

Meeting of:	<b>Cabinet</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Monday, 23 March 2020</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Corporate Performance and Resources
Report Title:	Responding to the Climate Emergency
Purpose of Report:	To update Cabinet on the work being undertaken in response to the climate emergency which was declared by the Council in July 2019
Report Owner:	Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources
Responsible Officer:	Rob Thomas, Managing Director
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Due to the corporate nature of this report, no specific Ward Member consultation has been undertaken
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for decision by Cabinet
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This report provides an update on the work being undertaken in response to the climate emergency declared by Council in July 2019.</li> <li>• The report details the activities being undertaken and work planned to ensure that the Council has a well-informed and considered response involving partners, the public, staff and members.</li> <li>• The report details how work will be co-ordinated and how we will work with the Public Services Board and engage with the local community and other stakeholders.</li> <li>• The report also highlights the extensive work already being undertaken and the proposals included in the draft Annual Delivery Plan for 2020-21.</li> </ul>	

## Recommendations

1. That Cabinet note the progress made since the climate emergency was declared in July 2019.
2. That Cabinet endorse the proposed way forward in developing a Public Services Board Climate Emergency Charter involving a range of partners which will be supported by individual action plans for organisations.
3. That Cabinet endorse the proposals for a Community Conversation on climate change to be led by the Public Services Board which will shape the Charter and inform our actions.
4. That Cabinet approve the timetable for taking forward the PSB Charter and the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.
5. That Cabinet refer this report to the [members of](#) Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee and the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee [by email to request their](#) ~~for their~~ views on how this work is being progressed ~~and~~ [with any comments being considered by the Managing Director for final approval of the report under the use of the Managing Directors Emergency Powers; and for this report to be](#) distributed to all members and Town and Community Councils and across the Third Sector [for information](#).
- 5.6. [That the use of article 14.14.2 \(ii\) of the Council's Constitution \(urgent decision procedure\) be authorised in respect of the above recommendation\(s\) in order that the matter can be addressed in the current circumstances.](#)

## Reasons for Recommendations

1. To update Cabinet on work already undertaken in response to the climate emergency.
2. To enable Cabinet to consider the development of a Public Services Board Climate Emergency Charter.
3. To seek approval for Cabinet to undertake a Community Conversation on Climate Change.
4. To seek approval for the timetable for the PSB Climate Emergency Charter and the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.
5. To advise Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee [members](#) of the work being undertaken and to seek their input into this important area of work and to make members, Town and Community Councils and the Third Sector aware of this work [and enable decisions to be taken in line with the Council's constitution at the current time-](#)
- 5.6. [-To enable decisions to be taken during the Coronavirus pandemic.](#)

## **1. Background**

**1.1** At the Council meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2019 Council resolved (minute 209):

- (1) T H A T the Vale of Glamorgan Council join with Welsh Government and other Councils across the UK in declaring a global 'climate emergency' in response to the findings of the IPCC report.
- (2) T H A T the Vale of Glamorgan Council reduce its own carbon emissions to net zero before the Welsh Government target of 2030 and support the implementation of the Welsh Government's new Low Carbon Delivery Plan, to help achieve the Welsh Government's ambition for the public sector in Wales to be carbon neutral.
- (3) T H A T the Vale of Glamorgan Council make representations to the Welsh and UK Governments, as appropriate, to provide the necessary powers, resources and technical support to Local Authorities in Wales to help them successfully meet the 2030 target.
- (4) T H A T the Vale of Glamorgan Council continue to work with partners across the region to develop and implement best practice methods that can deliver carbon reductions and help limit global warming.
- (5) T H A T the Vale of Glamorgan Council work with local stakeholders including Councillors, residents, young people, businesses, and other relevant parties to develop a strategy in line with a target of net zero emissions by 2030 and explore ways to maximise local benefits of these actions in other sectors such as employment, health, agriculture, transport and the economy.

**1.2** This report provides an update to Cabinet on the various strands of activity to date and how it is proposed that future work is undertaken to provide a co-ordinated and meaningful response to the emergency.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

**2.1** The Council is already undertaking a considerable amount of work to protect and enhance our environment, and this has been accelerated in response to the declared emergency.

