

Meeting of:	Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, 13 July 2022
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Corporate Performance and Resources
Report Title:	Project Zero Update Report
Purpose of Report:	To advise Members of progress across the Council in responding to the climate emergency and delivering our commitments as part of Project Zero.
Report Owner:	Tom Bowring, Director of Corporate Resources
Responsible Officer:	Rob Thomas, Chief Executive
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"> The report details a wide range of activity being undertaken to ensure the Council continues to deliver against commitments in the Climate Change Challenge Plan and to take forward Project Zero. Progress includes work around use and promotion of electric vehicles, active travel, energy and the Green Infrastructure Plan. In addition, work is progressing to improve our data and communications. 	

Recommendations

1. That the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee note the progress detailed in this report in relation to a number of the challenges within the Climate Change Challenge Plan.
2. That the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee refer this report and any comments to Cabinet.
3. That the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee recommend that following consideration of the report by Cabinet that they refer the report to Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee to consider with the comments of both the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet and refer any further comments back to Cabinet.
4. That the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet that this report is distributed to all elected Members, the Public Services Board and all Town and Community Councils for their information.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To enable the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider how Project Zero is being taken forward.
2. To enable Cabinet to consider the comments of the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee as part of its consideration of progress in delivering the Climate Challenge Plan.
3. To enable the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee to consider the report and the comments of both the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
4. To update all elected Members and other stakeholders on the arrangements in place to deliver Project Zero.

1. Background

- 1.1** At the Council meeting on the 29th July 2019 Council resolved (minute 209 refers):

(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** Project Zero is the Council's response to the climate emergency. It brings together work already being undertaken and policies, strategies and plans already in place. It sets out the challenges we face and proposed activities to meet these challenges. It recognises that everyone has a role to play and a responsibility to think about our legacy for future generations.
- 1.3** At the Council meeting on the 26th July 2021 Council approved the Climate Change Challenge Plan (minute 296). The Plan details eighteen challenges framed around the need to demonstrate strong leadership, fulfil our responsibility to current and future generations and to make a difference now.
- 1.4** The Challenge Plan reflects commitments in the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-25 which sets out the Council's four Well-being Objectives and how they will be delivered. The Corporate Plan includes a commitment to work to reduce the organisation's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 and to encourage others to follow the Council's lead as part of minimising the negative impact of our activities on the environment. The Corporate Plan is supported each year by an Annual Delivery Plan (ADP). The ADP for 2022-23 includes a number of activities that will contribute to work to tackle climate change and Project Zero is one of six cross-cutting themes in the ADP.
- 1.5** At the Council meeting in July 2021 a motion was also passed resolving to declare a Nature Emergency (Minute 289).

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** In February 2022 Cabinet considered a progress report on Project Zero and this was referred to the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee for consideration. As a consequence of the Cabinet report, the committee report template has been amended to include a section on the climate and nature emergency. It was also agreed that Project Zero progress reports will be brought to Cabinet and

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee three times a year.

2.2 This report provides an update on a range of activity as detailed below and is structured around the three themes in the Climate Change Challenge Plan:

- **Demonstrate strong leadership** - the Council must lead by example.
- **Fulfil our responsibility to current and future generations** – these are the areas where we help shape the activities of others through our policies and services and where we can have a significant influence on the actions of others.
- **Make a difference now** – this refers to how the Council operates as an organisation, an employer, buildings and landowner and landlord.

Challenge Plan Progress

2.3 The Climate Change Challenge Plan includes eighteen challenges across the three themes but many activities link to multiple challenges e.g. work on food will cut across waste, green infrastructure and procurement. The Challenge Plan sets out activities that will contribute not only to the Council's aim of being net zero by 2030 but the wider aim of being net zero across the Vale by 2050 in line with Welsh Government targets and ambitions for the public sector and for Wales.

Demonstrate strong leadership

2.4 This section of the Plan includes challenges around communications, engagement, evidence and data and ambition and influence. Progress to date includes, scoping of new Project Zero webpages with more of a community focus, meetings with groups in Llantwit Major, Wenvoe and Penarth about how we can work together as part of Project Zero, align activity and improve community engagement. A stronger branding for Project Zero with consistent referencing in press releases and social media and the development of stickers for the electric fleet vehicles and signage for our country parks. Work will continue to develop the climate conversation and provide information about what changes are possible and the impact they can have.

2.5 The Council also extensively promoted the recent all Wales Nature and Us consultation which was led by Natural Resources Wales. This included a Vale specific focus group and the findings of this consultation when available will help inform future engagement activity.

