

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>17 FEBRUARY 2025</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE AND DECARBONISATION ACTIVITY BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>STUART BALDWIN CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE MANAGER</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<p><b>The purpose of this report is to allow Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 the opportunity to better understand what constitutes Climate Change and raise questions on current activity and the future.</b></p> <p><b>Bridgend County Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2020 and on 30<sup>th</sup> June Cabinet agreed that the Council should establish a Climate Change Response Programme.</b></p> <p><b>The purpose of this report is to highlight that Climate Change is not just about decarbonisation and how we can mitigate and adapt to tackle climate change through many activities.</b></p>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to offer Subject Overview Scrutiny Committee 3 the opportunity to better understand what constitutes Climate Change activity in Bridgend County Borough and offer the opportunity to raise questions on what has already been successfully delivered and activity going forward.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 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.

- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Welsh Government declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019. Following this the Welsh Government 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.
- 2.4 The Welsh Government published its second national climate adaptation plan in 2019, Prosperity for All: A Climate Conscious Wales. That five-year plan demonstrated their commitment to tackling the climate emergency and set out the actions being taken by Welsh Government to prepare for and adapt to the risks and impacts arising from climate change. Welsh Government recognise that both these strategies are steps in the journey towards tackling climate change.
- 2.5 Bridgend CBC declared a climate emergency in June 2020 and established its Climate Change Response Programme. This contained a commitment to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2030 across its operations. This Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy ("Bridgend 2030 Strategy") is the initial strategic step in achieving this commitment.
- 2.6 In October 2024 Welsh Government published its 'Climate Adaptation Strategy for Wales' in which the plan marks an important shift in its approach to tackling the risks of climate change identified by Welsh Government and to supporting a country resilient to the effects of extreme and changing weather patterns. Climate change 'adaptation' is a term used to describe actions taken to address climate risks and increase climate resilience, whereas climate change 'mitigation' refers to actions taken to limit further global warming through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Both are essential elements of a comprehensive response to tackling the climate and nature emergencies.
- 2.7 The council had aligned its Net Zero target with the Welsh Government ambition of achieving a Net Zero public sector by 2030. This will require understanding the priorities, costs, stakeholders and wider impacts of actions associated with council operations, whilst improving understanding of the public sector's role in influencing change in society and the wider economic system. The council's eight Bridgend 2030 commitments are as follows:-

<b>Commitment 1</b>	The council will demonstrate leadership and commitment to deliver the Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy, to address the Climate Emergency as declared by Welsh Government, the Senedd and the council.
<b>Commitment 2</b>	The council will integrate low and zero-carbon behaviours throughout the organisation and carbon impact will become a key consideration in all strategic decisions.
<b>Commitment 3</b>	The council will decarbonise its built estate by 2030 with a strong focus on energy efficiency, low carbon heating and on-site renewable generation.
<b>Commitment 4</b>	The council will undertake a programme of fleet renewal to ultra-low emission vehicles, such that all vehicles are ULEV by 2030.
<b>Commitment 5</b>	The council will promote active and low-carbon travel options throughout its own operations.
<b>Commitment 6</b>	The council will decarbonise its procurement activity by engaging the supply chain, supporting and mandating suppliers to decarbonise, and progressing sustainable, local procurement practices.
<b>Commitment 7</b>	The council will ensure its land holdings are developed and maintained to support Net Zero objectives through high levels of carbon sequestration and biodiversity.
<b>Commitment 8</b>	The council will decarbonise its waste streams by ending landfill use and adopting a reuse culture alongside sustainable methods of disposal.

### 3. Current situation

3.1 On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 Cabinet approved the following as part of their plans for the implementation of a Climate Change Response Programme.

- A cross-party member committee to oversee the Climate Emergency Response Programme
- The creation of a dedicated officer role to lead on:
  - o Co-ordination of all BCBC services.
  - o Collaboration with key public, private and third sector partners.
  - o Engagement with residents.
- The development of a Bridgend County Climate Emergency Citizens' Assembly.
- The development of a Bridgend County Climate Emergency Response Strategy
- The hosting of an annual Bridgend County Sustainability Summit.

3.2 It is important to recognise that the context has changed significantly since the Climate Change Response Programme was created. Many aspects have moved on whilst others have not progressed, specifically:

- Subject Overview Scrutiny Committee 3 has been given the remit for Climate Change and Nature.
- The staff resource has been established and manages the sustainability and nature aspects. In addition, a Decarbonisation Programme Manager has been recruited and oversees the decarbonisation and energy aspects.
- While Bridgend CBC tendered and awarded for the delivery of a Citizen Climate Assembly the payment of residents was considered unpalatable considering the financial context at the time. There is still much work to do on engaging our residents in a more meaningful and longer-term basis. A Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) exists and the development of a

Climate Change Risk Assessment is underway in partnership with the Public Scrutiny Board (PSB), Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr County Borough Councils. The first Sustainability Summit took place with partner agencies in 2022.

