



## Report of the Director of Place

### Equalities & Future Generations Policy Development Committee 22 October 2019

## Response to Council Notice of Motion relating To Climate Change Emergency

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Swansea Council passed a Climate Change Emergency notice of Motion on the 27 June and called upon the UK and Welsh Government to do the same. In addition the Council committed to:
- Call upon the UK and Welsh governments to provide us with the necessary powers and resources to ensure Swansea becomes carbon neutral by 2030.
  - Publicise climate emergency and promote a greater awareness of the truth of climate change amongst the local population.
  - Work with relevant experts in research and development to:
    - a. Review our current strategies and action plans for addressing climate change;
    - b. Identify any further policy changes or actions which we could undertake, within the scope of our powers and resources;
    - c. Seek the help of local partners such as Swansea University and other research bodies to, within one year, produce a report to share with the community, explaining work to date, achievements and targets for the future.
  - Update on further work undertaken by the Council in this area on an annual basis through the Council Annual Review of Performance Report section on corporate objective - *Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity*.

Part of the response was to designate one of its Policy Developments Committee (PDC) to become the Equalities and Future Generations PDC with specific remit to cover the response to Climate Change emergency.

### 2. Actions to Date

- 2.1 The Council has for some time recognised the crucial role it plays in tackling climate change and whilst there is no doubt further actions are required some of the progress already made are summarised below:

- The City & County of Swansea Pension Fund is one of the first Pension Fund's in the UK to adopt an Environmental, Social & Governance policy which commits the pension fund to reduce its already low exposure to carbon based fossil fuel investments by up to 50% over the next 4 years. In doing so, it accepts that investing in new green energy, infrastructure and socially responsible investments offers the best sustainable financial return for members of the pension fund over the long term. Progress is reported on an annual basis.
- Changing 21,053 streetlights to LED, reducing CO2 year on year by 198,608.49kg.
- Delivering insulation and energy efficiency measures to benefit tenants of our council housing.
- Promoting Welsh & UK Government campaigns and programmes to increase energy efficiency amongst private tenants and homeowners, reducing fuel poverty and reducing emissions.
- Campaigning for the electrification of the railway line from Swansea to London.
- Progressing work towards a world-leading Tidal Lagoon, supporting community-owned renewable energy schemes, like SCEES, to deliver clean energy and benefit local schools and community buildings.
- Working with others nationally to urge Welsh Government to develop electric car charging infrastructure.
- Being leaders of good practice in Wales through having Sustainable Development policies.
- Recently incorporating care for the natural environment into our corporate plan as a new priority.
- Building the first council housing in a generation here in Swansea to Passivhaus standard, and begun building new council housing to a super-energy-efficient "Swansea Standard" that will enable all components to be procured locally and reducing emissions.
- Using innovation in construction for flagship projects showcasing waste minimization and sustainability.
- Winning investment for innovative green technology, such as "Homes as Power Stations", as part of the City Region Deal.
- Continuing to seek opportunities to add to our corporate fleet of Electric Vehicles, which is already the largest in Wales.
- Continuing to deliver on our Carbon Reduction strategy: 42% reduction in emissions since our baseline year. (09/10)
- Securing funding for a vast increase in Active Travel (walking and cycling) routes throughout the county and supported Swansea University's community cycle scheme.
- Becoming an Anti-Fracking Local Authority in 2016, having passed a motion to "oppose any unconventional gas development (fracking)" which also committed us to working towards being a fossil fuel free local authority by 2025.
- Implementing agile working so that our workforce may reduce unnecessary travel.
- Developing local procurement practices to reduce our carbon footprint.
- In Education, we are early joiners of the international Eco Schools programmes which encourages schools to promote recycling and reduce energy and water consumption.
- Encourage our Foundation Phase learning pupils to learn outdoors ensuring a respect for nature, biodiversity and eco-systems.

- At KS4, developing partnerships with our Universities to establish STEM workshops including the impact of climate change.
- Development of its Green Infrastructure strategy shortly to be issued for public consultation.

### **3. Action Plan**

- 3.1 In developing its action plan there are some initial areas which the input of the PDC is welcome.
- 3.2 The creation of a Climate Change Charter setting out headline commitments which the Council would seek to adopt and encourage a range all organisations within the Council area to also commit to. A draft charter has been included in Appendix A and comments are welcome.
- 3.3 Views of the PDC on further priority areas to inform the action plan are welcome.

### **Appendices:**

#### **Appendix A – Swansea Climate Change Charter**

## Appendix A

### Swansea Climate Change Charter

We, the Signatories to Swansea Charter on Climate Action, affirm our commitment on behalf of .....to work towards becoming nett carbon neutral by 2030 and in doing so commit to the following:

- Within 1 year of signing, review our organisations current strategies and action plans for addressing climate change and Identify any further policy changes or actions which we could undertake, within the scope of our powers and resources, to meet the challenge of climate emergency.
- Seek the help of local partners including public ,private and voluntary sectors to, produce our own response to share with the community, explaining work already underway and achievements already made, as well as targets for the future.
- Utilise our formal reporting mechanisms to place in the public domain how we are performing against our committed actions.
- Fully align our actions with our wellbeing and biodiversity obligations to ensure our actions and commitments meet the requirements of our future generations and the need to reverse the decline in biodiversity .
- Fully engage with our schools in line with the core principles of the UNCRC.
- Quantify, track and publicly report our carbon emissions, consistent with standards and best practices of measurement and transparency.
- Partner with experts, businesses, investors, environmental advocates and other stakeholders to develop and implement a decarbonisation strategy for the region, including by developing a work programme and tools and resources necessary to achieve the agreed emission reduction targets.
- Maximise the use of renewables , and the reduction of energy use and loss both within our own energy consumption and in relation to utilising our assets for renewable energy generation.
- Review our procurement methodologies/and criteria to align with our emerging principle of what constitutes “value for money” to ensure appropriate inclusion of climate change and biodiversity is an appropriate part of any award criteria. Above all communicate a shared vision and understanding through the development of a common strategy and messaging, including by championing climate action within our sectors through an enhanced and trust-building dialogue with relevant stakeholders.