SUBJECT:	**CLIMATE EMERGENCY STRATEGY UPDATE**
MEETING:	**COUNTY COUNCIL**
DATE:	**16 JULY 2020**
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL	

1.   PURPOSE:

1.1   To provide an update on progress towards the Council's commitment to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1   That Council notes progress made towards reducing council carbon emissions, including those areas where progress has been slower than anticipated.

3.   KEY ISSUES:

3.1   In May 2019 Council voted unanimously 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 Celsius.

3.2   The motion set a clear policy position with objectives, subsequently agreed by Council in October 2019 providing further detail on how this would be achieved. The objectives are set out in an appendix to this report. A detailed action plan was produced and will remain a live and flexible document to which further actions are added as new ideas and opportunities are identified.

3.3   A member-led Climate Emergency working group, chaired by the cabinet member with representatives from all political groups, relevant officers and members of the community, has been established. It has been agreed that this is an effective way to ensure this agenda is progressed with the necessary pace and ambition with the involvement of all political groups. The working group met for the first time in January and has used technology to continue meetings during the Coronavirus lockdown. The approach has

enabled valuable input and ideas from community representatives, meetings have been attended by senior officers leading on the actions.

3.4   At its most recent meeting the working group received a progress update with all actions tracked and progress summarised using a RAG rating. There is clear progress against 53 of the 68 actions including confirmation that the council has:
- Ordered two new electric vans for schools catering and commenced installation of EV charging points at Deri View and Kymin View.
- Installed 4200 LED street lights, bringing the total to 9000. The remaining 1400 lights are now being converted to LED.
- Provided financial support towards a repair café in Monmouth
- Reduced mowing of green infrastructure with over 3 million square metres managed in a more sustainable manner with less mowing therefore reduced levels of C02.
- Commenced a tree planting programme throughout the County.
- Funding secured to pilot the use of a small number of e-bikes to encourage active travel

3.5   The group also examined areas where progress has been slower than anticipated or has been unable to start. This includes: a lack of feasibility in local schemes to encourage the transition to electric taxis at the current time; limited progress on an anti-idling campaign at school gates due to COVID-19 and plans to open a re-use shop and Caerwent Household Waste recycling centre have been paused for the same reason. Overall the main reasons for projects not progressing can be grouped into 4 main types:
- A lack of available funding or uncertainty of funding due to COVID-19
- Work being paused or unable to start due to COVID-19
- Work is dependent on other partners
- Timings mean that progress cannot be made yet e.g. suitable technology not yet available, progress tied to LDP etc.

3.6   It is clear that COVID-19 has caused some delays to progressing our Climate Emergency aspirations, and created some uncertainty over funding. However, it has also resulted in a growing recognition nationally and internationally of the need to build climate change into a green recovery. The benefits include:

- Improved air quality due to reduction in driving and flying
- Recognition that home working can be an effective alternative to office-based work reducing the need for daily commuting
- Recognition that most meetings can easily be carried out virtually without the need to drive
- An increase in walking and cycling
- A closer awareness of nature and the wildlife around us
- Benefits to pollinators through reduced and delayed grass cutting
- Greater home cooking from scratch and less food waste
- More support for local shops
- Huge numbers of volunteers supporting their communities
- Increased levels of recycling and home composting

3.7   These benefits have been considered by the Working Group and also by Community Climate Champions, and the Council and our communities are actively considering ways in which we can embed these benefits as we transition from the response to recovery phase of the pandemic.

4. **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 Not required since the report is a progress report for information only.

6. **EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

6.1 In order to evaluate the success of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, the recently established Climate Emergency working group meet quarterly to hear updates on progress and identify where action needs to be taken.

7. **REASONS:**

7.1 To make Councillors aware of the progress as well as challenges in delivering the Climate Emergency Action Plan to deliver on the Climate Emergency motion that was agreed by Council.

8. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

8.1 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. **CONSULTEES:**

Cabinet
Strategic Leadership Team
Climate Emergency Working Group

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan, October 2019

11.   AUTHORS:

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Climate Emergency Objectives

Energy and Buildings
Reduce the amount of energy that is used for buildings and street lighting

Renewable Energy
Speed up the move from fossil fuels to renewable energy

Green Spaces
Create and manage green spaces to absorb carbon & provide resilience to climate change

What we Buy
Reduce carbon by thinking carefully about when and what we buy and the whole life costs

Waste
Reduce waste by encouraging people to reduce, re-use and recycle more

Active Travel
Encourage and make it easier for people to walk and cycle rather than drive

Greener Transport
Reduce the impact of vehicles and encourage the use of electric and hydrogen vehicles

Public Transport
Encourage people to use public transport rather than cars

Education and involvement
Help people understand climate change and what they can do to make a difference

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