

No.

ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Hybrid meeting held on 16th April, 2024.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

The recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor S. Lloyd-Selby (Chair); Councillor I.A.N. Perry (Vice-Chair); Councillors C.E.A. Champion, P. Drake, M.J. Hooper, C. Iannucci-Williams, E. Penn, J. Protheroe and S.T. Wiliam.

Also present: Councillors A. Asbrey, J. Aviet, R.M. Birch (Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language), B.E. Brooks (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places), G. Bruce, I.R. Buckley, L. Burnett (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources), S. Campbell, E. Goodjohn, C. Stallard, E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health) and M.R. Wilson (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services).

999 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Chair read the following statement: “May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing”.

1000 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor V.P. Driscoll.

1001 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meetings held on 20th February and 12th March, 2024 be approved as a correct record.

1002 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillors C.E.A. Champion and S.T. Wiliam both declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 5 – Review of the Council’s 2021 Residential Parking Permit Schemes Update Report. The nature of the interest was that both Councillors were in possession of Parking Permits. Both Committee Members spoke at the meeting and withdrew after they had made their representations.

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1003 REQUESTS FOR CONSIDERATION: BUS SERVICES –

Councillor Ewan Goodjohn had requested consideration of Bus Routes, Stops and Shelters following the recent cut to bus services from Cardiff Bus timetable changes. the threat of cuts to vital routes run in rural areas of the Vale, the current state of old bus shelters within Barry and the rural Vale and to protect vulnerable people during a cost of living crisis.

Councillor S. Campbell had requested consideration of the future and sustainability of the bus services in the Vale of Glamorgan. She advised that a recent meeting had been held with Adventure Travel and local residents to discuss the future of the 304/303 bus services in the rural Vale. Adventure Travel told residents they would be potentially cutting services based on passenger numbers or changing the frequency to “improve their services”. However, this had not be publicised. There had been a lot of conjecture about funding, the interchange and what the Council funded and did not fund. She felt it was necessary to have an open public forum with officers, Councillors, bus companies, Welsh Ministers and other stakeholders to discuss the future of the bus services in the Vale of Glamorgan. Currently there was zero accountability for Adventure Travel because they believed the Council had no other option in the Vale. Councillor Campbell felt there was another option regarding approaching Transport for Wales (TfW) to ask for support in a new way forward to have control of this ourselves. Discussion with all stakeholders involved to find a resolution to move forward was need as information was being filtered through media and political channels rather than directly from the source.

A report was provided in response to the two Requests for Consideration forms received from Councillor S. Campbell and Councillor Ewan Goodjohn. The report provided a summary of the past historical aspects such as the deregulation of bus services under the Transport Act 1985 and the role the Council had in supporting and monitoring the overall commercial network..

The report also provided a summary of current services provided and the recent regional tender exercise under Welsh Government’s ‘Bus Network Fund’.

Finally, the report provided information on future developments and plans of Welsh Government. The Committee was made aware that although the funding made available from Welsh Government had been more than welcomed to keep bus services as they were, there was currently no guaranteed funding past March 2025. That left it unsure of what the bus network would look like from April 2025.

The Chair welcomed Mr. Stephen Cooper, who had registered to speak on the agenda item. The Chair advised Mr. Cooper that he would have three minutes in which to address the Committee.

Mr. Cooper began by stating that he was a retired surveyor aged 72, who had lived in Rhoose for over 30 years. He stated that he could not drive due to glaucoma and had mobility issues. He advised that he was there to plead for the reinstatement of the Fonmon Road Section of the 304 bus route in Rhoose. Mr. Cooper added that the reduction in bus services failed against the Bus Services (Wales) Bill in relation to the stated aims of making bus services – easier to use, accessible and

