

**Ref:** Scrutiny/Env/08/12/2022

**Date:** 14 December 2022

**Councillor Wild**

Cabinet Member, Climate Change



Dear Councillor Wild

### **Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 8 December 2022**

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee a sincere thank you for attending Committee to facilitate our consideration of the **One Planet Cardiff**. Please also relay our thanks to the officers who attended the Committee meeting to support this item. Please be aware that I wrote to a number of interested and expert agencies and organisations asking for their comments and observations on the One Planet Cardiff Annual review which were referred to during the meeting and which I have attached for your information and consideration. Members agreed that I pass on the following observations. You will find our recommendations and requests, listed at the end of the letter. We have provided comments in each of the new activity areas used in the reporting framework.

#### **Buildings**

It was noted that there are some large developments being proposed, i.e. the replacement of a cycle track with a velodrome and a new conference centre to replace an existing one. Members commented that the production and use of concrete produces significant Carbon emissions and therefore, are carbon emissions taken into consideration in 'new' proposals and has retrofit /upgrading existing facilities been considered in a effort to minimise emissions?

Members asked why only one 'net zero' school was being built when we need to do significantly more to be carbon zero by 2030. Officers responded by clarifying that building a net zero school is more costly and therefore it was being used as a 'path finder' project to inform future developments, and to

resolve issues such as storage of energy from solar panels during the summer when the school is closed for a long period. It was also noted that Strategic Estates are looking at a plan to retrofit solar panels where appropriate and that as this technology is evolving quickly and some buildings may need site specific solutions.

The scale of the problem was also highlighted in an observation from the Welsh Government Energy Service and Local Partnership that:

*Cardiff Council has in the region of 240 buildings and the ambition is that these are net zero by 2030. Break this down and that is **only 11 days of effort per building** to commission, procure and install energy efficiency measures which will be a multi million pound programme.'*

The energy efficiency of some new developments was questioned and the response from officers clarified that these will have been approved historically and that the dialogue with developers is changing to reflect emerging needs and that Welsh Government will be expecting new developments to be near carbon zero. The need for Supplementary Planning Guidance to support the work being undertaken to achieve carbon zero was also highlighted. You also commented that the timing is right to raise this with the ongoing development of the RLDP and the preferred strategy being presented to Cabinet in January.

## **Mobility**

Members asked for clarification regarding HR policies in relation to use of cars and officers stated that possibly demonstrating why walking/cycling/public transport were not viable solutions, although a through review is being undertaken to better understand the issues and the need in relation to Equality Impact Assessments.

The Committee asked for further information about the City Car Club, and were informed that the service had been recently recommissioned and that a wider regional network/service is being explored as are potential links to the Councils 'grey fleet' instead of pool cars based at Council buildings. It was

also noted that there are incentives to use public transport, and these are currently being reviewed.

The lack of a public electric vehicle charging infrastructure was also commented on by members. Officers stated that grants were available to the public to fit charging points on their garage/drive and that a programme is being developed to deliver 24 chargers in 12 areas across the region and work to identify locations is being undertaken, but 'destinations' are being considered.

### **Supply Chain & Procurement**

The committee heard that this area of work is the most challenging producing 80% of the council's operational carbon impact. Members asked if "carbon emissions" will have a greater weighting than 'cost' in future tendering processes. Officers responded that carbon emissions will become an evaluation factor however they noted that the supply chain is not ready for large scale changes, but the council is working with suppliers to prepare them for these changes.

Problems in relation to supply of many items, due to demand or global issues, was noted. Officers informed members that Welsh Government are aware of supply issues facing all local authorities and are investigation 'national procurement to create greater buying power.

### **Recycling & Waste**

The committee asked about the Cardiff Circular Economy Network project and how impact of the circular economy will be measured. Officers commented that this was subject to complex calculations, but was needed the public to 'buy the right things' initially, items that can be reused or repaired.

Members also asked what was being done in relation to single use plastic. Officers responded that the recycling strategy for Cardiff that was recently approved, does away with a significant number of the 'green bags' previously

used. They also noted that the Climate Emergency Board, will share good practice examples across organisations.

### **Renewable Energy**

The Committee noted that should members of the public wish to investigate the installation of solar panels that it is not easy to find appropriate information. It also noted that in some areas of the city that it may not be possible to install them due to them being in designated conservation areas of the city, highlighting a potential conflict in policy.

### **Green Infrastructure & Adaptation**

The Committee notes the declaration of the climate emergency by the Council in 2018 and the development and publication of the One Planet Cardiff strategy as a response in 2021. However, a nature emergency was also declared in 2021 and members asked what is being done to preserve the current biodiversity in the city. Officers stated that there are links and a lot was being done in relation to flood defences, Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDS) and Coed Caerdydd, however, a decision was made to keep the two issues separate, despite them being linked, as carbon reduction is a complex issue.

Members asked if there was a mechanism in place to purchase land in order to plant more trees. Officers stated that the objective of Coed Caerdydd is the planting of trees on Council owned land, however, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board have offered land at the University of Wales Hospital site and stated they will also maintain stewardship of any trees planted. Officers also confirmed that there is insufficient land in Council ownership to meet the target of increasing the City's tree canopy by 25%.

### **Food**

The Committee made no specific comments about Food, although please note the comments received from Sustainable Food, endorsed by the Committee.

## **Behaviour Change & Engagement**

Members acknowledged that there is a significant challenge in addressing behaviour change in the public, officers cited that it can be achieved and gave smoking in public places as an example. They also stated that Welsh Government is developing a National Strategy that will pick a topic at a time to address, and that their overall strategy is to make the easiest choice the right choice, although acknowledging the current economic climate makes difficult choices even more difficult.

Reference was also made by the Committee to local authority climate plan scorecards [Cardiff Council Climate Plan Scorecards | Council Climate Scorecards](#) and the low score achieved by Cardiff in relation to 'Diversity and Inclusion' (0/5), although the average across all the plans scored in England and Wales is 1/5. However, it did score better in relation to 'Community, Engagement & Communications' (8/9), where the average score was 5/9

For ease of reference, the requests detailed in this letter are:

- Are carbon emissions taken into consideration in 'new' proposals and has retrofit /upgrading existing facilities been considered in an effort to minimise emissions?

No formal recommendations were made

Once again thank you once more for attending Committee and for considering our comments and recommendations.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Owen Jones', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Councillor Owen Jones**

**Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee**

*Cc: Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee*

*Andrew Gregory, Director for Planning, Transport & Environment*

*Gareth Harcombe, Commercial Manager for Energy and Sustainability*

*Cllr Adrian Robson, Group Leader, Conservatives*

*Cllr Andrea Gibson, Group Leader, Common Ground*

*Cllr Rhys Taylor, Group Leader, Liberal Democrats*

*Chris Pyke, Audit Manager*

*Tim Gordon, Head of Communications and External Relations*

*Jenny Goss, Cabinet Support Officer*