

Notice of 'Call-In'

Committee: Overview & Scrutiny Committee

1. Decision Subject To Call-In:

Title: Details inc date

Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy 13th December 2022

2. Member(s) of the Committee Wishing to Call the Decision In

Name

CLlr Martin Williams, CLlr Ian Williams, CLlr Tim Thomas.

CLlr Freya Bletsoe (Chair Scrutiny 2)

3. Reasons for the Call-In

It is recognised that the Authority has to comply with Welsh Government declared 'Climate Emergency' and legislation for the public sector in Wales to achieve Net Zero by 2030.

It is clear that this target is ambitious and will have significant implications for Bridgend County Borough Council. The pursuit and achievement of the target will have a profound influence on all aspects of the Authority's operation and services. There are therefore concerns that the *Bridgend Net Zero Carbon Strategy* agreed by Cabinet on 13th December 2022 was subject to insufficient scrutiny and indeed such a significant strategy should have been subject to scrutiny prior to Cabinet deliberation.

This call in is not about the Net Zero 2030 target or the overall vision set out within the strategy document. However, there are shortcomings within the strategy that require further scrutiny that will provide assurance to all members and the public that the strategy is robust, affordable and deliverable. Most importantly there needs to be assurance that the strategy is the best that could be adopted.

The following aspects, though not exhaustive, require more robust scrutiny.

Financial Implications – Although this was discussed very briefly within Cabinet there was no conclusion or even high-level estimate regarding the costs of achieving 'Net Zero' by 2030. The cabinet appears to have committed the Authority to an un-costed strategy in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis. This cannot be acceptable. There must be more scrutiny of this including a profiling of estimated costs over the next 7 years. The Authority needs to understand the cost of delivering the strategy and it needs to provide guidance to council taxpayers.

Performance and Monitoring – There is insufficient clarity as to how the strategy will be monitored and on what frequency. What are the risk thresholds and trigger points? What is the monitoring and evaluation framework, will a dashboard system be constructed to allow council to consistently monitor and evaluate against the charts on pages 16 & 17? Whilst the charts provide some illustration, they suggest linear progression from 90,241t to zero which is not credible for a corporate strategy of this significance or complexity. Furthermore, who should be responsible for setting annual targets? A credible strategy would include annual targets. Effective cabinet scrutiny would have questioned it.

Oversight & Governance – It is noted that a Programme Board will be established chaired by the Cabinet Member for Communities but given the significance of this strategy is that appropriate or sufficient. Should ownership of the strategy not be held by full council will delivery devolved to a Programme Board chaired by the Leader? What will the scrutiny arrangements be? Once clear targets have been set the evaluation of the first year against the plan will need to consider areas for improvement and creation of longer term goals. This matter requires much further consideration.

Resources – The papers refer to the intention to recruit additional expertise to support the strategy including a *Decarbonisation Programme Manager*. The paper also indicates that the existing post of *Climate Change Response Manager* is only accountable for delivery in relation to land use within this strategy. Action 'CM1 on page 28 references the intention to appoint a 'technical expert' how does this role fit in? There appears to be a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities within the strategy. As with oversight and governance should these roles not sit more corporately within the Chief Executive's Directorate? Again, further scrutiny is required.

4. **Date of Call-In:** 22nd December 2022.