

TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM - MONDAY, 10 MAY 2021

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM HELD
REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 10 MAY 2021 AT 16:00**

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

S Aspey	H Bennett	JPD Blundell	MC Clarke
P Davies	RM Granville	B Jones	Reeves
CE Smith	SG Smith	SR Vidal	KJ Watts
AJ Williams	RE Young		

Apologies for Absence

Councillors G Letman, D Evans and K Rowlands.

Officers:

Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Jonathan Parsons	Group Manager Development
Michael Pitman	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Ieuan Sherwood	Economy and Natural Resources Manager

206. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

207. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of a meeting of the Town and Community Council Forum dated 15 February 2021, be approved as a true and accurate record, subject to Councillors Amanda Williams and RM Granville, being added to the list of attendees.

208. CLIMATE EMERGENCY - 2030 DECARBONISATION AGENDA UPDATE

The Corporate Director – Communities supported by the Group Manager – Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability, presented a report, the purpose of which, was to provide a brief update on the BCBC decarbonisation work programme and raise issues of relevance to Town and Community Councils in their decarbonisation work.

She confirmed that Welsh Government (WG) declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019 and set out its priorities to address change for Wales to build resilience. In July 2020, the Welsh Government committed to achieving a net zero carbon public sector in Wales by 2030. This commitment included the public sector in its entirety, including Town and Community Councils.

Bridgend supports the net zero goal and have adopted it into its updated Corporate Plan for 2021-22. In addition, the Council is committed to co-ordinating action to help other areas of the economy making a decisive shift towards decarbonisation, by engaging in collaboration with other public sector organisations (including Town and Community Councils), academia, industry and the third sector.

The Corporate Director – Communities, explained that areas of focus for our internal decarbonisation efforts are energy, transport, buildings, procurement and open spaces. BCBC would be optimising its use of buildings, reducing energy use, designing new builds to the highest standards of energy efficiency, ensuring judicious use of its open spaces to enhance biodiversity and sequester carbon through tree planting, seeking out renewable energy opportunities, and buying better overall. Most importantly, BCBC would be having conversations internally across the Authority so that staff can coalesce around a genuine shared ambition for making a significant step change in relation to climate impact.

She went on further to advise that, 99% of emissions from within the boundaries of the county borough come from sectors other than the public sector. The Council had a clear leadership role in influencing, driving and facilitating change right across the Authority. So aligning low carbon strategies and sharing best practice with Local Partnership Boards, regional neighbours, communities, and businesses, including our Town and Community Councils, is essential to tackling the full range of emissions, including those from goods and services procured.

All public bodies need to address becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030, based on tackling the different scope emissions as detailed in the report. Public sector partners were establishing their carbon baselines and seeking to address the same issues. Businesses were also identifying their corporate and social responsibilities to address climate change to reduce their impact and improve social well-being. A collaborative approach across sectors was therefore both desirable and practical.

The shift to a low carbon system increases economic output and is part of our national recovery plans. BCBC's strategy and action plan for carbon neutrality will therefore contribute to local economic prosperity.

BCBC has also engaged Carbon Trust to conduct a baseline emissions audit of our Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. This baseline will be used to prepare a plan for full decarbonisation by 2030.

A provisional estimate was that around 60% of our emissions result from procurement. Our work with our suppliers and the supply chain will be crucial in ensuring swift progress to net zero.

The Council could not achieve its decarbonisation goal alone and will therefore be engaging widely with partners for sharing experience, knowledge, and delivering on our aims. Its draft action plan will be shared widely for consultation so that members of the public, civil society, and all stakeholders have an opportunity to shape our work.

A presentation on this important topic was also given by Officers, in support of the report.

The Leader thanked Officers for their submission and added that, Climate Change was having a detrimental effect on the planet and locally upon communities and was officially now regarded as something of a crisis. Therefore, things required changing in the future, in order improve the situation.

A Member felt that it was important to reduce speeds on roads and the highway network in general, which would reduce carbon emissions, particularly in rural areas such as where there were schools.

The Leader advised that there were plans introduced by Welsh Government in progress, whereby 20mph speed limit zones would be considered for implementation within built-

up urban areas and this was something that was presently being piloted. The Corporate Director – Communities confirmed this to be the case, adding that this project would affect major routes and residential areas throughout Wales, with a completion date of the end of 2023 being targeted. BCBC would look at this being considered outside the likes of schools and Care settings, amongst others.

