

**MANAGING BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN CARDIFF-
UPDATE ON RESPONSES TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the Committee with an update in response to the recommendations made to Cabinet as part of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee's Inquiry into 'Managing Biodiversity and Natural Environment in Cardiff'.

Background

2. At their meeting held on 19th March 2019, the Environmental Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake an inquiry into 'Managing Biodiversity and Natural Environment in Cardiff' and established a Task and Finish Group to take this forward.
3. The Terms of Reference for the Group were agreed as follows:

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.*
4. The final report, findings and recommendations was presented to Cabinet on the 23 January 2020, a copy of which is attached to this report at Appendix 1.
5. A full response was agreed by Cabinet on the 19th November 2020 and presented to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration at their meeting held on 2 March 2021. This initial Cabinet response is attached at Appendix 2 which resulted in a series of observations and requests from the Committee.¹

Cabinet Response to Recommendations

6. The scrutiny report made a series of key findings and 22 headline recommendations, however, some of these contained more than one

¹ [\(Public Pack\)Correspondence following the Committee Meeting Agenda Supplement for Environmental Scrutiny Committee, 02/03/2021 16:30 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

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.

7. 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.

8. Attached at Appendix 3 is a further update on the Scrutiny recommendations from the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate and the Economic Development Directorate.

Way Forward

9. Cllr Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and Environment, Councillor Peter Bradbury, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure and Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport have been invited to make statements. Andrew Gregory, Director of Planning, Transport and Environment, Simon Gilbert, Head of Planning and Jon Maidment, Operational Manager, Parks, Sports and Harbour Authority have also been invited to answer questions and assist the Committee in its consideration of the item.

Legal Implications

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

11. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make 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.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- i) Consider the information in this report, its appendix and the information presented at the meeting;
- ii) Determine whether they would like to make any comments, observations or recommendations to the Cabinet on this matter; and
- iii) Decide the way forward for any future scrutiny of the issues discussed.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance & Legal Services

7 January 2022