

EXECUTIVE BOARD

22nd MARCH 2021

NET ZERO CARBON PLAN - UPDATE REPORT

Purpose:

To approve the Net Zero Carbon Plan - Update Report.

Recommendations / key decisions required:

It is RECOMMENDED that:

- (1) the Net Zero Carbon Plan - Update Report be approved
- (2) a letter be written to Welsh Government to echo the concerns raised by the Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5th March 2021
- (3) delegated authority be granted to Officers to make typographical or factual amendments as necessary to improve the clarity and accuracy of the Net Zero Carbon Plan - Update Report

Reasons:

The Net Zero Carbon Plan was approved by County Council on 12th February 2020.

The attached report is submitted in accordance with Action NZC-28 of the Plan that requires annual performance reports on progress towards becoming a net zero carbon local authority by 2030 to be published annually.

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted YES

Scrutiny committee and date: Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee
5th March 2021

Scrutiny Committee recommendations / comments:

It was proposed that this Committee write a letter to the Welsh Government to convey its concern regarding the limited capacity of the local electricity distribution network and to request that Welsh Government work with Local Authorities, and others, to develop a clear plan to address this issue. In addition, the Committee in its letter, convey its disappointment that the Wales Carbon Reporting Guidance has not been published to date. It was further proposed that the Committee request that the Executive Board, in a separate letter to the Welsh Government echo and support the Committee's comments. The proposals were duly seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

6.1 the Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee write to the Welsh Government to convey the comments raised stated above;

6.2 IT BE RECOMMENDED TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD that the Executive Board write a letter to the Welsh Government in support of and to reaffirm the Committee's comments.

6.3 the Net Zero Carbon Plan – Update Report be received.

Exec Board Decision Required	YES
Council Decision Required	NO

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:

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

Directorate Environment and Chief Executive's Ruth Mullen Report Author: Kendal Davies	Designations: Director of Environment Sustainable Development Manager	01267 224647 RMullen@carmarthenshire.gov.uk 01267 228351 5351 jkdavies@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE BOARD

22ND MARCH 2021

NET ZERO CARBON PLAN - UPDATE REPORT

BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT

Overview

1. The Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Plan was approved by County Council on 12th February 2020. The attached draft report is submitted in accordance with Action NZC-28 of the Plan that requires performance reports on progress towards becoming a net zero carbon local authority by 2030 to be published annually.
2. The attached NZC Plan - Update Report comprises:
 - High Level Summary including Progress against Actions
 - COVID-19 and Climate Change
 - Section 1: Progress Update
 - Carbon Footprint - Non-domestic Buildings, Street Lighting, Fleet Mileage, and Business Mileage
 - Carbon Offsetting - Renewable Energy and Green Infrastructure
 - Collaboration - Working with Welsh Government, Carmarthenshire Public Services Board / Swansea Bay City Deal partners, and experts from the private and 3rd sectors
 - Integration and Communication
 - Section 2: Future Actions
 - Route Map to Net Zero Carbon by 2030
 - Appendix 1: Wider Response to Climate Emergency
3. In 2019/20 our overall carbon footprint reduced by 2.9% compared to 2018/19; however, it should be noted that our total energy consumption increased by 1.8% (due to the increased use of energy for heating) and our mileage increased by 3.4% (due to the inclusion of Domiciliary Care):

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19 vs 2019/20	
	Results				Progress	% change
Non-Domestic Buildings						
Consumption (kWh)	66,808,735	63,690,923	64,857,362	66,407,242	Declined	+2.4%
Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	18,923	16,258	14,822	14,443	Improved	-2.6%
Street Lighting						
Consumption (kWh)	5,718,531	4,873,979	4,202,381	3,925,149	Improved	-6.6%
Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	2,569	1,874	1,291	1,088	Improved	-15.7%
Fleet Mileage						
Mileage (Miles)	5,127,150	5,121,289	*5,293,249	5,154,668	Improved	-2.6%
Diesel Used (litres)	1,416,276	1,441,751	1,434,583	1,419,336	Improved	-1.1%
Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	3,790	3,852	3,856	3,814	Improved	-1.1%
Business Mileage						
Mileage (Miles)	4,186,640	3,948,586	3,846,615	3,971,513	Declined	+3.2%
Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	1,260	1,159	1,118	1,132	Declined	+1.2%
TOTAL						
Consumption (kWh)	72,527,266	68,564,902	69,059,743	70,332,391	Declined	+1.8%
Mileage (miles)	9,313,790	9,069,875	8,829,043	9,126,181	Declined	+3.4%
Carbon Footprint (tCO ₂ e)	26,542	23,143	21,087	20,477	Improved	-2.9%

Note:

* This figure has been updated since last year to correct for incorrect mileage entries.

