

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

18 JANUARY 2022

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

MEMBERSHIP OF THE UK 100

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a brief synopsis of UK100, what membership might mean for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and to propose that the Council seek to achieve membership.

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** – 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. 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. In July 2020, the Welsh Government committed to achieving a net zero carbon public sector in Wales by 2030. This commitment includes the public sector in its entirety, including Town and Community Councils.
- 3.2 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) supports the net zero goal and it has adopted it into the updated 2021-22 Corporate Plan. In addition, BCBC is committed to coordinating action to help other areas of the economy make a decisive shift towards decarbonisation, by engaging in collaboration with other public sector organisations, academia, industry and the third sector.

- 3.3 While BCBC is showing national leadership in its drive to become carbon neutral by 2030, the Council is not yet a member of the recognised forum for local leaders on climate action.
- 3.4 UK100 is billed as a forum for “the most ambitious local leaders across the UK” to tackle the climate emergency. It is a private company limited by guarantee with no share capital. They work with the most ambitious members - the Net Zero Local Leadership Club - who are doing everything within their power to get their communities to Net Zero as soon as possible, and by 2045 at the latest.
- 3.5 It counts among its membership¹ about 60 local authorities, including Birmingham City Council, Cardiff Council, City of Edinburgh, Glasgow City Council, Bristol City Council, and Cornwall Council.
- 3.6 UK100 runs campaigns² principally around three issues: climate change, clean air and green finance. Through the collective voice of their membership, they advocate for changes that are necessary to make the transition to net zero.
- 3.7 Benefits of membership include:
- enabling knowledge sharing between members including meetings, webinars, roundtables and workshops, and promoting best practice via social media (Twitter and LinkedIn) and newsletters
 - facilitating dialogue with national politicians and senior officials across Whitehall, amplifying the voices of local leaders via collective advocacy to national government
 - providing tailored insights, evidence and recommendations on the challenges and solutions to local Net Zero, inviting members to inform and participate in research
 - connecting with world-leading business and industry to help plan and implement the solutions needed to reduce emissions in the local area
 - demonstrating the collective ambition, commitment and ability of democratically elected local leaders to deliver Net Zero
 - access to the network’s members-only programmes and services, including briefings, research and publications.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 In order to become a member, BCBC must sign and adopt the net zero pledge. The net zero pledge has the following 3 commitments included in it:
- Have set ambitious Net Zero targets for greenhouse emissions of 2030 for council operations and 2045 for areawide emissions at the latest (there is an exception to this for counties and combined authorities).
 - Report carbon emissions annually for scope 1 and scope 2, for council emissions and areawide emissions

¹ <https://www.uk100.org/membership>

² <https://www.uk100.org/campaigns>

- Commit to limiting the use of offsets and if used to be as local as possible.

The table below sets out the current status of BCBC in relation to the membership pledge and its commitments, showing an analysis of current compliance and any challenges that are currently considered to be in place based on information available at this time.

Commitment	Compliant?	Challenges?
We recognise our responsibility to tackle the climate emergency and take bold action towards net zero.	Yes. Climate Emergency statement 30 June 2020 ³	Ensure BCBC actions match the commitment.
We will bring our Council emissions to Net Zero by 2030	Yes, Welsh Government target which BCBC has committed to meet.	The scale and cost of the transformation.
We will work with our residents and businesses to bring our wider communities' emissions in line with Net Zero as soon as possible (and by 2045 at the latest)	No. A further, explicit statement of intent in relation to a 2045 area-wide goal will need to be made.	Many of the levers to achieve the 2045 target are beyond the Council's control. However, on a reasonable assumptions basis, given the wider societal drive towards net zero, a 2045 target would be a good balance between stretching ambition and prudent expectation management.
We pledge to understand our impacts on climate change, prioritise where action needs to be taken and monitor progress towards our goals.	Yes. This assessment is being undertaken as part of the BCBC decarbonisation work. The action plan will be developed as a result of the baselining work.	Continued cross-Council action to make progress on the action plan.
We will reduce our emissions at source and limit the use of carbon offsets as part of the global effort to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.	Yes, the BCBC 2030 Decarbonisation Strategy (in development) is predicated on doing exactly this.	N/A

