



## **CABINET - 19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2025**

**SUBJECT:           DECARBONISATION ANNUAL REPORT NOVEMBER 2024**

**REPORT BY:       CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**

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### **1.     PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1    To provide Cabinet with an update on the work undertaken across the authority to deliver the aims of the Decarbonisation Strategy 2030 net zero carbon target and including the new work areas of developing a 2050 territorial emissions strategy and climate adaptation.
- 1.2    To seek Cabinet approval of the recommendations on the next steps across the three workstreams.

### **2.     SUMMARY**

- 2.1    In June 2019 Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) declared a Climate Emergency and committed to 'making Caerphilly County Borough Council a net zero carbon local authority by 2030'.
- 2.2    This report summarises the second Annual Report produced by the Decarbonisation Team summarising progress since November 2023. The full Annual Report is attached as Appendix 1. As well as setting out progress Caerphilly County Borough Council is making towards its target of being net zero carbon as an organisation by 2030, the report also includes 2 new sections. Firstly, an additional section on progress in developing a net zero carbon 2050 strategy for the whole county borough, including residents, organisations and businesses in line with Welsh Government's "territorial" aspirations. Secondly a section on the work on climate change adaptation.
- 2.3    There were some notable achievements over 2024 including:
  - CCBC has successfully achieved Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation accreditation with the Carbon Literacy Project.
  - Inclusion of Decarbonisation in MTC Business Case documents
  - Installation of heat pumps at Ty Penallta
  - Adoption of Asset Management Strategy 2025-2030
  - Ground was broken on the Oakdale Place low carbon mixed tenure

residential scheme

- Planning approval for Cwm lfor Solar Farm & agreement to sell
- Planting a further 24,350 trees to a total of 105,350 taking us over a third of the way to the 300,000-tree target
- Publication of Carbon Reduction Plan Guidance and delivery of CRP validation training
- 65 attendees at 2050 Strategy Focus Group Event
- Over 20 attendees at Green Libraries Author Talks

2.4 The Action Plan is now reviewed annually by each of the 4 working groups. Updates have been provided for each of the actions, and an assessment of progress against each action has been undertaken. Of the 79 actions:

- 27 have been completed,
- 22 are making good progress,
- 17 are making reasonable progress,
- 11 are making poor progress
- 2 have not yet started

A full update of all the actions and their assessed progress is attached as Appendix 2.

2.5 Carbon emissions data was submitted through the Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Scheme in September 2024, in line with the Welsh Government reporting requirements. For the reporting year 2023/24 where we reported an emissions total of 98,632,058 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e (23,150,857 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e operational emissions plus 75,481,201 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e supply chain emissions). This was offset by -7,386,283 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e through our land use, giving a submitted carbon emissions figure of 91,245,775 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e (or 91,246 tCO<sub>2</sub>e).

2.6 The reported emissions for 2023/24 show a decrease of 4,648,719 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e or 4.85%. This decrease was mostly driven by an improvement in the accuracy of reporting.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 That Cabinet notes the progress made to date on the actions set out in the Decarbonisation Annual Report and two new reporting areas.

3.2 That Cabinet consider and approve the 7 recommendations set out below:

Recommendation 1: That the Reduce and Produce working groups are merged into one Operational Emissions working group to streamline delivery, avoid duplication and ensure a holistic approach to reducing operational emissions.

Recommendation 2: That carbon emission metrics are updated to reflect the shift towards corporate responsibility. Service Area Baselines are to be

replaced with Corporate Baselines aligned to areas of responsibility to facilitate the development of carbon budgets and specific route maps to zero for the various components of our operational emissions.

Recommendation 3: That over 2025 a fully costed programme for decarbonising the corporate estate is developed considering capital and revenue requirements to achieve net zero.

Recommendation 4: That a programme of Carbon Literacy is developed and delivered to elected members and officers with an initial focus on key officers aligned to Mobilising Team Caerphilly.

Recommendation 5: That decarbonisation and net zero targets are further embedded into decision making as part of the MTC and Integrated Impact Assessment processes.

