



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE

23RD MARCH 2023

CORPORATE DECARBONISATION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE ESTATES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to enable Members to consider, review and approve the adoption of the draft Corporate 'Decarbonisation Strategy' and embedded 'Action Plan', the aim of which is to provide a clear pathway, with defined timescales, to assist the Council in delivering upon its target of achieving Carbon Neutral status by 2030.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note and comment upon the contents of this report and the Council's draft Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan (*in Appendix 1*).
- 2.2 Consider the draft Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan as providing the pathway for the Council to:
- a) Meet its stated carbon reduction targets as published in the Council's Climate Change Strategy 2022-2025
 - b) Contribute in response to the nationally declared climate and nature emergencies.
- 2.3 Agree to maintain and prioritise the Decarbonisation debate, to increase and/or vary the speed and scope of the Council's Decarbonisation work, and to recognise the need for all stakeholders to work together to make a positive difference.
- 2.4 Agree to receive regular updates on progress and to amend the action plan as appropriate to ensure we remain on target to meet our ambitions.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide a clear pathway and defined timescales to enable the Council to become Carbon Neutral by 2030 and to encourage the County Borough to move as close as practicable towards the Carbon Neutral ambition, by the same date.
- 3.2 To contribute towards the Welsh Government's carbon ambitions for a NZ public sector by 2030 and the target of a Net Zero Wales by 2050.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In 2017, the Welsh Government set out its own carbon reduction ambitions for the public sector by 2030 and this is reflected by RCTCBC's own carbon neutral commitments that are reflected in the Council's Climate Change Strategy 2022-2025 (*see 4.5 below*).
- 4.2 The Council has made progress in many aspects of its work, to adapt to and mitigate the effects of Climate Change, including a reduction in the Council's Carbon Footprint of around 1,200tCO₂e in 2021/22 from the equivalent 2019/20 baseline (*the effects the 'Covid-19 Pandemic' mean that the data for 2020/21 has been set aside for the purposes of this report*).
- 4.3 Over the past three years, the Council have calculated and reported its carbon emissions, under the Welsh Government Public Sector Net Zero Reporting Scheme. The annual reporting process has provided insight into the emissions profile of the Council's operations and services. The ongoing reporting process has developed into a sound basis to inform the development of future work to drive the Council's efforts to become a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030.
- 4.4 In March 2019, the Welsh Government published 'Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales' which includes Policy 20: *To support the public sector to baseline, monitor and report progress towards carbon neutrality*. Considering this, in early 2022, the Council engaged with the Carbon Trust to assist in the development of a Corporate Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan which are the subject of this report.
- 4.5 The draft Strategy and Action Plan was developed, with assistance from the Carbon Trust, and is designed to deliver results on commitments made within the Council's Climate Change Strategy 2022-2025 (*also referred to as the 'CCS' or 'Think Climate RCT'*). Whilst the CCS is a County Borough-wide Strategy, the targets and ambitions identified therein are cross referenced within the Action Plan that is included in the Corporate Decarbonisation Strategy, and it is intended that the ambitions of Corporate Decarbonisation Strategy will help underpin and support the wider ambitions of the CCS.

5. THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- 5.1 The Council's Decarbonisation Strategy (*as set out in Appendix 1*) seeks to provide a strategic overview of the key priority areas for action across all Council Service Areas. This plan will guide future policy direction and set out clear measures to aid the Council in delivering upon its targets and ambitions as laid out in the Climate Change Strategy 2022-2025.

The purpose of the Strategy is to set out specific, high reaching actions to:

- Reduce the Council's operational emissions, i.e. emissions generated from buildings, transport and staff vehicle use.
- Reduce the Council's supply chain emissions, i.e. emissions generated from the Council procurement of goods and services.
- Maximise Council land use for its sequestration potential and the self-generation of renewable electricity.

- 5.2 The Strategy is built upon the four priority areas for decarbonisation, namely, Transport, Buildings, Supply Chain & Land Use, as set out in Welsh Government's 'Net Zero Carbon Status by 2030: A Public Sector Route Map'. Informed by this, the Decarbonisation Strategy has presented key headline commitments to drive decarbonisation up to 2030. The commitments are Council specific and are aligned with those set out in the Climate Change Strategy.

