

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

19 JULY 2021

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE AND NET-ZERO CARBON BY 2030

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 of the approach being taken by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) in response to the challenges of Climate Change and achieving a position of Net-Zero Carbon as a public body by 2030.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

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

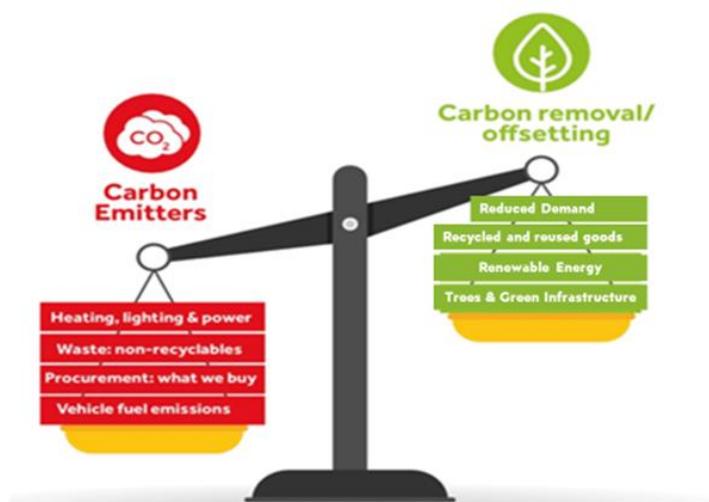
- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
- **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.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring 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 deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 In October 2018, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) produced a report on the state of global warming, warning of the consequences of failing to limit global warming to a 1.5°C rise¹. The report identified that global temperatures continued warming would significantly increase the likelihood and the resulting impact of floods, droughts, and extreme heat. The report stated the importance of limiting global warming and requiring an unprecedented scale and speed of action. It is also clear from the IPCC that taking action and delivering on the existing commitments of the United National Framework on Climate Change is the way to a more sustainable and equitable society.

¹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

- 3.2 In Wales,² emissions scenarios present a bleak picture of the future and are the consequences of allowing emissions to grow at an unconstrained rate.
- 3.3 The kinds of changes that would result would have overwhelming consequences for many residents of the County Borough, presenting much more frequent flood events, heatwaves, droughts and storms. This will significantly impact the well-being of both current and future generations, with extreme weather events putting increasing pressure on ecosystems, infrastructure, the built environment, finance, and the landscape. Reducing emissions from our activities will improve our well-being and demonstrate Bridgend's contribution to the global effort on climate change.
- 3.4 It is therefore essential that there is a focus on direct emissions and those that BCBC influence across all service activity and in residential and business communities. While BCBC does not have direct control of most local emissions, it delivers a range of regulatory and strategic functions in key sectors such as planning, housing and transport. BCBC has significant influence in their role as community leader, major employer and procurer of goods and services.
- 3.5 In November 2018, the Councils of Bristol and Manchester were among the first to pass motions that declared a 'Climate Emergency' and set ambitious targets aiming to be carbon neutral by 2030 and 2038 respectively to support efforts to limit global warming.
- 3.6 Welsh Government (WG) declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019. Following this WG has now committed to achieving a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. In addition, there is a commitment to coordinating action to help other areas of the economy to make a decisive shift away from fossil fuels, involving academia, industry and the third sector. This has now been incorporated into the updated 2021-22 BCBC Corporate Plan.
- 3.7 Carbon neutral or net-zero carbon is the balancing of carbon emissions against carbon removal, often with carbon offsetting, with the net result being neutral as summarised in the diagram below.



²See Welsh Government Prosperity for All: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-03/prosperity-for-all-a-climate-conscious-wales-technical-annex.pdf>

3.8 Policy around decarbonisation is evolving. Relevant recent legislative and policy levers are noted below:

- The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 specifies at least a 100% reduction in net Welsh emissions account for 2050 against the baselines specified in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. BCBC started recording emissions data in 2010/11 in line with the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme.
- WG has set a target for 70% of Wales' electricity to be from renewable sources by 2030. In Wales the equivalent of 50% of electricity consumption was met from renewable sources in 2018, compared with 48% in 2017 and 43% in 2016³.
- WG has set a target for 1 gigawatt (GW) of renewable energy capacity in Wales to be locally owned by 2030 and for all new projects to have an element of local ownership. Wales is 77% towards having 1 GW of renewable energy capacity as locally owned, with the total installed capacity of locally-owned energy projects up to the end of 2018 at 778 megawatts (MW)⁴.
- In March 2019, WG launched 'Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales – a cross-government plan to cut emissions and contribute to the global fight against climate change.
- In May 2019, the UK Committee on Climate Change (UKCCC) recommended that a **100% reduction** in greenhouse gas emissions should be legislated for 'as soon as possible' and urged the government to set a net-zero CO_{2e} emissions target by 2050.