3.3 Delivery of Climate Change and Decarbonisation activity is primarily driven by the Climate Change Response Team (climate change adaptation, community energy, domestic energy efficiency, Local Area Energy Planning, biodiversity enhancement, and nature conservation), and the Decarbonisation Programme Team (delivery of the Net Zero 2030 Strategy, energy management). It should be noted that delivery of this work cuts across all areas of BCBC activity and must be factored into decision making in all service areas.

### Decarbonisation

3.4 BCBC uses the Welsh Government Welsh public sector net zero reporting methodology (Public Sector Net Reporting Guide) to calculate emissions arising from its operations and to assess progress against the Net Zero Strategy. Annual emissions have been calculated since the 2019-20 financial year and progress has been made with an overall downward trend since the 2019-20 baseline.

3.5 Greenhouse gas emissions are categorised into three groups or 'Scopes' by the most widely used international accounting tool, the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol.

- Scope 1 covers direct emissions from owned or controlled sources such as gas for heating.
- Scope 2 covers indirect emissions such as from the generation of purchased electricity.
- Scope 3 includes all other indirect emissions that occur from an organisation's activity. This includes purchased goods and services and business travel.

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of BCBC emissions by scope for each year reported.

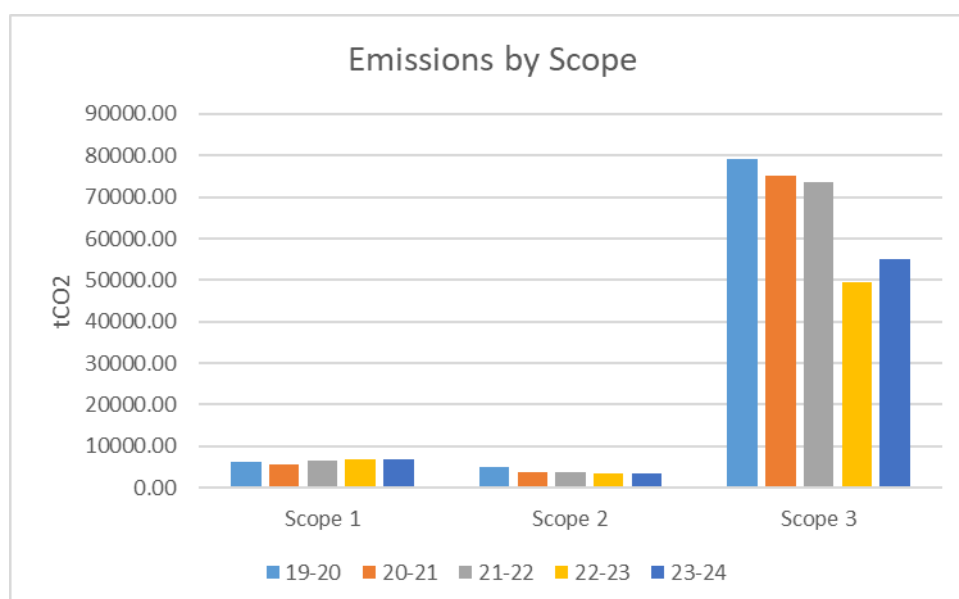


Figure 1 BCBC emissions by scope

3.6 In the latest BCBC emissions report covering 2023-24, procured goods and services (within Scope 3) account for 70% of the total carbon footprint. This is a consistent trend across all local authorities and many other public sector bodies. Actions to reduce this category of emissions are mostly not in the direct control of BCBC and long term so much of Decarbonisation Programme activity has been targeted at reducing scope 1 and 2 emissions where BCBC has a high degree of control and can quickly implement positive changes. This is in line with the pathway described in the 2030 strategy. Figure 3 shows the reported scope 2 and 3 emissions.

