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Summary of an Inquiry Report of the:
Environmental Scrutiny Committee

**Managing
Biodiversity & Natural
Environment in Cardiff
INQUIRY SUMMARY:
September 2019**



Cardiff Council

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FOREWORD

Managing Biodiversity & Natural Environment in Cardiff

The natural environment that is essential to our very existence is at crisis point. Species are in decline, natural habitats are disappearing at an alarming rate and ancient ecosystems upon which we rely are facing terminal decline. This bleak picture was painted to our inquiry by witnesses who made a series of worrying statements, these included:

- 56% of species in the United Kingdom have suffered a decline since 1970, with 354 species are currently at risk of extinction;
- The United Kingdom has lost 97% of its wildflower meadows since 1945;
- 23 bee and wasp species have become extinct in the United Kingdom since the 1850s – the wider decline also means that the United Kingdom now imports 65,000 bumblebee colonies to support agricultural productivity each year;
- Welsh swift numbers have declined by over 60% since 1995.

Clearly this cannot be allowed to continue, and so our task group carried out a detailed review to explore what the Council could do to better manage Cardiff's biodiversity and natural environment. In delivering this piece of work we explored a number of areas including:

- The development of Cardiff's Biodiversity Forward Plan;
- The approach taken by Welsh local authorities and other public bodies to create biodiversity forward plans;
- 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;
- Cardiff's Green Infrastructure Strategy;
- Aspects of the planning system that are designed to support biodiversity and the natural environment;
- The role of Council's partner organisations and the public.

The inquiry included eight task group meetings that supported fourteen separate witness sessions; dealt with 22 witnesses and made a series of theme based recommendations across the following areas: Context Setting; Council Resources; Commitment, Structure & Process; Communication & Engagement; Baseline & Focus; and Best Practice & Practical Applications. All of this work was carried out with the hope that the findings and recommendations would help the Council better manage existing natural resources and enhance biodiversity in the city. Key recommendations made during the inquiry included:

- Asking the Council to declare a biodiversity emergency to sit alongside the climate change emergency.
- To employ an additional Ecologist or Section 6 Officer to help ensure that the Council meets the requirements of the Section 6 Duty.
- Where practically possible, to limit the use of pesticides such as glyphosate across the Council estate.
- The Council should build a biodiversity well-being commitment into Capital Ambition, decision-making processes, business plans and policies.
- The Council should link biodiversity and the resilience well-being objective into Cardiff's Local Development Plan when it is revised in 2020.
- The Council should deliver a series of actions to improve connectivity of habitat across Cardiff. This would help enhance biodiversity in the city.
- The Council should create and publish a community growing policy.
- The Council should work with Elected Members, partner organisations, volunteer groups and the public to develop a 'Plant a Tree Scheme'.

To conclude I would also like to thank everyone who has taken part in the task & finish exercise. This includes the members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Jane Henshaw, Cabinet members, external witnesses and Council staff. Without your help this inquiry would not have been possible. My hope is that the contents of this report are helpful to the Cabinet, and that the recommendations made make a positive contribution towards enhancing Cardiff's natural environment.



Councillor Ramesh Patel

Chairperson – Environmental Scrutiny Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The aim of the inquiry was 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 included 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.

APPROACH TAKEN

Cardiff's Environmental Scrutiny Committee reviewed the management of biodiversity and natural environment in Cardiff to better understand how it can be better supported by the Council. In doing this the inquiry considered the current position of biodiversity in Cardiff and across Wales; the resources being allocated by the Council to support this area; existing commitment, structures and processes; proposed future plans; communication and engagement; baseline information and best practice / practical applications. In reviewing the information the task group drew upon a number of witness contributions and information sources including:

- Cardiff Council's Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment;
- Officers from Cardiff Council's Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate;
- Officers from Cardiff's Parks Service;
- Natural Resources Wales;
- Welsh government;
- RSPB;
- CLAS Cymru;
- SEWBRReC;
- Bug Life;
- Plant Life;
- Swansea City Council;
- Wildlife Trust;
- Planning & Biodiversity Forum.

