

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CLIMATE EMERGENCY STRATEGY</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>COUNTY COUNCIL</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>24 OCTOBER 2019</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>

## 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To set out Monmouthshire's strategy and action plan to respond to the Climate Emergency declared by Council in May 2019 and describing the objectives and actions to reduce the council's carbon emissions.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Council approve the ten objectives within the plan, listed in paragraph 3.7, which cover the areas of activity that the council will need to focus on to achieve its goal of reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2030.
- 2.2 That council endorse the action plan which will be an evolving document as new technologies develop and other opportunities arise.
- 2.3 That a member led-working group is created to accelerate progress and take responsibility for ensuring the action plan continues to evolve and be shaped by emerging evidence and cutting-edge practice and opportunities.

## 3 KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 In 2019 no one can be blind to the threat that climate change poses to our eco-system, our local environment and our way of life. There can be little doubt that this is one of the biggest challenges facing humanity. Carbon emissions from fossil fuels are one of the main causes of climate change and as a council we are striving to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- 3.2 On 16th May 2019 Council unanimously agreed to declare a Climate Emergency and passed the following motion:
  - That this council will ensure it will reduce its own carbon emissions to net zero before the Welsh Government target of 2030.
  - That this council will develop a strategy and associated costed action plans to aim to deliver these targets as soon as practicable.
  - That this council revise the Corporate plan, Well-being plan, Local development plans and other relevant plans and policies in support of above.
  - Publicise this declaration of a climate emergency to residents and businesses in the county and encourage, support and enable them to take their own actions to reduce their carbon emissions in line with a 2030 target.

- Work with partners across the county and other councils and organisations to help develop and implement best practice methods in limiting global warming to less than 1.5 degrees C.

- 3.3 A strategy has been developed and an associated action plan produced that begins to set out the things we will be focusing on over this period. We will do this while continuing to provide the services that help form the social foundations on which our communities are built. We have already made a start:
- Councillors have called on our pension fund to divest itself of investments in fossil fuels and this has started to happen
  - We've built and operate a solar farm that forms the significant part of the £650,000 of renewable energy that the council generates ever year
  - More than 99% of the energy we buy comes from renewable sources
  - We are piloting with riversimple to pilot hydrogen powered cars in Abergavenny and have installed a hydrogen refuelling station in the town.
- 3.4 Work has been done to understand the county's current emissions which have dropped from around 900,000 tonnes per year in 2005 to around 650,000 tonnes per year in 2016. 51% of these emissions are from transport, reflecting the rural nature of the county, 24% from domestic emissions, and 25% from industrial and commercial emissions. Addressing this cannot be done by the council alone, it will take collaboration, community action and determined action from many third parties.
- 3.5 The Council itself emits around 8,700 tonnes of carbon a year from static assets such as buildings and street lighting and another 3,000 tonnes from vehicles. We know that significant indirect emissions come as a result of procurement – the carbon produced in the manufacture of the supplies we buy that are made elsewhere and a crude estimate of these suggests around 15,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted from procured goods and services per year.
- 3.6 Over the summer officers have taken part in a number of workshops to identify potential actions that could be undertaken to reduce carbon emissions. These have focussed on local authority emissions which are within the control of the authority Council as well as some actions which will help to reduce wider emissions from the county, for example around transport and waste. An emerging action plan is appended to the strategy and will be kept under continuous review to capitalise on new and emerging opportunities.
- 3.7 Potential activities contribute to, and will be grouped under ten themes, each of which is linked to a broad outcome:
- Energy and Buildings - Reduce the amount of energy that is used for buildings and street lighting
  - Green Spaces - Manage green spaces to absorb carbon and provide resilience to climate change
  - Waste - Reduce waste by encouraging people to reduce, re-use and recycle more
  - Greener Transport - Reduce the impact of vehicles and encourage the use of electric and hydrogen vehicles
  - Education and involvement - Help people understand climate change and what they can do to make a difference
  - Renewable Energy - Speed up the move from fossil fuels to renewable energy
  - What we Buy - Reduce carbon by thinking carefully about when and what we buy and the whole life costs
  - Active Travel - Encourage and make it easier for people to walk and cycle rather than drive
  - Public Transport - Encourage people to use public transport rather than cars

- Climate Adaptation - Preparing and adapting for the impact of climate change.