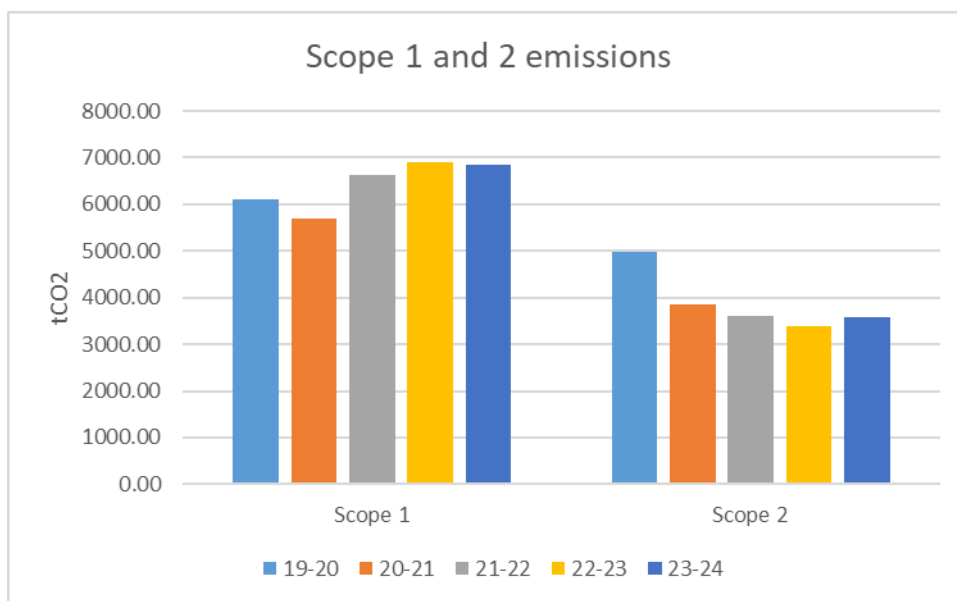


Figure 2 BCBC scope 1 and 2 emissions

- 3.7 Interpretation of scope 2 and 3 emissions is complicated by significant changes in building use between 2020 and 2023 due to the pandemic, and by changing emissions factors used to calculate grid electricity emissions. Since 2021-22 actual consumption of gas (scope 1) has reduced by 12% and electricity (scope 2) by 8% which has saved approximately £660,000 in addition to emission reductions.
- 3.8 Grant funding is an important mechanism to deliver actions that progress the decarbonisation of BCBC operations. Since 2021 BCBC has been awarded grants from Welsh Government and the Shared Prosperity Fund of £1.42m for electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, £1.1m for low carbon heating systems and solar PV, and a £204k interest free loan for LED lighting and solar PV with battery storage.
- 3.9 In addition to the grant funded infrastructure improvements, the Decarbonisation Programme team has initiated a range of 'no regret' actions that have low cost and high impact. Programmes to improve building insulation and replace lighting with LED fittings have been ongoing since 2023. Replacing all lighting with LED and improving lighting controls at the Civic Offices is conservatively estimated to have reduced annual electricity consumption by 23,000kWh. All BCBC sites (schools, offices, depots etc) have been visited so the building management systems can be optimised to minimise energy use.
- 3.10 The Net Zero Strategy is currently being reviewed to ensure it reflects the progress made, and current financial and technological environments.

## Climate Change Risk Assessment

3.11 Dr. Alan Netherwood (Netherwood Sustainable Futures) and Dafydd Thomas (Well-being Planner) were commissioned in March 2024 to undertake a Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) area, by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board (PSB). The area comprises three local authorities, Bridgend County Borough, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough.

The aim of this commission was to:

- explore how combinations of climate risks resulting from increasingly impactful, and frequent severe weather events might affect the landscape, infrastructure, services, assets and diverse communities across CTM
- to understand the cumulative effects of a changing climate on CTM and to begin to understand what issues may arise and where
- to identify priorities for forward planning for climate risk across CTM to inform partners' approaches to climate adaptation

3.12 The aim of this localised approach was to utilise available documentary evidence and data; understand current approaches to forward planning for climate risk and to gain insights of local experts and decision makers to build up a nuanced picture of climate risk across the CTM area. This work was undertaken between March and October 2024.

3.13 This is an independent report from the authors, to the PSB, informed by a wide range of opinion, evidence and data provided by contributors. It is important to note that this commission is for the production of a climate change risk assessment for the use of the PSB and partners to plan forward. The commission is not to produce a climate adaptation plan, but instead, the recommendations in the report can be used to support partners' thinking on future climate adaptation activity.

3.14 The CCRA has been funded through the Bridgend Resilient Communities Fund, via the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, and contributions from PSB partners set aside to support the work.

3.15 The report provides an overview of the work undertaken describing the approach taken, the evidence gathered; how this evidence has been used to engage with key partners throughout the CCRA and detail on 11 (eleven) climate risks which the authors believe the PSB and partners should prioritise for their forward planning.

