

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

19 JANUARY 2021

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

BRIDGEND 2030 DECARBONISATION STRATEGY, PATHWAY TO A CARBON NEUTRAL (NET-ZERO) COUNCIL

1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is detail the process of developing a “Bridgend 2030” Decarbonisation Strategy. This will further respond to the Councils Climate Emergency Response Programme and present a pathway to a Carbon Neutral (also known as Net-Zero) Bridgend by 2030, working with the Public Service Board, communities and business.

2.0 Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective/objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:-**

1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** –Taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
2. **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council’s well-being objectives.

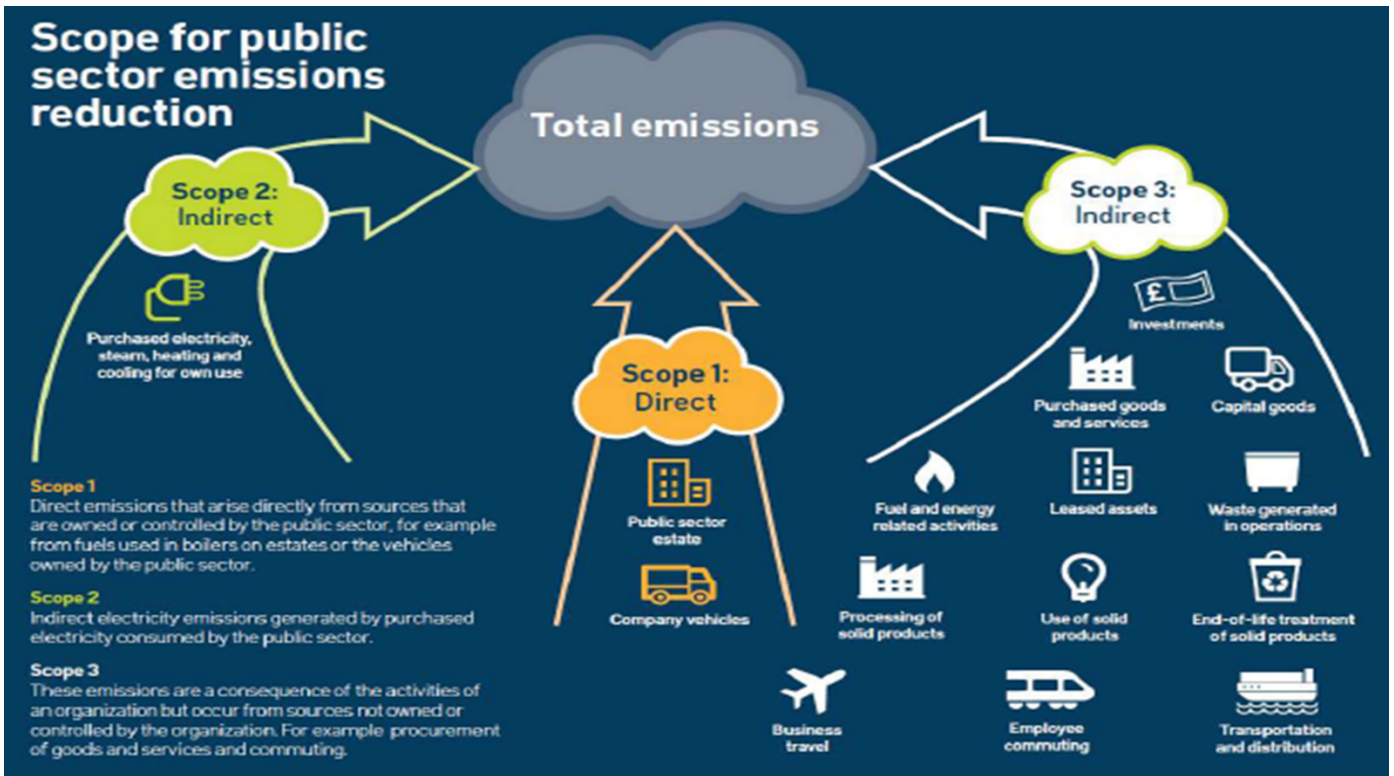
3.0 Background

3.1 Welsh Government (WG) declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019 and set out its priorities to address change for Wales to build resilience. Following this, the Welsh Government has now committed to achieving a carbon-neutral public sector by 2030. Bridgend supports this approach and has proposed its adoption into the updated 2021-22 BCBC Corporate Plan. In addition, the Council is committed to coordinating action to help other areas of the economy to make a decisive shift away from fossil

fuels, by engaging in public sector collaboration, academia, industry and the third sector and helping create sustainable jobs.