2.6 Work has already commenced on the second report for Welsh Government regarding the Council's carbon emissions. The submission date for Carbon Reporting covering 2021/22 is September 2022. The Welsh Government acknowledges that the reporting process is a learning process for all parties

involved and the completeness of the data is bound to improve over time. The work on our data continues to be refined and to inform the work of the Project Zero Board. As a result of the first report further work is being undertaken on the supply chain to identify where and what changes can be made. Welsh Government have also identified this as a priority area but recognise the need to improve the robustness of data in this area. The four key areas of procurement are purchase of products (manufacturing), construction, transportation and health and social care. These areas will be targeted for more accurate emission estimates in future years. In addition, research into emissions within the overall County is being undertaken and this work is being funded through a Community Resilience Fund grant. The key findings of that work will be reported on later in the year. The research is focusing on the emission sectors contained within the Welsh Government all Wales Low Carbon Delivery Plan (21/25) which are electricity and heat generation; transport; residential buildings; industry and business; agriculture; land use; and waste management.

- 2.7** The Council continues to work with PSB partners to share good practice work on climate change as part of the PSB's Climate Emergency Charter and other joint initiatives are currently being explored with public sector partners. The PSB Well-being Assessment published in May 2022 has identified climate change as a significant issue in the Vale and it will be a key part of the new PSB Well-being Plan to be published in May 2023. One of the three draft Well-being Objectives for the PSB's Well-being Plan is 'A More Resilient and Greener Vale'.

Fulfil our responsibility to current and future generations

- 2.8** This section of the plan covers areas where policies and actions can encourage behaviour change and adapt the necessary infrastructure to meet the current and future challenges of climate change. The focus for this section is on transport, economy, food, nature, energy, waste, water use and flooding. Examples of some of the progress made against the challenges in this theme are outlined in the following paragraphs.
- 2.9** Work on a new Green Infrastructure Plan and Tree Strategy has progressed. Internal consultation on the draft Green Infrastructure Plan is being undertaken with a view to public consultation on the draft plan in the Autumn and adoption of the plan by the end of the year. A Tree Strategy is also being developed reflecting the work of consultants who have produced an I.Tree document which maps the type and extent of tree coverage in the county and an associated guidance document. In addition, the Local Nature Partnership continue to support work across the Vale.
- 2.10** The review of the Local Development Plan and new Supplementary Planning Guidance will also strengthen the policy framework and support work on tackling

climate change. Section 106 monies continue to help fund environmental improvements and support behaviour change e.g. through transport schemes.

2.11 Work through the Cardiff Capital Region continues to support work on climate change including work around a hydrogen economy and plans for the Aberthaw site. As part of the Cardiff Capital Region, the Council was recently involved in the purchase of the disused Aberthaw Power Station to drive sustainable, clean economic growth across South East Wales. Over the coming years, the site will be redeveloped to:

- Support the production of renewable and green energy projects.
- Provide an accompanying battery storage facility to support green energy projects.
- Produce a zero-carbon manufacturing cluster which will include green hydrogen production facilities.
- Provide a green energy innovation centre to promote innovation, growth, knowledge and community interaction with the zero-carbon future of Wales.
- Maintain a bio-diverse ecology park which will include a visitor centre to promote green practices.
- Create the correct conditions to support industrial decarbonisation and facilities to produce environmentally friendly lithium-ion batteries.

2.12 The Council continues to work as part of the Food Vale partnership. Food Vale continues to provide a number of opportunities through which Vale residents can gain greater awareness of healthy & sustainable food choices, as well as the skills and knowledge involved in cooking a healthy meal on a budget. Many of these opportunities were promoted through the second annual Food Vale Festival in March 2022. Communities from across the Vale collaborated with Food Vale to organise a series of activities including seed swaps, foraging walks, garden tours and microgreen workshops with local schools. Food Vale have also received the bronze award status as part of the Sustainable Food Places Network.

2.13 Big Fresh is the Council's innovative catering company and continues to contribute to Project Zero. Profits are invested back into partner schools and this helps improve the range of food on offer and pays for other things, such as an alfresco dining area and sports kit, promoting an active lifestyle. All ingredients are locally sourced, cutting down on the environmental impact of transporting goods over large distances, while the company also has a low waste approach.

2.14 Work continues to promote active travel and encourage the use of public transport and electric vehicles. Recent activity includes the development of an animation to promote active travel, revisions to the active travel network map and schemes across the Vale e.g. Fairfield Primary School community design project (improvements in the vicinity of the school and a school street proposal), Bus Boarders and access kerbs, OVOBikes infrastructure and the installation of bike pump/repair stations throughout the Vale. EV charging points are being installed in around 18 car parks including the country parks as well as on street provision and the EV taxi scheme was launched in December 2021. Officers are

currently considering the recommendations included in an external advisor's report regarding an EV on-street charging policy and a further report on work to promote and encourage the use of electric vehicles will be presented to members later in the year. Work is also continuing with schools and 18 schools have signed up to Living Streets WOW project which encourages children to walk, cycle or scoot to school.