Recommendation 6: That we continue our work towards the all-Wales territorial 2050 net zero target in developing a 2050 Action Plan in partnership with Gwent PSB Local Delivery Group members.

Recommendation 7: That we scope out and identify resource requirements for further work on climate adaptation aligned to the updated Welsh Government Strategy for Adaptation.

#### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To contribute to the Council's commitment to become net zero carbon by 2030.
- 4.2 To develop a partnership approach to contribute towards Welsh Government's territorial net zero target of 2050.
- 4.3 To ensure that we are adapting to the changing climate.

#### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 In June 2019 Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) declared a Climate Emergency and committed to 'making Caerphilly County Borough Council a net zero carbon local authority by 2030'.
- 5.2 2023/24 marked the second year with a dedicated Decarbonisation team in place within the organisation. Recruitment of a team of four officers was completed in January 2023. The initial work focused on establishing structures to take forward the work, including establishing working groups to take forward each of the main themes of the Decarbonisation Strategy "Reduce, Produce, Offset and Buy". This structure is now in place and each working group has taken responsibility for their area of the action plan, including reviewing their section of the Decarbonisation Action Plan and ensuring progress.

- 5.3 The Action Plan is now reviewed annually by each of the 4 working groups. Updates have been provided for each of the actions, and an assessment of progress against each action has been undertaken. Of the 79 actions:
- 27 have been completed,
  - 22 are making good progress,
  - 17 are making reasonable progress,
  - 11 are making poor progress
  - 2 have not yet started
- 5.4 Since the previous Annual Report presented in November 2023 there have been significant changes in the financial position of the Authority which has resulted in changes in project prioritisation, resourcing and reporting. This has meant that a greater focus has been placed on work which directly reduces costs and results in savings. Much decarbonisation work fits into this category with every kilowatt hour of energy that is saved resulting in a financial saving.
- 5.5 The development of the new overarching Mobilising Team Caerphilly (MTC) programme has resulted in changes in project initiation process and project approval processes. Decarbonisation implications are included in the new processes and the Decarbonisation Team routinely provides reports, comments and calculations on the carbon emissions associated with major decisions as part of the business planning and project approval process.
- 5.6 As part of the MTC work there is a move to centralising of services through development of Corporate Landlord and Corporate Fleet functions. The Decarbonisation Team has been actively involved in this work and it is anticipated that these changes will provide significant opportunities to manage and drive down carbon emissions from our properties and vehicles.

### **Corporate and Cross-Cutting Actions**

- 5.7 The Corporate and Cross-Cutting section of the Decarbonisation Action Plan focuses firstly on measuring and understanding organisational emissions so that actions for emissions reductions are targeted and measurable. Secondly, there is a need for dissemination of this information and knowledge. A programme of awareness raising, and skills development is key to ensuring that decarbonisation is embedded into the organisation's ways of working. A Detailed information on progress against targets for this area are contained in Appendix 1. Below are some of the key achievements.
- 5.8 The Decarbonisation Team reviewed the previous Action Plan, revised and agreed the Corporate and Cross-Cutting section into 14 actions (See Appendix 2).  
Of these actions:
- 5 are completed

- 2 are going well with good progress
- 2 have had reasonable progress
- 3 have made poor progress
- 2 are not yet started

