

# Pecyn Dogfennau Cyhoeddus

Penallta House,  
Tredomen Park,  
Ystrad Mynach,  
Hengoed CF82 7PG

Ty Penallta,  
Parc Tredomen,  
Ystrad Mynach,  
Hengoed CF82 7PG



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(Tel: 01443 864420 Email: [jonesa23@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:jonesa23@caerphilly.gov.uk))

**Date: Dydd Mercher, 6 Rhagfyr 2023 Dydd Mercher, 6 Rhagfyr 2023**

To Whom It May Concern,

A multi-locational meeting of the **Pwyllgor Craffu Tai a'r Amgylchedd** will be held in Penallta House, and via Microsoft Teams on **Dydd Mawrth, 12fed Rhagfyr, 2023 at 5.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days. A simultaneous translation will be provided on request.

Members of the public or Press may attend in person at Penallta House or may view the meeting live via the following link: <https://civico.net/caerphilly>

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Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHarchy', enclosed in a large, loopy oval shape.

**Christina Harchy**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## A G E N D A

1 I dderbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb

Pages

A greener place Man gwyrddach



2 Datganiadau o Ddiddordeb.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

I gymeradwyo a llofnodi'r cofnodion canlynol:-

- 3 Pwyllgor Craffu Tai a'r Amgylchedd a gynhaliwyd ar 31ain Hydref 2023. 1 - 6
- 4 Ystyried unrhyw fater a gyfeiriwyd at y Pwyllgor hwn yn unol â'r drefn galw i mewn.
- 5 Rhaglen Gwaith i'r Dyfodol y Pwyllgor Craffu Tai a'r Amgylchedd. 7 - 18
- 6 I dderbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiadau\* Cabinet canlynol:-
1. Canolfan Hamdden Pontllan-fraith – 15fed Tachwedd 2023;
  2. Gweithredu Strategaeth Chwaraeon a Hamdden Egniöl (SARS) – 15fed Tachwedd 2023;
  3. Ysgol Gyfun Gymunedol Rhisga a Chanolfan Hamdden Rhisga – Darpariaeth Cae Pob Tywydd Newydd – 15fed Tachwedd 2023;
  4. Adroddiad Blynyddol ar Gwynion Corfforaethol a ddaeth i law ar gyfer y cyfnod rhwng 1 Ebrill 2022 a 31 Mawrth 2023 – 15fed Tachwedd 2023;
  5. Cynllun Corfforaethol (gan Gynnwys Amcanion Llesiant) 2023-2028. – 15fed Tachwedd 2023.

\* Os oes aelod o'r Pwyllgor Craffu yn dymuno i unrhyw un o'r adroddiadau Cabinet uchod i gael eu dwyn ymlaen ar gyfer adolygiad yn y cyfarfod, cysylltwch â Andrea Jones, 01443 864420, erbyn 10.00 a.m. ar **ddydd Llun**, 11eg **rhagfyr** 2023.

**I dderbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiadau Craffu canlynol:-**

- 7 Cyfundrefnau Torri Glaswellt. 19 - 28
- 8 Adroddiad Blynyddol Datgarboneiddio Tachwedd 2023. 29 - 92
- 9 Diweddariad ar Hwb Hamdden a Lles Caerffili.
- 10 Canolfan Hamdden Pontllan-fraith. 93 - 104

**Circulation:**

**Councillors** C. Bishop, M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, D. Cushing, C.J. Cuss, D.T. Davies, T. Heron, A. Hussey, M.P. James, D. Ingram-Jones, A. McConnell, B. Owen, L. Phipps, H. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard, J. Rao, A. Whitcombe (Cadeirydd) a S. Williams (Is Gadeirydd)

And Appropriate Officers

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## HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD IN PENALLTA HOUSE  
AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2023 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor A. Whitcombe – Chair  
Councillor S. Williams – Vice Chair

Councillors:

C. Bishop, M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, D. T. Davies, T. Heron, A. Hussey, D. Ingram-Jones, A. McConnell, B. Owen, L. Phipps, H. Pritchard, J. A Pritchard.