The priority areas identified are as follows:

- Post-industrial landscape
- Climate resilient communities
- Infrastructural pinch points
- Transport networks (road, rail, bridge)
- Wildfire management
- Asset management
- Social care and health provision

- Maintaining utilities (energy, water, food, ICT)
- Nature conservation management
- Institutional responses to climate risk
- Resource and finance for climate adaptation

- 3.16 The Climate Change Committee's Climate Change Risk Assessment sets out, at the broadest level, the changes in climate that we can expect by mid-century (two decades away) from projections of climate change. This includes warmer and wetter winters; hotter and drier summers; high variability of extreme weather and increased exposure to weather-related hazards: such as flooding, heatwaves, storm damage and wildfire. The aim of the Climate Change Risk Assessment was to explore the potential impact of combined and cumulative risks resulting from these changes in CTMs communities, their implications for public services and other sectors.
- 3.17 The CCRA provides UK and Wales based evidence of 61 risks categories inherited from multiple national governments and are designed for UK and Wales level risk management and provide a good starting point for considering climate risk in Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The report highlights the importance of public services recognising that repeated incidents of severe weather will become more frequent, intense and potentially impactful as the climate changes. Public service planning needs to take account of cumulative effects of these more frequent impacts on the key infrastructure it relies upon, community resilience, strategic planning, business continuity planning, as well as the operational considerations in responding to repeated severe weather incidents. Impacts will be felt differently in different places and may combine and cascade depending on local contexts. This CCRA seeks to develop a picture of potential cumulative impacts of combined risks specific to CTM rather than generic statements about which risks are most important to address.
- 3.18 It recognises the CTM area has suffered from repeated, intense flooding in recent years. The frequency and intensity of this flooding is highly likely to increase given climate projections in coming decades.
- 3.19 The backdrop to the assessment are both short and medium-term resource constraints on public funding. These constraints will profoundly affect the public and other sectors across CTM for the foreseeable future, There is less available resource to meet service demand and less capacity to plan forward for issues such as climate change. There is no additional funding for addressing climate risks.
- 3.20 This CCRA seeks to enable the PSB and partners to better understand the public service, community and institutional implications of climate risk for CTM and its partnerships. This approach should enable the PSB and partners to identify specific adaptation responses to address the risks identified.
- 3.21 The report has been framed as a tool to support the PSB's organisations and partners to engage with internal and external audiences. Bridgend County Borough Council now has to consider how it integrates the findings of the report into our corporate risk register and how in light of the recently published Welsh Government Climate Adaptation Strategy for Wales (October 2024) WG is exploring public bodies' reporting on climate adaptation planning across Wales as part of its powers under the Climate Change Act 2008. This will potentially compel PSB partners to undertake a climate risk assessment for their organisation and to support a strategic

response to this issue through its partnerships. This work on climate risk management should enable the partners to respond to any new reporting duties and to influence the requirements made of them under this duty.

3.22 The followings sections focus on work already underway in response to the Climate Change Risk Assessment where it relates to specific key areas, namely:

- The Natural Environment
- Homes
- Businesses
- Waste
- The future

3.23 To aid in halting and reversing the loss of nature, and along with governments across the world, the Welsh Government has set a goal to protect and effectively manage at least 30% of land and 30% of sea in Wales by 2030. This goal is known as 30 by 30. Welsh Parliament's Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee's report on Halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2030 (January, 2025) looks at how the Welsh Government has responded to the challenge of halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2030, since the UK joined this global commitment in December 2022 (the Global Biodiversity Framework), including progress towards 30 by 30. Given the current state of Wales' nature, meeting this commitment will be a significant challenge and there are currently limited plans or actions proposed to meet this target and limited progress has been made thus far.

3.24 The Halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2023 report also includes a list of 30 recommendations for Welsh Government, largely focusing on nature policy. This is a new report and Welsh Government have not yet responded to the report or the recommendations, so it is not yet clear what this could mean for local authorities going forward. What is clear, however, is that there is a significant challenge ahead and a great deal of work, commitment, and investment required to halt and reverse the loss of nature.

3.25 The Bridgend Local Nature Partnership (LNP) brings together organisations, groups, and individuals to work together to protect and increase biodiversity in Bridgend. The LNP is hosted by BCBC and has a dedicated staff member, funded by Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature grant scheme, to oversee co-ordination of the LNP. In the absence of official direction or action from Welsh Government, the LNP Steering Group (consisting of the LNP coordinator, BCBC Biodiversity Policy Manager, an NRW Officer, the LNP Chair, a representative of the Local Environmental Records Centre, a member of the public, and a member of a Community Council) commissioned a 30 by 30 assessment of Bridgend to better understand what land is likely to currently qualify toward this target, and what land has the potential to subject to effective management, improved condition and a management plan. The report found that only 1.15% of land assessed in Bridgend currently could qualify, with another 25.93% with the potential to qualify if the above conditions are met. Whilst each county is not expected to have 30% of its land contribute to the 30 by 30 target as this is a national target, these figures highlight the work required in Bridgend to improve land, habitats and spaces for nature, to ensure they are in good condition and have strong ecological resilience and connectivity.