- 5.9 For the reporting year 2023/24 we reported an emissions total of 98,632,058 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e (23,150,857 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e operational emissions plus 75,481,201 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e supply chain emissions). This was offset by -7,386,283 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e through our land use, giving a submitted carbon emissions figure of **91,245,775** kgCO<sub>2</sub>e (or 91,246 tCO<sub>2</sub>e).
- 5.10 The reported emissions for 2023/24 had a decrease of 4,648,719 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e or **4.85%**. This decrease was mostly driven by an improvement in the accuracy of reporting. Supply Chain emissions reduced by 7.04% as more of these emissions were able to be ascertained more accurately and moved into operational emissions, namely fleet fuel card usage.
- 5.11 Operational emissions increased by 4.71%. This was driven by an improvement in the methodology for estimating commuting emissions, leading to an increase of 64.54%. There was a 33.36% increase in Business Travel (also known as Grey Fleet emissions) due to an increase of 200,000 miles in mileage claims via expenses.
- 5.12 Caerphilly County Borough Council has successfully achieved Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation accreditation with the Carbon Literacy Project. In total, 40 officers have now received Carbon Literacy Training since September 2023. This training was delivered by an external partner Cynnal Cymru. Three CCBC owned courses are in development to begin delivery in late 2024. These courses are each intended to be suit specific audiences; the first, now fully accredited course, is for elected members and senior leaders; one is for officers; and the last is for residents. The latter two courses focus on Carbon Literacy through numeracy in partnership with the Multiply team.
- 5.13 As outlined above, carbon considerations are now being included within the business cases of projects through the MTC programme. Alongside this, wider sustainability and environmental impacts are also being considered within the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process. Reviewing the current IIA process and how these considerations could be bolstered to deepen the requirements to consider decarbonisation and the wider impacts of decisions, policies and projects has been identified as a priority for 2024/25.
- 5.14 There are inconsistencies with the Welsh Government reporting methodology which means that there is no benefit from developing ambitious mitigation projects such as building a solar farm or major tree planting programmes. A public sector organisation spending £14 million on building a solar farm, is

adding £14 million worth of carbon onto their footprint. If this solar farm is built without a Private Wire, current reporting will not allow the organisation to receive the benefit of the renewable energy generated by the project, despite contributing to the decarbonisation of the local energy mix and reducing territorial emissions. Similarly planting trees has a negative effect on the carbon footprint of organisations and the positive carbon sequestration cannot be recognised for 20 years within the land use section of the report. This is incompatible with net zero 2030 ambitions for the public sector and the Decarbonisation Team is actively lobbying for changes to the methodology.

## **Reduce Actions**

5.15 The scope of the work under the Reduce heading means that this section of the Decarbonisation Action Plan is the largest, crossing many services and existing work streams. The identified targeted areas for action are:

- Existing Buildings – Corporate and Domestic
- New Developments – Corporate and Domestic
- Streetlighting
- Travel & Transport
- Waste Management

5.16 The Reduce working group and other stakeholders reviewed the 27 reduce actions (See Appendix 2).

Of these actions:

- 5 are completed
- 10 are going well with good progress
- 7 have had reasonable progress
- 5 are making poor progress

Detailed information on progress against targets for this area are contained in Appendix 1. Below are some of the key achievements.

5.17 Outside of supply chain emissions, emissions from the use of buildings continue to account for the largest proportion of organisational emissions and therefore have received continued focus over 2024. Through the Reduce Working Group, high level estimates of costs and required projects have been compiled to decarbonise the corporate estate, including schools. However, little progress has been made on the delivery of decarbonisation projects across the estate.

5.18 An updated Asset Management Strategy has been adopted which details the approach to decarbonisation moving forward – Smaller, Greener, Smarter. Various workstreams are pulled together through this strategy – Corporate Landlord, Asset Efficiency & Rationalisation and Community Asset Transfer. The delivery of these workstreams to decarbonise the estate will require significant resources, both capital and revenue, to bring together the learnings, assess each building's fabric, current & future use and plot a route forward.