2.15 With regards to waste management a new 10-year waste strategy forms part of the work on Project Zero and includes recycling targets, reuse and repair and emerging new technology such as battery powered vehicles. Consultation on the new strategy will be undertaken in the summer. The new strategy is an opportunity to realign our objectives against changing priorities and embrace a circular economy in Wales that focuses on repair and reuse that helps the wellbeing of our communities, minimise waste and reduces our carbon footprint. Members of the waste team are meeting with community partners such as reuse cafés and Refill Wales to improve community engagement and partnership working. The first phase of construction for the Resource Recovery Facility is underway and due to be completed later in the year and additional funding from Welsh Government has been secured to complete phase 2.

2.16 Work is also progressing to meet the challenge of reducing the amount of energy we all use and to lead by example sourcing our energy from clean and renewable sources and working across all sectors to bring new technology, innovation and investment to the Vale. For example, the Council has recently installed photovoltaic solar panels as part of a roof replacement scheme at Cowbridge Leisure Centre and is planning a future programme of works targeting high energy consuming assets initially. A number of projects are being explored including opportunities for low carbon heat and renewable energy generation and further information will be included in the progress report in the Autumn.

Make a Difference

2.17 The challenges in this section of the plan focus on how the Council as an organisation provides its services and manages its assets. Activities relate to our procurement practices, schools and council housing, how we manage our land and assets, staff travel and investment in technology. It is activities in this section that will in particular contribute to the Council achieving the target of being net zero by 2030.

2.18 To achieve our Net Carbon Zero ambitions to be a Net Carbon Zero organisation by 2030, the Council needs to reduce the amount of Carbon it emits and increase the amount of Carbon it absorbs through a variety of initiatives including the way we use our buildings and fleet, but also through a range of other key initiatives such as looking at how our staff commute, the way we procure our goods and services through supply chains, and by considering how we can improve our offsetting and sequestration activity through grasslands/forests & woodlands

etc. Our Carbon Management Plan is our key strategy document that sets out the opportunities and challenges to meet these ambitions. Our current Carbon Management Plan expires at the end of 2022 and therefore work is now under way to develop our new Carbon Management Plan and in doing so, exploring our pathway to 2030 via scenario planning and identification and development of key projects and changes required to help the Council achieve its goals. It is planned to report the new Carbon Management Plan in December 2022 and this plan will be a key part of Project Zero.

- 2.19** Significant work is being undertaken as part of the asset management and carbon reduction programme across council buildings. In addition to the LED lighting that is referenced above, the Council has worked with the new tenant of the unit at the Cliff Top, Penarth and have provided advice in relation to energy efficient practices, to assist with reducing the carbon footprint arising from the use of the asset. This relationship was developed early on during lease discussions. A range of energy efficient improvements continue to be delivered such as the installation of an air source heat pump and associated heat emitters at the Council's BSC2 building in the Innovation Quarter, Barry.
- 2.20** The emissions data submission to Welsh Government in 2021 highlighted the level of emissions associated with the Council's supply chain and work has begun to review the Council's Procurement Policy and to consider the data in more detail. This will enable us to identify priority areas for change and procurement is another key area of work that can help reduce our emissions.
- 2.21** Work is continuing to improve the Council's housing stock and further work will be taken forward as part of the new Welsh Housing Quality Standard for which guidance is awaited. Current activities include investment in our housing stock to improve thermal efficiency and looking at alternative fuel supplies to support carbon reduction and reduce fuel poverty. Monitoring of data and training for tenants is also ongoing to ensure new systems are being used correctly, Development of local and sustainable supply chains and training for contractors and staff regarding more sustainable approaches and long term thinking is also a priority. In addition, the housing team are working in partnership with Welsh Government and the ten developing Councils and three Housing Associations, as part of the Net Zero Carbon Project, to establish an all-Wales framework to deliver pattern book zero carbon housing units. An innovation partner will be procured by October 2022, with the aim of delivering the first zero carbon housing pilot projects during 2023/24.
- 2.22** Significant work continues to be made with our schools, South Point Primary School in Rhose is the first zero carbon in use school in Wales. Delivered in partnership with Welsh Government, the £5.4 million project's revolutionary design means greenhouse gas emissions are greatly reduced and any remaining emissions offset, neutralising the school's environmental impact. The building has been designed to achieve net-zero carbon through improved building fabric,

maximising solar gain, increased photovoltaic panels with battery storage and an air source heat pump. Monitoring of energy usage at the school is ongoing to ensure the building is achieving net zero carbon in operation. There is significant outdoor space for play and sport activities and storage for push bikes and scooters to help promote active travel. The school also has electric vehicle charging points, green habitat areas containing flowers and trees within the grounds to improve ecology.