### **How we are already making a difference**

**2.2** Significant progress has been made in a number of areas of work in recent years as part of the Council's commitment to protect and enhance the environment. Examples of the work being undertaken by the Council includes:

- The Council purchases 100% renewable electricity from the grid.
- Photovoltaic panels have been installed at 13 sites.
- A ground source heat pump has been installed at Cadoxton House and a biomass boiler at the Docks Office.

- Over 100 energy projects have been funded through Salix including upgrading or installing LED lighting at a number of sites and replacing less efficient boilers.
- 67% of our street lighting stock has been converted to LED to date.
- In 2019/20 216m2 of parks, open spaces and highways land was sown with wildflowers or was maintained as a naturalised area.
- The Greenlinks service continues to provide an invaluable community transport service.
- The Council has signed the PSB Healthy Staff Travel Charter.
- An electric bike trial is being launched in Penarth.
- The amount of office space occupied by the Council has been reduced.
- More people are able to work remotely or from home reducing the need to travel e.g. through the roll out of Office 365.
- Implemented schemes to reduce flood risks.
- New social housing units adopt a fabric first approach ensuring homes are highly insulated and thermally efficient.
- Rolling out new recycling arrangements and reducing the use of plastic bags for dry recycling.
- Shared Regulatory Services have introduced hybrid pool cars.
- Supplementary Planning Guidance helps to promote sustainable development with specific guidance seeking enhancements on Biodiversity, Trees and Development, Travel Plans and Renewable Energy.
- Using Section 106 contributions to enhance public open space with wild-flower, bulb and tree planting.
- In the last 6 years we have secured £5.7 million in section 106 contributions to provide or improve sustainable transport facilities and to encourage active travel throughout the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Ensuring new 'highly vulnerable' developments are not within areas at risk of flooding and do not cause or increase the risk of flooding in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 38% of new housing development identified in Local Development Plan uses previously developed land.
- Reducing the amount of printing we do and paper we use through 'paperless office' initiatives.

### **How we are developing our response to the emergency**

- 2.3** Upon declaring the climate emergency, the Council has instigated a wide-ranging response. Work has been undertaken to map what is already in place and what work is planned. This information has helped to inform discussions within the

Council's Insight Board and Corporate Management Team and the Public Services Board.

- 2.4 Discussions within the Insight Board have helped to identify opportunities for more innovative approaches. The range of ideas included changes in how staff travel, work with partners, business and community groups, reducing waste and how we can influence changes in the behaviour of staff and the wider community. Details of this work are attached in Appendix A.
- 2.5 At the recent Insight Lab session on climate change (which all staff were invited to attend) a range of ideas were generated around what more the Council can do regarding energy use, awareness raising, transport, managing land and buildings and procurement.
- 2.6 The above discussions demonstrate that across the Council there is a wealth of knowledge and ideas and a genuine desire from many to embrace change. Suggested changes range from how we provide services, staff behaviour and more fundamental policy changes. It will be necessary to have a combination of all of these in order to respond to the emergency.
- 2.7 Although there is a need to act now and there is potential to introduce some immediate changes, it is also recognised that this will be an ongoing area of work for many years to come. There is a strong community leadership role for the Council with the need for a clear message to staff about what they can do and the means to support, encourage and facilitate the changes needed.

#### **How we have set out our strategic direction**

- 2.8 Work around climate change features heavily within the Council's new Corporate Plan and cuts across all four of the Council's new Well-being Objectives.
  - To work with and for our communities
  - To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth
  - To support people at home and in their community
  - To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment
- 2.9 Key commitments include:
  - Work to reduce the organisation's carbon emissions to net zero before 2030 and encourage others to follow our lead as part of minimising the negative impact of our activities on the environment.
  - Work with the community, developers and others to ensure that new developments are sustainable and that developers mitigate their impacts, integrate with local communities and provide necessary infrastructure.
  - Provide effective waste management services and work with our residents, partners and business to minimise waste and its impact on the environment
  - Provide more opportunities for everyday cycling and walking and work with our partners to develop a range of travel options to encourage people out of their cars.