- 5.19 CCBC owns 10,682 homes which represents ~13.8% of all households within the county borough (2021 Census Data). The Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) 23 programme delivery has continued through Caerphilly Homes, with the completion of programmes improving sections of council housing stock to EPC A or high EPC B. Additionally, triple glazing has been installed at 90 properties over 2024. Additionally, in Bryn Carno 86 properties in total, including 36 Council properties, are undergoing a replacement scheme to reinsulate homes and remedy defective EWI installed during a previous Welsh Government scheme.
- 5.20 The Council continues to deliver against its commitment to deliver 1000 new, affordable, low carbon homes by 2033. Developments including a 45 apartment later living scheme and a 92-home flagship development at Oakdale Place. Both developments started on site in 2024. The commitment to deliver new, affordable, low carbon homes that are energy efficient and lower fuel costs for customers is outlined in the Council's Caerphilly Homes Development and Governance Strategy.
- 5.21 As part of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme Plasyfelin Primary School will be the Authority's first school to achieve Welsh Government's Sustainable Community for Learning Net Zero School standards, which is currently progressing through the RIBA design stages. All subsequent school build projects will be required to demonstrate carbon reduction techniques and technologies and achieve Net Zero Carbon Operational and meet an embodied carbon target.
- 5.22 As of September 2024, a total of 557 vehicles made up our fleet. This number represents a slight increase when compared September 2023 but still a significant decrease from the highs of over 620 in the summer of 2020. There has also been a significant change in the make-up of the fleet with an increase in hired vehicles to replace vehicles returned to Specialist Fleet Services (SFS) at the end of their individual lease periods.
- 5.23 Through the MTC programme, the ongoing Fleet review has superseded the Reduce Working Group's existing work on decarbonising the council's fleet of vehicles and the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure. Through this process, the team have been working with Fleet Services on the creation of an updated Vehicle Replacement Strategy to enable the transition to EV or ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV).
- 5.24 Poor progress has been made on the reduction of grey fleet and commuting mileage. This will have a renewed focus for 2025, as emissions from grey fleet have risen by 33% from 2022/23 to 2023/24. This will be supported by the findings of Cardiff University Data Science Academy studies on HART grey fleet mileage.
- 5.25 Decarbonisation is being woven through the construction of new domestic and non-domestic buildings. Focus has been on reducing operational emissions of completed buildings alongside reducing emissions through the construction

phases.

- 5.26 The impact on reported emissions of the implementation of the waste strategy will not be realised until the next reporting round after April 2024, however, initial indications are that large quantities of waste are now going through recycling over entering the residual waste streams.

### **Produce Actions**

- 5.27 The Decarbonisation Strategy acknowledged the importance of generating our own “green” electricity and heat. The group has reviewed the 13 Produce actions. Of these actions:
- 5 have been completed
  - 4 are going well with good progress
  - 2 have had reasonable progress
  - 2 have made poor progress

Detailed information on progress against targets for this area are contained in Appendix 1. Below are some of the key achievements.

- 5.28 Planning approval for the development of the flag ship, 20MW Cwm Ifor Solar Farm was granted in May 2024. It is anticipated that when operational the solar farm would generate 23GWhrs of electricity per year, or enough to power around 6,000 homes. In September 2024 Cabinet agreed to sell the Cwm Ifor Solar Farm Project on the open market. This would mean that anyone can come forward to purchase the solar farm including public bodies, community energy groups or the private sector.
- 5.29 The original Decarbonisation Strategy identified that the Council has local arrangements in place at Bryn Quarry where Council collected food waste is converted into green energy via an Anaerobic Digester. The linked Energy Prospectus highlighted the opportunity to take electricity directly from this site, via a hardwire and utilise it at the Council’s Tredomen Campus. The outline business case has now been completed. Negotiations have begun on Heads of Terms and the principles of any potential power purchase agreements.
- 5.30 A reassessment of the feasibility of a hydro-electric scheme at Cwmcarn Forest Drive has been completed. Financial modelling completed as part of this process has shown that the project would be viable with grant funding opportunities in future.
- 5.31 Engagement has continued with the Coal Authority over the feasibility of mine water heat network schemes within the borough, with a current focus on the Heads of Valleys Regeneration Area. Due to this early engagement, Caerphilly CBC are well placed within Wales to receive further support in the development of a scheme at Pontlottyn. This scheme is currently going through further feasibility after high level studies showed the promise of the project.



- 5.32 Significant funding has been secured to further develop green hydrogen projects within the borough at Coed Top. The focus of the current Innovate UK project is on overcoming the non-technical barriers to decarbonisation and helping communities in understanding how energy projects benefit them.
- 5.33 Additional Hybrid2 funding is supporting the initial feasibility work based on 15MW of solar or wind generation with a circa 10MW electrolyser. After an extensive land asset review, which included internal discussions with Regeneration & Planning, and external stakeholders including National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED), two initial sites have been identified for consideration on council land. The project takes into account ethical water sources and would use water from the Council owned reed bed facility in Nelson.