Cabinet Members:

Councillor S. Morgan (Leader of Council), C. Morgan (Waste, Leisure, and Green Spaces), C. Andrews (Education and Communities) and P. Leonard (Planning and Public Protection).

Also in attendance:

K. Alderson (Speaker), B. Roberts (Audit Wales) and S. Byrne (Audit Wales)

Together with:

Officers: M. S. Williams (Director for Economy and Environment), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services), M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), H. Jones (Waste Strategy and Operations Manager), J. Lougher (Sport and Development Manager), J. Reynolds (Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager), S. Pugh (Communications Manager), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer) and ( A. Jones (Committee Services Officer).

### RECORDING, FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live-streamed and recorded and would be made available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#) Members were advised that voting on decisions would be taken via Microsoft Forms.

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. James and J. Rao.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Ingram-Jones declared a personal interest on agenda item 7 as her project is funded by Families First. Being a personal interest, Cllr Ingram-Jones could remain in the meeting and vote whilst the item was discussed.

## **3. HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023.**

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 be approved as a correct record and by way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 13 for, 0 against and 2 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 (minute nos. 1 – 6) be approved as a correct record.

## **4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE**

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

## **5. HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Mark Jacques (Scrutiny Officer) presented the report, which outlined details of the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme (FWP) for the period October 2023 to March 2024.

A Member requested that a report be added to the forward work programme on homelessness rates and on housing stock with an update on putting empty properties back into use.

Another Member requested that a report on the Community Asset Transfer process with particular emphasis on the Council's terms of conditions and how they compare with other Local Authorities.

Members were asked to consider the FWP alongside the Cabinet work programme and suggest any changes prior to publication on the Council's website.

It was moved and seconded that the report recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 16 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

## **6. CABINET REPORTS**

It was confirmed that there had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

## REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

### 7. SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION STRATEGY (SARS) IMPLEMENTATION

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces presented the report, which sought the comments of Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the implementation of the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019 – 2029 as detailed in Appendix 1 for inclusion in a report being presented to Cabinet. The Scrutiny Members were asked to recognise the current budget pressures being experienced by the service and understand the steps needed to overcome these pressures. Members heard that SARS was a key component of addressing this issue.

The Head of Public protection advised members that an update was brought to Scrutiny 2 years ago and that this report was a further update at the mid-point of the strategy and highlighted the broad breadth of delivery that the implementation plan outlines. In particular how the council works with partners, maximise the use of the Countryside and the investment in leisure facilities.

The Chair informed the committee that a Member of the Public had requested permission to speak at the meeting and introduced her to the Committee.

The Speaker (K, Alderson) thanked the Chair and Committee for allowing her to speak on behalf of the Leisure Centre Campaigners and stated that the Council was aware of their Social Media Campaign which is on day 118. Members heard how the Campaign is making people aware that Caerphilly County Borough Council wanted to provide a ten year strategy that meant that out of 11 leisure centres they wanted 4 strategic ones based in Risca, Caerphilly, Heolddu and Newbridge.

Members of the committee were advised that the matrix system that is being used in the strategy is the WRU Matrix System from the 2014 module and is outdated. Therefore, it needed to be updated as using this Matrix System will cause chaos as it will mean that anyone who forms a club at grassroot level will not be allocated a slot at any leisure centre facility as they do not qualify under the matrix.

The Committee were informed of difficulties the speaker had experienced personally in accessing leisure facilities as a member of the Blackwood Walking Football Team and she also highlighted that the team have had to move to sites that were not suitable for them. Committee heard how on one occasion they had to host a recent league game outside of the Borough and had to use facilities at Ocean Park in Cardiff as they were not able to secure a slot within Caerphilly County Borough. Ms Alderson outlined how there was concern for all clubs who were not able to train on their local grassroot field pitches.

