

SUBJECT:	CLIMATE EMERGENCY STRATEGY UPDATE
MEETING:	COUNTY COUNCIL
DATE:	24 JUNE 2021
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1 PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To set out progress towards Monmouthshire's Climate Emergency action plan which outlines how the council plans to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030, as committed to in the Climate Emergency declaration by Council in May 2019.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

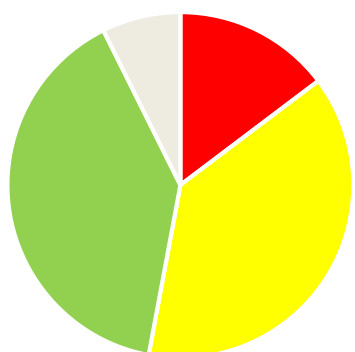
- 2.1 That Council receives a progress update on actions being taken to reduce the authority's carbon emissions in line with its agreed policy commitment.
- 2.2 That the Climate Emergency Working Group is tasked with updating the action plan to reflect the latest evidence and potential solutions to deliver the council's agreed policy position.

3 KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 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 Celsius.
- 3.2 A strategy and an associated action plan was agreed in October 2019 which set out the things we will be focusing on. The strategic direction remain appropriate and it is not proposed that this needs adjustment at this point in time. The action plan remains a live and flexible document to which further actions and information can be added as it becomes available.

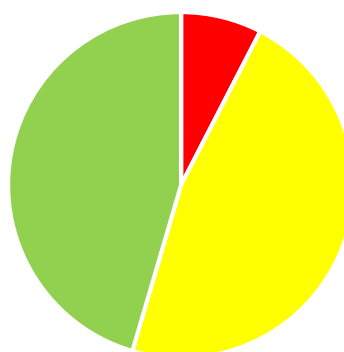
- 3.3 The member led Climate Emergency Working Group, chaired by the cabinet member with attendance from officers and members of the community has met regularly since January 2020 to ensure that this important agenda is progressed with the necessary pace and ambition.
- 3.4 Feedback has been gathered on progress made to date for each of the actions. These have been given a colour rating based on progress. Of the 66 actions in the plan, 30 are progressing as planned (green), 31 are showing some progress (yellow) and 5 not progressing as planned (red). Compared with the last report to Council in July 2020, there are more green and yellows, and fewer reds. This report aims to give an overview of progress, but the full action plan can be seen in Appendix 1, with some highlighted actions in the infographic in Appendix 2.

Progress on actions June 2020



■ No progress ■ Some progress
 ■ Good progress ■ Not yet started

Progress on actions May 2021



■ No progress ■ Some progress
 ■ Good progress ■ Not yet started

- 3.5 There is good progress being made on almost half of the actions, with some that had not started last year because of Covid 19 now underway. The reason for the slower progress with some of the actions is mainly because of delays due to the pandemic, caused by competing pressures, closure of venues or services, postponed consultation or engagement or delayed decisions on external funding.
- 3.6 Significant progress has been made against many of the actions. Examples include:
- Purchase of 7 electric vehicles for use by different council teams, with an electric minibus and two electric road-sweepers on order.
 - Establishing Libraries of Things, Repair Cafes and a second Re-use Shop using Welsh Government Circular Economy funding.
 - Developing further active travel routes, trial changes to traffic flows in town centres to allow active travel with social distancing and the purchase of E-bikes to pilot
 - Delivery of Carbon Literacy training to 113 representatives of Monmouthshire PSB partners
 - Nearly 10,000 streetlights converted to LED bulbs which use less energy.
 - 150,000 kg of carbon dioxide saved by reducing business mileage in 2020/21. Although this has been due to lockdown, we are likely to continue to work agilely more often and continue to hold online meetings.
 - Changes to grassland management, including reduced mowing and the purchase of new equipment to cut and collect mowings, all of which has benefited pollinators by allowing wildflowers to thrive.

- 3.7 Although good progress is being made against the actions in the plan, we still don't have enough detailed information about what our baseline emissions are and what the precise carbon savings of the measures we are taking are likely to be, in order to be able to accurately establish whether we are on track to meet the net zero carbon target by 2030. It is proposed we get additional expertise and capacity in to help us establish our emissions and a better understanding of the carbon savings included in the plan. This will enable us to establish where we should best be focusing our resources to generate the maximum carbon savings.
- 3.8 Once we have this information, we plan to do a refresh of the action plan, in order to make sure that our activity focuses on the most important areas for reducing carbon, and also to fully reflect the influence that the Council has over wider emissions across the county, not just within our own estate and fleet. The aim is to bring this to Council in November 2021, which will be 2 years since the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan were adopted, and will be an important opportunity to gauge progress towards the 2030 target.

4 EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 4.1 This report is an update on progress, rather than a decision or policy change, so does not need to complete an evaluation. However, the Climate Emergency Action Plan has significant positive contributions to make to the Well-being Goals with no negative impacts. 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 and does not propose any changes to policy.

6 EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- 6.1 Evaluation is undertaken by assessing progress against each of the measures within the Climate Emergency Action Plan. The Climate Emergency working group has representatives from each political group on Council and meets quarterly to hear updates on progress and identify where action needs to be taken.

7 REASONS:

- 7.1 To ensure that progress towards achieving the council's agreed policy aim is maintained and that the council is open and accountable to the citizens of Monmouthshire in demonstrating the activity that is being undertaken to achieve this important goal.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 The activity 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

Progress against the action plan is being scrutinised by Strong Communities Select Committee at its meeting on 16th June.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan, October 2019

https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2019/11/Climate-and-Decarbonisation_Strategy_v1.0.pdf

Appendix 1 Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020/2021 Summary

Appendix 2 Infographic showing progress towards the Climate Emergency Action Plan

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