### **Offsetting Actions**

- 5.34 It is inevitable that through delivering its services the authority will emit carbon. Therefore, in order to achieve net zero carbon these emissions will need to be offset. There are two principal ways that this can be done, carbon sequestration (capturing carbon usually by planting trees or by habitat management) or by purchasing carbon units/offsetting credits. In January, the Offset Group reviewed and updated the Offset Action Plan. The agreed new Offset Action Plan contains 12 actions (see Appendix 2) Of these actions:
- 7 have been completed
  - 2 are going well with good progress
  - 2 have had reasonable progress
  - 1 not yet started

Detailed information on progress against targets for this area are contained in Appendix 1. Below are some of the key achievements.

- 5.35 Further work has been completed understanding and evaluating authority owned land for the purposes of offsetting. This has been complimented by the completion of a study to build the business case for offsetting projects. The team have further developed the mechanism for identifying land suitable for offsetting, building in wider environmental and biodiversity considerations to ensure that the best use possible is made of the land. The authority owns 1,140 hectares of forest land which offset 8,283,848 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2023/24
- 5.36 An additional 24,350 trees were planted across authority owned land over the 2023/24 planting season. 3,000 of these trees were planted with volunteers during two events held in March 2024 and co-ordinated in support with PSB partners including GAVO and NRW.
- 5.37 The team are collaborating with City Science on an Innovate UK funded project to build a tool for a Nature Investment Land Assessment which has the aim of facilitating investment in nature whilst prioritising sequestration and biodiversity benefits.

- 5.38 A Cabinet commitment was given to “set a target of planting 300,000 trees by 2030, where land availability allows”. To date a total of 105,350 trees have planted since the Decarbonisation Strategy was approved.

### **Buy Actions**

- 5.39 Around 75% of our carbon emissions are as a result of the goods and services that we buy. In January 2024 the Buy Action Plan was reviewed and updated. The agreed action plan consists of 13 actions (See Appendix 2). Of these actions:

- 5 have been completed
- 4 are going well with good progress
- 4 have had reasonable progress

Detailed information on progress against targets for this area are contained in Appendix 1. Below are some of the key achievements.

- 5.40 The Spikes Cavell data from 2023/24 has been analysed through the Welsh Government reporting. Through this analysis the group has agreed that the target areas for intervention and further work will be:

- Social Care
- Construction
- Food
- IT Products & Services
- Road Transport

- 5.41 It is recognised that there is significant overlap with the Third Party Spend workstream of the MTC transformation programme and as such the Procurement and Decarbonisation teams have been working closely to ensure that emissions are considered as part of the Third Party Spend review.

- 5.42 The Buy Group have been developing resources for officers on how to incorporate decarbonisation into the procurement cycle, including the provision of standard clauses and terms which can be used through contracts to align with the authority’s decarbonisation objectives.

- 5.43 Social Care providers have been engaged and worked with the authority on a pilot of a social care specific carbon calculator to enable smaller providers to begin to understand their emissions with a view to taking targeted action to reducing them.

- 5.44 Through the EdTech programme, suppliers have been engaged to understand their carbon reduction journeys. This is important in developing specifications and terms within procurement so that officers can advise on what is reasonable to expect of certain sectors.

- 5.45 A two fronted approach has been taken to construction spend. Robert Price, as a supplier of materials have been engaged to understand the emissions

embedded within the products that they supply to the council. Alongside this, the Decarbonisation team have been brought in to discussions with project teams by Procurement to ensure that (i) large developments are considering decarbonisation to the extent required for the authority's 2030 target, and (ii) are able to work with the team to provide higher quality data for the annual carbon reporting.

- 5.46 Regionally, the Buy Group have been working with the South East Wales Procurement Network to create guidance on the implementation of WPPN 06/21 which stipulates the provision of Carbon Reduction Plan for contracts over a £5 million threshold. This guidance has been live for over 6 months and is due for review in January.

