

Meeting of:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 20 January 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Project Zero Update Report
Purpose of Report:	To advise Members of progress across the Council in responding to the climate emergency, the nature emergency, and delivering our commitments as part of Project Zero including work being undertaken through the Public Services Board.
Report Owner:	Rob Thomas, Chief Executive
Responsible Officer:	Tom Bowring, Director of Corporate Resources
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
Executive Summary: - This report and Appendix A detail the 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. This includes the RAG (red, amber, green) rating of progress against the steps in the Climate Change Challenge Plan. - Progress and developments from April 2025 to September 2025 including the commissioning of a PSB Climate Change Risk Assessment funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund, the submission of our 2024/25 Net Zero Carbon data to the Welsh Government, monitoring of new photovoltaic panels on a number of Council sites, and funding for seven new EV vans. - The report provides Members with an update regarding the finances associated with Project Zero. - This report provides updates on the Public Services Board (PSB) work to tackle the climate and nature emergencies which is a priority in the PSB Well-being Plan. - The report provides an update our carbon emissions for 2024/25. - The report also updates on the approach to programme management.	

Recommendations

1. That the Committee consider the progress and funding detailed in this report and Appendix A in relation to the challenges within the Climate Change Challenge Plan and the work of the Public Services Board (PSB) to tackle the climate and nature emergencies.
2. That the Committee considers our carbon emissions for 2024/25.
3. That the Committee refer this report and any comments to Cabinet to be considered.
4. That the report be shared with all elected Members, members of the Public Services Board and all Town and Community Councils for their information.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To enable the committee to consider how Project Zero and the related work of the Public Services Board is being taken forward.
2. To ensure that the Members are aware of the net zero carbon data for 2024/25.
3. To enable Cabinet to consider the comments of the committee as part of its consideration of progress in delivering the Climate Change Challenge Plan.
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. At the Council meeting on the 26th of July 2021 the Council approved the Climate Change Challenge Plan (minute 296). The Plan details eighteen challenges and eighty underlying steps framed around the need to demonstrate strong leadership, fulfil our responsibility to current and future generations and to make a difference now.
 - 1.3. At the Council meeting in July 2021 a motion was also passed resolving to declare a Nature Emergency (Minute 289).
 - 1.4. The Council's Corporate Plan, Vale 2030, sets out the Council's five Well-being Objectives, how they will be delivered and the key priorities. Vale 2030 includes a commitment on respecting and celebrating the environment, including reducing our carbon emissions as an organisation and encouraging and supporting others to do the same. This includes a focus on the changes needed to how we travel, the energy we use, the waste we create, and our food. Vale 2030 is supported each year by five Directorate Plans and a raft of annual performance measures. Vale 2030 sets out the continued vision for the Council's work in response to the climate and nature emergencies and is aligned to the commitments in the Challenge Plan.
 - 1.5. 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, improving biodiversity, and contributing to the Welsh Government's 30 by 30 target and ambitions for the public sector and for Wales. In order to support our drive to net zero, a [Carbon Management Plan](#) was approved by Cabinet in 2024.
 - 1.6. In response to the July 2022 Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee recommendations, a 'RAG' rating system (Red, Amber and Green) for progress has been continued at Appendix A. The rating reflects the progress from April 2025 to September 2025 only, and the ratings may fluctuate over time to reflect new opportunities and barriers in future reporting periods.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

2.1 This report and Appendix A provide an overall update on the wide range of activity being undertaken as part of Project Zero. In response to the request to streamline reporting, progress under each step is summarised, along with examples of activities undertaken against each challenge.

2.2 Some of the key progress from April to September 2025 in delivering the Climate Change Challenge Plan is detailed below. In this report there is a new 'business as usual' category that reflects where steps within the challenge plan are embedded into everyday practice. 'On track' reflects where discrete activities have been planned and delivered to progress the step within the Climate Change Challenge Plan. In Q1&2 2025/26 the overall RAG rated progress is shown in table 1 below:

Table 1. April to September 2025, RAG progress against the steps in the Climate Change Challenge Plan

RAG categories	Number of steps
Business as usual	25
On track	38
Slower than expected progress	9
No progress	0
Completed	2
No planned action	6

Demonstrate strong leadership - Challenges 1-4

- Consultants were appointed to undertake a Climate Change Risk Assessment for the Vale PSB, using Shared Prosperity Funding awarded to the VoGC on behalf of the PSB.
- The Council's 2024/25 net zero carbon return was submitted to Welsh Government. The data showed a rise of 6% in comparison to 2023/24 data. Our scope 1 data has reduced slightly, and the overall rise is primarily due to a rise in supply chain emissions (scope 3) due to changes in the UK Government emissions factors which underpin carbon calculations. These are set by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), in partnership with Defra.
- Our renewable energy generation increased year on year, with over 1024 MWh energy generated in 2024/25.
- The Council is meeting regularly with the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Energy team who currently manage the Aberthaw site. The Director of Place has also recently taken up a post of Director at CCR Energy to support the project and to help it move forward.
- A new Local Area Energy Plan Officer is now in post to lead the wider energy decarbonisation agenda across the Vale and support the journey for the Vale as a whole to reach net zero by 2050.

Fulfil our responsibility to current and future generations - Challenges 5-12

- A new Biodiversity and Ecological Resilience Plan for 2026 – 2029 has been drafted by the Council's Ecologist, following internal consultation.
- As part of the Restore the Thaw Landscape project, 10,000 sapling trees have been ordered through the Woodland Trust with an additional 200 standard trees purchased by the Restore the Thaw Landscape project. Trees will be planted throughout December 2025 and January 2026.
- Work on the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) is underway currently although this has been delayed due to site selection issues, however a report regarding proposed strategic housing allocations has been reported to and agreed by

Cabinet, Scrutiny and Council and this is now due to progress to the formal Deposit Stage following further reports to Cabinet in late 2025 and Council early in 2026.

- In April 2025, £3.4million of Welsh Government funding was confirmed to boost walking and cycling numbers in the Vale.
- An Economy, Employment and Skills Study for the Council is underway, to include a focus on green skills.
- A Vale Food Producers Directory was launched, highlighting 28 local food producers, shops, markets and café.
- The soft plastic pilot began, serving 16,000 homes and collecting around 60 Tons between April and November 2025.
- Rainwater harvesting systems have been successfully installed and are currently in use in a number of new Council housing developments.
- Over 1000 solar panels have been installed in Vale homes through the Solar Together programme that the council has been promoting.

Make a difference now - Challenges 13-18

- The Procurement Policy and Strategy has been revised providing additional focus and direction on the circular economy as well as a number of other enhancements.
- The new housing development Llyn yr Eglwys was completed with a number of environmentally positive features including solar panels, rainwater harvesting to provide grey water for toilet flushing, and a living wall.
- Ysgol Llyn Derw is in the final stages of construction and will have numerous energy efficiency measures such as PV panels and batteries, and biodiversity enhancements including a green roof and a segregated area to the north of the site specifically for biodiversity.
- Monitoring of the new PV panels at Llanfair Primary School in Cowbridge and the Flying Start family support services building in Barry show substantial financial and carbon savings.
- A successful application was submitted to the Welsh Government Energy Service for funding to replace seven diesel vans with EVs.
- The design phase for migrating around 180 on-premises servers to Amazon Web Services is complete. Once implemented, the sustainability assessment for the programme shows a projected 86% reduction in CO₂ emissions and will result in reduced on-site energy usage.