- 3.2 The areas of focus for decarbonisation are energy, transport, buildings and open spaces. The energy focus is to reduce the amount used and shift energy production to clean sources. Utilising buildings better, designing new ones to be energy efficient, using open spaces to provide carbon offset and provide direct renewable power opportunities, changing fleet and buying better overall. These aspects are in the control of the Council to influence and change.
- 3.3 Carbon emissions are measurable on what the Council own and buy for communities, for example: how energy is purchased and used, buildings heated and powered, transport contracts or fleet purchased. Data collection needs improving to fully understand our Carbon Footprint and address priorities for becoming carbon neutral.
- 3.4 When tackling Bridgend County Borough's community-based emissions that include community and business transport and energy and heat for homes, for example, here, the Council has a role in influencing, driving and facilitating change. Therefore aligning low carbon strategies and sharing best practice with Local Partnership Boards, regional neighbours, communities, and business is essential to joining up benefits and tackling all Indirect Emissions (inside and outside of the Council's control).
- 3.5 All public bodies need to address becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030, based on tackling the different scope emissions shown in Figure 1 below. Our public partners are setting their carbon footprints, monitoring and seeking to address the same concerns. Businesses are also identifying their corporate and social responsibilities to address climate change action to reduce their impact and improve social well-being. A collaborative approach across sectors is, therefore both desirable and practical.

Figure 1 Scope for Public Sector Emissions Reduction
(*Low Carbon Wales Prosperity for All Welsh Government, 2019*)



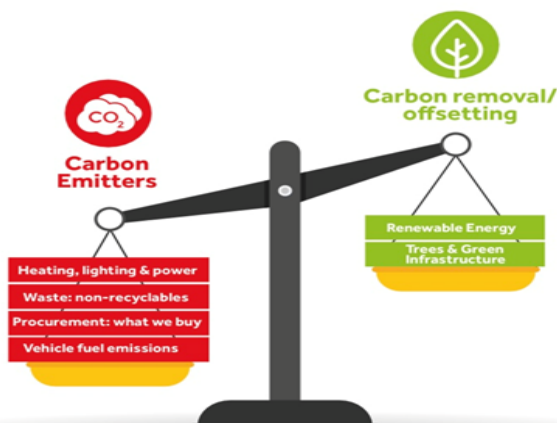
3.6 The shift to a low carbon system increases economic output and is part of our national recovery plans. Therefore, BCBC regionally can strengthen local economic prosperity by setting a clear encompassing strategy and delivery plan for carbon neutrality by 2030 for direct and indirect controlled emissions controlled by the Council, as part of its overall response to climate change.

4.0 Current situation/proposal

Understanding our Carbon Footprint

4.1 To propose areas of priority and focus resources, BCBC requires a carbon audit to fully understand the carbon footprint relating to each in-scope emission category, as shown in figure 1 above. A Carbon Audit will need to be completed of all areas; this will identify key areas of focus and targets for change. For example, other Local Authorities in South Wales have identified that procurement of services, goods and works have the highest Carbon footprint and therefore, the highest opportunity for reduction by 2030. They have also identified that their highest opportunity for 'offsetting', see Figure 2 below, is by continuing to increase waste diversion from landfill or incineration.

Figure 2 – How to Achieve Carbon neutral by offsetting



Carbon neutral or net-zero carbon footprint is the balancing of

*carbon emissions against carbon removal,
often with carbon offsetting,
with the net result being neutral*

4.2 It will also be imperative to improve digital data collection in order to understand carbon sources in detail. It is proposed that this is achieved by breaking the whole Council target down into smaller areas and then targeting and resourcing the changes necessary to reduce emissions (i.e. energy, transport, buildings) and increase offsets (i.e. solar panels, heating schemes, green infrastructure, tree planting, wetlands). It is also essential to make the areas specific, to help engage staff, residents and business in what Bridgend want to achieve.