### **Territorial 2050 Net Zero Target**

- 5.47 In 2021, Welsh Government agreed to a 2050 target for the whole of Wales to achieve Net Zero. Since the declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, the Council have been focused on reducing organisational emissions in pursuit of being operationally net zero by 2030. The Caerphilly Local Delivery Group of the Gwent Public Services Board agreed an action to author a partnership strategy document to achieve the 2050 territorial net zero target.
- 5.48 In April 2024, two officers funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund were put in place to lead on the development of this strategy. The ambition being that the strategy would be created over 2024/25 and completed by the end of March 2025.
- 5.49 A Task and Finish group was established consisting of members from across the authority and public sector partners including Cardiff Capital Region, GAVO, Gwent Police, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. Through this group it was determined that the format of the 2050 strategy would follow the Welsh Carbon Budget 2 with chapters focusing on:
- Energy
  - Travel
  - Land Use & Agriculture
  - Waste
  - Organisations including Business
  - Buildings
- 5.50 In support of the development of this strategy, a focus group event was held at Ty Penallta in September 2024 which was well attended by 65 residents and businesses.
- 5.51 Accompanying the development of the strategy, officers have SPF interventions for both businesses and residents that form the basis for the funding. Officers have been engaging with businesses and residents on how they can reduce their emissions through various measures such as home energy efficiency improvements.

- 5.52 For businesses, officers have conducted in person carbon reduction workshops, networking events and provided signposting to support businesses within the borough. For residents, officers have participated in public events during Green Libraries Week, engaged at community events and conducted carbon literacy follow up conversations to provide support and guidance on steps that can be taken within the home.
- 5.53 Through collaboration with the employability team, three academy placements have been taken on with the Decarbonisation Team to assist with the pulling together of the 2050 strategy.

### **Local Area Energy Planning**

- 5.54 Beginning in 2023, Welsh Government commissioned the development of Local Area Energy Plans (LAEP) for all local authorities in Wales (except for Pembrokeshire, Conwy, Bridgend and Newport who had already piloted the LAEP process). The consultants commissioned to develop the LAEP for Caerphilly County Borough (and the other local authorities within the Cardiff Capital Region) were ARUP, Carbon Trust and Afallen. The LAEP is a partnership document which sets out the needs for the entire borough and its delivery is not solely the responsibility of the council, but of all partners within the county borough.
- 5.55 The purpose of the LAEP is to provide short-term low regrets actions and interventions for the decarbonisation of the local energy system. Within the Caerphilly LAEP, the council and other stakeholders have reaffirmed commitment to existing actions that are focused on these short-term priorities. However, further work is needed to fully comprehend the wide-ranging complexities of the medium and long-term collaborative actions required to achieve a net zero energy system by 2050.
- 5.56 The Decarbonisation Team received the final draft of the main LAEP report at the end of October 2024. The team are waiting for the remaining documents (Technical Report & Renewable Energy Prospectus) to be finalised and for the suite of documents to be translated so that they can be brought through internal governance processes for endorsement.
- 5.57 Work has begun to collate the identified local priority intervention areas in each local area into regional and national energy plans. The Decarbonisation team continue to be involved in regional and national LAEP forums to contribute to the shaping of the delivery of these plans. How the delivery of the LAEPs will be resourced and co-ordinated moving forward is yet to be established by Welsh Government.

### **Climate Adaptation**

- 5.58 Climate adaptation is about making changes to live with the effects of climate change. For example, building improved flood defences to protect against increased rain fall or planting drought-resistant crops in areas that are getting

drier. This is distinct from climate mitigation which is about reducing or preventing the causes of climate change.

