



Report of the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation
Climate Change Scrutiny Performance Panel – 2nd May 2023
Swansea Council – Net Zero 2030

Purpose	To provide an update on Net Zero 2030 including Green Vehicle Adoption.
Content	This report includes a summary of the climate change activity on Swansea Council net zero 2030 ambitions since the January meeting. It also includes an update on Green Vehicle Adoption.
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider progress from January 2023 on the Swansea Council net zero 2030 action plan monitoring and reporting. • Consider progress to date on the adoption of green vehicles.
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Andrea Lewis, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Service Transformation
Lead Officer(s)	Director of Place – Mark Wade and Head of Property Services – Geoff Bacon.
Report Author	Rachel Lewis – Place Directorate Project Manager and Mark Barrow – Fleet Manager
Legal Officer	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer	Ben Smith
Access to Services Officer	Rhian Millar

1. Background

- 1.1 Following the Climate Change and Nature Scrutiny Committee meeting in January 2023 and as noted in the Conveners letter dated 15th February 2023 to Cllr Lewis, the committee were 'very pleased to hear' that the Council has responded to all recommendations from the Wales Audit Office, and has a fully costed delivery plan for Net Zero by 2030.

Appendix 1

- 1.2 The committee acknowledge the ongoing work on renewables and was provided with more information on how the Tidal Lagoon project was progressing.
- 1.3 The committee requested that the January update on the Adoption of Green Vehicles should be included in the May briefing note, as Cllr Andrea Lewis was not in attendance.

2. Net Zero 2030 Update

- 2.1 A new corporate wellbeing objective, focusing on Swansea Council NZ2030, Swansea NZ2050 and Nature Recovery ambitions has already been approved at 30th March Council, and is awaiting approval from PSB on 27th April 2023. **Appendix 2**

- 2.2 The objective includes a commitment that by the end of 2023-24 we will have:

- Reported to Welsh Government on Swansea Council 2022-23 emissions.
- Progressed phase 2 of the public buildings retrofit programme.
- Delivered a second year of projects with our environmental partner.
- Agreed a development model and progressed with the Tir John solar farm development.
- Agree and announced progress on the Blue Eden project with our development partner.
- Built strong collaborative working relationships with climate charter signatories on the 2050 Swansea agenda.
- Begun to implement our ULEV Transition Strategy 2021-2030, with over 150 ULEV vehicles and fleet charge points.
- Continue with the LED street lighting installation programme.
- Agreed an updated tree planting and management strategy.
- Planted hundreds of new trees.
- Produced a series of Wild About your Ward Maps to support communities in identifying opportunities for enhancing local

greenspaces and wildlife sites and engaging them in volunteering activities.

- Drafted Management Plans for Council owned Local Nature Reserves.
- Targeted treatment and/or removal of Invasive Non-Native Species on nature sites.
- Produced a series of Climate Change and Nature Recovery e-training modules.
- Continued amenity grassland and road verge management trials to establish as species rich wildflower meadows.
- Prepared a Local Nature Recovery Action Plan and a County Wide GI Strategy.

2.3 The team is also developing a suite of internal PI's which will be reported annually, examples include:

- Numbers of trees planted during the year across the council.
- The increase in number of council locations with renewable energy sources
- Number of Members and officers that have completed Climate Change and Nature Recovery Training
- Number of projects delivered through the Environmental Partners Framework to support ambition of Swansea Net Zero 2050.
- Percentage of the Council fleet which are Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs)

2.4 The reporting calendar from 2023 onwards will be:

- Emissions data collated and reported annually to Welsh Government the first week of every September.
- Internal PI data will be reported annually, timeline to be confirmed.
- The team will update progress on both emissions data and PI's to Cabinet at the end of each calendar year.
- The wellbeing objective key milestone delivery will be reported as part of the wider corporate plan performance monitoring cycles.
- Monitoring will also be done through the new Transformation Plan governance process, cycles yet to be decided.

2.5 It is proposed that from 2024 Climate Change progress will be reported annually in the month of June to the scrutiny committee in order to align with the annual monitoring cycles mentioned above.

3. **Green Vehicle Adoption**

3.1 The report initially presented at 10th January 2023 Climate Change & Nature Scrutiny Committee is attached as **Appendix 3, 4 & 5**.

4. Conclusion

- 3.1 **Net Zero 2030** - Swansea Council has robust governance and reporting processes in place to monitor delivery of the approved action plan.
- 3.2 **Green Fleet Adoption** - The Council's declared aim of becoming a net zero organisation by 2030 includes its vehicle fleet operations. The ULEV Transition Strategy has set out an initial pathway reflecting this commitment and is progressing.

The challenges of this wholesale change have been increased by recent global events and have made the timescales (2025 and 2030) difficult to achieve. The financial and operational impacts will be significant.

The Council is amongst the leading public sector fleets in this regard and the next two years will see continued progress, particularly in the light goods vehicle renewals and infrastructure.