2.3 Programme Management

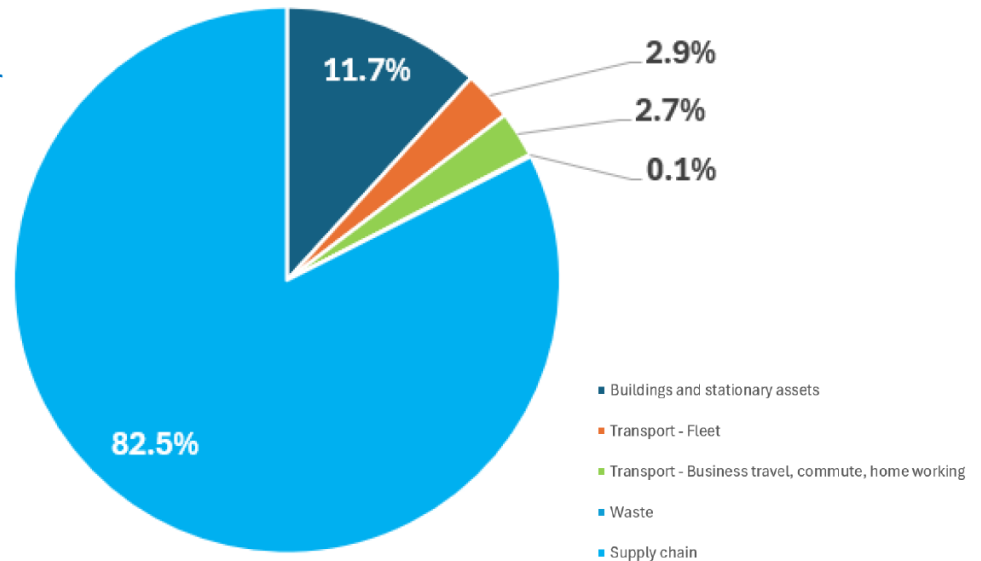
- The Project Zero Board continues to steer the programme through bi-monthly meetings, with senior representation from across all Directorates.

- The Project Zero Board met 3 times in Q1 and Q2, and awareness was raised of diverse projects across the Council including reviewing waste services across the education estate, and the work of the internal funding forum. A number of proposals were brought to the Board from across the Council to agree which should be submitted for the Welsh Local Government Association Climate Change Support Fund. The proposal chosen focuses on an In-Cab Digital Routing System for Waste Services, picked due to its scalability, carbon and operational savings, and on the ground impacts for residents. The Board also agreed a carbon offsetting approach for Sustainable Communities for Learning new build schools, and offers of support were made to Food Vale around improving community access to land for food growing.
- A review of Project Zero reporting was undertaken following the commitment to streamline reporting. Meetings took place with Project Zero Board members to review the Climate Change Challenge Plan's 80 steps, and a new RAG category of 'business as usual' was added to reflect that some of the steps are now embedded into everyday practice. As a result, the updated RAG status will continue to be reported, and updates in Appendix A will be consolidated to focus on key highlights and challenges during the period.
- The regular Project Zero biannual report was presented to the Place Scrutiny Committee for the first time in July 2025. Consolidating updates across 18 challenges and 80 steps, the report covered the period October '24 to March '25. During that reporting period 57 steps were on track. 20 steps had slower than expected progress, and 3 steps reported no progress.
- The Project Zero Programme Manager continues to engage with other Local Authorities and Public Sector bodies to learn and share good practice. This includes the WLGA Climate Officers group, the PSB Asset Management and Climate Emergency Group, and membership of the Shaping Places for Well-being programme being run by Public Health Wales and funded by the Health Foundation.
- The Project Zero Programme Manager and the communications team continue to meet regularly to roll out the dedicated communications plan.

2.4 Carbon Management Plan updates

- The Council's 2024/25 net zero carbon return was submitted to Welsh Government in August and included reporting on our emissions from the supply chain, buildings and stationary assets (such as street lighting), fleet, waste, and commute, business travel and home working. The data showed a rise of 6% in comparison to '23/24 data.

By activity, our 74.4 Mt CO₂e splits into...



- Our scope 1 data (activity which is directly within our control e.g. how we heat our buildings and the fuel for our fleet vehicles) has reduced slightly due to energy efficiency works, for example one primary school has moved from gas to an electric air source heat pump. The overall rise in total emissions is primarily due to a rise in supply chain emissions (scope 3) due to changes in the UK Government emissions factors which underpin carbon calculations. These are set by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), in partnership with Defra. We continue to review procurement data for trends and to understand spend categorisation: although our spend has decreased, some emission factors have increased, driving up our emissions. Renewable energy generation increased year on year, with over 1024 MWh of energy generated/exported in 2024/25.
- To support the data submission, a staff travel survey was undertaken. With over 700 responses, the preferred mode of transport for travelling to work is still the car.
- At September's special PZ Board meeting, Board members presented their carbon data and plans for reduction over 2025/26.
- An update on the Carbon Management Plan will be provided to Cabinet in January 2026.
- As with previous years, the Project Zero Programme Manager and Decarbonisation & Energy Manager are presenting the 2024/25 corporate carbon emissions data to all Directorates to widen engagement in this agenda. These sessions continue to consider the data afresh and link activity up across teams. PZ Board have disseminated these slide decks to their teams to continue to engage staff on our need to decarbonise.

2.5 Resources

- Much of the work reflected in this report is resourced within existing capacity, supported by established internal budgets and annual capital funds. External annual funding pots also support work, including from the Welsh Government, for example

funding for the schools building programme, for transport, and for Council housing. In addition, time bound UK Government funding pots such as the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and the Welsh Government Assets Collaboration Programme Wales have enabled projects.

- Several decarbonisation schemes were delivered in the 2024/25 Capital Programme including the installation of air source heat pump at Bro Morgannwg, PV panels at seven Council sites including residential homes, schools and Leisure Centres. There are decarbonisation schemes on the Capital Programme totalling £2.428M from 2025/26 to 2030/31 and this budget has been allocated across 16 schemes for installation of LED lighting, PV Panels, interface upgrades and air source heat pumps

2.6 The Public Services Board

- The Vale of Glamorgan Council and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) co-chair the Public Services Board (PSB) Asset Management and Climate Emergency Group which meets quarterly and reports to the PSB.
- Shared learning during this period has included reviewing partners' carbon data collection, reporting and learning about water saving approaches across partners' estates.
- Consultants were appointed to undertake a Vale PSB Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA), using Shared Prosperity Funding awarded to the VoGC. The consultants met with the PSB Asset Management and Climate Emergency sub-group and wider partner workforce to gather professional experience of the impact of extreme weather (such as heatwaves and storm) on communities and services. These experiences, plus those gathered from the wider community directly, will form part of the evidence base for the CCRA.

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 are embedded throughout Project Zero as we work collaboratively through the PSB and with other partners. It is recognised that this is a long-term programme of work, 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 is fundamental to us making a difference through our activities and we are 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.
- 4.2** This report includes details of progress spanning across the 18 challenges and 80 steps in the Climate Change Challenge Plan at Appendix A. This includes progress towards our 2030 net zero goal through decarbonising our estate including schools, our fleet, waste and supply chain. Our wider work supporting county-wide decarbonisation by 2050 and tackling the nature emergency is also reflected in Appendix A.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** The details of the Council's reserves and other funding to support the delivery of Project Zero are set out in the body of this report.