- 5.59 Welsh Government released an updated Climate Adaptation Strategy for Wales at the end of October 2024 which outlines the interrelated risks and approaches within Wales and identifies a way forward through an updated action plan for Welsh Government in taking further action on adaptation. With the publication of the WG strategy for adaptation, it is anticipated that there will be a renewed focus on this climate change challenge. The WLGA Climate Strategy Panel have started a new Adaptation task and finish which will be developing a programme to support councils with adaptation planning and service resilience.
- 5.60 The Gwent Wellbeing plan is committed to supporting communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change, recognising that some communities are more exposed to floods, heatwaves, air pollution and other climate risks to health. The first step in setting out an Adaptation Strategy for Gwent is to undertake a Climate Risk Assessment in line with national guidance. Through the Gwent PSB Regional Support Funding, two decarbonisation officers attended MET Office training on assessing climate risk that was co-ordinated by NRW colleagues. Colleagues from across the PSB including NRW, ABUHB and other local authorities attending the training to build skills and understanding within the region with a view to collaborating on a regional approach to adaptation.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 It has been assumed that the WG guidance and net zero carbon reporting methodology will not change. Previous reporting has changed which has made it impossible to compare year on year progress.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The IIA identifies that as this report is a summary of progress against the Decarbonisation strategy there is no direct impact to service delivery. However, individual elements and projects have their own IIA where required.

There will be CO<sub>2</sub> and greenhouse gas savings which will provide health and wellbeing benefits, and other advantages to be gained from the implementation of the strategy.

The full IIA can be found at: [IIA Decarbonisation Report](#)

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 A budget of £500,000 was allocated as an earmarked service revenue reserve for decarbonisation work by Cabinet in 2020/21. As of 30<sup>th</sup> April

2024, earmarked service revenue reserve has been used as match funding (£56,344) for electric vehicle charging infrastructure in 2021/22. A further £180,000 was allocated from this reserve figure by Cabinet in April 2023 towards the Cwm Ifor Solar Farm project. A further £20,454.65 has been allocated towards electric vehicle establishment costs, leaving a balance of £243,201.35. In May 2024, it was agreed that the remaining balance would be used to extend the fixed-term contracts of the Decarbonisation Project Officer, Fleet Review Officer and Decarbonisation Support Officer to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 to ensure continued delivery of the Decarbonisation Strategy.

- 8.2 The internal Salix Local Authority Energy Fund (LAEF) invest to save scheme has invested over £2 million in energy efficient technologies in projects in corporate, non-domestic buildings which meet the scheme and pay back criteria. This will continue to be an important element in delivering our net zero ambitions.
- 8.3 The authority has been successful in securing funding from various grant sources to support this work. £119,030.73 Innovate UK funding has been secured to fund a Decarbonisation Project Manager post focusing on the development of a decarbonisation toolkit for residents. £14,822 of Innovate UK funding has been secured to support with the development of the Nature Investment Land Assessment Tool. £12,660 was secured from Welsh Government for EV charging infrastructure. £10,000 has been secured to support with the development of the Local Area Energy Plan. £23,748.89 has been secured for Hybrid phase 2 working on the development of hydrogen projects. SPF funding has been utilised to fund posts developing the 2050 net zero strategy for the borough. Identifying and securing grant support is an important element of achieving our decarbonisation targets.
- 8.4 Calculating the cost of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 is extremely difficult. Tools and studies to identify the cost of various elements of the work are in progress. This will provide high level costings for the decarbonisation of non-domestic buildings, investment in renewable energy generation to meet future needs, and offsetting forecasted residual emissions by 2030 to achieve Net Zero Carbon. This work is to be prioritised for the next year as a key action for the Decarbonisation Team.
- 8.5 Specific, detailed, and costed proposals for future work will be developed and brought forward as future reports for consideration.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Corporate Director Lead will be the Corporate Director for Economy and Environment. The Decarbonisation agenda is currently being driven by the decarbonisation team as well as the energy team in property services and in the longer term it would be more appropriate to create a single structure for delivering decarbonisation with all staff reporting to a single Head of Service. The decarbonisation performance data will feature in the Economy and Environment Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA) and Annual reports

on progress against the agreed Decarbonisation Action Plan will be provided to the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee followed by Cabinet. Annual reports to Welsh Government through the Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Scheme will also be required.

