

Meeting of:	<b>Cabinet</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Monday, 02 November 2020</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Corporate Performance and Resources
Report Title:	Developing a Climate Change Action Plan
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 to develop a Climate Change Action Plan as part of the response to the climate emergency declared by Council in July 2019.</li> <li>• The report details the activities undertaken to date 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 the Climate Change Action Plan will be developed, including arrangements for engagement and consultation.</li> </ul>	

## **Recommendations**

1. That Cabinet notes the progress made since the climate emergency was declared in July 2019 and the progress report in March 2020.
2. That Cabinet endorses the proposed way forward for developing the Council's Climate Change Action Plan to be published in April 2021 in tandem with the Annual Delivery Plan.
3. That Cabinet notes the Public Services Board's commitment to work together to tackle climate change and to agree a Climate Emergency Charter which will be supported by individual action plans for organisations.
4. That Cabinet endorses the proposals for engagement and consultation on climate change as described in the body of this report.
5. That Cabinet refers this report to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee and the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee for their views on how this work is being progressed and distribute to all members and Town and Community Councils and the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee for their information.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

1. To update Cabinet on work being undertaken to tackle climate change.
2. To seek approval from Cabinet for the proposed way forward for the development of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.
3. To update Cabinet on the commitment from the Public Services Board to continue to work in partnership to tackle climate change.
4. To update Cabinet on the proposals for the engagement and consultation which will form a Community Conversation on Climate Change.
5. To advise Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee of the work being undertaken and to seek their input into this important area of work and make members and Town and Community Councils and the voluntary sector aware of this work.

## **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** At the Cabinet meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, Cabinet considered a [report](#) on the work of the Council and the Public Services Board with regards to climate change.

**1.3** This report provides an update to Cabinet on the various strands of activity that have been undertaken since the start of the covid-19 pandemic, subsequent lockdown and resulting changes in the work of the Council and partners and seeks endorsement to undertake a range of engagement and consultation to produce an action plan for publication in 2021.

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

**2.1** In March 2020 Cabinet were advised of the work that was planned with the development of the Council's climate change action plan, a Public Services Board (PSB) Climate Emergency Charter and a conversation on climate change. This work had been developed in response to the climate change emergency but due to Covid-19 it has not been possible to progress this work as originally envisaged.

**2.2** This report details the proposals for the development of an action plan for the Council to tackle climate change. It also highlights how the Council's recently approved recovery priorities will support work to tackle climate change and how the PSB is also taking forward work in this area.

**2.3** Some of the changes to how we work that have been made as a result of Covid-19 have been in line with steps needed to tackle climate change e.g. an increase in working from home, greater use of technology to support online meetings and less travel connected with work. In developing our action plan, we will build on these changes, take the opportunity to reflect on what we have learnt and how

this can inform our response to the climate emergency and the way we work and live in the future.

## **Our commitment**

- 2.4** Since the climate emergency was declared in July 2019 and also since the changes that have been brought in as a result of Covid-19, the Council has continued to progress work to tackle climate change. This reflects priorities in the Corporate Plan 2020-25 and the Annual Delivery Plan 2020-21.
- 2.5** The Corporate Plan 2020-25 includes the commitment to ‘Work to reduce the organisations 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’.
- 2.6** Progress has been made against a range of actions as detailed in the Annual Delivery Plan. These activities build on work already being taken forward by the Council to mitigate the effects of climate change and adapt to its impacts. This includes:
- Improvements to street lighting
  - Work undertaken as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme
  - Promotion of Active Travel
  - The roll out of recycling arrangements
  - Improvements to the housing stock
  - Tree and wildflower planting to improve our green infrastructure
  - Supplementary Planning Policies

## **Green Recovery**

- 2.7** The Council’s Coronavirus Recovery Strategy was agreed on the 21st September 2020 and details the Council’s priorities for recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a strong emphasis on a green recovery as advocated by Welsh Government, the Future Generations Commissioner and Natural Resources Wales. The Council’s Well-being Objectives provide a framework for recovery work which is taking place in tandem with the ongoing response to coronavirus.
- 2.8** The Climate Change Action Plan will reflect work being undertaken as part of the Council’s Recovery Strategy.
- 2.9** Recovery priorities of particular relevance include.
- Take action to promote a ‘green’ recovery and re-focus the capital programme to support economic growth.
  - Re-establish work in response to the Council’s declaration of a climate emergency, including the delivery of a green infrastructure strategy.

- Progress the active travel agenda to encourage and support sustainable changes to people's travel patterns.
- Work with our communities to re-energise and refocus our commitment to reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Provide well-being and other forms of support for our colleagues to assist them at work and at home as we recover from Covid-19 and work in different ways.
- Redefine the Council's approach to digital service delivery.
- Involve, engage and consult our residents and other stakeholders in redesigning services.