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responsive. Mr. Cooper advised that Rhoose was a larger village with a population approximately 50% bigger than that of Cowbridge. Approximately 800 people, around 12% of the population of Rhoose, lived within the Fonmon Road area. The Fonmon Road route (3 stops including Fonmon Cross) directly served the population of 800 people. Mr. Cooper added that the revised bus route via the coast road only served one bus stop to the Aberthaw Site of Special Scientific Interest. That route was only 0.4 miles shorter, about 1 – 2 minutes in bus travel time. Mr. Cooper stated that a significant percentage of the Fonmon Road population was over 60. There were lots of bungalows in the Adenfield Way area with a population of 250 people of which around 50% were over 60. No buses on Fonmon Road meant that it disproportionately discriminated against that age group who were more likely to have mobility issues and not drive. Mr. Cooper stated that to catch a bus on Fontygary Road there was a bottleneck at the Fontygary Arms, with no footpath and was prone to regular flooding. There was a detour to the next stop along Fontygary Road through Kenson Close but it was longer and down three poorly lit paths. Finally, Mr. Cooper stated that “you gave me a bus pass at 60 and then when I needed to use it the most you took the bus away”.

As a point of clarification, Councillor I. Perry asked Mr. Cooper which destination did it link to. In reply, Mr. Cooper stated that the bus would take him into Barry and to Cardiff and was useful for trips to the hospital or for leisure time. It was environmentally friendly and saved money when compared to using the car.

The Operational Manager Transport Services, in being asked to comment on some of the points raised by Mr. Cooper, stated that the 304 service previously run by Adventure Travel, ran in the day time as a commercial service. Therefore it was not a contracted service from the Council. The Fonmon leg of the journey was removed as Adventure Travel were having particular timing issues and were trying to find the best operation so that they met the timetable. When the service was retendered, it was agreed that they would be tendered on a commercial basis so that leg of the journey was not put back in. However, there was scope for discussion with providers about adding back in some of the lost routes so there was a possibility of the route being extended.

The Chair commented that there were concerns about what would happen if the bus network fund was not sustained beyond March 2025. In reply, the Operational Manager stated that there were regular meetings of the South East Wales Bus Working Group which met monthly, but those meetings may become more frequent in order to address issues. At this stage, it was unknown whether Welsh Government would continue funding past March 2025.

Councillor M. Hooper commented that there would be lots of Mr. Coopers in the Vale that were not in attendance at the meeting and whose voices were going unheard. Councillor Hooper commented on the vital services provided through public transport across the Vale of Glamorgan, Wales and the rest of the United Kingdom. The importance of public transport was exemplified by the recent work undertaken by the Council on its Replacement Local Development Plan, where large housing development sites were located to fit around the rail network. Councillor Hooper raised a concern in relation to how networks were planned and thought through. In addition, Councillor Hooper asked for views in regard to the Browns Foundation in

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2018 which called for free public transport in Wales. It was suggested that free transport would be key in order to fight climate change but would also fight against poverty across Wales. Finally, Councillor Hooper referred to a strategic failure by the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal citing the example of Barry Docks which for the first number of months had no buses.

In reply to the points raised by Councillor Hooper, the Operational Manager began by referring to the Barry Dock Interchange and advised that at the time of the development of the Interchange an agreement with a provider for a service to be run was in place but unfortunately that service was cancelled. At that time, operators were aware that the market was unstable and so were unwilling to change their timetables or operate differently until the issue of future funding had been confirmed. At present, there were more services running into the Interchange. With regard to free fares, the Operational Manager stated that the loss of revenue for operators needed to be recognised and the impact of reduced passenger numbers ultimately would mean that the Council would have to pay any free fare scheme. That would be a challenge given the unknowns around future funding from Welsh Government. The Operational Manager stated that the market in 2018 was more robust with more commercial services and operators that were making sufficient profit to keep the services running without any financial input from the Vale Council or Welsh Government. Unfortunately, that was not the position at present.

Councillor J. Protheroe queried what were the Council's plans to encourage people back to using buses and what were the plans for rural parts of the Vale which relied on Greenlinks. In reply, the Operational Manager stated that in terms of increasing the use of bus services, the Council was looking at improving infrastructure such as new e-displays which would provide real time information. In addition, the Council was looking at a reduced fare scheme, particularly on the 303 service during the summer which could be progressed through Section 106 funding. With regard to Greenlinks, there was a resource issue and the recruitment of posts but a co-ordinator for Greenlinks had recently been appointed and they would be able to focus on recruiting more volunteer drivers.