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

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

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

Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee Report 13th July 2022 Minute - Project Zero Update Report

[Minutes \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/minutes)

Cabinet Report (Reference from Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny 18th January) Minute - 2nd February 2023 Project Zero Update report

[Minutes \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/minutes)

Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee Report 21st June 2023 Minute - Project Zero Update Report: [Project Zero Update Report \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/project-zero-update-report)

[Minutes \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/minutes)

Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee Report 17th January 2024 Minute - Project Zero Update Report: [Project Zero Update Report \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/project-zero-update-report)

Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee Report 17th January 2024 Minute - Project Zero Update Report

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Report 16th January 2024 [Minute - Project Zero Update Report](#)

Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee Report 19th June 2024 [Minutes and Project Zero Update Report](#)

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Report 18th June 2024 [Minutes](#) and [Project Zero Update Report](#)

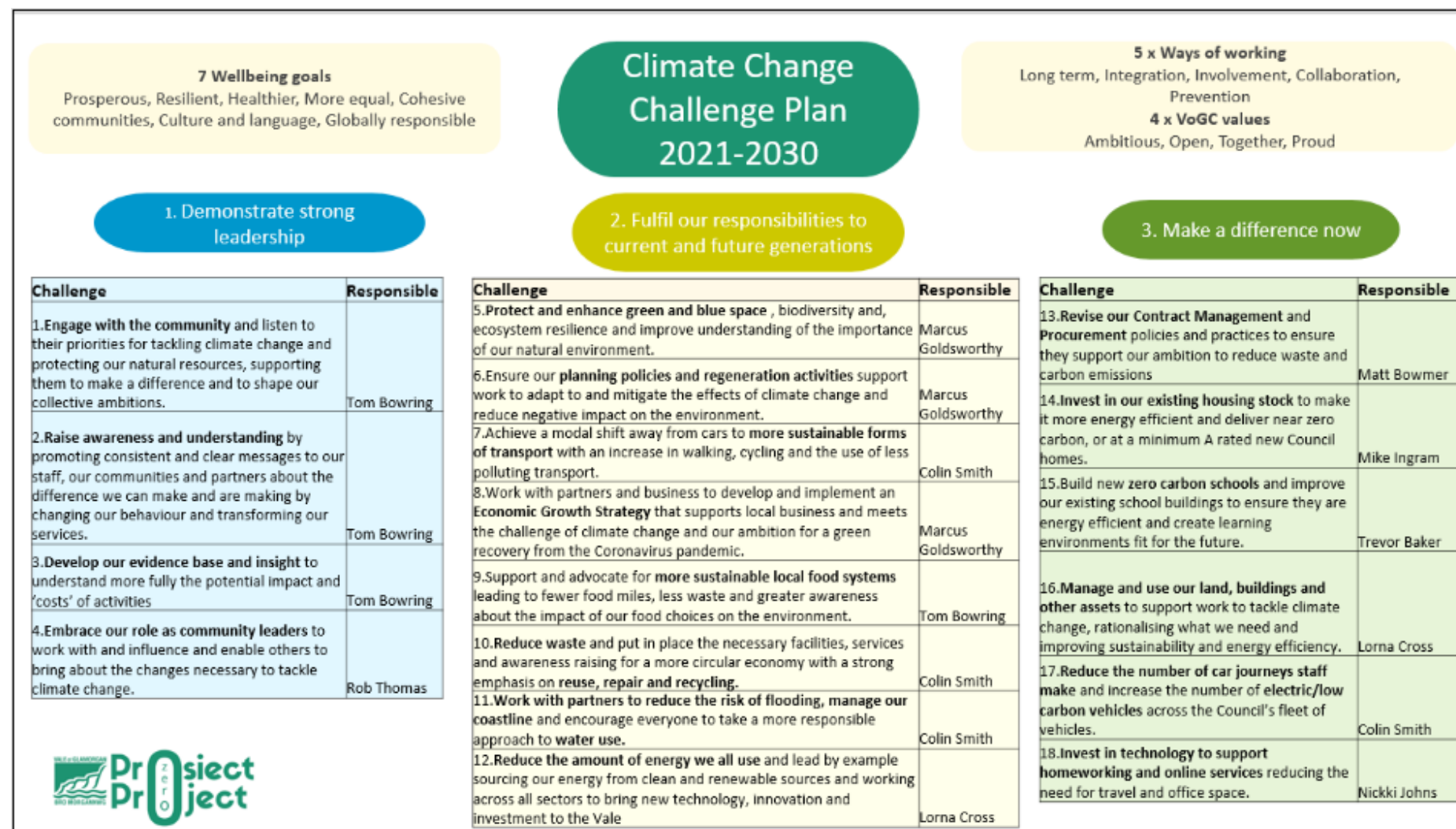
Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee Report 15th January 2025 [Minutes and Project Zero Update Report](#)

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Report 14th January 2025 [Minutes](#) and [Project Zero Update Report](#)

Place Scrutiny Committee Report 22nd July 2025. [Minutes](#) and [Project Zero Update Report](#) and [presentation](#)

Appendix A. Project Zero - Climate Change Challenge Plan progress, April 2025 to September 2025

Climate Change Challenge Plan overview



Area 1: Demonstrate strong leadership. Challenge 1-4

We will demonstrate strong leadership as we meet the challenge to effectively engage with the community and our partners about how we can work together. We will raise awareness about the issues and the work we are undertaking and develop a better understanding about where we can have the biggest impact and how we can influence others to work with us and be part of an ambitious programme of change

Project Zero: Challenge 1	
Engage with the community and listen to their priorities for tackling climate change and protecting our natural resources, supporting them to make a difference and to shape our collective ambitions.	
Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC1.1. Build momentum around the Climate Change Community Conversation as an ambitious campaign for change.	Business as usual
PZC1.2. Involve Stakeholder groups and develop a green ambassador’s group to shape our plans and encourage behaviour change.	Business as usual
PZC1.3. Promote volunteering opportunities and community projects.	Business as usual

Highlights

The steps in Challenge One are now embedded into ways of working. The Council’s **Participation Strategy** is currently being refreshed, and engagement to support Project Zero will be embedded. Opportunities to engage in this period have included the Let’s Talk survey that includes environmentally focused questions on the climate and nature emergencies. In addition, an engagement plan has been developed to support the **PSB Climate Change Risk Assessment**. In the next reporting period, we will gather a broad cross section of experiences of extreme weather from our communities including carers, young people, housing tenants, older people, businesses, food growers, and those seeking employment. In addition, we have asked elected members and Town and Community Councils to share relevant knowledge of the experiences of those in their community.



This summer we partnered with Keep Wales Tidy to run a ‘**Make memories not mess**’ campaign at Barry Island resort. The aim of the campaign was to encourage visitors to the resort to be responsible about the impact they have and to either take their litter with them or use the bins provided. Banners and large bin stickers were placed at the resort and colleagues from Keep Wales Tidy were visible with volunteers who litter picked along the beach and promenade during peak summer days. Over the course of the three-week campaign 50 participants filled 36 bags of litter. The campaign received good media coverage, with ITV Wales interviewing the charity’s Chief Executive at the resort itself.