- 3.26 The LNP and its Steering Group have also been developing a Bridgend Local Nature Recovery Action Plan (LNRAP), which is intended as a strategic document of local priorities, actions and projects to guide not only the work of the LNP and its partners to protect and enhance nature, but all those who work and live in Bridgend. Whilst this document is important to ensure work addresses local needs and priorities and is conducted through a joined up approach, nature recovery actions often require significant commitment, resource and financial investments, as well as ongoing monitoring and management to ensure they remain effective and valuable to nature. Whilst the actions and projects identified in the Bridgend LNRAP will not be solely the responsibility of BCBC, it is important to note that, as a significant landowner and influential organisation, BCBC can and should play a large role in nature recovery in Bridgend.
- 3.27 Whilst the Senedd, and a number of other local authorities in Wales, declared a Nature Emergency in 2021, BCBC have yet to declare one. BCBC should make it a priority to declare a nature emergency to acknowledge the urgent need to protect the natural environment and act on climate change, particularly as BCBC declared a climate emergency in 2020, and climate and nature are inherently interconnected and interdependent.
- 3.28 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 that seeks to reverse the decline and secure long-term resilience of biodiversity in Wales. Section 6 of the Act places a duty on public authorities to 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity' so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. In so doing, public authorities must also seek to 'promote the resilience of ecosystems'.
- 3.29 Green space management makes a significant contribution to improving an area's ecology. Furthermore, green space management also helps to promote community spirit and sense of place especially if the community is involved such as inputting to the scheme design at the concept stage or actively involved in the planting process. There have been a number of examples of green space enhancement within Bridgend County Borough over the last few years that have been funded through BCBC's Climate Change budget, the most recent of these being the identification of five tree planting schemes at Brynmenyn Primary, School terrace Cornelly, Bryntirion Community Centre, BCBC Civic offices and Aber/Planka Fields. These schemes will involve woodland planting, enhancing and replacing failing urban planting and building on implemented schemes to further enhance ecological potential. They have also been designed with the input of local and relevant schools, community council and dedicated public consultation.
- 3.30 One significant threat to our native biodiversity is invasive non-native species (INNS), These are species that have been introduced to an area where they are not native, which can cause harm to the environment, economy or human health. INNS are considered one of the top five threats to biodiversity worldwide. This is due to their ability to spread quickly and outcompete native plants and animals, reducing the diversity of habitats, and ultimately reducing the resilience of ecosystems, making it difficult for them to adapt and recover in the face of climate change.
- 3.31 Recommendations regarding a BCBC wide approach to INNS management were made to Cabinet on 17 November 2021, and given approval. These recommendations included:

- An INNS survey of all BCBC land
- The development of a BCBC INNS policy
- The establishment of a working group
- A point of contact to review and develop actions plans to control Japanese knotweed infestations on BCBC managed land.

- 3.32 An INNS Officer has been in role since January 2023 to facilitate a cross-council approach to INNS management. A mapping exercise focused on INNS present on BCBC land, specifically Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam, was completed in April 2024. Whilst progress has been made to ensure a cross-council approach to the management of INNS on BCBC assets, INNS remain a significant threat to biodiversity as eradication is challenging with many of these species, and therefore, ongoing control methods are necessary. This means that ongoing commitment and resources are required to ensure these species can be locally managed.
- 3.33 BCBC actively manages five Local Nature Reserves, these being Bedford Park at Cefn Cribwr, Craig y Parcau at Bridgend, Frog Pond Wood at Pyle, Lock's Common at Porthcawl and Tremains Wood at Brackla. Under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 local authorities, in consultation with the Natural Resources Wales, have powers to designate sites in their control as LNRs. In using these powers, the local authority accepts a commitment to manage the land as a nature reserve and to protect it from inappropriate uses or development.
- 3.34 Current approaches to the management of green spaces seeks to mutually promote the multiple benefits that they can provide such as ecology, landscape, well-being along with socio-economic benefits and in doing so promote the concept of Green Infrastructure. The importance of the multiple benefits of green assets has been realised at national policy level such as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- 3.35 To this end both Bedford Park and Tremains Wood have active and constituted volunteers that meet regularly. This not only aids the ecology of these sites, but the volunteers also get a sense of ownership and have the opportunity of up-skilling through training. These volunteers will also help with the management of other LNRs that don't currently have dedicated volunteers. In partnership with the woodland charity Llais y Goedwig, at Bedford Park a tree nursery has been implemented, with the trees being tended by volunteers. These trees in time will be utilised in planting schemes elsewhere in the county borough. Also at Bedford Park, following the discovery of great crested newt within the Bedford Park Ironworks compound, a project in partnership with Amphibian and Reptile Conservation is being implemented to create a wetland complex to improve the habitat at Bedford Park not only for great crested newts, but a range of other flora and fauna.
- 3.36 Trees make a significant contribution to an area providing multiple benefits including the defining of place names e.g. Pencoed. In recognition of the importance of the county borough's urban tree stock, on June 7<sup>th</sup> 2018 Cabinet approved a revised corporate tree policy. This updated a previous policy and included additional information as set out in the 2014 Bridgend i- Tree study. This study quantified that the ecosystem services value (e.g. flood alleviation, removal of air pollution, carbon