- 2.23** Salix funding is being utilised for energy improvements in existing school buildings e.g. LED lighting and PV solar panels. Condition surveys have also been completed and condition reports finalised to inform future programmes of work. Data monitoring of energy use is ongoing with for example the tracking of school energy consumption in all school buildings. Work is continuing to provide monthly reports and promote the role of energy champions in schools in tandem with information packs to encourage behaviour change. No Mow May was promoted to schools to help improve biodiversity throughout the school estate. Work is currently being undertaken to establish wildflower meadows on school sites throughout the Vale to improve ecological value.
- 2.24** In addition to the work being undertaken to promote more sustainable travel detailed earlier in the report, work is also being progressed to reduce the number of car journeys staff make and increase the number of electric/low carbon vehicles across the Council's fleet of vehicles. This includes completion of a staff travel survey to inform the staff travel scheme, Dr Bike sessions held at Vale Healthy Staff Charter partner locations and made available for council staff. The Council now has 12 electric pool cars which will replace part of the current diesel-powered fleet and which will reduce emissions by 26,304kg each year. The Kona EV cars travel up to 300 miles on a single charge and can be recharged in less than hour using a rapid charge point. On the road, they help raise awareness amongst residents of how everyone can take steps to reduce their carbon footprint. The Council is also installing 72 EV charging points primarily for Council fleet use at the Civic Offices and the Alps Depot with an additional eight EV charging points being installed in four Vale parks.
- 2.25** The information above demonstrates the range of activity being undertaken and the involvement of so many services, it also helps to highlight that work is at different stages of development but with a consistent objective to reduce our emissions and consider our impact on the environment and ensure the whole of the Council is working as part of Project Zero.

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 Project Zero 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 a 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. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** Project Zero is the Council's response to the climate emergency and brings together work from across the Council in a co-ordinated response to the climate emergency. Commitments in the Climate Change Challenge Plan are designed to enable the Council to meet its ambition to be net zero by 2030 and include actions that will change how we work, enable others to make changes and raise awareness about the need for urgent action. This report details work on new strategies and plans including the Waste Management Strategy and the Green Infrastructure Plan, new and innovative activity around energy and a continued focus on our own buildings including housing and schools.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** The Council has established a series of reserves to support the delivery of Project Zero and these were outlined to Members in February of this year.

Employment

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

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** 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.
- 5.4** The feedback gathered during the consultation on the draft plan has informed Project Zero and equality impact assessments will be undertaken for different activities within Project Zero as necessary. These assessments will reflect the consultation findings and other relevant engagement and data.

6. Background Papers

Council Notice of Motion 29 July 2019 - Minute 209

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

Cabinet Report 23 March 2020 Minute C280 - Responding to the Climate Emergency

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

Vale of Glamorgan Council Corporate Plan April 2020

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/achieving_our_vision/Corporate-Plan.aspx

Vale of Glamorgan Council Coronavirus Recovery Strategy Cabinet 21st September 2020

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2020/20-09-21/Coronavirus-Recovery-Strategy.pdf

Cabinet Report 2nd November 2020 Minute C357 - Developing a Climate Change Action Plan

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2020/20-11-02/Minutes.pdf

Cabinet Report 25 January 2021 Minute C451 – Vale Public Services Board Climate Emergency Charter

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2021/21-01-25/Minutes.pdf

Cabinet Report 22 March 2021 Minute C526 – Project Zero - Draft Climate Change Challenge Plan

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2021/21-03-22/Minutes-of-21-03-22.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2021/21-03-22/Minutes-of-21-03-22.pdf)

Council Minutes 26th July 2021 (289 and 296) - Notice of Motion – Declaration of Nature Emergency and Project Zero – Draft Climate Change Challenge Plan

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Council/2021/21-07-26/Minutes.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Council/2021/21-07-26/Minutes.pdf)

Cabinet Report 25th October 2021 Minute – Project Zero – Delivering the Climate Change Challenge Plan

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2021/21-10-25/Project-Zero-Climate-Change-Challenge-Plan.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2021/21-10-25/Project-Zero-Climate-Change-Challenge-Plan.pdf)

Cabinet Report 28th February 2022 Minute – Project Zero – Update, Resources, Evidence and Reporting

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2022/22-02-28/Minutes.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2022/22-02-28/Minutes.pdf)