From this body of evidence the Members drew key findings and a series of recommendations.

During the inquiry the task group was grateful to the following witnesses who provided verbal evidence or written contributions:

- 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

Key Reference Documents

- Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity Forward Plan Letter - Task Group Letter to Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member, Strategic Planning and Transport – September 2019 - As a part of this inquiry, the Committee considered the draft Cardiff Green Infrastructure Plan and sent a letter to the responsible Cabinet Member which set out the comments, observations and recommendations of the task group in relation to the draft Green Infrastructure Plan. This was received by the Cabinet Member in advance of the Cabinet meeting on the 26th September 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Context Setting: Recommendation 1 – Declare Biodiversity & Climate Change Emergency

Many of the actions linked to the cause of climate change relate directly to habitat and biodiversity loss, therefore, protecting, supporting and enhancing biodiversity will help in addressing climate change. Organisations like Natural Resources Wales have declared joint climate change and biodiversity emergencies, therefore, the task group recommends that the Council declares a biodiversity emergency to sit alongside the climate change emergency. When declaring the joint emergency, the Council should publish a list of actions that it proposes to take to deliver the aims of the joint declaration.

Council Resources: Recommendation 2 - Additional Ecologist / Section 6 Officer

The Council needs to employ an additional Ecologist or Section 6 Officer. He or she should work across all service areas to ensure that the Council is doing what is needed to meet the requirements of the Section 6 Duty of the Environment Act Wales. This would support the work of the current Ecologist who spends the majority of his time dealing with planning related work. Tasks to be covered by this post should include:

- To co-ordinate, support and promote a range of environmental projects across Cardiff being delivered to meet the requirements of the Section 6 Duty.
- To provide support for volunteer groups that are engaged in work that relates to the Section 6 Duty of the Environment Act Wales.
- Liaison with partner organisations and other third party groups that are working with or supporting the Council to deliver projects that relate to the Section 6 Duty of the Environment Act Wales.

Council Resources: Recommendation 3 - Cardiff Ranger Team Apprentice

The Council should employ, train and develop an apprentice to work with the Cardiff Ranger Service. Given the current age profile of the Cardiff Ranger Service, the post would help preserve the extensive knowledge and experience of the team within the Council. The length and structure of the apprenticeship scheme should reflect the amount of knowledge and skill that the apprentice would need to become a fully trained member of staff.

Council Resources: Recommendation 4 - Biological Engineering – River Rhymney

Where possible, the Council should use the biological engineering techniques similar to those applied on the banks of the River Usk when undertaking remediation work on sections of the River Rhymney as a part of the new flood defence scheme. Taking this approach would provide biodiversity and reduced carbon footprint benefits when compared against hard engineering alternatives.

Council Resources: Recommendation 5 - Herbicides & Pesticides - Glyphosate

Where practically possible, the Council should limit the use of pesticides such as glyphosate across its estate. Local authorities such as the Vale of Glamorgan have managed to become herbicide free in a number of parks by using alternative weed control and management practices. The Council should look to learn from this and publish details of how, where and why herbicides and pesticides will be applied across the Council estate.

Council Resources: Recommendation 6 – Volunteer Support

The Council does a good job in providing support to volunteer groups who carry out lots of work to help enhance Cardiff's natural environment; this is evidenced by the 16,278 volunteer hours that were supported by the Cardiff Ranger Service in 2018/19. However, Members feel that if more resource were invested into volunteering then volunteer contributions would be even greater. On this basis, task group recommends that the Council should invest additional resources to encourage, recognise and expand support from volunteer groups for work that relates to the Section 6 Duty of the Environment Act Wales. Specifically, they believe that this resource would be maximised if it focused on volunteer co-ordination and in applying for grant funding.