Where we are now

4.3 The Council developed its Smart Energy Plan in 2019 comprising of a series of projects to tackle decarbonising heat which Cabinet approved on 19th February 2019. This includes District Heat Networks in Bridgend and Caerau, (their specific progress is subject to separate reports to Cabinet,) smart metering and gaining electrification of heat. Whilst progressive, the Smart Energy Plan alone does not cover all energy opportunities within the focus areas of energy, transport, buildings and open spaces.

4.4 To meet the carbon-neutral/ net-zero carbon objective by 2030, the progress of and projects within the Smart Energy Plan need to be, expanded and accelerated and its governance strengthened. Table 1 below sets out the progress that has been achieved to date within the four WG prioritised areas of focus for 2030. Highlights to date include, significant investment in active travel routes within the Borough and the conversion of all street lighting in BCBC to LED's resulting in reducing associated emissions by upto 70% overall.

Table 1: Examples of Progress within BCBC under the four areas of focus

	Project	Emissions	Users
Buildings	Corporate Landlord Energy Efficiency Programme ReFIT	Direct	Council Buildings
	Proposed Bridgend District Heat Network Schemes	Direct and Indirect	Council Buildings and

			other public facilities
	Net Zero Carbon Developments new Council assets and planning proposals and procurement	Indirect (Planning decisions)	Council and Community
Energy	Caerau Local Heat Scheme	Direct	Council and Community Use
		Indirect	Community Use
Transport	Electrifying parts of Council Fleet Installing some Electric vehicles charging points across Borough	Direct	Council
		Indirect	Community Use
Open Spaces	Using bio-diversity areas to offset	Carbon sequestration	Community Use

4.5 Across the four areas of focus, there remain opportunities to expand the scope further, this includes:-

Energy:

- Identifying and delivering renewable power schemes on our estate of buildings and land to produce electricity that offset demands.
- Look at how we buy energy
- Smart metering across our entire estate

Transport:

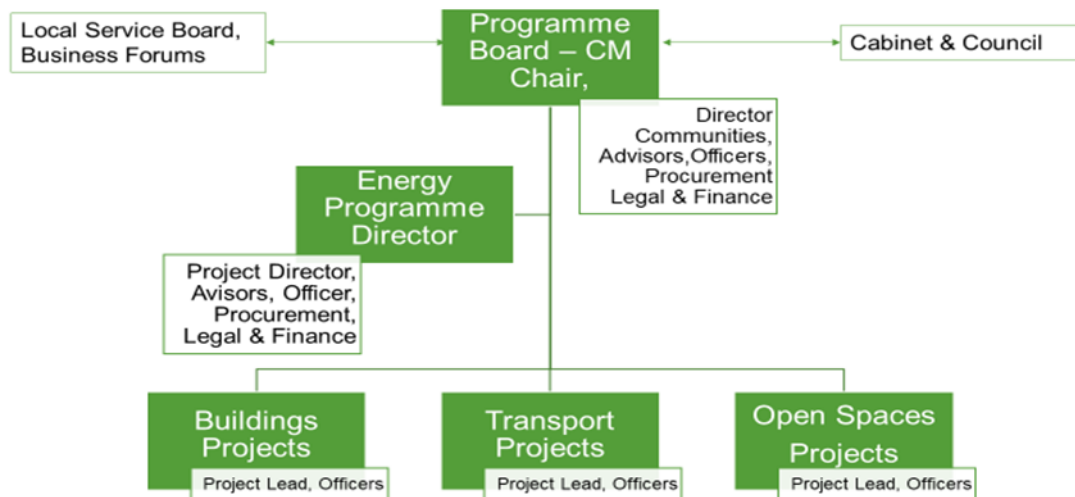
- Full electrification/ or hydrogen fuelling of our fleet
- Rapid expansion of community electric charging
- Employee commuting and business travel
- Commissioned Transport Services specify electric for example; Home to School or social care

4.6 A significant proportion of carbon emissions are a result of goods and services we buy, circa 60%. Therefore procurement also needs to have a focus. Sustainable, resource-efficient contracts can be a source of revenue savings when reviewed, as the first call is to challenge whether or not we need these goods in our contract and can we reuse what we have. Stimulating the supply chain to respond positively to lower carbon activities can be cost-effective and support social needs.