3.9 BCBC has a crucial role to play through the management of its own resources and assets and the way in which it works with and supports local residents, organisations and businesses to respond to the challenges set out in the IPCC report.

3.10 In 2020 BCBC declared a Climate Emergency and Cabinet created a Climate Emergency Response Programme. These actions highlighted that BCBC has a role as:

- **A community leader** – to work with residents, groups and businesses in relation to their energy use and preparing for climate impacts
- **A service provider** – to deliver more resource efficient services that are less carbon intensive, encourage more resilience and support the most vulnerable in society.
- **The manager of an estate** – to ensure that the estate and its operations are as resource efficient as possible, to use clean energy and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

³ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-10/energy-generation-in-wales-2018.pdf>

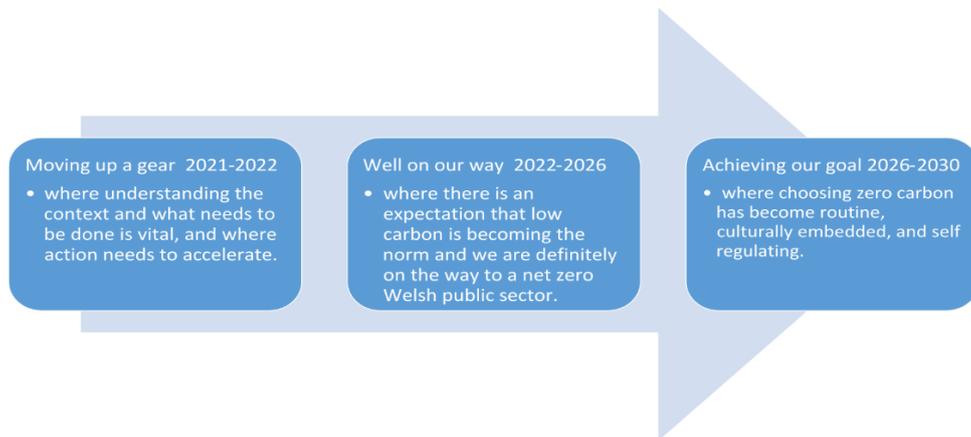
⁴ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-10/energy-generation-in-wales-2018.pdf>

4. Current situation/proposal

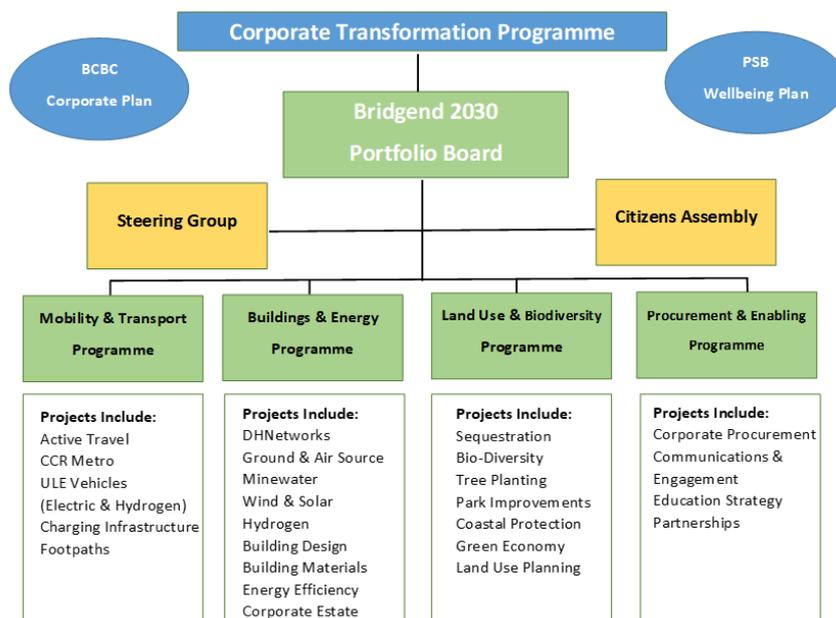
4.1 A target for Local Authorities in Wales to be net-zero carbon must be met by 2030. In response, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) with local government Leaders have established a Decarbonisation Strategy Panel, supported by all 22 local authorities, WG, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Cardiff University. The Decarbonisation Strategy Panel, alongside WG, have defined the areas of focus in reaching net-zero carbon as follows:

- Mobility and Transport
- Building and Energy
- Land Use and Biodiversity
- Procurement

4.2 The panel provides a strategic overview of the priority areas for action and the changes required for the Welsh public sector to reach net-zero emissions by 2030 as the diagram below shows.



