

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC PROTECTION
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 NOVEMBER 2019**

NET ZERO CARBON PLAN

Purpose:

To develop a clear plan for a route towards becoming a net zero carbon local authority by 2030.

To consider and comment on the following issues:

To endorse the draft Net Zero Carbon Plan outlining a route towards becoming a net zero carbon local authority by 2030.

Reasons:

To formulate views for submission to the Executive Board / Council for consideration.
The Notice of Motion unanimously supported by County Council on 20th February 2019 requires that a clear plan for a route towards being net zero carbon be developed within 12 months.

To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: YES

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

Cllr Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs

Directorate:	Designations:	Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:
Environment and Chief Executive's		
Ruth Mullen	Director of Environment	01267 224647 RMullen@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 NOVEMBER 2019

NET ZERO CARBON PLAN

BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The meeting of County Council on 20th February 2019 unanimously resolved that the Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Aled Vaughan Owen be supported:

“...we propose that Carmarthenshire County Council:

1. Declare a climate emergency
2. Commit to making Carmarthenshire County Council a net zero carbon local authority by 2030
3. Develop a clear plan for a route towards being net zero carbon within 12 months
4. Call on Welsh and UK Governments to provide the necessary support and resources to enable effective carbon reductions
5. Work with Public Services Board and Swansea Bay City Deal partners to develop exciting opportunities to deliver carbon savings
6. Collaborate with experts from the private sector and 3rd sectors to develop innovative solutions to becoming net zero carbon.”

2. The attached draft action plan outlines a route towards becoming a net zero carbon local authority by 2030. A pragmatic approach is being recommended that initially focuses on the carbon emissions that are presently measured by the Council from: (a) Non-domestic buildings; (b) Street lighting; (c) Fleet mileage; and, (d) Business mileage. However, it is recognised that this approach needs to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate changing circumstances, including the reporting requirements yet to be introduced by Welsh Government as part of its ambition for a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. Within the confines of this draft action plan ‘Net Zero Carbon’ and ‘Carbon Neutral’ are considered to be inter-changeable.

3. The draft action plan’s initial narrow focus is not intended to limit or preclude other potential wider actions to address the climate emergency, and some of these are identified in Appendix 3 of the attached document.

4. The Council has adopted proactive programmes to reduce its carbon emissions over a number of years. Whilst there is a commitment to significantly further reduce carbon emissions, it is recognised that however energy / carbon efficient Services become the Council will inevitably still have a residual carbon footprint. This situation is acknowledged by the “Net” in the Net Zero Carbon equation as it enables this residual carbon footprint to be compensated for by the generation of renewable energy and/or via carbon offsetting (such as by the planting of trees).

5. Whilst the preferred primary method of compensating for the Council’s residual carbon footprint is to significantly increase the amount of renewable energy generated on Council-owned land, this is dependent on enhancements to the capacity of the local electricity distribution network. This is beyond the direct control of the Council and discussions are ongoing with Western Power Distribution and Welsh Government to seek the necessary improvements. However, as one unit of carbon has the same climate impact wherever it is emitted, the benefit is the same wherever it is reduced or avoided.

6. Amongst the actions identified in the attached draft action plan are proposals to report performance annually, together with annual reviews of the action plan.

7. It is proposed to also produce a shorter, more accessible version of the document.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

Signed: **Ruth Mullen** Director of Environment

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	NONE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The Notice of Motion supported unanimously by County Council on 20th February 2019 requires that a clear plan for a route towards being net zero carbon be developed within 12 months.

This echoes Welsh Government's ambition for a carbon neutral public sector by 2030, and with 'Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales' (March 2018).

2. Finance

The Council has adopted proactive programmes to reduce its carbon emissions over a number of years. Consequently, there will be financial implications in significantly further reducing carbon emissions as much of the more cost-effective measures have already been undertaken. For example, to-date energy efficiency programmes in non-domestic buildings have been financed using interest-free funding secured from Salix / Wales Funding Programme, however there will be a need to supplement this funding to enable further energy measures with higher payback periods to be delivered if we are to full achieve Net Zero Carbon.

Whilst the preferred primary method of compensating for the Council's residual carbon footprint is to significantly increase the amount of renewable energy generated, this would require significant financing. Compensating for the Council's 2018/19 carbon footprint by renewable energy generation could require more than £20m capital investment, at a time of increasing pressure on Council budgets. Choosing to prioritise this investment would inevitably mean delaying or removing other capital schemes under consideration, including the implications for match funding contributions, such as 21st Century schools WG contribution or Regeneration schemes match funding.

There will be a need to establish robust business cases for each potential renewable energy project. **The more favourable investment returns of the projects, the lower the impact on other council budgets will be.**

3. ICT

The actions identified in the draft action plan complement the Council's ICT strategies to facilitate more efficient working practices such as Cloud hosting, agile working via provision of laptops/ Skype, and paperless meetings.

4. Risk Management Issues

Climate change is seen as one of the world's greatest threats.

5. Physical Assets

Reducing carbon emissions would have significant implications for a variety of the Council's physical assets: non-domestic buildings, street lighting and fleet. There is also potential for use of Council owned land and buildings for renewable energy generation.

6. Staffing Implications

Staff, and Member, awareness and buy-in will be required to enable the Council to successfully deliver significant carbon reductions. This will require specific training and communications.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Ruth Mullen

Director of Environment

1. Scrutiny Committee	N/A
2. Local Member(s)	N/A
3. Community / Town Council	N/A
4. Relevant Partners	N/A
5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations	N/A

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Net Zero Carbon Local Authority	NZC	Rural Business Development Centre, Nant – y – Ci, Carmarthen