sequestration) of Bridgend County Borough's urban tree stock amounted to £686million. The 2018 report also included other information, notably when the Council would and wouldn't intervene when requested to undertake trees works by the public. However, in light of the range of enquiries concerning trees that officers receive, this policy is subject to further review with the addition of further information such as information concerning Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Area and Felling Licences. This revised policy will be presented to Cabinet in due course for further approval.

- 3.37 In 2023 a £6.4m scheme was delivered to defend Porthcawl from flooding and any potential future rise in sea levels. The work was jointly funded by Welsh Government and Bridgend County Borough Council as part of the Coastal Risk Management Programme. The work transformed the promenade area into a flat, easily accessible space with new planters and enhanced flood defences which blend into the overall design and run between Porthcawl Marina and Coney Beach.
- 3.38 The work also focused on the iconic Western Breakwater and extensive refurbishment delivered to ensure that the 200-year-old structure continues to stand up to the tides and tough maritime weather conditions. Around 550 tonnes of grout was used during the upgrade. The second phase of the project extended into Sandy Bay and as far as Rhych Point, where flood defences and dune protection works were also upgraded.

## **Homes**

- 3.39 The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government energy efficiency scheme in Great Britain to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. The scheme began in April 2013, and over time it has been amended and we are now operating under ECO4.
- 3.40 This ECO policy will be entirely formed from one obligation, the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO). Under HHCRO, obligated suppliers must mainly promote measures which improve the ability of low income, fuel poor and vulnerable households to heat their homes. This includes actions that result in heating savings, such as the installation of insulation or the upgrade of an inefficient heating system. The target is divided between suppliers based on each supplier's relative share of the domestic gas and electricity market.
- 3.41 Bridgend County Borough Council signed a Statement of Intent in February 2024 and the impact of this meant that residents in Bridgend County were eligible for the LA Flex aspect of ECO but we know that residents had been securing home ECO funding directly with suppliers without there being any form of monitoring or oversight.
- 3.42 Through working in partnership with E.ON a new Statement of Intent was signed in July 2024 to include the new Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS). The UK government insulation scheme started out as ECO+, with the aim of helping eligible UK homeowners install home insulation to make their homes more energy efficient with energy-saving improvements. At the heart of the scheme are affordability and comfort, so if you make your home more energy efficient, it will keep a consistent temperature, making it more cost-effective and efficient. The scheme was launched in the summer of 2023 and will run until March 2026. GBIS is just about insulation and differs to ECO4 and LA Flex which takes a whole house approach.

3.43 Through our partnership with E.ON we know that 114 properties have benefited from energy efficiency measures and the average SAP ratings overall.

Average starting SAP	49.07
Average SAP change	22.12
Average final SAP	81.89

The table below shows the total measures and spend by each obligation in Bridgend County Borough Council.

Obligation	Total Measures	Spend
ECO4	277	£1.48M
GBIS	32	£97.53K

### **Businesses**

3.44 Challoch Energy, working closely with Nuvision Energy (Wales) Ltd and Bridgend College, was appointed by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) to design a delivery model to provide advice and guidance to small businesses of Bridgend County Borough on how to implement energy savings measures to help them reduce energy costs and deliver carbon savings.

3.45 The project was funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This framework has enabled Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) to further support decarbonisation of the economy through their work with communities and businesses.

3.46 Improving energy efficiency by reducing the amount of energy that businesses use will play a key role in reducing carbon emissions as well as benefit businesses through lower energy bills. There are a wide range of measures that can be implemented ranging from low-cost behavioural actions to high-cost installations, some of which are listed below:

- Behavioural changes
- Changing to energy efficient LED light bulbs
- Double-glazing windows
- Draft-proofing and insulation
- Upgrading heating (heat pumps)
- Installation of solar PV

### **Transport**

3.47 Transport remains the largest domestic sector for emissions in the UK at more than 25%, with Bridgend attributing 51% of its emissions to transport. Transitioning to cleaner road transport is crucial for the UK to meet its net zero emissions target by 2050. The recent surge in both the supply and demand for Electric Vehicles (EVs) has highlighted charging infrastructure as the primary challenge to this goal as highlighted in Bridgend County Borough Council's Draft Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy.