4.7 To achieve a net-zero position, we need to be very ambitious and focus resources into delivering services differently. A Cabinet decision in June to appoint a Climate Emergency Manager to join the small energy team assists this ambition. However, this agenda requires resources and expert advice to focus time, pressure and expertise into delivering energy projects and drive forward the overall programme. Further expertise is also needed to establish the true Carbon Footprint for BCBC and help with procurement. It is proposed to utilise the funding approved by Cabinet in June 2020 (as outlined in paragraph 8.1 below) for the Climate Emergency Response Programme to further strengthen our capacity to meet the first challenge of setting our Roadmap to Net Zero Carbon by 2030 as early as possible in 2021.

- 4.8 The Council cannot do this alone and broader engagement is required with sector partners for delivery. Agreeing a more comprehensive roadmap and action plan to set out clear and measurable reduction targets leading to a Carbon Neutral Bridgend County Borough by 2030. To achieve this, it is proposed that this should be co-produced with our partners, and most immediately, with Public Service Board (PSB) Partners on the energy programme and Carbon foot-printing.
- 4.9 This proposal was discussed at a recent PSB meeting where it was agreed that the PSB could collaborate in a broader road map to net-zero for Bridgend County Borough by 2030. It was noted that there is potential to support resources through a subgroup, potentially share data platforms and most importantly agree on a methodology and priorities, joining up projects and outcomes. It is therefore recommended that this work is progressed with PSB partners.
- 4.10 The scale and complexity of both the existing energy programme and the requirements of transitioning to a net Zero Carbon Bridgend 2030 requires appropriate governance, to support Cabinet, the corporate team and wider stakeholders. There is currently an Energy Programme Board in existence but it is proposed to strengthen this by ensuring that it has a “2030” Decarbonisation focus and is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Communities and supported by the Corporate Director Communities to oversee the full programme. A draft governance structure is set out below in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Draft Programme Governance Structure



- 4.11 The newly realigned 2030 Programme Board would be responsible for all projects (and agreeing additional projects), their scope, viability and overseeing the financial and risk profiles. The Programme Board will communicate the benefits of the programme to the wider community and also provide clarity of the Council’s role for each. It will be instrumental in agreeing collaborations and will report via the Cabinet Member for Communities to the Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and Council. As the Programme grows, in volume and complexity, it may be necessary to appoint an Energy Programme Director to oversee the governance, finance and progress of

the multiply initiatives. This proposal will be reviewed as part of the resource requirements of the 2030 Strategy.

4.12 Key Outcomes

- Produce a draft roadmap to Carbon Neutral Bridgend Council 2030 that works with a Public Service Board broader Roadmap for Bridgend Borough 2030, utilising best practice and WLGA areas of influence.
- Hold a Public consultation on the draft Bridgend 2030 Decarbonisation Strategy as part of the Council's commitment to an annual Sustainability Summit in summer 2021, including forums for young people, etc.
- The consultation outcome and subsequent draft 2030 Strategy and Action Plan would be subject to approval in a further report to Cabinet.
- Resource the energy programme effectively, including possibly a temporary leadership role (Programme Director) to improve the delivery of projects and collaboration with PSB and others (NRW, e.g. for sequestrations data support and digital innovation.)

4.13 The timeline for activities is set out in Figure 4 below, which illustrates the journey from this Cabinet Report in January 2021 to an approved Bridgend 2030 Strategy. This includes undertaking BCBC's detailed Carbon Audit, co-producing a 2030 Strategy, Action plan & Roadmap, undertaking public consultation in the summer of 2021 and the target of approval of a finalised strategy by the Autumn.

Figure 4 – Roadmap to the “Bridgend 2030” Decarbonisation Strategy



5.0 Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no direct impact on the Council's policy framework and procedure rules.

