bombard members of the public with the whole climate change agenda but to pick issues or small changes that they are able to focus on and to plan engagement accordingly. The strategy includes a table of the most effective changes individuals can make, and therefore it is important to provide them with the information they need.
- Members noted that the Action Plan states that all new build schools in the city will be net zero carbon design standard from 2023 onwards. Members asked whether the Band B projects currently underway will meet that commitment. The

Director stated that if the commitment by the Schools Directorate is included in the action plan then it must include schools that are already identified in the Band B programme. Some projects were already underway and subject to agreed policies. All schools were built to BREAM excellent standard and will be high performing. However, the zero carbon target post-dates some funding and procurement arrangements. The Leader agreed to provide further details in response to the question in writing.

- Members asked what percentage shift would be required year on year to achieve net zero carbon. Officers stated that annual reduction targets have not been considered. Officers accepted the point and officers considered that there may be an opportunity in the annual monitoring report to show what progress is being made.
- The Committee asked how many dedicated staff were employed to work on the climate change agenda. The Director stated that the One Planet Strategy is a corporate priority and there are hundreds of staff contributing to the strategy.
- Members noted that the strategy and action plan did not include any reference to the financial commitment required to achieve its goals. Members asked what work had been done in terms of costings and for an estimate of the funding required. The Director stated that all the projects in Phase 1 have business cases that establish 'invest to save' or the financial commitments required from the Council or other partners. Any projects moving forward will go through the same process and will be fully costed. There is no overall estimate in terms of the funding required but the Director agreed to provide a figure if requested to do so. Members considered that this figure would be useful in terms of the annual monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.

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 : PROCUREMENT OF PUBLIC CAR CLUB SCHEME FOR CARDIFF

The Committee received an information report on a Cabinet paper entitled 'Procurement of Public Car Club Scheme for Cardiff' in advance of the matter being presented to Cabinet.

Members were advised that the Cabinet report would seek to enable Cabinet Members to consider the role of Car Clubs in achieving the city's Transport Vision and to set out the policy context for supporting the growth of the car club sector in Cardiff. The report also seeks Cabinet approval to delegate decisions on the procurement of a provider for a car club scheme in Cardiff and also outlines the proposed approach to procuring a new scheme for the city.

Members were asked to note the report and suggest any future actions in relation to this. Members expressed an interest in monitoring the scheme and receiving more details regarding the business plan, the expected outcomes and how those will be measured. Members also considered that there would be value in evaluating existing schemes and the demand for such schemes. The Principal Scrutiny Officer agreed

to consider the Committee's comments when formulating the Committee's forward work programme.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

23 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Members were asked to note the correspondence received during the financial year.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

24 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were received.

25 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 7 November 2021.

The meeting terminated at 6.15 pm