4.3 To oversee the current and future work which BCBC has to undertake BCBC has internally developed a new governance structure. The governance structure is set out below however the Committee is asked to note that the Bridgend 2030 Portfolio board has now been renamed the Bridgend 2030 Decarbonisation Programme Board.



- 4.4 The former Cabinet Member for Communities, Cllr Richard Young, currently chairs the Bridgend 2030 Decarbonisation Programme Board with the Cabinet Member for Communities, Cllr Stuart Baldwin in attendance, and the Vice Chair is the Corporate Director of Communities. The Bridgend 2030 Decarbonisation Programme Board reports to the Corporate Transformation board and escalates to the Corporate Management Board as required. The Bridgend 2030 Decarbonisation Programme Board will receive direct engagement with a Citizens Assembly once established and a Steering Group of interested delivery partners. Direct engagement is held with Public Services Board (PSB) to establish synergies, shared resources and commonality of vision.
- 4.5 In developing a position of net-zero carbon for Council operations, BCBC is seeking to undertake an innovative and radical decarbonisation programme across the Council and in doing so develop accurate, scientific and robust technical support to enable the delivery and achievement of this ambition.
- 4.6 To do this officers are undertaking a programme of work that includes the following:
- (a) A thorough Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions scoping and emissions baseline review to support BCBC to consider and set the boundary, period and scope of what will be included and excluded from the BCBC GHG emissions baseline following an assessment of Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 GHG emissions. This will define and calculate a robust carbon footprint to take forward as the baseline for the reduction trajectory and net-zero carbon route map.
 - (b) The development of a bespoke GHG emissions baseline tool for on-going use by BCBC to enable in house data addition for future reporting and monitoring as required.
 - (c) The creation of a wide-ranging GHG emissions reduction trajectory that will adjust according to annual data to align the BCBC carbon reduction pathway with international agreements on carbon budgeting to tackle climate change and limit global warming to well below 2 °C.
 - (d) The endorsement of comprehensive net-zero carbon route-map with comprehensive Decarbonisation strategy and action plans that set out the objectives and actions required to achieve net-zero carbon. This will develop a robust pipeline of projects and activities with detailed assessment and prioritised opportunities based on carbon saving potential, costs and timeframes.
- 4.7 The Welsh Government published its Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Guide in May 2021. This sets out detailed scope and boundaries of the GHG emissions and a consistent calculation methodology to determine the degree to which Public bodies are progressing towards reaching net-zero carbon. These are split into 3 'scopes' as summarised below.

Category	Description	Sources
Scope 1: Direct emissions	Emissions from operations that are owned or controlled by the reporting organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generation of electricity, heat or steam • Physical or chemical processing • Transportation of employees/goods in company-controlled vehicles • Fugitive (e.g. leakage/evaporation) emissions from company-controlled sources
Scope 2: Indirect emissions	Emissions from the generation of purchased or acquired electricity, steam, heating, or cooling consumed by the reporting organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generation of purchased electricity • Generation of purchased heat or steam • Generation of purchased district heating
Scope 3: Indirect emissions	All indirect emissions (not included in scope 2) that occur in the value chain of the reporting organisations, including both upstream and downstream emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchased goods • Purchased services – core functions • Purchased services – discretionary • Capital goods • Fuel and energy-related activities • Upstream transportation and distribution • Waste generated in operations • Business travel • Employee commuting • Upstream leased assets • Downstream leased assets • Downstream transportation and distribution • Processing of sold products • End-of-life of sold products • Franchises • Investments
Biogenic carbon emissions and removals	All emissions and removals from activities that release or uptake carbon on the estate of the reporting organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequestration from owned estate • Short cycle carbon emissions from biofuels

4.8 As result of this, a number of the services that BCBC currently expects to report on are as follows:

- School education
- Domestic waste collection & disposal, and street cleansing
- Highways and street lighting
- Libraries and archives

- Environmental and animal health
- Registrar services (births, marriages and deaths)
- Social services
- Planning and building control
- Benefits administration
- Allotments
- Conservation and rights of way
- Childcare provision
- Car parking and parking enforcement
- Collection and disposal of trade waste
- Flood protection
- Parks and gardens
- Promotion of tourism
- Electoral administration
- Trading standards
- Housing and homelessness services (except council housing)
- Licensing services
- Disabled parking permits
- Play facilities
- Burial and cremation services
- Sport and leisure services
- Economic development & business support
- Maritime and coastal services (e.g. slipways, marinas and lifeguards)
- Support for the arts
- Adult and lifelong learning
- Direct Ancillary functions