- 2.10** The draft Annual Delivery Plan 2020-21 (which supports the Corporate Plan) also includes a wide range of activities which will progress work in response to the climate emergency and builds on work already being taken forward by the Council. These actions include work to mitigate the effects of climate change and adapt to its impacts
- Promote the Public Services Board Staff Healthy Travel Charter and encourage staff to use their cars less and to be more active.
  - Work in collaboration to increase safe walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure both within and to connect new developments to existing active travel integrated networks and proactively promote these.
  - Work with our Public Services Board partners to develop a strategic response to the Climate Change Emergency.
  - Develop and implement a strategic action plan for the Council in response to the Climate Emergency.
  - Develop a more environmentally sustainable fleet including the use of electric and hybrid vehicles.
  - Develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy to map the Council's assets and identify opportunities to mitigate the impact of our activities on climate change.
  - Develop a Tree Strategy to maintain and increase the number of trees in the Vale.
  - Invest in education, sustainable transport and community facilities as a result of negotiating Section 106 payments from developers.
  - Implement the Shoreline Management Plan including coastal monitoring and working collaboratively as part of the regional coastal groups.
  - Revise the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in response to the updating of the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy.
- 2.11** The Council has established an internal Climate Change Working Group to help shape the development of the Council's action plan. This group will be instrumental in exploring innovative opportunities for change and for championing this work. They will also be key to managing the corporate risk on climate change which will be monitored through the Insight Board, Audit Committee and Cabinet.

#### **How public services are working together**

- 2.12** In conjunction with the work being undertaken within the Council the Public Services Board (PSB) has also agreed to focus on tackling climate change as one of its priority workstreams. The PSB brings together public services across the Vale together with representatives of the third sector and Town and Community Councils and seeks to improve local well-being and address the issues that matter most to residents.

- 2.13** This work will concentrate efforts around a range of activities within the PSB Well-being Plan e.g. around procurement, asset management and active travel and work will be undertaken in parallel with the other priority workstreams around improving engagement, timebanking and the Move More Eat Well Plan.
- 2.14** The PSB has actively sought input and challenge in developing its response to the climate change emergency. In December it brought together young people from the Vale Youth Forum, Cardiff and Vale College, a local school and the Cardiff and Vale UHB Youth Board to discuss what changes are needed. The meeting was dedicated to discussing climate change and information was shared about what partners are already doing (this is attached as Appendix B) and attendees were asked to focus on what more needs to be done and priorities for action. At the end of the meeting three priorities were identified. These were:
- To work in partnership to promote more sustainable and ethical consumer choices
  - To work in partnership to reduce plastic use and move towards more sustainable food options in schools
  - To work in partnership to encourage public transport use and to make it easier for people to use recognising the particular concerns of young people
- 2.15** A copy of the notes of the PSB meeting in December are available via the following link <https://sway.office.com/uyVUmVouEbvEKVbA?ref=Link>

## **A Charter for Change**

- 2.16** The PSB met again in February 2020 and discussed the outcome of the meeting in December 2019 and the best way to work together around climate change. Partners have agreed to develop a Climate Emergency Charter setting out key principles that all partners can commit to.
- 2.17** Engagement and consultation will be undertaken before the Charter is agreed and this will also inform the various activities that partner organisations will take collectively and within their own organisations.
- 2.18** The Charter will set out an ambitious set of commitments which together will form a comprehensive response to the climate change emergency. These commitments will provide a framework for the work partners will undertake in a number of areas.
- 2.19** The Charter will detail the positive actions we can take. For example, planting more trees, increasing the number of electric/hybrid vehicles in our fleet. It will emphasise the need to reduce our waste, use of single use plastics and the amount of energy we use. It will highlight the need for partners to work together and provide leadership in terms of raising awareness about climate change,

procurement policies and valuing the environment. It will be a Charter for change, for organisations, staff and residents.