Commitment, Structure & Process: Recommendation 7 – Building Biodiversity into Decision Making & Governance

During the task & finish exercise several witnesses raised the importance of building biodiversity and the Section 6 obligation into Council governance, policy documents and the wider decision making process. This would ensure that biodiversity becomes a corporate responsibility. Members supported this idea and based on the evidence provided recommend the following:

- **Recommendation 7 (a)** – The Council should build a biodiversity wellbeing commitment into Capital Ambition, alongside the other well-being objectives. This would ensure that biodiversity becomes a corporate responsibility and policy objective.
- **Recommendation 7 (b)** - Ask the Cardiff Partnership Board adopt a biodiversity well-being objective into its Well-Being Plan. This would help provide consistency in approach for all of Cardiff's public sector organisations who are, by definition, subject to the new responsibilities created by Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- **Recommendation 7 (c)** - Build biodiversity and climate change into the Council's decision-making process so that it is considered when all decisions are taken. This should include a Well Being, Climate Change, Biodiversity & Natural Environment Implications section in all Council, Cabinet and Committee reports / papers.
- **Recommendation 7 (d)** - Build responsibility for biodiversity into the key Council business planning documents, for example, Directorate Delivery Plan and Personal Review Documents. This should place biodiversity on a similar footing to Equalities and the Welsh language.
- **Recommendation 7 (e)** - Ensure the Green Infrastructure Plan (including the Biodiversity Forward Plan) links into the new well-being biodiversity objective, and other relevant cross organisational policies at a strategic level, for example, the Local Well-being Plan and Area 39 Statements.
- **Recommendation 7 (f)** - Appoint a dedicated biodiversity and climate change champion to represent the Council. The task group felt that the title should be clear enough for the public to instantly understand the purpose of the role, for example, the 'Champion for Nature' was suggested. The task group felt that the champion should: i) become the Council spokesperson for biodiversity and climate change announcements; ii) act as Chair for a re-established Cardiff Biodiversity Partnership; iii) have sufficient status within the Council to ensure that he or she has regular access to the Cabinet and Senior Management; iv) have the support and responsibility to deliver an annual biodiversity and climate change report to Cabinet or Full Council setting out the progress achieved during the year against a set of agreed targets.

- **Recommendation 7 (g)** - The Council's biodiversity and climate change responsibilities should be built into one Cabinet portfolio to ensure clear lines of responsibility and accountability. The range of responsibilities are currently split across three Cabinet portfolios; Members felt that this division of responsibility created a barrier in terms of accountability and delivery.
- **Recommendation 7 (h)** - Develop a clear and enthusiastic vision for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity to ensure a consistent 'buy-in' from each service. Once established this should be circulated across the Council and if possible to all of the other partners on the Cardiff Partnership Board.
- **Recommendation 7 (i)** - The Council should identify and create a series of biodiversity and natural environment performance indicators that would sit alongside the Biodiversity Forward Plan and feature in the Council's Performance Reporting. The indicators should be meaningful and directly relate to the positive outputs that support biodiversity in the city, and should be included in an annual biodiversity and climate change report.
- **Recommendation 7 (j)** - Identify funding for a dedicated officer to support the reincarnation of the Cardiff Biodiversity Partnership. This post could either be held within the Council or delivered by one of its partners. Tasks would include arranging meetings, collating information, producing reports and reporting on performance. Ideally the individual would work with the Council and all of its partner bodies.

Commitment, Structure & Process: Recommendation 8 – Planning

The task group received evidence relating to the planning system and the part that it could play in protecting biodiversity and the natural environment. Members shared concerns that development priorities were continually being put ahead of nature, with developers regularly overturning planning decisions on appeal thanks to insufficiently detailed planning guidance. This in turn meant that Cardiff was regularly losing valuable pieces of green infrastructure, for example, mature trees, which were then replaced by 'mitigating measures', for example, saplings. Members felt that the cumulative effect of these decisions had been huge over the years. The task group also had concerns about the lack of participation by Cardiff with the Planning & Biodiversity Forum, and that the Council should do more to ensure that developers did more to support biodiversity and the natural environment on new

developments. Cardiff's first Local Development Plan review is due to begin in 2020, and this ties in neatly with the recently updated Planning Policy Wales review and the shift towards all policy linking into the Well Being of Future Generations. Members felt that now is a good time to align and improve this suite of policies for the long-term benefit of the environment. Considering the summary of planning information above, the task group recommends the following:

