

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 20<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2021

REFERENCE FROM ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE: 16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2021

“551 PROJECT ZERO – DELIVERING THE CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE  
PLAN (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2021 was presented by the Head of Policy and Business Transformation:

- This was an update on the progress being made to develop the Council’s approach to delivering the Project Zero, Climate Change Challenge Plan, including governance and delivery;
- By the way of background, the Council had declared a ‘climate emergency’ in July 2019; followed by a ‘nature emergency’ declared in July 2021;
- The Climate Change Challenge Plan had also been approved by the Council in July 2021 which set out the steps on how the Council would reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 but also included the Council’s role in providing community leadership and encouragement for wider changes in behaviour within the Vale that will reduce the county’s overall carbon emissions;
- Project Zero and the Climate Change Challenge Plan complemented, not replaced, other statutory plans or duties, by setting out what was needed to effect a reduction in carbon emissions across the Council and the wider community as well as the key areas that needed to be addressed around this, such as energy, procurement, transport and green spaces;
- A new Project Zero Board had been set up which reported back to the Reshaping Board and ultimately to Cabinet, as well as being overseen and scrutinised by this Committee and Corporate Performance and Resources;
- There was a project brief included within the report, which set out the structure on how this work would be taken forward, i.e. the eighteen challenges contained in the Challenge Plan have each been assigned to a Senior Reporting Officer (SRO). The SROs will develop specific and detailed plans for their areas and the relevant project board will meet every other month at the Board chaired by the Managing Director;
- A Project Support Team had also been set up in order to coordinate the work and support the commitments including Finance, Training and Energy teams within the Council;
- Work had already commenced and discussions held on how to encourage and create momentum for such changes within Housing and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme, as well as encouraging active travel and the installation of electric car charging points throughout the Vale;
- The teams within Estates had worked extremely hard in completing the first data return to develop a ‘baseline’ for the Council’s emissions using the WG’s

'toolkit'. This would assist in identifying where the biggest impacts would be made and would be backed up by external specialist support as required;

- There was ongoing engagement with the wider community, with the Council offering leadership in helping tackling climate change, such as linking in with local schools, community groups ('Green Ambassadors') and local Town and Community Councils (TCCs).

Following the Officer's presentation, the subsequent questions and comments were raised by the Committee:

- On Councillor Sivagnanam's question about how often the Committee would be getting further updates on Project Zero and delivery of the Climate Change Plan, the Head of Policy and Business Transformation replied that he would co-ordinate with Democratic Services and Cabinet on providing these. He suggested providing such reports three times per year to Cabinet and then referred on to the relevant Scrutiny Committees;
- On Councillor Robertson's questions:
  - Regarding how the Council would know when net zero had been reached, it was explained that would be realised, firstly, in terms of the Council's impact, through the WG's 'toolkit' by the Council providing the appropriate data to WG in order to assess its carbon footprint and impact both directly and indirectly i.e. through its supply chain. Secondly, at the wider, county level, this would be done via the Council's community leadership role and the Authority would work with others to reduce their carbon emissions, but there was some way to go in measuring this. Details of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) model that could be used in order to measure this would be shared with the Committee.
  - On what the Council was doing in order to tackle other pollutants, it was explained that there were plans, policies and measurements already in place for such issues, such as a Forward Work Programme for Biodiversity and the work being undertaken on air pollution. Also, the Council and City Region were speaking to businesses to promote a move to Carbon reduction, such as through the South Wales Industrial Cluster (including Tarmac and Tata) which could access funding and receive support via the public sector in order to reduce their emissions and a move towards a non-fossil fuel based economy, using technologies such as through carbon capture and the development of hydrogen as a fuel.
  - Both the Leader and the Head of Policy and Business Transformation shared hyperlinks on how Net Zero and emissions could be measured with the Committee.
- The Chair reiterated that a recommendation should be made for this report to come back to Cabinet and then the relevant Scrutiny committees on a four monthly (triannual) basis.

**RECOMMENDED – T H A T** further reports on Project Zero be provided to Cabinet on a triannual basis, with the reports to then be referred to Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee for their consideration.

#### Reason for recommendation

To enable Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider how Project Zero is being taken forward on a triannual basis.”