6.0 Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics and

an EIA status of low priority is considered appropriate at this stage. It is considered that there will be no negative impacts from this report.

7.0 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 Setting the Carbon Neutral Bridgend Council 2030 strategy and action plan pathway is a positive step in regard to the Council's role in complying with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. A clear pathway to decarbonisation demonstrates BCBC taking a positive, proactive leadership role within the decarbonisation agenda in Wales which will ensure that the significant environmental, social and economic opportunities created through the decarbonisation transition of the energy plan market and transport will be captured for Bridgend as well as the area being able to demonstrate its compliance with national carbon reduction targets.

7.2 In terms of meeting the 5 ways of working within the Act a "Bridgend 2030" Decarbonisation strategy will provide the following:-

1. **Long Term:** A decarbonisation strategy and action plan will provide the pathway for Bridgend County to develop a decarbonised, digitally advanced transport, buildings power and heat systems and green space enhancements that meet the UK 2030 decarbonisation targets are supported by BCBC's Local Area Energy Strategy and Smart Energy Plan and Green Infrastructure Plans.
2. **Prevention:** A decarbonisation strategy and action plan will provide an opportunity for all to benefit from the decarbonisation transition and ensure that solutions are designed and available for everyone within Bridgend County Borough.
3. **Integration:** A decarbonisation strategy and action plan offers an opportunity to develop a range of transport, buildings power and heat systems and green space enhancements options to communities, public and business partners offering carbon reductions, reduced fuel bills and create economic opportunities through a clearly identified value chain for the area.
4. **Collaboration:** BCBC is working in partnership with our communities, public sector partners and UK Government and private sector partners to deliver a route-map to decarbonisation 2030.
5. **Involvement:** Creating and delivering a decarbonisation strategy and action plan will involve working with a variety of stakeholders, notably local public service partners, to jointly deliver sustainable solutions.

8. Financial implications

8.1 In June 2020, Cabinet approved the Bridgend County Climate Emergency Response Programme. This included an annual allocation of £215,000 from the £2m public realm and place shaping budget, which was approved in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the Communities Directorate for 2020-21. The value of £215,000 will be for a full year programme, made up of £65,000 staff costs and £150,000 general revenue.

- 8.2 As part of year 1 of the Programme, a one-off sum of £50,000 was allocated to support the development of the strategy and prioritised action plan, including costings, performance management and reporting procedures. The value required for 2020-21 will be a pro-rata figure due to the timing of the June 2020 report. It is anticipated that this now will be £80,000.
- 8.3 The resources required for undertaking any specialist strategy work, working with the Public Services Board and a consultation event of a draft 2030 Strategy as part of the Annual Sustainability Summit, will be provided through these budgets.
- 8.4 It is recognised that an approved 2030 Strategy and Action Plan may require additional resources to implement initiatives in the future, which will be subject to Cabinet and / or Council approval once the quantum of resource is known. However, it must be realised that there is an increasing financial risk to BCBC if no action is taken. Welsh Government have mandated that the public sector in Wales must be net carbon zero by 2030. The harmful impacts of events arising from climate change affect people and property which in turn presents both direct and indirect challenges and costs for BCBC.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet :-

- Approves the development of a draft “Bridgend 2030” decarbonisation strategy and action plan for public consultation in the summer of 2021 and note that this draft strategy and action plan shall be reported to a future cabinet meeting prior to public consultation.
- Approves and delegates authority to the Corporate Director, Communities engaging with the Bridgend Public Services Board on the draft “Bridgend 2030” decarbonisation strategy and agree a shared narrative and methodology with the Public Services Board for the decarbonisation agenda for the Borough.
- Approves the development of a realigned Programme Governance structure and the appointment of the Cabinet Member for Communities as the Chair of the 2030 Programme Board as set out in section 4.10 of this report.

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Background documents

- Cabinet 30th June 2020, Report of the Chief Executive, Bridgend County Climate Change Emergency Response Programme.
- Cabinet 19th February 2019, Report of the Head of Operations, Community Services, Local Energy Strategy & Smart Energy Plan