- **Recommendation 8 (a) - Planning & Biodiversity Forum** – To date Cardiff Council officers have not attended the Planning & Biodiversity Forum. Members felt that this was a missed opportunity, particularly as the direction of travel for supporting the environment has shifted in the last twelve months under Planning Policy Wales Edition 10, the Environment (Wales) Act and the Well Being of Future Generations. The task group, therefore, recommends that an officer from Cardiff attends future meetings of the Planning & Biodiversity Forum. They also feel that the profile and influence of the Planning & Biodiversity Forum would benefit from Elected Member involvement, and so ask the Council to approach the group to ask if it could be expanded to include councillor representatives from each of the represented local authorities.

- **Recommendation 8 (b) - Review of Cardiff's Local Development Plan** – A review of Cardiff's Local Development Plan is due to begin in 2020. Given the importance of recent changes within Planning Policy Wales Edition 10, the Section 6 Duty of the Environment (Wales) Act and the Well Being of Future Generations legislation, the task group recommend that now is an excellent opportunity to enhance the environmental policies and goals of Cardiff's Local Development Plan. Strong and detailed environmental policy that link to the Council's main corporate objectives could be used as a 'hook' to develop stronger supplementary planning guidance, which in turn could provide greater protection for Cardiff's valuable green infrastructure.

- **Recommendation 8 (c) - Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 – Greater Detail** – Following the meeting with the representatives from the Planning & Biodiversity Forum, the task group concluded that a lack of detail was the biggest weakness in environment related planning guidance, meaning that developers were consistently able to win on appeal and offer 'mitigating measures' to comply with planning conditions. The task group asks that the Council raises these concerns with Welsh Government, and asks them to

increase the level of detail around the suite of planning guidance that is used to ensure environmental protection.

- **Recommendation 8 (d) - Measuring Tree Coverage** – Members believe that the Council should focus on measuring tree coverage instead of the number of trees in the city. The environmental benefits of established tree coverage far outweigh that provided by newly planted trees, which are often provided as an environmental mitigating measure. As a consequence, the task group recommends that the Council should identify a way of accurately measuring Cardiff's tree coverage, and then report on this annually.
- **Recommendation 8 (e) - Supporting Nature in new Developments** - The task group was provided with information on a range of features that can be built into new developments to support biodiversity, for example, bat bricks and hedgehog holes. The cost of these features is relatively small; for example, a single bat brick costs less than £20. On this basis the task groups recommends that the Council asks developers to install nature supporting features on all new build properties as standard, and if necessary identify a policy 'hook' within the new or revised Local Development Plan to use to create supplementary planning guidance to support this aim.

Communication & Engagement: Recommendation 9 - Embed New Biodiversity Well Being Objective

The Council should embed the new biodiversity well-being objective into the organisation by developing and delivering relevant training to all Council staff. Suggested examples of how to do this include:

- Through the use of e-learning, various staff communications and staff questionnaires;
- Building the new biodiversity well-being objective into the Personal Development Review (PDR) process;
- Targeted research and group discussions – particular functions. It should also encourage other public organisations to roll out similar training within their organisations.

Communication & Engagement: Recommendation 10 - Promote the Council's Drive to Support Biodiversity

Make information available to the public to encourage participation and understanding, for example, by publishing information on the Council webpages; sharing information with partner organisations and other key stakeholders; communicating the message through social media and running wider communications promotions.

Communication & Engagement: Recommendation 11 - Regular Liaison Meetings

Invite environmental voluntary groups and Community Council representatives to attend regular liaison meetings – these could link into Cardiff Biodiversity Partnership meetings to ensure that all parties are kept informed. The meetings would allow them to access additional support to specialist advice from relevant officers.

Communication & Engagement: Recommendation 12 - Schools & Governors

Create environmental link Governors on school governing bodies who can take relevant information and projects to their school. Encourage better use of school grounds and local wildlife sites for biodiversity.

Communication & Engagement: Recommendation 13 - Mandatory Biodiversity Training for Members

The Council should introduce mandatory Member training to improve knowledge on biodiversity and the natural environment.