Councillor I. Perry raised a number of points and queries which could be summarised as follows:

- It was wrong for the country to rely on volunteer drivers for such an important public service like buses, so the role of bus driver should be a paid job;
- The point of free public transport across the Vale of Glamorgan was something that should be progressed which would assist young people as well as those that had retired;
- Free bus travel would also likely increase bus usage which could ultimately lead to more services being created and would also assist with tackling climate emergency and could contribute to tackling the cost of living crisis;
- The main strategic decisions on public transport at Westminster and Welsh Government were being made by car owners and who he felt had a bias against buses and public transport;
- The strategic discussion around public transport needed to be how people used their cars less, with more emphasis given to walking, cycling and new

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bicycle schemes such as the secure guarded parking which allowed cyclists the confidence of their bikes being in a secure location;

- There were currently three bus services using Culverhouse Cross with the 96 going through Wenvoe, the C1 and the X2 which passed all the way through to Cardiff, but more thought was needed around connectivity. Particularly as some residents in St. Nicholas would have to drive to Wenvoe in order to catch a bus to Canton;
- There needed to be a complete joined up system which was properly funded.

The Chair asked the Operational Manager to further clarify the situation with voluntary bus drivers for the Greenlinks services. In reply, the Operational Manager stated that the Greenlinks operation previously worked very well with many voluntary drivers at hand. Therefore a number of rural communities in the Vale were served with the creation of the G1 and the G4 service. Once more volunteers were recruited, the Council could look at the reintroduction of more services which were successful prior to the Covid pandemic.

Councillor E. Penn stated that it was disappointing that the 89-B service at Llandough had been removed which made it more difficult for people to get to Llandough Hospital. Councillor Penn also highlighted the issue of bus timetables containing small print and were also sometimes a bit too high from the ground. In response, the Operational Manager stated that Council staff had been out to look at the accessibility of timetables and this would be looked at again. In terms of the 89-B service, this was similar to the Adventure Travel route for the 303 service and the timetabling had to be tweaked in order for the service to reach its final destination on time. As previously stated, the Council was working with First Cymru to look at those areas that missed out with the hope that some services could be reintroduced.

Councillor B. Brooks (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places), with permission to speak, stated it was important to recognise that for the Barry Dock interchange, planning and funding for that was considered a long time before the Covid pandemic, which had impacted on bus services. The Council had worked hard at attracting services to use the interchange.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee receives an update report in 6 months' time, which should also address some of the issues in relation to the Replacement Local Development Plan in terms of bus routes and the Council's plans for significant housing developments. The report to also cover the work being progressed by the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and in relation to the regional partnership working across the local authorities, as well as updates in relation to the G1 Greenlinks bus service.

(2) T H A T from the perspective of equalities, for consideration to be given around the accessibility of bus timetables and whether that was something for the Council's Equalities Consultative Forum to be consulted upon. The outcome of any

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subsequent review to be included in the 6 month update report as per Recommendation (1) above.

(3) T H A T Recommendations (1) and (2) above be referred to Cabinet for information and consideration, and Cabinet be also advised of the Scrutiny Committee's suggestion for there to be further consideration around ways to connect homes and hospitals, and also to the issue of missing bus stops and bus interchanges / connections for Culverhouse Cross and Sycamore Cross. Cabinet to be also advised of the Committee's suggestion for a summer marketing campaign to be held, themed 'catching the bus'.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) To provide an update report to the Scrutiny Committee in 6 months' time.

(2) Following comments made in relation to the height of some bus timetables which also contained text that was too small and difficult to read.

(3) To advise Cabinet of the views and suggestions of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

1004 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S 2021 RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMIT SCHEMES (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 21st March, 2024 as contained within the agenda was presented.

Councillor S. Wiliam stated that he welcomed the proposals, stating that parking in relation to the social club on Barry Island required further consideration. Councillor Wiliam also referred to the Knap and the White House areas and he commented that there were some issues to resolve so parking for that area needed to be reviewed.