- 3.48 Welsh Government published an Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy in 2022, which sets out an objective that ‘by 2025, all users of electric cars and vans in Wales are confident that they can access electric vehicle charging infrastructure when and where they need it as referenced in Bridgend County Borough Council’s Draft Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy.
- 3.49 The Welsh Government position on EV charging is synonymous with Central Government messaging and policy around the topic, with a targeted transition to EV being central to transport decarbonisation, removing charging infrastructure as a perceived and real barrier to EV adoption.
- 3.50 The development of this draft EV Strategy is to facilitate a scalable shift to Zero Emission Vehicles over the 5 years to 2030, as part of Bridgend’s commitment to addressing the climate emergency. Our draft strategy aligns with the Welsh Government’s Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, which aims to ensure that by 2025, all users of electric cars and vans in Wales can access charging infrastructure when and where they need it.
- 3.51 Bridgend’s draft strategy aims to provide accessible, reliable, and inclusive EV charging infrastructure for all residents, visitors, and businesses. To ensure that everyone will have access to dependable, inclusive and affordable EV charging facilities.
- 3.52 Bridgend have been actively increasing its public EV charging network over recent years, particularly in public community spaces such as leisure facilities, and are committed to developing this network further. The County currently has 12 public chargepoints that have been commissioned by the Council, 52 that have been commissioned by the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR), alongside an additional 44 chargers that are operated independently at locations such as supermarkets.
- 3.53 The main focus for the next five years is delivering a public charging network aimed at residents, with the right types of chargers in the right locations.
- 3.54 The Bridgend Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy is still in draft form and internal officer consultation is currently ongoing. As part of the governance route we are committed to bringing this strategy to Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **3.55 The future**

#### **The Local Development Plan**

- 3.56 The need to tackle the climate emergency and contribute towards meeting national renewable and low carbon energy generation targets was identified as a key issue and driver within the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). The planning system has a key role to play in setting the land use framework for a broader response. This overarching issue was encapsulated within a key Strategic Objective (3j), also informed by the Sustainability Appraisal process:

“Promote developments that are well located and designed to assist in meeting energy demand with renewable and low carbon sources in accordance with the energy hierarchy for planning (set out in Planning Policy Wales, PPW), including delivery of net zero carbon homes in the first

instance, thereby helping to both mitigate the causes of climate change and tackle the 'climate emergency' declared by Welsh Government and the Council".

- 3.57 As recognised in Planning Policy Wales, development proposals should “mitigate the causes of climate change, by minimising carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions associated with the development’s location, design, construction, use and eventual demolition; and include features that provide effective adaptation to, and resilience against, the current and predicted future effects of climate change”. RLDP Policy SP4 therefore specifies criteria that require development to both mitigate and adapt to climate change, thereby minimising its underlying causes and planning for its consequences. A key role of the RLDP is to put in place resource efficient and climate change resilient settlement patterns that minimise land take and urban sprawl. Put simply, this means locating development in settlements which are accessible to a range of services and facilities whereby people can reduce private car usage and thereby reduce the harmful effects of carbon emissions.
- 3.58 Policy SP4 also recognises the risk of flooding as a key effect of climate change. The Policy seeks to steer highly vulnerable development away from undefended flood risk areas, to assess the implications of development in areas at risk of flooding and to ensure that new development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. The Flood Map for Planning accompanying Technical Advice Note 15 includes climate change information to show how this will affect flood risk extents over the next century, along with the potential extent of flooding assuming no defences are in place. The Flood Map for Planning has been supplemented by a Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment for Bridgend County Borough. This information has influenced the siting and type of development allocations within the RLDP, and will also inform policies on flood risk whereby subsequent development proposals can be assessed.
- 3.59 The planning system also plays a key role in delivering clean growth and the decarbonisation of energy, as well as being crucial in building resilience to the impacts of climate change. The transition to a low carbon economy not only brings opportunities for clean growth and quality jobs, but also has wider benefits of enhanced places to live and work, with clean air, clean water and improved health outcomes. In accordance with national planning policy, the Council has an aspiration for all new housing development to be net zero carbon in the first instance, while continuing to promote a range of low and zero carbon technologies as a means to achieve this. This aspiration is encapsulated within the RLDP.
- 3.60 In order to reduce future energy demand, strict policies have been introduced that seek to maximise the energy efficiency of new development, integrate energy generation into wider development proposals, and ensure that low carbon heating systems are installed. The principles of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy are now incorporated into Building Regulations. However, the RLDP also seeks to ensure that new development has regard to broader principles of sustainable design in order to significantly reduce energy usage and carbon emissions. Passive building techniques can help achieve these principles through design that makes best use of insulation, orientation and shading to facilitate solar gain and passive cooling to optimise thermal comfort. SP4 seeks to encourage renewable and low/zero carbon energy generation technology, subject to a range of

material planning considerations. Such policy approaches can also help ensure that new development is designed to be resilient to future climate change effects.