Communication & Engagement: Recommendation 14 - Dedicated Outdoor Learning Officer

The Council should either employ a dedicated outdoor learning officer, or identify funding to deliver this role and designate responsibility to a third party with existing experience to deliver this work. This would provide tailored support, training and delivery to enable Cardiff schools to:

- Fully realise the potential of outdoor learning;
- Deliver educational and wellbeing benefits from the varied natural resources that Cardiff possesses.

Baseline & Focus: Recommendation 15 – SEWBRc Service Level Agreement

The Council should enter into a service level agreement with the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRc) for 2019/20 and beyond. This would provide the Council with the best available data on local biodiversity, so that the Council is better informed about the natural resources that it has, and at the same time is in a good position to allocate its limited resources into the area of most need.

Baseline & Focus: Recommendation 16 – Ward Based Mapping

Complete and publicise a ward mapping exercise. This would provide each ward and the Councillors with information specific to that ward. It would include information about important species, protected sites and other relevant ecological information as well as potential opportunities for improving biodiversity within the ward. This could be developed using information from the SEWBRc database.

Best Practice & Practical Applications: Recommendation 17 – Connectivity

Improving connectivity of habitat across Cardiff represents a big step towards enhancing biodiversity in the city. Section 6 of the Environment Wales Act states that a public authority must take account of the resilience of ecosystems, and makes specific reference to maintaining 'connections between and within ecosystems'. Organisations such as the RSPB, Bug Life and Plant Life also advocate enhancing connectivity, while Councils such as Brent are running projects to improve nature connectivity. Members support this idea and recommend that the Council works with partner organisations and volunteer groups to:

- **Recommendation 17 (a)** - Adopt a landscape-scale approach to pollinator conservation, i.e. to look at the challenges that biodiversity and supporting ecosystems face across a wide area. This should involve working with partner organisations and volunteers to map nature connectivity so that it can identify how best to improve connectivity across the city. A good starting point would be to use the Cardiff 'B-Lines' data that was established in 2012, and to map out disused space, for example, abandoned railway lines.

- **Recommendation 17 (b)** - Where connectivity gaps are identified, the Council should work with partners and volunteer groups to establish localised projects to bridge the gaps. Suggested projects or approaches include promoting the growth of wildflower verges and building wildlife friendly measures into new and renovated building developments.

- **Recommendation 17 (c)** - The Council should work with property developers and the wider community to better support hedgehog highways. This would involve cutting 13cm x 13cm holes in garden walls and fences to allow hedgehogs to travel, feed and mate.

Best Practice & Practical Applications: Recommendation 18 - Supporting & Developing Habitats

The task group received lots of evidence that highlighted significant habitat decline, which in turn has had a negative impact on ecosystems and biodiversity. Reversing this trend requires developing more and supporting existing habitats, and witnesses such as the Welsh Government and CLAS Cymru identified a number of practical actions that they felt would help enhance natural habitats in Cardiff. Based on the comments made during the task & finish exercise the task group recommends that the Council:

- **Recommendation 18 (a) - Create Accessible New Habitats** – The Council should support the creation of new habitats, such as local orchards, native hedges, wildflower meadows or other areas of wildlife-friendly green space that is accessible to local communities. This can either be done on Council land or in partnership with other organisations. This approach should be built into Cardiff's Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- **Recommendation 18 (b) - Community Managed Spaces** – The Council should provide support for the development of community managed spaces. If the Council did this then CLAS Cymru could provide policy perspective and a link to the type of tools that can be accessed to develop such schemes. 90% of community managed spaces that are supported by CLAS Cymru rely on and support wildlife. Features that are common to community managed spaces include rain water harvesting; composting; healthy no dig soil; mulch; plants for pollinators; bees; insect hotels; compost toilets; ponds; forest garden planting; wild edges; fresh organic local food and natural predators for controlling pests.