Project Zero: Challenge 2

Raise awareness and understanding by promoting **consistent and clear messages** to our staff, our communities, and partners about the difference we can make and are making by changing our behaviour and transforming our services.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC2.1. Develop a co-ordinated programme of internal and external communications	Business as usual
PZC2.2. Report on the progress being made and the impact of the changes we make	Business as usual
PZC2.3. Showcase community projects across the Vale.	Business as usual
PZC2.4. Signpost people to information and services within their community	Business as usual

Highlights

Monthly Project Zero communications meetings ensure that opportunities to raise awareness are maximised, and this is now business as usual.

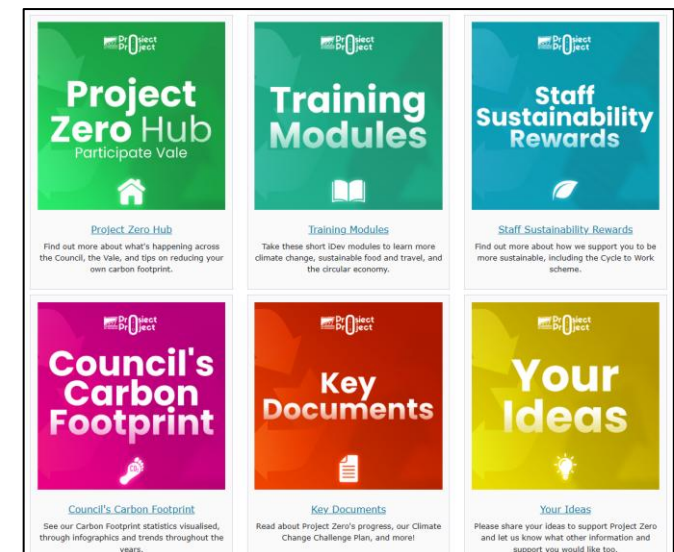
During this period we have supported **national campaigns** such as Walk to School Week, collaborating with Living Streets to create a reel featuring the Mayor that reached over 1.2k views on Instagram and was shared by Living Streets.



We **showcased community-led action** throughout the Vale, including celebrating Keep Wales Tidy volunteers during Volunteers' Week, which achieved 8.6k views on Facebook, and highlighting the community-led transformation of the St Paul's alleyway which reached 25.9k views and received lots of positive engagement.

In addition, **Council initiatives** such as the new paint re-use station at the Barry Household Waste Recycling Centre were highlighted on social media.

To support ongoing engagement, we refreshed the [Project Zero online hub](#) with recent examples of our work, which saw 776 views through this period, and launched a dedicated [Project Zero staff portal](#) on the intranet featuring case studies, training, carbon data, rewards, and an ideas link to encourage staff involvement.



Project Zero: Challenge 3

Develop our **evidence base and insight** to understand more fully the potential impact and 'costs' of activities.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC3.1. Bring in external expertise and research best practice in other organisations inc. with PSB partners to understand our impact.	Business as usual
PZC3.2. Provide training for staff and Members.	On track
PZC3.3. Calculate and understand the Council's carbon footprint and publish other key data detailing our performance and progress.	Business as usual
PZC3.4. Set meaningful targets towards reducing our negative impact on the environment.	On track

Highlights

Bringing in **external expertise and researching best practice** in other organisations is part of our business-as-usual operation at the VoGC, with many teams attending Wales wide meetings in their fields where practice and research is shared, e.g. the Welsh Local Government Association Climate Officers group.

Where funding allows and the expertise and capacity is required, consultants add value e.g. in this period the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) have worked with the waste team on the soft plastic pilot.



We have continued to promote the **Project Zero E-Learning Suite** as part of Learning Café and Corporate Induction. We have also rolled out a **new Bio-diversity E-Learning Suite** procured via grant funding. This has been well received, and we have also had the opportunity to roll out some limited face to face training to staff as part of this grant funding. Whilst the face-to-face training was limited, the e-learning will be available long term.

In this period, our **2024/25 carbon data** was gathered from across the organisation and submitted to the Welsh Government ahead of the September 2025 deadline. The details of our Net Zero Carbon data submission are at section 2.5.

Project Zero: Challenge 4

Embrace our role as community leaders to work with and **influence and enable** others to bring about the changes necessary to tackle climate change.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC4.1. Work with Welsh Government and influence policy change and legislation.	Business as usual
PZC4.2. Work within the Cardiff Capital Region to bring about change across the region.	On track
PZC4.3. Work with PSB partners to deliver the commitments in the PSB Climate Emergency Charter.	On track
PZC4.4. Work with business and industry, Town and Community Councils, Community groups and the Third Sector to make a difference locally.	On track

Highlights

As part of our ongoing work with the Welsh Government, in this period we have been considering the recommendation in **the [Future Generations Report 2025 - Future Generations Wales](#)** and formulating a response drawing on discussions at Project Zero Board and with the PSB. Since being agreed by Cabinet (November 2025) our responses will be considered by the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner and will go on to shape some of the future PSB priorities. Further updates on our work with the PSB, including the Climate Change Risk Assessment, is at section 2.7 in the report



In ongoing work with businesses and the community, Council teams took part in a joint **‘Give and Gain’ day** alongside volunteers from the construction company Morgan Sindall at St Luke’s Community Garden and the surrounding area of the Council's Food Pod in Penarth. Morgan Sindall have worked with the Council on a number of high-profile projects across the county, including the delivery of Ysgol Llyn Derw, the second Ysgol y Deri site at Cosmeston.

The day at the Food Pod focused on upgrading the site as part of the Council's Cleaner, Greener, Connected, and Healthier Neighbourhood Clean Slate project. Volunteers painting fences and replanting the planters, as well as general tidying and maintenance around the Food Pod, with Morgan Sindall also donating plants and materials for the community garden.

Area 2: Fulfil our responsibility to current and future generations. Challenge 5-12

In meeting these challenges, we will 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, food, nature, energy, waste, water use and flooding. In meeting the challenges, we will support a green economy and the importance of balancing economic growth with the need to minimise negative impact on the environment and our natural resources. We will take forward work to improve the green infrastructure in the Vale and to promote sustainable food systems.

Project Zero: Challenge 5 Protect and enhance green and blue space, biodiversity, and ecosystem resilience and improve understanding of the importance of our natural environment.	
Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC5.1. Develop and implement a Green Infrastructure including a survey of all trees in the Vale and an assessment of the current infrastructure.	On track
PZC5.2. Implement the biodiversity forward plan and raise awareness about the importance of nature and wildlife.	On track
PZC5.3. Replace lost trees and promote tree planting across the Vale including working with owners of large areas of land.	On track
PZC5.4. Improve existing and create more green and blue spaces through Council led schemes, s.106 funds and new transport schemes.	On track
PZC5.5. Work with local communities to increase the number of allotments and community garden space.	On track

Highlights

All our planned work against Challenge 5 was on track during the period. A new **Biodiversity and Ecological Resilience Plan** for 2026 – 2029 has been drafted by the Council's Chief Ecologist to replace the current Biodiversity Forward Plan. Internal consultation on the plan was completed in the period.

Through the [Restore the Thaw Landscape Project](#), 14 planting areas have been identified, mainly on private farmland, to create connectivity in the landscape. 10,000 saplings have been ordered through the Woodland Trust, plus 200 standard trees to be planted in the winter. A further 140 water voles were released on the River Thaw in June, and Non-Native Invasive Species **Himalayan Balsam has been removed** on the River Kenson in Fonmon. Himalayan Balsam out competes native plants for space, light, moisture and nutrients, along with its shallow root system which does little to stabilise riverbanks. As such, its management and removal is critical in the management of waterways.