In terms of electric vehicle charging, a Member advised that it was a statutory requirement for BCBC to convert its fleet from the likes of diesel/petrol to electric operated vehicles and provide charging points for these new vehicles. He asked where these charging points are going to be provided and if any would be placed where the public could access them, such as in Bridgend operated/owned car parks.

The Leader advised that the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal had taken the lead in terms of steering and committing investment to the provision of electric vehicle charging points and there would be a number provided in the County Borough in areas such as for example, Porthcawl, Bridgend, Brynmenyn, Bryncethin, Maesteg and at the Civic Offices and at around 112 sites across the whole of the County Borough.

A Member stated that there was a need for the Council to work with key stakeholders and businesses, in order to impress upon the importance of the change to electrically operated vehicles, such as the general public who owned private cars and taxi companies/drivers, as they were on the road far more than other public transport such as buses etc. Support should be given she felt to not just convert vehicles such as those provided by First Cymru from conventional energy to that based upon electric energy, as well as looking to provide more public transport services in more of our rural communities as well as town locations.

The Leader confirmed that there would be 15 electrical charging sites for larger vehicles of public transport such as buses and he recognised and acknowledged the need for taxi's to convert to the more user friendly energy of electric also.

The Corporate Director – Communities, added that the local authority had committed £500k to the above and it would actively work with its stakeholders, as well as with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, in order to look at further possible avenues of funding, in order to put the proposed converted changes in place. A greater push would also be made she added, for the use of Active Travel and the availability and provision of more transport routes across the County Borough with the likes of transport providers such as First Cymru. Welsh Government were also still assisting in the funding of bus routes across Wales, as part of re-introducing public transport and encouraging the public to use this, since it was stopped during the stages of lockdown.

The Cabinet Member – Communities advised that BCBC now had a 2030 Decarbonisation Strategy and it would therefore be judged on the aims, objectives and ultimately the achievements of this as it progresses. This would mean changing the way it conducted its business in future and in the way it provided alternative forms of energy. This included travel and the way we heated our homes. A One Council approach was very much required in order to realise this, he explained. In terms of wider travel opportunities, the Cabinet Member – Communities added that the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal were also funding a Metro Transport provision.

A Member felt that the proposals of the Decarbonisation agenda on a wider scale, would affect the National Grid.

The Leader confirmed by stating that the likely supply and demand in Bridgend had been mapped out.

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The Corporate Director – Communities added that as well as electric forms of energy, there would still be scope to look at other ‘friendly’ methods of power, such as the likes of solar and wind. In terms of electrical charging facilities provided at various locations, these also had to adequately supply sufficient energy to charge the estimated number of vehicles that were going to be accommodated there. Capacity issues would have to be closely examined and monitored.

The Cabinet Member – Communities acknowledged the fact that the National Grid would have difficulty in coping with the anticipated surge of alternative energy when this came into fruition. Aside of other examples of alternative renewable energy sources suggested, renewable energy from the sea was also a viable option to be explored.

A Member suggested that Town and Community Councils could be approached in order to assist the funding levels required for the likes of Electric charges points. Solar Panels could also be fitted in Council buildings, which too could be financially supported by the Authorities partners/stakeholders.

The Corporate Director – Communities agreed that this suggestion could be pursued further.

A Member asked if any further thought had been given to connecting Pyle to Bridgend and Porthcawl by way of a tram.

The Corporate Director – Communities confirmed that as part of the Salt lake development, there would be a bus terminus connecting transport links between Porthcawl and Pyle. A further connection then from Pyle to Bridgend could then be made by rail transport.

A Member felt that there was a need to look at ways to discourage car travel, as she considered that there were far too many cars on the road. Energy reductions should also be looked at in Council buildings, particularly at some older schools where the windows were in a bad state of repair.

The Corporate Director – Communities confirmed that the Council’s Corporate Landlord section were undertaking re-fit works at schools, ie the provision of new windows, doors, insulation etc. This was being pursued through a Re-fit loan that would be paid back in 7 years, from energy savings made as a result of these works. New schools that had recently been built or were proposed to be built in the future, would have as part of their build energy efficiencies in place, she added.

RESOLVED: That the Forum noted the report.

209. PLANNING UPDATE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AND PLACEMAKING

RESOLVED: That Members agreed that this report be deferred to the next meeting of the Town and Community Council Forum.

210. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 17:50