Councillor J. Protheroe suggested an additional recommendation for additional signage for Ogmores-by-Sea to make visitors aware of the residential parking permit zones.

Councillor M. Hooper echoed Councillor Wiliam's comments in relation to Barry Island. Councillor Hooper urged the Council to undertake more engagement with residents in relation to Council proposals and he stated that more enforcement was required for the Knap and Lakeside area of Barry.

In reply to the comments made, the Director of Environment and Housing stated that White House had been specifically referred to in the report because issues had been known for some time. The Director agreed that a review of the area was required so possible improvements could be considered. As regards Lakeside, it was important to carefully consider the range of options, for example, if a no stopping or waiting at any time Order was introduced, an enforcement camera would pick up anyone that had parked in a location or stopped, even for a brief moment and this would include residents, their visitors and any delivery vehicles. Therefore, there was a balance in

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relation to the type of parking controls that could be introduced. In relation to the point regarding engagement on the proposed new residential parking arrangements at Barry Island, the Director stated that he agreed, and so better consultation would be carried out as part of the review to be undertaken over the forthcoming months.

Councillor I. Perry commented that he could not understand why the residential parking permit scheme was not self-funding and he felt that it was something that the Council needed to consider. Councillor Perry added that the Council needed to be more proactive in terms of reducing car usage and car ownership, particularly in relation to tackling the climate emergency.

The Chair reminded the Committee that in terms of cost recovery a further report would be coming back to the Scrutiny Committee following the review.

In reply to a query regarding Blue Badge holders, the Director clarified that the policy dealt with how Blue Badge holders could park within the residential parking zones provided that their badges were on display. Blue Badge holders would be permitted to park for up to 3 hours within a residential parking zone. There were no proposals for that to change.

In being asked to comment, Councillor M. Wilson, the relevant Cabinet Member, stated that it was important for the Council to talk to local Ward Members and residents as much as possible. There had already been a high level of consultation which was why the Council was making the proposed changes. One of the Council's main aims was to make the scheme self-enforcing and where issues had been identified improvements were being considered.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) That an update report be provided to the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee following the review of the Residential Parking Permit scheme.
- (2) T H A T Cabinet be advised of the views of the Scrutiny Committee that:
 - There should be a review of arrangements specifically in the White House / Knap area of Barry;
 - There should be additional enforcement patrols for the Lakeside area;
 - For consideration to be given to additional signage for Ogmores-by-Sea;
 - As part of the review, there should be meaningful engagement with affected residents to ensure that their views and issues were captured and responded to.

Reason for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

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1005 BATHING WATER QUALITY AT DESIGNATED BATHING BEACHES IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN (DEH) –

For this item, the Committee welcomed Mr. Steve Wilson (Managing Director Wastewater Services) and Mr. Daniel Humphrys (River Quality Liaison Manager) from Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, and Mr. David Letellier from Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

The Director of Environment and Housing, presented the report which outlined that the Council had eight designated bathing beaches within its administrative area, the highest concentration of bathing water beaches in Southeast Wales. Bathing water quality was a crucial aspect of public health and environmental protection, and the Vale's beaches and coastline played a key role in supporting the local economy, in particular the thriving tourism industry around Barry Island, in addition to the well-being of local residents who frequented the waters.

Two new beaches were designated for bathing in 2023 – Watch House Bay in Barry (known locally as Watch Tower Bay), and Ogmores-by-Sea beach.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) was the regulating body responsible for measuring bathing water quality in Wales.

NRW, began undertaking water quality sampling at these beaches during the 2023 bathing season. Unfortunately, the sampling results at the two newly designated beaches resulted in a 'Poor' bathing water quality classification for the 2023 bathing period. Worse, these beaches were the only two 'Poor' water quality beaches in Wales.

The report explained the bathing water classification system and the legislative requirements that applied.

Whilst the Vale of Glamorgan Council was not responsible for bathing water quality, its officers and Elected Members could have a role working with the regulators NRW and Dwr Cymru to seek improvements over a reasonable time period.

The report therefore explained the proposed arrangements to assist in improving bathing waters at designated bathing beaches in the Vale of Glamorgan and the Council's role in this.

