

CABINET - THURSDAY, 12 JANUARY 2023

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB / REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 12 JANUARY 2023 AT 14:30

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

JC Spanswick
HM Williams

N Farr
JPD Blundell

W R Goode

J Gebbie

Officers:

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| Carys Lord | Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change |
| Claire Marchant | Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing |
| Janine Nightingale | Corporate Director - Communities |
| Mark Shephard | Chief Executive |
| Mark Galvin | Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees |
| Lindsay Harvey | Corporate Director Education and Family Support |
| Michael Pitman | Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services |
| Kelly Watson | Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory, HR and Corporate Policy |

Invitees:

Cllr Paul Davies

103. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

104. **CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION: BRIDGEND 2030 NET ZERO CARBON STRATEGY**

The Subject Overview and Scrutiny 3 Chairperson presented a report to Cabinet on the recommendations of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 (SOSC 3) from their meeting held on 4 January 2023, following the decision of 3 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and a Scrutiny Chair to Call-In the decision of the Executive in relation to Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy.

The Scrutiny Chair explained that Members of the committee discussed the decision at this meeting and highlighted the points as set out in section 4 of the report. Following this, the committee recommended that the decision be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration for the reasons set out in section 4.5 of the report.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that a report was presented to Cabinet on the 13th December 2022 on Bridgend's 2030 Net Zero strategy following Welsh Governments mandate for all Local Authorities in Wales to have an appropriate strategy in place. Bridgend's 2030 strategy was attached at Appendix C of the report.

She added that while this was not a fully funded initiative, Welsh Government did set out the requirements of this strategy and the scopes that they wanted included. Bridgend's strategy was the culmination of 18 months work and it was subject to assistance from Carbon Trust, who were industry experts in this field. She added that the 2030 Strategy went to a Scrutiny Committee in 2021, was subject to two Cabinet reports, and also went out to public consultation for 12 weeks.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that the Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy was a corporate strategy that set out aspirations to get our Council operations to a net zero carbon position by 2030. This was based on a calculation of 90,000 tonnes of carbon emissions, this calculation was provided by Carbon Trust.

She explained that the Strategy in line with the original Cabinet report would be reviewed every three years in line with the corporate plan and will evolve as part of the net zero carbon national agenda and so with further guidance from Welsh government is provided, the strategy will evolve and mature. She added that the strategy also had a supporting action plan that would be reviewed annually in line with the MTFS and Greenhouse Gas Reporting Protocol as set out by Welsh Government.

The Corporate Director Communities highlighted the call in notice at Appendix B of the report. The call in reasons given were asking clarification on a number of points as highlighted below:

1. the financial implications of the strategy
2. performance and monitoring
3. oversight and governance
4. resources

The Corporate Director Communities explained that the financial implications were going to be significant for all of the public sector, particularly in the current financial climate. Whilst all 21 local authorities have produced a 2030 strategy, none of them have included detailed costings in their strategies. She added that the reasons for this was that it would be impossible to determine accurate costings for implementation over the next 7 years due to the advancing technology in this arena, the change in national agenda by Welsh Government and cost inflations.

The Corporate Director Communities stated that the action plan as previously mentioned would include costings, both revenue and capital implications for that ensuing year. BCBC were not starting from a standstill as there had already been many environmental initiatives over the last 3 years. The action plan would be made up of external grant funded projects we already have in play and it will include internal corporate initiatives who's business plans will be approved by the 2030 programme board.

The Corporate Director Communities highlighted a number of secured funding which included Welsh Government grants, Welsh Government Energy Service as well as the City Region which will aid in changing our fleet to electric and implement charging infrastructure.

BCBC also have the Bridgend district Heat Network initiative which is currently seeing work undertaken with the brand new Bridgend College building. The Health Board have also expressed interest in Princess of Wales hospital joining the heat network in subsequent phases.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that with regards to other local authorities, Swansea Council recently estimated their cost of implementing their own 2030 strategy as £187 Million. However, they have stated that this was a ballpark indication only. It was only intended as an indicative figure to demonstrate how challenging funding 203 would be as they only have £4m currently budgeted.

She advised that with regards to the call in meeting and the point made regarding costings for the achievement of the milestones by 2024, she explained that all budgets were corporate and held across all directorates and monitored through the MTFS and Capital Programme.