4.3 The pathway for signing the pledge and becoming a member is as follows: Officers and cabinet members of the interested authority contact the membership team via membership@uk100.org to schedule an introductory conversation to answer any

³ <https://democratic.bridgend.gov.uk/documents/s21828/Climate%20Emergency%20Cabinet%20report%20220620.pdf>

questions. Then, an official invitation to join the network is sent to the Leader from UK100's Network Membership Director, to which the Leader should respond confirming membership via email. The UK 100 also recommends that the Leader prints and physically signs the pledge, with a picture and quote taken for related comms when the council's membership is announced. The official invitation to join the network was received on 13 April 2021.

- 4.4 Therefore, this report proposes that Cabinet approve BCBC becoming a UK100 member, for the Leader to be given authority to respond via email confirming membership and, as recommended by UK100, sign the pledge and then engage in the publicity arrangements following this.
- 4.5 Membership does not need to be renewed on an annual basis, however membership can be terminated if a council no longer meets the criteria.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no direct impact on the Council's 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 on this policy or proposal.

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

- 7.1 The proposal to become a member of the UK 100 and the ambition of net zero emissions by 2045 (5 years prior to the UK government target) 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 ambition for wider community 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 will be captured for Bridgend as well as the authority being able to demonstrate its compliance with national carbon reduction targets. BCBC engagement with UK100 will help build towards a movement of local authorities committed to high ambition on climate action across the UK.
- 7.2 In terms of meeting the 5 ways of working within the Act a statement committing the authority to a net zero target within its area and subsequent membership of and engagement with UK100 will provide the following:-

1. **Long Term:** A specific net zero community target for 2045 explicitly commits BCBC to do everything possible to not only make those changes necessary to achieve the internal 2030 decarbonisation targets, but to work with businesses, individuals and communities to ensure the widest possible involvement in our collective endeavor to reach net zero. This commitment is critical for long term climate stability.
2. **Prevention:** Likewise, a 2045 net zero commitment for the County Borough is premised on fully realising BCBC's contribution to preventing the worst

excesses of climate change. Engagement with UK100 and the other member authorities will facilitate greater action by BCBC and others to take preventative steps.

3. **Integration:** Membership of UK100 offers the opportunity to work with a wide range of partners, including local authorities right across the UK, to ensure that BCBC learns from other leading authorities in this field.
4. **Collaboration:** Working with and through BCBC staff as well as multiple external stakeholders, collaboration is critical to achieving shared decarbonisation goals.
5. **Involvement:** Working with businesses, communities and individuals borough-wide – which is a likely following step from setting out the 2045 net zero ambition – will involve working with a very variety of stakeholders, including the public we serve.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 Membership of UK100 is free of charge. The Net Zero Pledge is not legally binding in that the UK100 will not take legal action if the targets are not reached. However, if the Net Zero targets are adopted by the Council and set as an official policy, the council is publicly committing to the targets and is therefore accountable in the same way the Council is accountable for other types of policies that it has publicly commits to.
- 8.2 Accelerating an area-wide ambition, from the UK 2050 net zero target to a Bridgend County 2045 net zero target, could lead to pressure for greater resource allocation to this area of work or a re-designing of current resources to do things in different ways. Therefore, whilst there may be a degree of additional resource needed there is also likely to be an element of using existing resources in different, smarter and more carbon efficient ways.
- 8.3 If any additional resources are required separate business cases will be prepared for Cabinet approval as necessary.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - Approves the Council becoming a UK100 member;
 - Approves the Leader responding to the official invitation received on 13th April 2021 via email confirming the Council's membership and, as recommended by UK100, signing the pledge and then engage in the publicity arrangements following this.

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Background documents:
None