Best Practice & Practical Applications: Recommendation 19 - Community Growing

The 'Monmouthshire Community Growing Policy' was cited to Members as an example of good practice in terms of getting the community to grow more produce while supporting nature. It was created to allow the Council to make underutilised land in its ownership available for the community to grow food. This demand has been created through the lack of available allotment space, prevailing economic conditions and the need to develop more

resilient communities. Monmouthshire County Council developed a policy and license that allows the use of small bits of Council owned land to grow food on. The creation and roll out of this policy has supported the ‘Incredible Edible’ movement, i.e. where groups of people get together to grow produce on easily accessible land and the produce can be taken away freely by anyone not just those who have worked to make the produce grow. The task group like this policy, and feel that the community growing approach produces added benefits for local biodiversity. They recommend that Cardiff follows suit by creating and publishing a community growing policy.

Best Practice & Practical Applications: Recommendation 20 - Verge Cutting & Wildflower Planting

The task group received evidence on the importance of proper roadside verge cutting and wildflower planting. They provide a much needed space for nature, enhance local ecosystems, support connectivity, are very beneficial to pollinators and can be very cost effective to deliver. Based on the evidence provided the task group recommends that:

- **Recommendation 20 (a) - Highway Verge Cutting Process** – Plant Life explained that they have been asked by the Council to re-write its Highway verge cutting process. This has worked well in Dorset where they have stopped cutting verges as intensively, and has benefited local biodiversity. The task group recommends that the Council follows this approach, ensuring that service areas and contractors are made to follow the new process.
- **Recommendation 20 (b) - Highway Verge & Wildflower Areas Connectivity** – In conjunction with Recommendation 17, the task group recommend that highway verges and wildflower areas should be included into connectivity mapping. Where possible, the Council should also identify new pieces of land that are suitable for wildflower planting and work with volunteer or community groups to develop these areas, for example, in a similar way to the scheme that is being developed with the Cardiff Civic Society.

Best Practice & Practical Applications: Recommendation 21 - Biodiversity Friendly Buildings

During the task & finish exercise witnesses emphasised the importance of biodiversity friendly buildings in urban areas. They provide a valuable habitat for nature, are able to act as a

carbon sink, help buildings adapt to seasonal weather changes and are generally cost effective to deliver. It is also felt that they can make cities feel more pleasant and innovative. Examples of features included in biodiversity friendly buildings include green roofs, green walls, sustainable urban drainage and planted trees. Given the wider decline in natural habitats, Members recommend that the Council should do more to encourage the development of biodiversity friendly buildings in Cardiff. This could be done by:

- Talking to developers, local architects and surveyors about the benefits of the features of biodiversity friendly buildings;
- Promoting the approach and providing advice through the planning process;
- Documenting good practice and advice on delivering such schemes into planning guidance or policy, for example, including relevant information into supplementary planning guidance;
- Taking a lead in developing biodiversity friendly features on Council buildings and promoting the benefits of this approach.

Best Practice & Practical Applications: Recommendation 22 - Tree Planting

Tackling climate change means that we will have to find effective ways of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The simplest and most effective way to do this is to plant trees, as they store carbon dioxide naturally. When Councillor Peter Jones from Swansea addressed the task group in July, he explained that he and a few colleagues had decided to knock some doors in the ward that he represented to find out if local residents would like the opportunity to have a mature tree planted outside their property for £56. He was staggered by the response, with a large number of people agreeing to pay for a tree. Members were encouraged by this proactive approach, and felt that there was merit to replicating a similar scheme in Cardiff. The task group recommends that the Council works with Elected Members, partner organisations, volunteer groups and the public to develop a 'Plant a Tree Scheme'. The scheme could encourage the public to buy trees, and help to identify funding to pay for or offset the cost of the trees. In turn this would reduce Cardiff's carbon footprint, contribute to Cardiff's climate change emergency agenda and help increase tree coverage across the city.

Scrutiny Committee Membership



Cllr Ramesh Patel
(Chairperson)



Cllr Bob Derbyshire



Cllr Owen Jones



Cllr John Lancaster



Cllr Jacqueline Parry



Cllr Thomas Parkhill



Cllr Oliver Owen



Cllr Emma Sandrey



Cllr Peter Wong

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