She further highlighted a range of budget allocations that were already in place. She detailed the route map to a Net Zero Bridgend as set out in Appendix C of the report which highlighted the targets that must be achieved on the way to 2030. Each year the action plan will look at these milestones and adjust accordingly.

The Cabinet Member Communities explained that there were lots of work going on behind the scenes and it was unfortunate that the hard work was not always recognised. He added that it was disappointing that as this had been to scrutiny previously, they had not used the opportunity to ask these questions. He added that it would be irresponsible and impossible to form a budget for 2030 and so as an authority it was important to be responsible and form a 12–18 month plan and do this as and when new guidance is provided, costs change as well as the financial situation of Wales changes.

The Cabinet Member Education agreed with these comments and added that he chaired the Scrutiny committee when this was initially looked at but appreciated that there were new Members who wished to look at this, however with regards to costing it was impossible to look past 18 months with any real accuracy.

The Corporate Director Communities stated that it was important to note that schemes were becoming more affordable as time goes on and they become more mainstream, for example, the UK Government had recently stated that they expect the cost of electric vehicles to drop significantly over the next two years and so the more supply and demand there is, the easier it will be to provide longer term costings.

Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations explained that these schemes and technologies involved were often new and very complex and this added to the difficulty in costings. He added that Scrutiny's input was valuable and much needed to ensure as a Council we were making the right decisions. He asked what can be done to prepare for further along the process around the 2026-28.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that the industry was aware that public sector have a net zero carbon target and so it was important for us as a council to look at sustainable procurement in order to facilitate this. The aim was to look at more companies who are local and support the local environment and economy as well as cut down on carbon miles. It was also important to look at the energy we buy and ensure that we buy green and switch sources from to renewable where possible.

The Leader added in respect to the targets and action plan, he noted that if we were not on track to meet targets that it was important we got back on track.

The Chief Executive mentioned one of the points that was raised at the call in meeting around the corporate focus and why this did not sit within the Chief Executives Directorate. He explained that not all corporate issues would sit within this directorate but made clear that the Corporate management Board was responsible for escalating issues.

The Leader asked the Scrutiny Chair if he would be happy, along with the scrutiny committee, to assist in the review of the strategy. The Scrutiny Chair stated that he would be happy with this but would welcome the views of other Scrutiny chairs to discuss which Committee it would be best suited to sit within. He recalled a discussion about this at the call in meeting whereby an Officer believed SOSC 3 to be the suitable committee for this to sit under. The Leader highlighted that in future years, many aspects of carbon reduction savings may be suitable for other Scrutiny committees as the strategy changes and the way Scrutiny wishes to look at it.

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The Deputy Leader stressed that as Members Scrutiny Committees it was important to exercise the powers available to that committee and bring reports to meetings and review any strategies or policies at the earliest opportunities.

The Leader asked the Scrutiny Chair in relation to the strategy itself was the committee happy with it or did they have anything they wished to change. The Scrutiny Chair stated there was nothing specific about the strategy itself. The comments made by the Committee were that Cabinet did not ask enough questions in relation to the wider financial costs. The Leader had stated that the long term costs were unknown and that it would be challenge in terms of funding, but as these costs were unknown and other local authorities were in a similar position, the best way forward was to establish an action plan that dealt with the costs for each ensuing year.

The Deputy Leader added that for each cabinet and scrutiny committee report, there were sections at the end that looked at the wellbeing and future generations, policy, framework and procedural rules and the EIA also. She stressed that as much detail had been provided as could be. Carbon Net zero by 2030 is a mandated requirement by Welsh Government and so Cabinet must look to deliver good service at the best price with the best socioeconomic values for residents of BCBC.

The Scrutiny Chair asked for clarification on a point raised by a Member of the scrutiny committee at the call in meeting. He raised a point that as costings were provided up to 2024, could costings be provided further. The Corporate Director Communities explained that the budgets in relation to the action plan were held within each directorate, for instance there was work being done around ULEV for social care, there were budgets to replace boilers in schools with ground source heat pumps and this sat within the education directorate etc. She believed that it would require a large amount of officer work to collate each individual budget and costing and would not provide any further benefit to Members for reasons previously mentioned.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet agreed to confirm the decision made at its meeting on 13 December 2022 and formally adopt the Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy, with it noted that costings up to the period of 2024 will be outlined in the Action Plan that supports the strategy.

105. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 3:45