The Chair asked if David Letellier, to provide a brief update from the perspective of NRW. Mr. Letellier advised that:

- NRW's principal role was to monitor and classify bathing waters which have been designated as a bathing water.
- Bathing seasons were set within the Bathing Water Regulations (2013) and ran from 15th May to 30th September.
- Regular samples taken through the season were analysed for faecal indicator bacteria - The bacteria used as a measure were those associated with faecal material. They were indicative of human sewage as well as faeces from animals – including cows, sheep, dogs, horses and birds. So they contained

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the bacterial load both from diffuse and point sources of pollution and various land uses.

- Classification made at the end of the season was usually based on a 4-year dataset and would be published by Welsh Government in the Autumn following the season.
- In Wales there were 109 designated bathing waters, the Vale of Glamorgan area had 8 bathing waters. With 75% compliance with Bathing Water Regulations 2013, across Wales there was a 98.17% compliance.
- Where any samples analysed showed and elevated bacteria, NRW officers would investigate further – gathering data such as rainfall, river level, storm overflow spill data and work with key stakeholders in the catchment such as Dwr Cymru Welsh Water or landowners to identify any issues.
- July and August were particularly wet during 2023 season/
- Generally, poorer bathing water quality could be expected following rainfall events due to run off from land and storm discharges
- Following any bathing water being classified as ‘Poor’, NRW was the appropriate agency under the Bathing Water Regulations (2013), and was required to carry out certain actions such as to investigate and take measures at the bathing water to prevent, reduce or eliminate (as appropriate) the causes of pollution.
- In addition, NRW would work in partnership with the Council and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water to manage and seek to improve the bathing waters.
- At Jackson’s Bay and Whitmore Bay in Barry, NRW were working in partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan Council and was introducing a Pollution Risk Forecasting system.
- Funding had been provided by Welsh Government’s capital funding for Water projects in NRW 2022-2025 for model development and a system of automation/robotisation to run the model.
- Funding would also be available for better signage and an information system to give predicted bathing water quality and advice against bathing when predicted quality was poor.

Mr Steve Wilson from Dwr Cymru Welsh Water was then afforded opportunity to address the Committee. The points covered by Mr. Wilson included:

- An overview of Dwr Cymru Welsh Water including the area it served.
- Summary information relating to the Bathing season from 15th May to 30th September, 2023, for which data showed that the months of July, August and September were particularly wet with heavy rainfall.
- The combined system across most parts of the UK, meant that the amount of rainwater and foul sewage that was collected in the same pipes, meant that the system was over-capacity, and which led to the storm overflows being operated.
- Dwr Cymru Welsh Water was currently devising a 5-year investment plan for 2025 to 2030, to upgrade its assets and to tackle issues of storm overflows to manage climate change and to try and tackle river water quality. The only funding available to do that work was through charges levied through its customers.

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- It was envisioned that approval and final sign off for the investment plan 2025-2030 would be finalised by December.
- In terms of issues affecting Watch House Bay in Barry, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water were looking at the enhancement of the Barry coastal model to provide source information. It was also considering schemes for storage improvement for the western area of Barry. There was also a plan for a 4.6-hectare removal of surface water at Brock Hill Rise, Penarth.
- For Ogmere-by-Sea, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water had started to develop a coastal model for water catchment. A Trigger Exceedance Notice (TEN) for bathing season 2023 had been issued to NRW, so further investigation of the causes was underway. Additional funding was being accelerated to investigate options for additional storage at the Penybont Water Treatment Works and storm over flow assessment investigations and interventions work would continue in catchment, with 16 assets in various stages of investigation.
- Dwr Cymru Welsh Water would share an annual data set with regulators on its 2300 overflows, and it would make the annual data available on its website.
- Dwr Cymru Welsh Water also voluntarily share live alerts for some storm overflows with SAS (Surfers Against Sewage) and it shared near real time data on its website on its new Storm Overflow Map.
- However, volume data was not available due to the type of instruments on each overflow.
- There was regular contact with NRW for ongoing operational challenges, mitigation and improvement actions.
- Community work including liaising with local stakeholder groups, and it was working closely with the Council, RNLi and NRW, with regular Bathing Water meetings being held.
- Dwr Cymru Welsh Water was looking for additional sites for the removal surface water through the use of 'Rainscape solutions', and it would continue to promote its 'Stop the Block, campaign.