- 4.9 This, therefore, requires a whole-council approach to data gathering, monitoring and programming of the systemic changes required.
- 4.10 Focusing on the priority themes of (a) mobility and transport (b) buildings and energy (c) land use and biodiversity and, (d) procurement is not new for BCBC. Some examples of BCBC decarbonisation projects that are already in development or underway for 2021/22 are outlined below.
- 4.11 The Bridgend District Heat Network has led to BCBC securing a grant from The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to develop a heat network in Bridgend. The authority has also allocated significant capital resources, part of which is funded by borrowing, towards this project. Phase 1 of the project will serve some public sector buildings in the town centre. Future phases have the potential to comprise a large district heat network around the town centre and beyond. This however is not certain and subject to further feasibility work. The project plans to deliver reduced heating costs for buildings on the network, reduced carbon emissions associated with heating; ultimately, low- and zero-carbon sources of heat are proposed to be added to the network supply and help cement Bridgend's status as an innovator and low carbon hub.
- 4.12 The Re:fit programme proposed by the Welsh Government was considered to be the most appropriate capital energy investment delivery model for the Council to deliver carbon saving measures. Re:fit is an energy performance framework produced by Local Partnerships LLP (which is a joint venture owned by HM Treasury and the Local Government Association and established in 2009) and specialises in delivering retrofit energy projects to public sector buildings. BCBC will retrofit 18 buildings installing energy conservation measures such as LED lighting replacement, Solar PV systems and BMS controls.
- 4.13 Bridgend has been awarded a grant of nearly £500k from Welsh Government as part of the national Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV) Transformation Fund to improve its electric vehicle charging infrastructure with the possibility of further funding of £300k via the Welsh Local Government Association. The Cardiff Capital Region

(CCR) has also been successful in securing grant funding and will also be developing further infrastructure throughout the constituent local authority areas during 2021. This includes the purchase of a number of ULEV taxis for trial use by taxi operators and managed through the CCR. Bridgend has 6 ULEV taxis that will be available on a 'try before you buy' basis together with a rapid charging point at Hillsborough Place Car Park.

- 4.14 The Bridgend ULEV grant will be used to design and implement charging facilities at its own facilities including depots and the civic offices and develop renewable energy systems to enable future use of ULEV fleet. The CCR grant will focus on public on-street charging infrastructure and will utilise existing Council car parks. The ULEV grant funding must be spent before the end of the current financial year with a view to providing initial infrastructure to encourage a greater public uptake of ULEV.
- 4.15 In addition to these projects, work is also progressing in relation to phase 2 property rationalisation via the updating homeworking policy and development of active travel routes, Metro Plus Schemes across the Borough and a bus terminus in Porthcawl.
- 4.16 More broadly BCBC's 2021/22 policy priorities are as follows:
- Develop the Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan outlined above in section 4.6
 - Produce and implement a Corporate Sustainable Procurement Strategy
 - Develop Biodiversity and Sequestration opportunities and plans for Green Infrastructure Plan
 - Deliver the Local Energy Plan identified projects
 - Embed Sustainable development Local Development Plan (LDP) policies into practice towards net-zero carbon and healthy living development and construction.
- 4.17 The timing of publication of the Welsh Government Greenhouse Gas Protocol and BCBC's work is such that BCBC has been advised by the Carbon Trust that it is the first Local Authority in Wales to be fully reviewing its base line and developing its Decarbonisation Strategy in line with the protocol. The priorities for action identified through the work in section 4.6 will build on and add value to the action already underway as outlined above. The immediate next steps in taking forward this crucial area of work in 2021/22 are as follows:
- Completion of baseline assessment
 - Establishment of Bridgend County Borough Citizens Assembly
 - Creation of and consultation on draft Decarbonisation Strategy
 - Approval of final Decarbonisation Strategy

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 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, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA at this stage.

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

7.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment Template has been completed and a summary of the implications from the assessment relating to the five ways of working is below:

- **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 that are supported by BCBC's Local Area Energy Strategy and Smart Energy Plan and Green Infrastructure Plans.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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. The value of £215,000 per year, provided through the public realm and place shaping budget, is made up of £65,000 total staff costs and £150,000 revenue budget. In addition an Earmarked Reserve (EMR) of £220,000 has been created to support with enhanced staff capacity to take forward co-ordination of work on the Decarbonisation agenda across the Council.

8.2 WG have mandated that the public sector in Wales must be net carbon zero by 2030. Therefore, the final 2030 Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan will require additional resources for implementation and to achieve this. As the exact detail of the resource requirement is not yet known, the potential source or sources are yet to be determined.

8.3 It is to be noted that there is an increasing financial risk to BCBC if no action is taken. 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. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the content of this report and provide comments on the work undertaken to date and the way forward outlined in the report.

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Background documents:
None