- 3.61 A placemaking approach must also be adopted in the identification, design and delivery of all transport measures in order to maximise the sustainability of developments. The location, scale, density, mix of uses and design of all developments should be carefully considered in a manner that reduces transport demand and enhances the scope for sustainable transport choices. The 'transport network' refers to the links and services that help people move across the County Borough, including the highway, public transport, pedestrian routes, cycle routes, public rights of way and bridle routes.
- 3.62 Policy SP5 emphasises that movement, connectivity and legibility of transport links are critical components in the creation of a successful, sustainable place. An efficient, integrated transport network that prioritises sustainable transport is critical to making a contribution to decarbonisation and supporting economic growth. SP5 requires all development proposals to consider improving and/or expanding corresponding active travel and public transport networks. This will prove fundamental in ensuring the increasing attractiveness of active travel as a credible alternative to the private car, thereby encouraging modal shifts away from unsustainable forms of transportation, helping to promote physical activity and reducing the impact of transport based emissions.
- 3.63 In summary, the RLDP sets out a clear, overarching policy response to the climate emergency within, adopting appropriate mitigation and adaption measures to reduce and respond to the impacts of climate change.

### **The Future – Bridgend County Climate Response Strategy**

- 3.64 The Climate Change Risk Assessment has identified 11 key priority areas that Bridgend CBC should consider adding to its risk register. Following internal discussions Bridgend needs to recognise how these feature in a Climate Change Response Strategy.
- 3.65 Beginning in 2025/26 a specification will be developed to enable officers to tender for the delivery of such a strategy. Early discussions have already taken place with officers supporting the Public Service Board on the possibility of developing an holistic strategy that will focus on an area basis rather than an organisational one.
- 3.66 The aspiration is that, through 2025/26, a strategy will be commissioned and drafted and taken through the appropriate governance routes ready for adoption in 2026/27.

## **4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

## **5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

- 5.1 Long term – Tackling climate Change through mitigation and adaptation is a long term activity and often across several generations to enact the behaviour change required to reduce human impact on biodiversity and reducing greenhouse gases.

Integration – activities identified in this report promotes a shift towards sustainable practices and demonstrates our commitment to innovation and environmental stewardship, inspiring others to adopt similar initiatives. This holistic approach ensures that our project supports multiple well-being goals and aligns with the objectives of other public bodies.

Involvement – Engaging stakeholders with an interest in achieving well-being goals, activities identified in this report promotes action on climate change and renewable energy outreach actively collaborates with local community groups, environmental organisations, and council members. These stakeholders are integral in planning and executing our outreach activities, ensuring that diverse perspectives and needs are considered. The stakeholders reflect the diversity of the area by including representatives from various demographic groups, such as different age groups, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. This inclusive approach ensures that our activities address the unique needs and concerns of all community members, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collective action towards achieving well-being goals.

Collaboration - Internally, we collaborate with various departments within the council to ensure alignment with broader sustainability goals and to secure necessary resources. Externally, we partner with local environmental organisations, community groups, and educational institutions to enhance our outreach efforts and share best practices. These partnerships enable us to pool resources, expertise, and networks, ensuring a comprehensive approach to promoting environmental awareness and sustainable practices. By working together, we can more effectively address the well-being goals of reducing carbon emissions, fostering community engagement, and promoting a culture of sustainability.

Prevention – Activities identified in this report should over the longer term reduce our negative impact on biodiversity and greenhouse gas emissions. This has a direct impact on the wellbeing and future generations so have at least the same quality of life as we do now.

## **6. Climate Change Implications**

- 6.1 The actions and activities within this report and inextricably linking to climate change mitigation and adaptation and decarbonisation of the activities of Bridgend County Borough Council.

## **7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

- 7.1 No safeguarding or Corporate Parent implications associated with this report in line with the risks identified in the Safeguarding Policy.



## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 In June 2020 Cabinet approved the establishment of a Climate Change Response Revenue Budget (£150,000) and it is this budget that will be utilised to deliver the new Climate Change Response Strategy. It is estimated that such a strategy will cost in the region of £60,000.
- 8.2 There is a fixed annual capital allocation of £150,000 to support the Council with match funding for climate response grant bids. The cost of incorporating net zero in major builds, e.g. new schools, is built into each individual scheme's capital budget.

## **9. Recommendation**

- 9.1 It is recommended that Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 consider and provide comment on this report.

## **Background documents**

Bridgend Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy (draft)