## **A Community Conversation**

- 2.20** It is intended that consultation will be undertaken through a community conversation on climate change, this will involve all partners and be undertaken ~~from April to June~~ as soon as it is practical given the circumstances surrounding Coronavirus.
- 2.21** There is a need to involve and engage with partners outside the PSB, for example the business community and Town and Community Councils and to discuss with residents how our organisations can change and how service users and the wider community must also change and why. These conversations will be wide ranging and cover issues around planning, housing, energy use and transport but are essential to demonstrate our commitment to change and our willingness to listen to what local residents and other stakeholders say matters most to them. The community conversation will also provide an opportunity to raise awareness about the issues, the need to change now and to consider how our decisions and actions will affect future generations.
- 2.22** It is intended that all partners will be involved in the community conversation, speaking to their stakeholder groups, meeting with people of all ages and different organisations and taking the conversation out to people across the Vale.
- 2.23** The work planned ~~for April and June~~ will be the start of an ongoing dialogue to discuss the issues, share ideas and demonstrate progress. It is only by involving people at the start of this work that we will be able to build momentum and confidence in the changes we need to introduce.

## **Agreeing the Charter and the Council's Action Plan**

- 2.24** Following the community conversation, the Charter will be finalised and agreed ~~in the Summer to be and~~ launched in September 2020. Partner organisations will need to revise or develop action plans to support the commitments in the Charter and the scope of these will vary from organisation to organisation.
- 2.25** The Council will need to develop a comprehensive action plan that reflects the range of services it provides and the opportunities for change. The Council's action plan will need to consider how it operates as an organisation for example staff travel, paper use and water consumption as well as actions relating to our role as a landlord and management of parks.
- 2.26** The work already undertaken through the Insight Board, staff engagement, climate change working group and discussions as part of the development of the new Corporate Plan and Annual Delivery Plan will all be brought together to shape the Council's action plan. The plan will build on the work already being taken forward but will also need to challenge the organisation as a service provider, employer and community leader. Work will continue on these activities as the Charter is developed.



- 2.27** As the Charter and action plan are developed, work will continue to progress and monitor actions within the Annual Delivery Plan 2020-21 as detailed earlier in this report.

### **Maintaining Momentum**

- 2.28** It is important that the conversations on climate change are ongoing and that partners continue to review and revise their action plans in light of feedback and challenge from the community and other stakeholders and in response to new technology and best practice. Partners are keen to learn from each other and recognise that there are common and unique challenges across our organisations but that it is important that we are all changing how we work in response to the climate emergency. Partners are also keen that strong links are established with young people through schools and youth groups to ensure that they inform this work.
- 2.29** Cabinet are asked to note the work already underway, the commitment across the PSB and the Council to respond to the climate emergency and the need for extensive engagement in order to bring about the necessary changes within our organisations, businesses and communities across the Vale.

## **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

- 3.1** The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about sustainable development. The Act sets out a 'sustainable development principle' which specifies that the public bodies listed in the Act must act in a manner which seeks to ensure the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In meeting their sustainability duty, each body must set objectives that highlight the work the body will undertake to contribute to meeting the seven Well-being Goals for Wales.
- 3.2** The activities set out in this report will contribute to the national well-being goals and help ensure we have a resilient Wales. The five ways of working will be embedded throughout this work as we will be working collaboratively through the PSB and with other partners. It is recognised that this is a long-term project, but that action needs to be taken now and that prevention will be critical element to this work. Involvement of the community in order for them to shape our activities and to understand the need for change will be fundamental to us making a difference through our activities and we will be integrating work on this agenda across the Council ensuring this is seen as the responsibility of all Directorates and staff.

## **4. Resources and Legal Considerations**

### **Financial**

- 4.1** The actions detailed within this report will be met from within existing budgets. The Council has established a reserve for tackling climate change and improving

our green infrastructure. The 2020/21 budget makes provision of £4.9 million for activities specifically dedicated to the response to the climate emergency.

- 4.2** Consideration will be given to resourcing the delivery of actions associated with the Council's action plan and further reports will be presented to cabinet in due course.

#### **Employment**

- 4.3** There are no specific employment implications arising as a direct result of this report.

#### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

- 4.4** There are no direct legal implications arising from the activities detailed within this report, but activities undertaken in response to the climate change emergency will be consistent with duties under the Environment Act and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- 4.5** An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of work to develop the Council's action plan to tackle climate change.

### **5. Background Papers**

The Vale of Glamorgan Council Minutes 29<sup>th</sup> July 2019

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/\\_Committee%20Reports/Council/2019/19-07-29/Minutes.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Council/2019/19-07-29/Minutes.pdf)