### **Working in Partnership**

- 2.10** At the PSB meeting in July, partners shared their experience of responding to the pandemic. Partners discussed what had changed for them and the challenges and opportunities this has presented. As part of these discussions there was a recognition that as we recover from this pandemic that it needs to be a green recovery. Significant changes made included agile and remote working and greater flexibility supported by IT as well as more online services e.g. teaching and clinical services.
- 2.11** The challenges and opportunities identified included the following, which all support work on climate change.
- Opportunities to embed and build on changes e.g. more online services/delivery of courses/meetings, more remote working.
  - Determining if buildings/vehicles are fit for the future requirements of services.
  - Sustaining work around climate change and ensuring a green recovery, valuing the environment.
  - Learning from this experience and retaining close partnership working as the issues and challenges shift.
  - Reviewing the purpose of the PSB, refocusing and ensuring we make a difference.
- 2.12** The PSB has agreed to continue to undertake work to tackle climate change as one of its priority workstreams. This will incorporate work being undertaken as part of the PSB's Staff Healthy Travel Charter, the delivery of the Move More, Eat Well Plan, Foodvale and a focus on engagement including work with Town and Community Councils and children and young people. The PSB will take an integrated approach to this work recognising the connecting threads that run through these workstreams.

- 2.13** Work will continue to develop the PSB Tackling Climate Change Charter which will set out a clear commitment from partners to work together and with the community to ‘reduce our emissions to mitigate the effects of climate change whilst adapting to its impacts and to become a carbon neutral public sector by 2030’.
- 2.14** 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. Partners will then develop strategies and action plans to support this work e.g. the Council’s Climate Change Action Plan.
- 2.15** The Charter will detail the positive actions we can take. For example, planting more trees and increasing the number of electric/hybrid vehicles in our fleet. It will emphasise the need to reduce our waste, the 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.
- 2.16** This work will also align to the work of the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) which is moving towards having a stronger focus on people and places rather than organisations and services. The three themes for the RPB are starting well, living well and ageing well and work on climate change is relevant to all three themes.

### **The Future Generations Report 2020**

- 2.17** The [Future Generations Report](#) was published in May 2020 and is a statutory report by the Future Generations Commissioner on the first five years of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The report contains a comprehensive range of advice, tools and recommendations for Welsh Government and public bodies and as well as setting out recommendations against each of the national well-being goals.
- 2.18** The report also details a number of recommendations for some priority areas which are of particular relevance for work to tackle climate change. These include decarbonisation, procurement, housing, transport, land use planning and place making. The report is a useful tool to help shape work to tackle climate change and to understand the impact of our activities on the environment and our legacy for future generations.

## Development of the Climate Change Action Plan

- 2.19** Work has continued to tackle climate change as detailed earlier in the report and work has continued to develop an action plan. Work has been undertaken to bring together the discussions that have taken place since the emergency was declared and to recognise that there is already a great deal of activity taking place or planned. This will enable us to understand where we are now, why we need to act and to consider the opportunities and possibilities for change.
- 2.20** A number of activities have been undertaken to bring this work together, including discussions of the Council’s Insight Board, by engaging with a range of staff through the “Insight Lab” session held earlier in the year and with the PSB. These have helped to identify opportunities for more innovative approaches to tackling climate change. The range of ideas included changes in how staff travel, work with partners, business and community groups, procurement, reducing waste and how we can influence changes in the behaviour of staff and the wider community. There is a wealth of knowledge across the Council and a genuine desire from many to embrace change.
- 2.21** A set of live discussion papers have been produced to assist with the process of developing the action plan and to highlight the work already being undertaken and these will be regularly updated. The discussion papers detail our ambition (e.g. commitments in the Corporate Plan and Annual Delivery Plan), key recommendations from the Future Generations Report published by the Future Generations Commissioner in May of this year and evidence to explain why we need to act, work already being undertaken and the ideas that have been generated to date through various discussions and engagement. All of these will shape our future plans and will form the basis of internal and external engagement on what we need to do in response to the emergency.
- 2.22** There are seven discussion papers which will kick start the next phase in the development of the action plan
- Reducing and rethinking our energy needs
  - Making better use of technology
  - Using procurement and contract management to reduce the negative impact of our activities on the environment
  - Leadership
  - Rethinking how we travel
  - Reducing waste and promoting recycling
  - Managing our land and buildings to the benefit of the environment
- 2.23** These have been brought together in the live discussion paper which can be accessed from the following link:  
<https://sway.office.com/UKGXxGlriNFAMtP0?ref=Link>