Councillor M. Wilson (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services), with permission to speak, added that the challenges around water management were very complicated which required a multi-agency response. To tackle some of the issues there needed to be more consideration of how the environment was managed, for example the use of hard standing that contributed to the large amounts of water run off entering the network. It was also important for the Council to make the public aware of the use of soakaways, and in particular, the impact of wet wipes which was a huge problem. The Council was trying to reduce the amount of things that likely caused problems and it was working to try and reduce the impact of flooding.

Councillor S. Wiliam asked for clarification in regard to storm overflow in Penarth which affected Jacksons Bay. In reply, Daniel Humphrys (Welsh Water) advised that Welsh Water had undertaken a lot of modelling work in the area and he clarified that pollutant from Penarth would likely be washed up on Jacksons Bay. Therefore, Welsh Water was progressing a multi-phased approach in terms of investment in order to tackle some of the issues.

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Councillor J. Protheroe stated that her ward covered Ogmore-by-Sea and the issue of poor water quality was something that had been raised by many residents and groups. Councillor Protheroe outlined that a key question raised from surfers and residents was whether Welsh Water was required to post on their website every time they discharged sewage into the river. In addition, there was also a question as to what Welsh Water's plans were to improve water quality and stop the discharging sewage. In reply, Steve Wilson (Welsh Water) stated that in terms of discharging of sewage from the network, Welsh Water monitored that activity with almost all of the 2,300 storm overflows being covered by electrical monitoring equipment. There was coverage for Ogmore-by-Sea and Welsh Water was trying to publish the information on an hourly basis and the links to the website would be shared with a number of swimming groups. Therefore, residents and swimming groups would be able to see whether any discharges were operating within the hour. In terms of plans to improve water quality, it was important to recognise that for the River Ogmore there were lots of sources of pollution which were carried down that river. There was the sewage treatment works very close which was very large and served all the residents of Bridgend and Porthcawl. That sewage treatment works had UV disinfection, but the issues of storm water management would also be upstream where there were another 16 storm overflows. In addition, there was a lot of farm livestock in the catchment and the area also contained high tides. Therefore, rain water would also be washed into the river which could contain pollutants. Mr. Wilson added that it was the work Welsh Water and NRW to continue to investigate the sources of pollutant onto the Ogmore beach and where the sources of bacteria came from. That was the main focus at present. In addition, Welsh Water were also looking at issues around septic tanks, private discharges from caravan parks and other sources of pollutant in order to understand all the factors that were affecting bathing water quality.

Mr. Wilson advised the Committee that as a result of the poor water quality readings, an investment of £1m was available. Therefore, Welsh Water were looking at large concrete structures that would need to be built or put in place, but it was also important to fully understand where the pollutant was coming from as well as looking at how Welsh Water operated its assets.

In terms of when Welsh Water's investigation into the sources of pollutant would be completed, Mr. Wilson clarified that investigations would involve a fair bit of water sampling and that would be undertaken alongside colleagues from NRW. Further hydraulic modelling works would be required which would include the areas as far as Porthcawl and Bridgend. As there was a lot of work required to understand where the water was coming from, it was likely to be a two or three year exercise but that did not mean that no improvement works would be carried out in the meantime. Therefore, Welsh Water were keen to advance its investment programme for the area. One aspect that needed to be highlighted was the significant amount of rain and wet weather that was being experienced which would impact on the level of pollutant within the sewage and water drainage systems.

The Chair also asked a question about where NRW were taking samples, pointing out that there was a wish for those to be taken in those areas where residents were being advised to swim e.g. between red flags at Whitmore Bay. NRW promised to provide that as follow-up information.