- 3.8 On 26 October Strong Communities Select Committee undertook pre-decision scrutiny to explore, debate and prioritise the relative merits of different policy interventions to help shape the action plan. The actions range from very bold statements that we are not yet sure how we can deliver, through to more specific and manageable actions. This is part of the 'Cathedral Thinking' that climate campaigner Greta Thunberg has described as essential if we are to tackle the climate emergency – to do this on time you need to commit to laying the foundations before you know exactly how you are going to build the ceiling.
- 3.9 Officers recommend that the action plan, remains a live and flexible document to which further actions and information can be added as it becomes available. This also gives the flexibility to add additional actions as technology develops and new opportunities arise. For this reason the establishment of a member led Climate Emergency working group, to be chaired by the cabinet member with attendance from officers and members of the community has been established to ensure that this important agenda is progressed with the necessary pace and ambition.
- 3.10 The Climate Emergency Action Plan cannot be delivered by the Council alone. We need other partners to join us in helping to reduce carbon emissions across the county. The Public Service Board have agreed to focus on their climate change objectives, and work together with us on carbon reduction. We hugely value the enthusiasm, energy and expertise of the residents of Monmouthshire who have such a lot to contribute and plan to collaborate with our communities and other partners to work together on our action plan.
- 3.11 We must do this while continuing to provide the services which form part of the social foundations our communities are built. We know that this will not be easy. Our core and unifying purpose is, and remains, building sustainable and resilient communities. Now, perhaps more than any time in the past, we need everyone to get behind this commitment and play their part in securing a better tomorrow.

### **3. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

- 4.1 The Climate Emergency Action Plan has significant positive contributions to make to the Wellbeing Goals. In particular it has strong benefits for a Prosperous Wales, by developing a low carbon economy and thinking carefully about sustainable procurement. There are also benefits for a Resilient Wales, based on changes to the way we manage green spaces. A Healthier Wales will be enhanced by improvements to air quality from more sustainable travel and more walking and cycling. There is also significant potential to contribute to Cohesive Communities, by working collaboratively and in partnership with our communities. There are no negative impacts on the Well-being Goals.
- 4.2 There are no significant positive or negative impacts on the protected characteristics, safeguarding or corporate parenting. The principles of Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement have been used throughout the development of the Action Plan.

### **5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

5.1 Through the motion, the Council has committed to producing an action, so doing nothing was not an option. However, the content and extent of the action plan has been subject to a number of options, set out below:

	<b>Option</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
1	Focus the action plan solely on direct MCC emissions	Easy to manage and measure Within the remit of the council	Will miss large emissions from the wider community
2	Focus on direct MCC emissions and some actions which will reduce emissions in the whole county	Many actions are easy to manage and measure Will impact on a wider range of emissions Potential to involve wider community and partners Maximises policy levers that we do have in place to influence county emissions e.g. transport, waste	Harder to measure county emissions Will require further resources
3	Broaden the action plan to address all the emissions of the whole county	Could potentially give the most comprehensive carbon reductions Potential to involve wider community and partners	Hard to measure and manage Policy levers to influence wider county emissions are not in place Emissions are beyond council control Lack of council resources to address emissions of whole county

5.2 The decision has been made to use option 2 as a pragmatic approach which incorporates our own emissions as well as some wider county emissions where we have the policy levers to do so. However, it needs to be acknowledged that some of the wider county emission reductions may be hard to measure.

## **6 EVALUATION CRITERIA**

6.1 In order to evaluate the success of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, the newly established member led working group be established will meet quarterly. Once adopted by Council, updates on progress against the actions will be collated every 3 months and reported to the working group.

## **7 REASONS:**

7.1 The action plan needs to be agreed to deliver on the Climate Emergency motion that was agreed by Council.

## **8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

8.1 Currently the work of co-ordinating our response to the Climate Emergency lies with the Head of Policy and Governance and Sustainability Policy Officer, and has been completed within existing staff resources.

8.2 Reaching zero carbon will not be cost neutral and there are likely to be decisions that will have to be made in future which will require additional capital and revenue financial resources to be allocated. The actions within the Climate Emergency Action Plan all have different resource implications and will be funded in different ways. Some are zero cost,

some will be grant funded, some will be funded by prudential borrowing and invest to save schemes. It is anticipated that where additional funds are needed these will be subject to subsequent decision making processes.

## **9 CONSULTTEES:**

Cabinet  
Senior Leadership Team  
Strong Communities Select Committee

The actions in the plan were collated and discussed by officers from a wide range of departments across the council. Each action is “owned” by a named officer who has been responsible for pulling together further detail on the action.

A draft list of actions were circulated to members of Monmouthshire Community Climate Champions for discussion and feedback in July 2019.

A draft list of actions were discussed at Strong Communities Select. This was used to help prioritise actions. Some of the key general feedback includes: Important to involve Town and Community Councils and business, needs to be adequately resourced, important to lobby Welsh Government (e.g. on building regulations, grid capacity, infrastructure projects etc.) and data needs to be easy to visualise.

Consultation resulted in a streamlining of the action plan to focus on and prioritise the key activities.

## **10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None

## **11 AUTHORS:**

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