

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

13 DECEMBER 2022

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

BRIDGEND 2030 NET ZERO CARBON STRATEGY

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval to formally adopt the Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy. The report recommends that the strategy should be adopted and the action plans detailed in it implemented so that Bridgend Council can achieve net zero status 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.
 - **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 to 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. The report identified that a continued warming of global temperatures will significantly increase the likelihood and resulting impact of floods, droughts and extreme heat. The report stated the importance of limiting global warming and a requirement for an unprecedented scale and speed of action.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Welsh Government declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019. Following this the Welsh Government has now committed to achieving a carbon neutral public sector by 2030.
- 3.4 In June 2020 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Cabinet approved a report that set out the crucial roles that BCBC has 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.

- 3.5 BCBC's latest Corporate Plan highlights 'decarbonisation and environmental sustainability' as a priority area for the Council up to 2023. A new Corporate Plan is being developed for approval by Council and the Bridgend Net Zero 2030 Strategy will feed into that. Alongside this BCBC ensures that the climate is considered at an everyday decision-making level. This is underpinned by The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Bridgend Public Service Board Well-being Plan.
- 3.6 In 2021, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (Amendment of 2050 Emissions Target) Regulations 2021 were introduced which amended the initial target of net Welsh emissions account for the year 2050 from at least 80% to 100% lower than the baseline. The Climate Change (Interim Emissions Targets) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 were also introduced which amended the Climate Change (Interim Emissions Targets) (Wales) Regulations 2018 so that the maximum amount for the net Welsh emission account for 2030 is 63% lower than the baseline instead of 45%.
- 3.7 A target for Local Authorities in Wales to be net-zero carbon by 2030 is an ambition set by Welsh Government. In response, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) with local government Leaders established a Decarbonisation Strategy Panel, supported by all 22 local authorities, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Cardiff University. The Welsh Government published its Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Guide in May 2021. The timing of publication of the Welsh Public Sector net zero reporting guide and BCBC's work is such that BCBC has been advised by the Carbon Trust – a commissioned expert guide on the route to Net Zero, sharing experience from the climate change frontline; pioneers for more than 20 years, driving real change with leading businesses, governments and organisations - 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.
- 3.8 Following appointment of the Carbon Trust to work with BCBC on the development of a Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy, officers have undertaken the following activities:
 - Commence work – April 2021
 - Data gathering – April 2021 – June 2021
 - Scoping workshop Communities Directorate Management Team (DMT) – June 2021
 - A report and presentation to Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 – July 2021
 - Initial headline figures presented to BCBC 2030 Programme Board – July 2021
 - Officer workshop series – September – October 2021
 - Draft Strategy officer workshops – January 2022
 - Corporate Management Board (CMB) presentation – February 2022
 - BCBC Decarbonisation 2030 Programme Board presentation – February 2022
 - Draft Bridgend 2030 – Net Zero Strategy presented to Cabinet – March 2022
 - Public consultation of the draft strategy – June – August 2022

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The final version of the Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy is attached to this report at **Appendix 1**. It was developed following an in-depth review of data in line with the Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Guide and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. Importantly, this Strategy will not be the only driver for net zero. It will be a part of the Council's Corporate Plan, whilst policies, strategies and ongoing plans will all need to reflect the commitment to net zero. This will ensure it is fully embraced across the organisation.
- 4.2 A public consultation on the 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy was undertaken over a twelve-week period from 8th June to 30th August 2022. The consultation received a total of 360 online survey completions, with a further 35 face to face engagement completions. The consultation report is included at **Appendix 2**.
- 4.3 Analysis of the responses shows that the majority of respondents are in support of the draft Bridgend 2030 Net Carbon Zero Strategy and the priorities within. There was no clear signal from respondents to remove or change any of the commitments or initiatives in the strategy and therefore no changes to the draft strategy document are recommended.
- 4.4 Given the necessary focus on the Council's own estate and Welsh Government's carbon reporting methodology the strategy does not address some of the key themes and messages captured in the consultation, such as a desire for low carbon public transport. The consultation report will be shared with relevant officers and the 2030 Programme Board so that the feedback gathered through the consultation can be used to inform activity beyond the immediate Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy remit.
- 4.5 The Carbon Leads for taking forward the delivery of the Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy are:
- Carbon Management – Group Manager - Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability
 - Waste – Head Of Operations - Community Services
 - Transport – Group Manager - Highways and Green Spaces
 - Buildings – Group Manager - Corporate Landlord
 - Land Use – Climate Change Response Manager
 - Procurement – Corporate Procurement Manager

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the Council's policy framework or procedure rules as a result of this report.

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 at this stage.

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

7.1 The Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy demonstrates the sustainable development principle by ensuring that by meeting the needs of the present they do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This is evidenced through the 5 ways of working as follows:

- **Long Term:** A Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy will provide the pathway for Bridgend County Borough to develop a decarbonised, digitally advanced transport, buildings power and heat systems and green space enhancements that meet the UK decarbonisation targets that are supported by BCBC's Local Area Energy Strategy and Smart Energy Plan and Green Infrastructure Plans.
- **Prevention:** A Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy 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 Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy 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 will continue to work in partnership with our communities, public sector partners and UK and Welsh Government and private sector partners to deliver a Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy.
- **Involvement:** Creating and delivering a Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy has, and will continue to, involve working with a variety of stakeholders, notably local public service partners, to jointly deliver sustainable solutions.

8. Financial implications

8.1 The resource challenge faced by all public bodies in Wales in their efforts to achieve net zero carbon by 2030 is significant. Whilst the process for developing the Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy has been led by the Communities Directorate there has been a Council wide approach towards its creation and its delivery must be seen as a corporate responsibility. Delivery will also require an on-going partnership approach with key external stakeholders and a wide range of funders.

8.2 Much has been achieved by BCBC in securing external resources to date, often matched on a case-by-case basis with BCBC resources, for a number of the early

phase actions being delivered to support the Council to reach net-zero carbon, such as work on the Bridgend District Heat Scheme, HyBont project, active travel and the Re:Fit scheme.

- 8.3 Like these schemes, many of the initiatives in future years will require feasibility funding to finalise their detailed cost and delivery profiles. Such funding is available on an annual basis via bids to BCBC's Corporate Feasibility Fund.
- 8.4 As initiatives that require additional resources are taken forward it is noted that the Corporate Director Communities, in consultation with the Corporate Director – Education and Family Support, Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy and Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change will submit proposals to secure external resources to fund 2030 initiatives through appropriate funds. As initiatives are developed, each one, including their potential resource requirements and carbon reduction potential, will be considered based on the information available at the time.
- 8.5 It is noted that, depending on fund criteria, an element of match funding may be required from BCBC. As the specific detail of individual funding packages are not yet known at this stage it is considered that any match funding requirement would be highlighted by the Corporate Director Communities, and the most appropriate source of match funding identified, where possible, which could require further reports to Cabinet and Council, particularly if capital match funding is required.
- 8.6 BCBC does not currently have a dedicated capital resource to deliver the 2030 programme in its entirety within its capital programme. The Council is facing a number of capital pressures which it needs to address, and if a specific ringfenced fund was to be created within the current Capital programme solely for decarbonisation then it may prevent other pressures being funded.
- 8.7 A revenue budget growth pressure proposal was developed by the Corporate Director Communities as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy process to provide revenue resources on an annual basis going forward in support of the delivery of the Strategy. If this is not made available then any future work to support the delivery of the Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Strategy would have to be supported through existing revenue budgets across all Directorates.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 Cabinet is recommended to formally adopt the Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy.

Janine Nightingale
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