The [Vale Local Nature Partnership](#) (LNP) submitted their 2-year Local Places for Nature programme to Welsh Government and funding was approved. 29 engagement and training events were delivered in the period including the **Vale Nature Festival**, held at Cosmeston, which attracted over 1000 people. The Creature Chronicle Storytelling Sessions delivered in partnership with Restore the Thaw and Visit the Vale, highlighting our most endangered species in the Vale. In addition, the Vale LNP launched the meadow monitors programme for the Vale's verges and grassland, and the Swift Guardians programme. Their grants programme was relaunched for community groups and other organisations to apply for funding in line with the Vale's Nature Recovery Action Plan.

Project Zero: Challenge 6

Ensure our **planning policies and regeneration activities** support work to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change and reduce negative impact on the environment.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC6.1. Produce Sustainable Urban Drainage Guidance.	No planned action
PZC6.2. Review/produce Supplementary Planning Guidance to support work on tackling climate change.	No planned action
PZC6.3. Maximise opportunities to meet our communities need for housing, employment and services through, where possible, the sustainable redevelopment of brown-field land in appropriate locations, through the existing Local Development Plan and the plan review commencing in June 2021.	On track
PZC6.4. Work with developers to develop zero carbon buildings.	On track
PZC6.5. Create more energy efficient buildings through planning policy.	On track
PZC6.6. Require all new and significant developments to implement appropriate sustainable drainage system (SuDS) to appropriately manage surface water, water quantity and biodiversity.	Business as usual
PZC6.7. Use S106 agreements to invest in environmental and sustainable transport measures.	On track
PZC6.8. Work with Cardiff City Region to explore opportunities to promote and develop clean growth hubs capitalising on Barry as a dock and maximising renewable energy potential.	On track

Highlights

The majority of steps against Challenge are on track during this period. Work on the **Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP)** is underway currently and was delayed due to site selection. The RLDP includes policies on requiring new buildings to be net zero carbon in operation, on 'presumption against demolition' policy, on renewable energy, active travel and allocating land for active travel improvements. It sets out parameters in relation to development and flood risk and has a strategic policy on Climate Change mitigation and adaptation. Work on [Supplementary Planning Guidance \(SPGs\)](#) will follow in 2027/28, and may consider Sustainable Drainage Systems.

As part of the **use of Section 106 monies** for local enhancement, a community consultation was undertaken in September on enhancements to the play area and surrounding green spaces in **Sully Central Park**. The proposals include enhancing biodiversity through the planting of new wildflower meadows, adjusted mowing regimes, bulb planting, and native tree and hedgerow planting. The **Bearfield scheme in Cowbridge** is also progressing well and the skatepark refurbishment project went out to tender in the period. The Bearfield scheme also includes biodiversity enhancements such as new wildflower meadows and new tree planting which will take place. The new tree and shrub planting in the **Murchfield, Dinas Powys** new community space has been undertaken and is now flourishing.

Sustainable transport enhancements during this period include pedestrian improvements in Buttrills Road, Barry, replacement bus shelters at Camms Corner, Dinas Powys, new benches in St. Nicholas and a new controlled crossing in Ham Lane East, Llantwit Major. All these sustainable transport projects seek to encourage more sustainable travel in communities.

Project Zero: Challenge 7

Achieve a modal shift away from cars to **more sustainable forms of transport** with an increase in walking, cycling, and the use of less polluting transport.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC7.1. Work within the Cardiff Capital Region to improve public transport options for the region and implement taxi charging points as well as a future network of car park and bus charging points.	Business as usual
PZC7.2. Work with developers to ensure new business, leisure and housing developments plan appropriately for transport needs and encourage behaviour change.	Business as usual
PZC7.3. Increase active travel (walking and cycling) and improve the transport infrastructure in the Vale using Welsh Government grants to improve access, safety and the joining up of the active travel network.	Business as usual
PZC7.4. Expand the Nextbike e-cycle hire scheme into other parts of the Vale following on from the implementation of the scheme in the Penarth area.	On track
PZC7.5. Work with all schools to ensure they have green travel plans and adequate cycling facilities.	Business as usual
PZC7.6. Establish a network of Electric Vehicle Charging Points and support projects which promote alternatively fuelled vehicles.	Business as usual

Highlights

The majority of steps in Challenge 7 are now business as usual. In April 2025, £3.4 million of **Welsh Government funding was confirmed to boost walking and cycling numbers in the Vale**, increase road safety, upgrade bus stops, and support the move away from the private car. £645,000 of this will be used to continue the development of active travel routes from Barry to Dinas Powys, Weycock Cross to Cardiff Airport and Sully to Cosmeston. The funding will also be used to acquire land, continue scheme development, support a public consultation and help make pedestrian improvements across the Vale. £500,000 will be used on improving bus service infrastructure by introducing signs with real-time scheduling information that accurately reflect projected arrival times.



In work to support cycle confidence in young people, the **Barry Bike Club** – funded by the UK Government’s Shared Prosperity Fund, delivered by Pedal Power, and supported by our Community Investment and Active Travel teams - is in its third year of offering free weekly cycling sessions for local children aged 6 to 10. At an awards ceremony during the reporting period, three children were also presented with their own bikes, donated through the **Recycle project** - an initiative led by Pedal Power with assistance from the Council. That scheme sees donated bikes refurbished and given to families who may not otherwise be able to afford one, also keeping used bikes in use for longer.

Five schools have also received brand new bikes, helmets, and storage facilities to help boost cycling confidence among pupils and staff, supporting National Standards Cycle Training and broader efforts to promote active travel to and from school. Albert Primary, All Saints Church in Wales Primary, Cogan Primary, Peterston-Super-Ely Primary and Y Bont-Faen Primary are already taking significant steps to support active travel. Each has developed and submitted a plan outlining commitments to increase walking, wheeling and cycling among pupils.

Project Zero: Challenge 8

Work with partners and business to develop and implement an **Economic Growth Strategy** that supports local business and meets the challenge of climate change and our ambition for a green recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC8.1. Develop and implement a sustainable and green Economic Growth Strategy.	On track
PZC8.2. Support increased digital access and literacy in the community.	Business as usual
PZC8.3. Support employment opportunities linked to a green economy and work with the Cardiff Capital Region to explore green jobs growth potential in areas such as renewables.	On track
PZC8.4. Work with businesses, colleges and universities to identify opportunities and promote new technology.	On track

Highlights

All steps against Challenge 8 are on track or embedded as business as usual during this period.



Consultants Wavehill were appointed in September 2025 to undertake an **Economy, Employment & Skills Study** for the Council, with the Baseline Economy, Employment & Skills Analysis almost completed in the reporting period. Green skills are an integral part of the study. The results of the study will support the council to take a more strategic and informed approach to supporting future skills development.

Planning was undertaken in the period for a **Cardiff & Vale Sustainable, Renewable & Green Careers Information Event**, which was held in October. The event was a collaboration between Careers Wales, VoGC (the Economic Development and Communities for Work team), The Department of Work and pensions (DWP), Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC) and the Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership (CCRSP). The event gave a number of Vale employers an opportunity to showcase careers in the Vale that connect to the green economy, including the Council, CCR Energy (and contractors Erith) and Renishaw, a world's leading engineering and scientific technology companies, with manufacturing capacity in the Vale.