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Councillor Protheroe stated that a number of groups such as the Lifeguards wanted to understand how the readings and the level of water quality would affect them. In addition, there was a need to clarify the location of water testing and particularly if testing was where swimmers would be permitted to enter the water. In reply, David Letellier (NRW) stated that he was unsure of the exact location of the testing but he confirmed that the testing protocol was followed and so from his perspective there were no issues with regards to the outcome of the test. Mr. Letellier advised that further information on the location would be shared outside of the Committee meeting. Further to that point, the Chair then stated from the Council's perspective and for residents, it would be useful for the focus of sampling to be reflective of where most people were actually swimming and enjoying the Vale's local water.

In being asked to comment, the Director of Environment and Housing stated that the advice to people was that they should enter the water at their own risk and he encouraged people to access the Council's website to access the relevant links to NRW's website in order to understand the sampling process and to view the latest samples taken during the forthcoming bathing season. It would be useful to include some further advice on the website about swimming after heavy storms and periods of heavy rainfall which could impact the quality of the water. Therefore, bathers and swimmers would be able to make adjustments as they saw fit. Further to that point, Steve Wilson stated that there was also a website sharing app which would publicise when storm overflows were operating and that information would be available to anybody who signed up. For the public, a good indication of whether or not to bathe in the sea water would be to consider whether the storm overflow had been operational in the previous 24 hours. Welsh Water had a significant investment plan with a major focus of that being on the Vale of Glamorgan. Therefore Welsh Water recognised the value of good water quality to the environment and the economy of Wales.

Councillor Protheroe stated that the pollution forecasting modelling that was being carried out for the Barry beaches was also needed for Ogmore-by-Sea. Therefore, it was important for NRW and Welsh Water to lobby Welsh Government in order to receive additional funding so that the pollution forecasting model tool could be implemented at Ogmore-by-Sea. In reply, David Letellier (NRW) stated that the opinion of NRW as a key stakeholder would be provided to Welsh Government and once the Barry project was completed NRW were keen for it to be expanded to Ogmore-by-Sea.

In terms of lobbying Welsh Government, Councillor M. Wilson (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services), with permission to speak, stated that he was totally supportive of raising the issue of additional money and he would contact Welsh Government on the Council's behalf.

Councillor M. Hooper commented that in terms of meetings with residents, it would also be useful to invite the local Ward Members. Councillor Hooper also raised the important work being undertaken around Whitmore Bay last summer which made a real difference to the water quality. Councillor Hooper raised a concern in relation to the national model of water and sewerage, particularly in England, with private

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bodies being responsible. It was important as water was a public service, for more funding to be allocated to the key priority areas. Finally, Councillor Hooper raised the importance of swimming in the open sea which was something that added to people's health and wellbeing, therefore extra resources and funding to improve water quality was important. In reply to Councillor Hooper's point regarding meetings with residents, the Director stated that he would check as to whether local Members had been invited and he stated that if not, he would ensure that Members would be invited to future meetings.

Councillor I. Perry commented on the issue of hard standing, which was something that the Council could possibly consider further particularly for its own building projects. In reply, Mr. Steve Wilson stated that in Wales, there was a good framework of planning around the sustainable urban drainage. All new builds in Wales had to come with separate systems and using sustainable urban drainage. The challenge was more about not new builds, but more around retrofitting existing properties, as well as urban creep and what residents were doing on their own properties and curtilages. In being asked to comment further, Councillor Wilson stated that the Council was disappointed with the two poor water quality readings, but the Council was determined to assist and facilitate improvements with Welsh Water and NRW. It was also important to recognise that the Council had its Project Zero programme which would also lead to improvements, but it was also important to recognise the impact of climate change. The investment by Welsh Water was welcomed but the improvements would take some time which meant that monitoring as much as possible was important and for that information to be publicly available.

Councillor L. Burnett (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources), with permission to speak, raised a point of clarification in that the Council did use permeable tarmac in its schools, and there was also the extensive use of attenuation ponds.

The Chair thanked Dwr Cymru and NRW for their attendance, and she hoped it had been made clear that the Council and residents were very concerned about the poor water quality classifications and would hold both organisations to account for ensuring the required improvements were achieved.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee to receive an update report at an appropriate time and after the summer's bathing season. Further update reports to be considered as part of the Committee's Forward Work Programme discussions.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.