- 5.3 The Strategy has been developed collaboratively with support across multiple service areas. A series of workshops were held with Officers from across the Council, focussed around the four stated categories. The workshops provided an opportunity for Service Areas to promote their current and ongoing carbon reduction measures and identify / assess the feasibility of further interventions that could be taken forward in support of decarbonising the Council's services and operations.

- 5.4 It was clear from the workshop feedback that we need to do more, and at pace, to make sure that all our services and all our staff are contributing to reducing carbon emissions across all aspects of the Council's business, so that every aspect of our work contributes to the reductions in the Council's Carbon Footprint.

- 5.5 Utilising 2019/20 as the baseline year, a range of pathway modelling scenarios were predicted, using the Science Based Target initiative methodology (SBTi), and are presented to highlight the Council's expected emissions trajectory, from 2019 through to 2030.

- 5.6 The Strategy looks at a range of emissions pathways, that have been modelled to represent the range of options considered achievable to meet what can be foreseen as 'a scale for Carbon Neutrality'.

- 5.7 In consideration of this initial assessment, we will need to closely monitor our performance, with the Plan being considered for use as a 'live document', which will be updated regularly. This will give the opportunity to assess the scale of action with each review and allow for the action plan to be updated, to take account of improvements in future technologies and enhanced methods of delivery.

- 5.9 The pathway modelling underscores the scale of the challenge ahead. The Actions contained within the Strategy's 'Action Plan' are thus of paramount importance in driving the Council's efforts to meet the 2030 targets. Likewise, the 'Action Plan' covers the overarching strategic aims for each of the four themes. The Plan categorises actions into those that should be achieved in the near-term (*i.e. to the end of calendar year 2025*) and further ambitions that should be achieved over the longer-term (*i.e. out to the target of 2030*). As with the Strategy's development, the Actions contained therein are cross-service related and will require adoption by each Service Area, as required.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 A Socio-Economic Impact Assessment has been completed and the main considerations are listed below.
- 6.2 Under the Equality Duty (set out in the Equality Act 2010), local authorities are required to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6.3 In line with the Equality Act 2010, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is committed to working towards achieving the Well-Being goal of a more equal Wales, as set out by the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (*also refer to item 12*), and ensuring equal access to its services and opportunities, no matter background or circumstance.
- 6.4 The Decarbonisation Strategy will aim to support the alleviation of poverty and deprivation, improve access to employment opportunities, improve access to skills and to develop improved infrastructure and healthier communities. The Council will ensure that decisions taken in support of the Decarbonisation Agenda will advocate for disability and accessibility equality in the roll out of related works, in line with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been completed and the main considerations are listed below.
- 7.2 Public bodies must work to achieve all seven well-being goals put in place by the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (*also refer to item 12*), with achieving a Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language being one of the seven goals. The Welsh Government's ambition is to see the number of people able to enjoy speaking and using the Welsh language to reach a million by the year 2050, for further information see the Cymraeg 2050 Welsh Language Strategy. The Council intends to support this ambition by providing the conditions to facilitate an increase in the use of the Welsh Language.

- 7.3 Under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, RCTCBC has a duty to comply with specific standards in respect of the delivery of Welsh language services. To ensure that we meet the requirements of the Measure, we have undertaken a Welsh Language Impact Assessment to assess the likely effects of the Decarbonisation Strategy on the Welsh language, both within our workforce and in the community, so that we can mitigate any negative impacts and enhance the positive impacts.
- 7.4 The Council will ensure that decisions taken in support of decarbonisation will support the aims and ambitions of the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy.
- 7.5 Due to the high level and diverse nature of the Decarbonisation Strategy & Action Plan, assessing the detail of the likely effects of the strategy for staff and potentially residents on Welsh Language will be further addressed in implementations that are undertaken to deliver the actions required to meet the Council's decarbonisation ambitions.

8. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The intent of this report is in furthering the ambitions for the Council's Climate Change Agenda, and if the potential as described herein and contained in the Appendix is realised, the outcomes could deliver a significant contribution towards tackling climate change.

9. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 9.1 Workshops have been held with key officers across the Council to help develop and inform the draft Strategy and Action Plan. The draft Strategy and Action Plan was also presented to the Senior Leadership Team on 11th January 2023 for their comments and endorsement.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 10.1 The costs for engaging The Carbon Trust to help develop the Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan have been met from within existing budgets.
- 10.2 It is recommended, that moving forward, an agreed programme of work to deliver the Council's Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan should be incorporated into Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements to ensure resource requirements are reviewed, challenged, and projected for.