Project Zero: Challenge 9

Support and advocate for more **sustainable local food systems** leading to fewer food miles, less waste and greater awareness about the impact of our food choices on the environment.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC9.1. Work through the PSB and Food Vale to implement the Move More Eat Well Plan and to promote buying local produce and shopping locally.	On track
PZC9.2. Work within Food Vale to obtain Sustainable Food City status and promote businesses that have sustainable practices.	On track
PZC9.3. The Big Fresh Catering Company which serves nearly 2 million meals a year will take steps to further reduce its impact on the environment.	Slower than expected progress
PZC9.4. Review procurement arrangements to support less food miles and less packaging and waste.	Business as usual
PZC9.5. Work with community groups and through the Green Infrastructure Plan to encourage people to grow their own fruit and vegetables.	No planned action
PZC9.6. Promote and facilitate food waste recycling for residents, business and schools.	On track

Highlights

Just one step in Challenge 9 has progressed more slowly than expected. As a result of poor weather and harvests, a number of Vale farmers were unable to supply Big Fresh with vegetables under the [Welsh Veg in Schools](#) project.

Raising awareness of food producers and businesses has been a priority during this period. The Economic Regeneration team, in collaboration with Visit the Vale, launched the [Vale Food Producers Directory](#) in May to promote 28 local producers, shops, markets and cafes. In its first 6 months there are 350 active users and over 2,200 online interactions. The directory is supported by a #discoveratasteofthevale branding and a communications campaign.



The **third annual Vale Food Trail**, organised by [Food Vale](#), ran over a week in May / June bringing together an estimated 1,000 visitors and locals. This year's festival featured more than 20 businesses and 46 diverse events showcasing the best of local food and sustainability

As the interest in having spaces for residents to grow their own fruit and vegetables increases, Food Vale commissioned and published a [Community Food Growing in the Vale of Glamorgan report](#). The report highlights 54 growing spaces across the Vale, and discovering an allotment waiting list of 860 people. The report identifies common barriers and challenges, along with solutions / needs, and provides a foundation for future research needs and support. In addition, Food Vale's new [online map of community growing spaces](#) makes it easier for Vale residents to find their local growing opportunities and communities.

Project Zero: Challenge 10

Reduce waste and put in place the necessary facilities, services and awareness raising for a more circular economy with a strong emphasis on reuse, repair and recycling.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC10.1. Adopt a new Waste Management Strategy with a strong emphasis on working with the community.	Business as usual
PZC10.2. Develop campaigns to change behaviour e.g. to reduce single use plastics and packaging and to increase reuse, recycling and composting.	On track
PZC10.3. Promote and signpost to community projects and services which encourage reuse and repair and a reduction in waste.	On track
PZC10.4. Establish a Reuse Shop to take in products, repair as necessary and sell them on.	Completed
PZC10.5. Roll out of recycling arrangements across the Vale and work with schools and business to reduce waste and improve recycling rates.	On track
PZC10.6. Build a new Resource Recovery Centre in the Western Vale.	Slower than expected progress
PZC10.7. Commit to avoiding the export of any residual waste or recycling materials from the UK.	On track

Highlights

Despite slower than expected progress in identifying land for a Resource Recovery Centre in the Western Vale, **our waste services continue to be one of the leaders in Wales**. 54,870 tons of municipal waste was collected in 24/25 (include kerbside collections, HWRC and business), of which under 0.2% went to landfill. Our recycling rate has increased by 1% to 71.55% in 2024/25, with provisional data putting us 3rd in Wales out of 22 local authorities. We had a 200% increase in our reuse performance in the Enfy's shop and the collection of textiles through the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). Of waste streams that can't be recycled, such as black bag waste, there has been a decrease of over 12% in material going to the Viridor energy from waste plant in Cardiff.

The **soft plastic collection pilot**, funded by Welsh Government and supported by WRAP, began in April 2025 with collections from around 16,000 homes in the southern Vale. Exceeding expectations, From April to November 2025 around 60 Tons in total has been saved from the general waste stream. Before the pilot, soft plastics like bags and wrapping were part of the general waste stream. It now goes to a company in England to be recycled into products such as bags for life, supporting the circular economy and reducing the reliance on single use plastics. The pilot will run into early 2026. In ongoing action to divert more waste from the general waste stream, a **new [textiles recycling scheme](#)** was rolled out in Barry in November 2025. Progress will be spotlighted in the next Project Zero report as more data becomes available.



In work to further decarbonise waste services and build on the success of the two electric Romaquip waste collection lorries, work is progressing to appoint a company to install a **140kw PV array on the roof of our Resource Recovery Facility** which will allow us to decrease our reliance on the grid. Future plans also include the **development of our fleet parking facilities** at Atlantic Trading Estate, with the aim of increasing our EV charging capacity.

Project Zero: Challenge 11

Work with Partners to **reduce the risk of flooding**, manage our coastline and encourage everyone to take a more responsible approach to water use.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC11.1. Implement a Flood Risk Management Plan and a Shoreline Management Plan.	Slower than expected progress
PZC11.2. Ensure Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are delivered.	Business as usual
PZC11.3. Promote water efficiency measures in our work and buildings.	Business as usual
PZC11.4. Encourage the re-use of rainwater where possible.	No planned action

Highlights

Using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in developments and promoting water efficiency in our buildings and work is business as usual.

Following delays due to lack of capacity, development of an **updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) report and Flood Action Plan annex** is progressing internally during this period. To support this work, a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA), Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA), and additional specialist mapping support has been undertaken by consultants. Additional resource has been identified to assist in finalising the draft strategy and associated flood plan. Appropriate local objectives, measures and action plans are being worked on and will undergo internal consultation in quarter 3 of 2025. Following internal consultation, the draft suite of LFRMS and annexes will undergo public consultation. In the next reporting period, the draft strategy will be completed, and consultation will be undertaken.



Rainwater harvesting system installed at Llon Yr Ysgol – during and after installation.

As we continue to embed **water efficiency measures in our work and buildings**, rainwater harvesting systems have been successfully installed and are currently in use on the new Council housing developments at Lon yr Ysgol, Penarth; Llys yr Eglwys, Barry; and Clos Holm View Phase 2, Barry - serving 57 homes.

Across the wider Council estate we have been continuing to **monitor water leaks** and reporting back to relevant teams. At the end of September there were **27 leaks showing across the estate**. Most are less than 1m3 per day. Currently the Energy and Decarbonisation Team have a number of unfilled posts, so lack capacity to monitor progress. New appointments in the next period will fill this shortfall.

Project Zero: Challenge 12

Reduce the amount of **energy** we all use and 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.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC12.1. Develop and implement a Local Area Energy Plan and contribute to the work of the Cardiff Capital Region.	On track
PZC12.2. Work with developers and businesses to move away from fossil fuels and explore opportunities for investment in alternative energy supplies.	No planned action
PZC12.3. Support community renewable energy projects and develop district heating networks.	No planned action
PZC12.4. Provide information about being more energy efficient in the home including raising awareness about grants and schemes for homeowners and tenants.	On track

Highlights

In October 2025 the new **Local Areas Energy Plan (LAEP) Officer** took up a three-year post to focus on the roll out of the LAEP. This new officer will be taking ownership of a number of steps that sit under Project Zero Challenge 12, and action is anticipated once the role is embedded.