4. The Update Report refers to preliminary work to identify the impact of COVID-19. For the period April – June 2020 electricity consumption in our non-domestic buildings was less than 34% (a carbon saving of 738 tCO₂e) and business mileage less than 45% (a carbon saving of 139 tCO₂e) compared to the same period in 2019. However, the full impact won't be reflected until next year's update when we report on 2020/21 data. It is likely that the continuation of staff home working, as well as changes in working practices such as an increased use of video conference facilities and online communication will see a lasting reduction in carbon emissions in the longer term.
5. Welsh Government has an ambition for a carbon neutral public sector by 2030 and was to establish Wales-wide methodologies for carbon emissions reporting by the end of 2019/20. Unfortunately, this Guidance has not yet been published and this delay has impacted on several Actions in the NZC Plan which were dependent on this Guidance being published in April 2020.
6. We know that Welsh Government's reporting methodologies will differ from our current approach; however, until we have the specific detail there appears to be little merit in setting targets etc. as these will inevitably have to be reviewed / amended when the Guidance is published. Following the publication of the reporting Guidance, we will review our carbon reporting methodologies and will set targets to incorporate the new Guidance. This will not prevent the work outlined in the NZC Plan to reduce our carbon footprint being progressed.
7. Whilst we are committed to reduce our carbon footprint significantly further, we recognise that however energy/carbon efficient our Services become they will inevitably still have a residual carbon footprint. We aim to primarily compensate for this by increasing the amount of renewable energy we generate on our Estate. Unfortunately, recent applications to connect to the local electricity network have continued to attract significant reinforcement costs that have rendered schemes financially unviable. This is a major concern as enhancements to the capacity of the local electricity distribution network are beyond our direct control as require a combination of major infrastructure works plus balancing local consumption, generation, and storage.

8. Furthermore, the continuing decarbonisation of the electricity distribution network (National Grid) means that the emission conversion factor for electricity is decreasing. Whilst this has a positive impact in reducing our carbon footprint, it conversely has a negative impact in reducing the equivalent carbon savings from renewable energy generation, thus requiring more wind turbines / solar PV panels to offset our (reducing) carbon footprint.

Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Route Map

9. Public services across Wales have pledged (July 2020) to ensure that action on decarbonisation is embedded through:
- (1) Understanding their carbon footprint, in line with guidance for public sector greenhouse emissions reporting
 - (2) Agreeing to a set of net zero commitments / pledges for the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 1st – 12th November 2021
 - (3) Closely monitoring and reporting their current and future carbon emissions
 - (4) Ensuring all Local Authorities have robust, evidence-based net zero action plans in place, as living documents, by March 2021
 - (5) Work with the new Decarbonisation Strategy Panel (**Note:** Our Chief Executive is a Member of this Panel).
10. Whilst we already have a NZC Plan in place (Item (4) above), achieving net zero carbon by 2030 will require a range of ambitious actions and targets. A 'Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Route Map' is currently being developed by the Local Government Decarbonisation Strategy Panel as a high-level thematic framework to guide its approach. Where possible, we also propose to use this Route Map to help guide our approach. It should be noted that some of the Targets in the Route Map are particularly challenging, and appropriate Actions are currently being discussed with the relevant Lead Officers for incorporation into our NZC Plan.

Recommendations

11. It is RECOMMENDED that:
- (1) the Net Zero Carbon Plan - Update Report be approved
 - (2) a letter be written to Welsh Government to echo the concerns raised by the Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5th March 2021
 - (3) delegated authority be granted to Officers to make typographical or factual amendments as necessary to improve the clarity and accuracy of the Net Zero Carbon Plan - Update Report.

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	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The Notice of Motion supported unanimously by County Council on 20th February 2019 required that a clear plan for a route towards being net zero carbon be developed within 12 months. The County Council approved the Net Zero Carbon Plan on 12th February 2020.

The Net Zero Carbon Plan accords with Carmarthenshire's Well-being priorities and 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 many 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 achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2030.

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 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 Welsh Government 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 Net Zero Carbon Plan embodies the Council's ICT strategies to facilitate more efficient working practices such as Cloud hosting, agile working via provision of laptops /and video conferencing.

4. Risk Management Issues

Climate change is acknowledged 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

Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee was consulted on 5th March 2021.

Recommendations / Comments:

It was proposed that this Committee write a letter to the Welsh Government to convey its concern regarding the limited capacity of the local electricity distribution network and to request that Welsh Government work with Local Authorities, and others, to develop a clear plan to address this issue. In addition, the Committee in its letter, convey its disappointment that the Wales Carbon Reporting Guidance has not been published to date. It was further proposed that the Committee request that the Executive Board, in a separate letter to the Welsh Government echo and support the Committee's comments. The proposals were duly seconded.

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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

EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO HOLDER AWARE/CONSULTED	YES
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Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THERE ARE NONE