- 9.2 For the authority to achieve net zero by 2030 a whole organisation approach and cultural shift is required. Significant work will be required to build knowledge, understanding, and the skills required to enable all employees across the authority to play their part in delivering the Decarbonisation Strategy. Alongside this, resources will be required through the Mobilising Team Caerphilly programmes and projects to ensure that decarbonisation is properly considered, and emissions reductions are embedded into these processes.
- 9.3 The Decarbonisation Team will have a key role to play in driving forward this agenda, co-ordinating work, facilitating training and managing individual projects. The four corporate pillar groups; Reduce, Produce, Offset and Buy are an important element, which require continuation of specific input from services. These groups are being co-ordinated by the Decarbonisation Team. The Team will also work with each area of corporate responsibility to enable understanding of emissions, identify priorities for reduction and to support with decarbonisation projects. Project specific work will be undertaken with all services, but will require input from Finance, Procurement, Legal and Property, plus support from HR, IT and Policy on specific work. Additionally, opportunities will be considered to engage employees in a “bottom up” approach to assist in mobilising employees in this programme of works.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 The views of the listed consultees have been reflected within this report.
- 10.2 The Decarbonisation Annual Report was considered by the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

One member welcomed the Carbon Literacy training offered to members and encouraged other members to take up the offer in future.

Another member queried how Caerphilly County Borough Council compares with other local authorities in setting a 2030 target given the presence of the 2050 target and in progress to date. Welsh Government set an ambition for the whole of the Welsh Public Sector to achieve net zero by 2030 and so all 22 local authorities are covered and working towards this. This is distinct from the all-Wales territorial net zero target of 2050 which also includes residents and businesses and is legally binding. Due to the varying nature of all local authorities across Wales with regards to the number of buildings, the size of fleets, the amount of streetlighting etc, it is not useful to compare emissions totals as we would not be comparing like with like. When Welsh Government first mandated the Public Sector Net Zero Emissions Reporting, it was agreed amongst all stakeholders that the purpose of this was not to create a league

table but to gauge progress and share best practices across Wales.

Another member queried the purpose of planting trees when the council will not see the benefit to its carbon emissions for 20 years and asked about the veracity of the emissions reporting methodology used. Whilst the planting of trees between now and 2030 will not contribute to carbon sequestration in support of the 2030 organisational net zero target, it will contribute to the territorial 2050 net zero target. Aside from this, tree planting has other benefits to the environment in improving green infrastructure and supporting biodiversity and nature recovery. The planting of trees is motivated by it being the right thing to do rather than the benefit that the council receives to its carbon emissions footprint. Officers calculate emissions using the Welsh Government mandated Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting framework. This methodology is aligned to the United Nations Greenhouse Gas Protocol which is the most widely used and recognised reporting methodology for greenhouse gas emissions in the world.

The report was then duly noted by Committee Members in accordance with the recommendations set out in the report.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

### **11.1 Climate Change Act 2008.**

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Consultees: Cllr James Pritchard – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change  
Cllr Nigel George – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Property and Highways  
Cllr A Whitcombe Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr S Williams Vice Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive  
Richard Edmunds, Chief Executive  
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director of Economy and Environment  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer  
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S.151 Officer  
Leanne Sykes, Deputy Head of Financial Services and S.151 Officer  
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy and Programme Director Place Shaping  
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer



Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services and Programme  
Director for Service Transformation  
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure  
Robert Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and  
Leisure Services  
Nick Taylor-Williams, Head of Housing  
Jo Williams, Assistant Director – Adult Services  
Gareth Jenkins, Interim Corporate Director Social Services  
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager  
Ian Evans, Procurement and Information Manager  
Allan Dallimore, Regeneration Services Manager  
Ryan Thomas, Planning Services Manager  
Kevin Eadon-Davies, Green Space Strategy and Cemeteries  
Manager  
Paul Rossiter, Energy and Water Officer  
Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1.** Decarbonisation Annual Report November 2024

**Appendix 2.** Updated Decarbonisation Action Plan November 2024