As part of our work to provide information about being more energy efficiency in the home, including information on grants and schemes for homeowners and tenants, the Regeneration team has led the Council's partnership with independent experts to bring **Solar Together** to eligible homeowners across the Vale. The new scheme offers solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage, plus stand-alone retrofit battery fitting. The scheme uses a group-buying approach, bringing households across the Vale together accessing competitive pricing, and helping residents through the process. The aim is to unlock the environmental and financial benefits of solar while making the process easier. Following direct mail letters in April to Vale residents and an online campaign, there were 747 registrations for Solar PV (the 2nd highest number of the 11 local authorities in the CCR region), plus additional battery registrations. 148 homes went on to accept the offer of solar panels, with 90 installations taking place to mid-November 2025. As table 2 shows, 1141 solar panels have been installed and 95 batteries in total – 89 batteries to complement the new solar panels, and 6 retrofit batteries installed to date.

Table 2. Solar together in the Vale of Glamorgan: data for 2025 scheme, to mid November 2025

	No. Accepted / paid	No. Installations to mid Nov '25	Panels installed	Total kW installed	Battery installed with solar panels	Total kW of battery installed with solar panels
Solar systems	148	90	1141	513	89	693
Retrofit battery only	11	6	n/a	75	n/a	n/a

In further work, the team have been raising awareness of energy saving initiatives for residents through our webpages, including information on the **ECO4 Flex scheme**. 79 ECO4 Flex applications were approved for April-September 2025, with the relevant declaration notifications issued to Ofgem. **Partnerships with Warm Wales and Nest** have also ensured that our residents are getting the support that they need.

Project Zero: Challenge 13

Revise our **Contract Management** and **Procurement** policies and practices to ensure they support our ambition to reduce waste and carbon emissions.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC13.1. Revise the procurement policy and strategy and train staff on more sustainable procurement to reduce consumption and encourage a circular economy.	Slower than expected progress
PZC13.2. Explore social and environmental clauses in contracts which place an increased focus on local supply chains and business, with a commitment to supporting the foundation economy.	Slower than expected progress

Highlights



Due to the complexity of the decarbonisation of procurement, progress against this challenge continues to be slower than expected. In this period the [Procurement Policy and Strategy](#) has been revised providing additional focus and direction on the circular economy as well as a number of other enhancements. The new policy and strategy also reflect the task and finish work of the Corporate Performance & Resources Scrutiny Committee. It is aligned more closely with that of our Ardal partners to enable a more consistent approach by Ardal's category managers. Ardal's pre-tender report has been strengthened to ask if officers / service areas have used and embedded the Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Guidance, and asking where decarbonisation and circular economy actions are being embedded in tender processes.

In support of one of the recommendations from [Future Generations Report 2025](#) for the public sector to become **deforestation free** by 2028, officers including those from The Big Fresh Catering Company, took part in a 'Deforestation Free' workshop hosted by our procurement partner Ardal and run by [Size of Wales](#). Deforestation Free status ensures that ensures that supply chains do not contribute to global deforestation, habitat loss or human rights violations, including child labour and the abuse of Indigenous Peoples' rights.

Following the development of a [procurement dashboard](#), launched in November 2025, that shows quarterly spend and carbon data by directorate, the next period will focus on raising awareness of the dashboard in order to drive cost and carbon savings.

Project Zero: Challenge 14

Invest in our existing housing stock to make it more energy efficient and deliver near zero carbon, or at a minimum A rated new Council homes.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC14.1. Deliver near zero carbon, or at a minimum A-rated new Council homes.	On track
PZC14.2. Improve the energy efficiency of the Council housing stock and utilise Optimised Retrofit Programmes.	Slower than expected progress

Highlights

As part of the ongoing programme of building new social housing and retrofitting existing housing and buildings, the [Llys yr Eglwys new housing development](#) was completed, with one and two bedroom apartments for and tenants with general needs. Built on the site of the former Colcot Clinic in Barry, the flats have environmentally positive features including solar panels, rainwater harvesting to provide grey water for toilet flushing, and a living wall made of vegetation to support biodiversity.



In a redevelopment of an existing 1950s building, '**The Olives**' supported housing scheme on Port Road, Barry (see photo), provides 10 self-contained apartments for those at risk of homelessness. The apartments have under floor heating and a solar energy part supply. The building is fitted with several PV panels on the main roof and lower roof, along with Air Source Heat Pumps and internal insulation panels that give the building an EPC A rating. The development has also been fitted with 2 EV chargers that will provide electricity to VoGC vehicles, enabling more efficient route planning for council staff using electric vehicles.

Challenges for our housing work include the ongoing reliance on Welsh Government funding, ensuring all properties are a minimum EPC C rating by 2030, and following a target energy pathway towards achieving EPC A.

There are additional budget pressures around **installing more mechanical ventilation systems** in our council homes, with an additional £500,000 needed to combat damp caused by historical issues such as modernisation, the removal of natural ventilation, coupled with higher working from home usage since Covid.

Some progress has been slower than expected as the **Optimised Retrofit programme contractor pulled out of the contract**. Emergency powers have allowed the second-place contractor to move forward with the contract. There are 26 building archetypes in the programme, which includes deep retrofit work including ground source heat pumps.

Project Zero: Challenge 15

Build new **zero carbon schools** and improve our existing school buildings to ensure they are energy efficient and create learning environments fit for the future.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC15.1. Invest in carbon reduction measures across the educational estate.	Business as usual
PZC15.2. Design new schools to meet BREEAM Excellent standard, delivering energy efficient buildings, enhancing habitats for wildlife, and reducing the carbon cost of construction.	On track
PZC15.3. Monitor and control carbon footprint at the construction stage and investigate options to address embodied carbon through natural materials and modern methods of construction.	On track
PZC15.4. Adopt a fabric first approach to achieve high thermal performance and install photovoltaic panels and/or air source heat pumps.	On track
PZC15.5. Improve school grounds biodiversity as a means of decarbonisation and map natural carbon sinks.	Slower than expected progress
PZC15.6. Focus on methods to further reduce in-use consumption, e.g. reducing catering, monitoring community usage.	Slower than expected progress

Highlights

There is ongoing scoping of a **former hockey pitch at Y St Curig to use for biodiversity enhancement**. The site has SINC designation (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation) from Natural Resources Wales. Due to governance issues, necessary cross departmental working and other organisational priorities, the project has taken more time than expected to get to this stage. Development of an **Education Eco-Directory** continued in this period and took more time than expected due to the technical nature of building the directory online and capacity challenges. The Directory was launched in November 2025.

Despite the previous contractor going into administration in September 2024, work has picked up again with a new contractor in place on the development of **Ysgol Llyn Derw** (formerly known as Ysgol y Deri Expansion project). The site will provide a 150-place Sixth Form Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision as part of an expansion of the existing Ysgol y Deri.

Ysgol Llyn Derw is in the final stages of construction, and the building is expected to achieve over the BREEAM Excellent standard. The site will have **energy saving technology** including PV arrays, batteries for energy storage, and air source heat pumps. The site will have a green roof, provide natural areas for habitats to thrive, and there is a segregated area to the north of the site which has been allocated for increasing the biodiversity net value on the site through various means such as bird/bat boxes, bug hotels, varieties of grasses and wild planting, all achievable through the vigorous Employers Requirements that were provided.