5. Legal implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications other than those detailed in the report.

6. Finance Implications

- 5.1 To remind scrutiny committee as per the previous January report, the full financial cost of achieving Net Zero can still only be considered an estimate at this stage and broad financial implications were noted in section 7 of the 15th December Cabinet report.
- 5.2 The report sets out initial estimates of the costs of legal duties upon the Council. It remains unclear whether any financial assistance will be forthcoming from Welsh or UK governments to meet all or any of the costs given this Council like all others faces a plethora of other legal obligations and a stark outlook in real terms for public finances for the foreseeable future of the decade.
- 5.3 No future budgets have been provided for any of these indicative future costs to date to be met by the Council. This reflects the explicit presumption that the Council will not be expected to fund costs out of core spending, but that alternative external sources of finance will be provided by national governments. However, consideration should be given to spend to save initiatives, for example future phases of the ReFit programme.
- 5.4 By way of potential context and scale only, if capital budgets were to be provided from now onwards over the forthcoming 7 years to 2030 it would be prudent to assume £25m per annum of additional capital obligations each year growing cumulatively to £175m This would be the

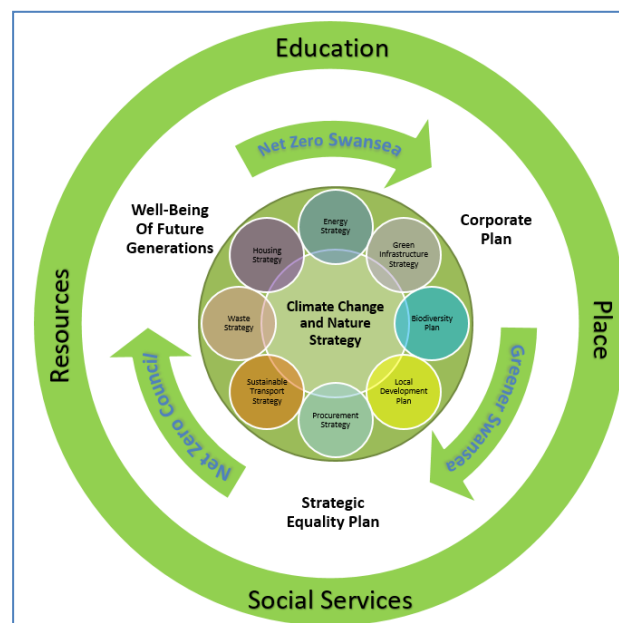
most prudent, assuming zero support from government. It is likely to overstate the cost and risk as neither UK nor Welsh government could reasonably expect individual councils to meet the costs in isolation.

- 5.5 If this Council were expected to have to fully fund itself then at current likely rates and MRP this would cost coming on £2m per annum rising cumulatively to £12m by 2030 in capital financing costs. This broad estimate is at today's prices and interest rate outlook and could vary significantly in practice.
- 5.6 Cabinet and Council will have to have due regard to this in all future budget setting and MTFP decision rounds. Its appetite for revenue versus capital spending decisions, the timing of those decisions and its prioritisation of competing legislative obligations will be an undiluted challenge as the Audit Wales report acknowledges. The longer uncertainty persists over funding support or lack of support and the longer Council does not explicitly provide for any future costs the bigger the risk of inevitable end loaded costs if no external support is obtained.
- 5.7 It is clear in any scenario residual carbon emissions will remain even after action and, subject to the views of WG in terms of their carbon emissions reporting guidance, there could be planned for costs of offsetting in either the revenue budgets from 2030 onwards (minimum £0.5m at current prices) or before that further capital (£27.5m at current prices)
- 5.8 At present the budget presumption is repeated that this Council is assuming that 100% of all costs are met externally as they materially transcend its ability to afford them itself."

7. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 6.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 6.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the ‘well-being goals’.
- 6.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 6.4 This agenda does not present any negative impacts.
- 6.5 If we move in the right direction as a council aiming for net zero by 2030, we can lead by example bringing citizens along with us on the 2050 journey, then all benefits could and should be very positive, eg reduction in fuel poverty, local food supply, improved health and well-being, reduced fire and flooding to name but a few.
- 6.6 Internal governance and multidisciplinary involvement is strong and has recently be ratified by the awarding of the Bronze One Planet Standard. Between the programme board and the communication group, every single service area of the Council is involved.
- 6.7 To note the Well-being of Future Generations is a pivot part of our project governance structure.



- 6.8 Risks are medium – We have the plan, but financially we will need to continue to lobby WG to ensure funding is available to make such changes – e.g. decarbonisation of homes and public buildings, transportation, active travel.
- 6.9 A brilliant and exciting opportunity to maximise the wellbeing of future generations and equality plan principles to make for a Greener Council by 2030 and a Greener Swansea by 2050.
- 6.10 The IIA screening form is included as **Appendix 6**

Background papers: *None*

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Costed delivery Plan – Swansea Council Net Zero 2030
Appendix 2 – Corporate Wellbeing Objective – Delivering on Nature Recovery and Climate Change
Appendix 3 – Green Fleet Adoption report (January 2023)
Appendix 4 – ULEV Transition Strategy
Appendix 5 – IIA - Green Fleet Adoption
Appendix 6 – IIA - Net Zero 2030