- 2.24** The discussion reports include all the ideas generated to date which range from small energy saving ideas to strategic changes, for example in how we manage our land and buildings. They can be read as a set or people can focus in on the areas that most interest/concern them. These papers are **not** a draft action plan but are designed to facilitate further conversation on climate change.
- 2.25** The action plan will be developed and implemented in line with our duties under the Well-being of Future Generations Act and will reflect the five ways of working:
- Collaboration – working with the community, business, partners
  - Integration – e.g. making the connections between the environment and health between waste and procurement, seeing the whole picture
  - Involvement – getting everyone involved in making the changes and shaping the future
  - Prevention – taking action now to protect the future well-being of current and future generations
  - Long-term – thinking beyond the immediate, understanding and planning for a better future
- 2.26** The Climate Change Action Plan will set out the work that will be undertaken to deliver on our commitments in the Corporate Plan and for our carbon emissions to be net zero by 2030. The discussion papers provide the framework for discussion internally with key officers, with staff across the Council through learning cafes, with the public and with our partners. We need to ensure that we are accurately reflecting the significant work already underway, that we understand the evidence about why we need to act and what the outcomes will be. We also need to ensure we have the right mix of simple changes and ambition.
- 2.27** There is a strong community leadership role for the Council with the need for a clear message to staff and the community about what they can do and the means to support, encourage and facilitate the changes needed.

### **Consultation and Engagement – The community conversation on climate change**

- 2.28** To ensure the Council has a robust action plan for tackling climate change it is important that the community and other stakeholders are involved in shaping the plan and its implementation. Due to the restrictions in place around social distancing and the significant changes in how we work there is a need to rethink our approach to consultation and engagement and the community conversation on climate change.
- 2.29** It is proposed that despite the uncertainty over the coming months that work continues to engage and consult on the subject of climate change. The main components of this will be as follows but this will need to be flexible. A key message we want to give staff and other stakeholders is that no idea is ‘too



small' and no suggestion is too ambitious for consideration.

- 2.30** As part of the conversation we will also capture information and views gained through more specific projects, for example future consultation on the development of the Green Infrastructure Plan.
- 2.31** The component parts of the community conversation are still being developed and it is intended that this is an organic process that evolves over the coming months in response to the feedback we receive and the ways in which we can work.
- 2.32** Key elements will include, Learning Cafes for staff in November on each of the themes in the discussion reports and an Insight Board meeting on climate change in November. The week commencing the 2nd November is Wales Climate Week and a series of daily discussion points/questions will be raised via social media throughout the week.
- 2.33** In December the consultation on the draft Annual Delivery Plan and budget proposals will also help to inform work on climate change and in January there will be a consultation on the draft climate change action plan including discussions with the 50+ Forum and Youth Forum.
- 2.34** Work is currently underway to develop a more integrated approach to our consultation and engagement activities which will support a more joined up approach across the organisation and enable the sharing of intelligence across departments. As part of this work we will hold an online discussion with representatives from PSB partners to discuss the issues in the Vale and the actions needed. This will help inform the Council's action plan and the PSB Charter.
- 2.35** The Council's Communications team will develop a programme of activity over the next 12 months to enable the public and community groups to continue to inform the work on climate change and shape our response. The conversation will be wide ranging and cover issues around planning, housing, energy use and transport. 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.
- 2.36** It is important that the Council's response to the emergency continues to evolve, responding to the latest evidence and best practice and that we continue to listen, learn and act.

## Outline Timetable

November	Wales Climate Week – public engagement and awareness Learning cafes – staff engagement (virtual) Insight Board
December	Draft Climate Change Action Plan Consultation on budget proposals and Annual Delivery Plan PSB climate change discussion
January	Consultation on the draft Climate Change Action Plan
February	Consultation on the draft Climate Change Action Plan Scrutiny
March	Cabinet approve Climate Change Action Plan Cabinet Consider Annual Delivery Plan
April	Annual Delivery Plan approved by Council Annual delivery Plan and Climate Change Action Plan published
May – December 2021	Community Conversation on Climate change continues

- 2.37** 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** There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. However, the actions detailed within this report will need to be resourced and consideration of funding will be given when developing and implementing the action plan. The Council has made budget provision of £4.9 million for activities specifically dedicated to the response to the climate emergency in the 2020/21 budget.

### **Employment**

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

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

- 4.3** 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.
- 4.4** 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)

The Vale of Glamorgan Cabinet Minutes 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/\\_Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2020/20-03-23/Minutes.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2020/20-03-23/Minutes.pdf)

The Future Generations Report 2020 - May 2020

[https://www.futuregenerations.wales/resources\\_posts/the-future-generations-report-2020/](https://www.futuregenerations.wales/resources_posts/the-future-generations-report-2020/)