Project Zero: Challenge 16

Manage and use our land, buildings and other assets to support work to tackle climate change, rationalising what we need and improving sustainability and energy efficiency.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC16.1. Review the Asset Management Strategy.	Business as usual
PZC16.2. Progress the Space Project to modernise and rationalise Council buildings including the creation of more green areas.	On track
PZC16.3. Invest in and implement a programme of energy saving projects to reduce energy use across our buildings as part of the carbon management plan.	On track
PZC16.4. Maximise the potential of Council owned land and assets in the production of renewable energy and exploring ways in which this could benefit the local community.	Business as usual
PZC16.5. Encourage leaseholders to be more sustainable in how they use property leased from the Council.	Business as usual
PZC16.6. Implement plans to convert more street lighting and de-illuminate bollards.	On track

Highlights

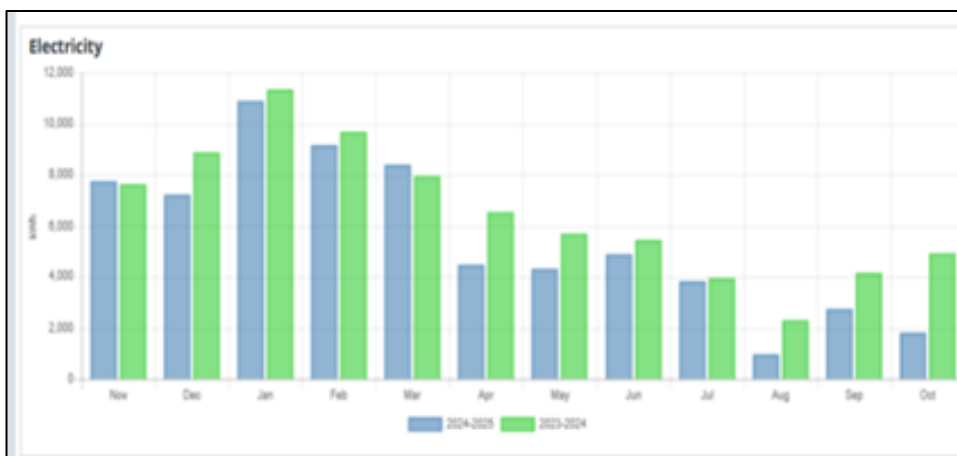


Figure above: Llanfair Primary School electricity usage: 2023/24 compared with 2024/25 (PV live from August 2025)

A number of steps under Challenge 16 are now business as usual.

As part of the ongoing programme to decarbonise the estate, at **Llanfair Primary School** in Cowbridge, a new roof with PV arrays was completed in July 2025. Batteries were also fitted to store excess energy produced by the panels.

Monitoring to date through SolarEdge has shown that 50% of the building's energy consumption has come directly from PV, 18% from the battery, and 32% from grid electricity. As a result, in September 2025 **the school saved around a third of their electricity bill** compared to September 2024 – see the change in electricity usage in the bar chart

At the **Flying Start family support services** building on Skomer Road, Barry, the existing roof covering had come to the end of its life cycle and required renewal. This presented an opportunity for the installation of photovoltaic panels (PV panels) using funding from the Welsh Government Early Years and Childcare Capital scheme.

A 8kWp 13 panel solar array was installed in March '25. The panels used have strong sustainability credentials such as a low carbon footprint, made in fair production conditions, and with high recycling rates in their raw materials.

Becoming operational in April 2025, **grid electricity use has significantly reduced** since then. Taken month by month, use is between 40% and 64% lower than the previous year. The building is the main office for Flying Start staff, housing the Health Team, Parent Support Team, Early Years Team and some of the Childcare Team. Since the work has been done there has been a significant reduction in running costs for the building. As the costs for the building are covered from the Flying Start grant, any savings can be put into additional community support to our families.



SUSTAINABILITY

50%
LESS CO₂

LOW CARBON FOOTPRINT

FAIR
LABOUR

FAIR PRODUCTION CONDITIONS

CIRCULAR
ECONOMY

HIGH RECYCLING RATE

low CO₂ footprint
< 220 kg eq CO₂ / Modul*, 50% less CO₂ than standard modules and certified according to PPE2 criteria

no forced or child labour, fair pay and regular audits by independent audits by independent experts

high recycling rate in raw materials
aluminum: 75 %, cell silicon: 45 %
sustainable use through long durability and recycling at the end of the product life cycle

* Specifications without frame, with frame < 280 kg eq CO₂/module

Project Zero: Challenge 17	
Reduce the number of car journeys staff make and increase the number of electric/low carbon vehicles across the Council’s fleet of vehicles.	
Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC17.1. Develop an electric /alternative fuelled vehicle strategy.	Slower than expected progress
PZC17.2. Promote and incentivise more sustainable staff travel including corporate membership for Nextbike, pool bikes, local bus services and TfW rail service with reduced charges for staff, non-car parking days for staff and a cycle to work scheme.	On track
PZC17.3. Develop hub facilities for staff to work from to reduce the need to travel.	Completed

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Highlights



Transitioning the fleet to EVs is slower than expected, primarily due to the cost. A **full costing of transition to EV** has shown that an additional £18 million would be required over the next 5 years. As yet uncoded is the additional EV charging infrastructure that would be required.

A successful application was submitted to the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) for funding to **replace seven diesel vans with EVs**. Five of the new vans will be used by the Highways maintenance team, and two by the cleansing team. Both teams have high annual mileage at of between 6,000 –8,000 miles per year.

The **two new waste Romaquip waste lorries** have been in use since April 2025 undertaking waste collections across the Vale. The roll out has been successful, with high driver satisfaction. From April to October 2025 50% more CO₂ has been saved in the period due to the switch from diesel to electric charging. These vehicles also have a lighter impact on local communities during waste collection rounds, with lower noise impact and no exhaust fumes.

Project Zero: Challenge 18

Invest in technology to support homeworking and online services reducing the need for travel and office space.

Step	Q 1 & 2 RAG rating
PZC18.1. Utilise new technologies and digital practices to reduce electricity usage and reduce carbon emissions.	On track
PZC18.2. Implement a new Digital strategy to support increased use of technology and a reduction in office space and travel.	On track

During Q1 and Q2 we completed the design and scrutiny phases for **migrating around 180 on-premise servers to Amazon Web Services (AWS)**. This included validating the cloud architecture, confirming security and resilience patterns, and preparing the first wave of workloads for transition. The sustainability assessment for the programme shows a **projected 86% reduction in CO₂ emissions** once the migration is complete.

AWS offers far greater energy efficiency than traditional on-premises datacentres. Its hyperscale infrastructure uses modern, purpose-built hardware, advanced cooling systems, and a renewable-energy-led power mix that significantly reduces the carbon footprint per compute unit. By moving our services into this environment, we replace ageing high-consumption equipment with a platform designed to deliver the same capacity using far less energy, directly supporting Project Zero's carbon-reduction goals.

As part of the ongoing delivery of the digital strategy in support of increased technology use and a reduction in office space and travel, **a number of projects have been delivered which will lower emissions** including: a process to remove un-necessary return to office for housing repairs; an enhanced pest control system limiting return to office; support of implementation for Eich Lle; and delivery of Aceni Hybrid Mail, reducing outgoing postage.