The speaker raised the importance of leisure facilities to people's health, and well-being was discussed and how it had a huge impact on people's physical, social, and mental well-being. The speaker concluded by stressing the importance of the community and the council working together to provide what is best for now and for future generations.

The Chair thanked the Speaker and invited members to ask any questions.

A Member enquired about the evidence behind using Sport Wales funding for the over 60's on outdoor e-bikes and asked about promoting the benefits of taking a walk. The Sport and Leisure Development Manager provided information on organised walks that were taking place across the County Borough and the 60 plus bike scheme which was developed during lockdown restrictions when leisure centres were closed. The Chair asked officers to note the Member's comments on promoting the benefits of a walk to the elderly.

One Member enquired if the Aaron Ramsey Cruyff Court at Trinity Fields School would be accessible to the wider community. The Sport and Leisure Development Manager advised that this would be the case but highlighted that a lack of floodlights limited its use during winter months. The Member also asked for an update on the installation of equipment in play areas, the relevant specification used and whether all equipment purchased has been installed. The Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services advised that to the best of his knowledge purchased equipment had been installed but that he would check with the service area and respond to the Member outside of the meeting.

A Committee Member questioned if the focus was still on the four strategic centres as originally outlined given the investment at other sites. The Member also questioned the assertion that users of the indoor space at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre had relocated to other sites. In addition, it was queried if the sports facilities at the Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) was a replacement for the leisure centre, as it was initially described as an additional facility for residents. The Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services advised that it was never the intention to invest solely in just the four strategic leisure centres. Members also heard that the CVL was included in the report as it was part of the whole offer in terms of leisure facilities across the County Borough. The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment highlighted that most leisure facilities were linked to schools and therefore inextricably linked to the Schools Strategy. It was outlined how the CVL was described as an additional facility at the planning application stage because at the time a decision had not been reached on the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre. The Sport and Leisure Facilities Manager gave examples of clubs who had relocated from the indoor space at the centre, one example given was Oakdale Badminton Club which had moved to Islwyn High School. The Member welcomed all investment in leisure facilities and outlined that they knew of some clubs who thought the relocation was a temporary measure whilst the centre was being used as a vaccination hub.

One Member had concerns that by recognising current budget pressures and steps that may be taken to overcome them, as outlined in the recommendations, Members might be sanctioning future closures of leisure facilities. The Member also queried if a struggling leisure centre in the future could be considered for a Community Asset Transfer. The Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services highlighted to Members that if a leisure facility was experiencing financial challenges transferring to a community-run model would not necessarily remove those challenges. Committee heard how the recommendation acknowledged the pressure on public sector finances. Members heard how savings of £48M would have to be made over the next two years, and the overspend identified in the report due mainly to increased energy costs was also highlighted by officers.

A Member raised the issue of disability sports and queried the role of CCBC in facilitating this sport. The Sport and Leisure Development Manager advised that the "Insport Series" was run by Disability Sport Wales in collaboration with the 5 Local Authorities in the Gwent Region. Information on sports available was promoted on the Council website and the officer agreed to share further information with the Member outside of the meeting.

The Council Leader welcomed the Strategy and highlighted the brave decision made by Councillors in 2018 to keep leisure services in-house rather than outsourcing the service like other Local Authorities.



Having noted the content of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations are supported and should be forwarded to Cabinet for approval. By way of Microsoft Forms and with one verbal vote (and in noting there were 13 for, 2 against and 0 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. The Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee provided their comments on the progress of the Implementation of the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019 -2029 as detailed in Appendix 1 for inclusion in a report being presented to Cabinet
2. Scrutiny Committee Members recognised the current budget pressures being experienced by the service and understand that steps will need to be taken to overcome these pressures. The SARS is a key component of addressing this issue.

## **8. WASTE MANAGEMENT REVIEW REPORT FROM AUDIT WALES**

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces presented the Report which explains how Audit Wales have carried out a review of the Council's approach to recycling waste including its performance against key indicators and its plans to drive improvement in its performance. The audit did not examine in detail all the waste management services provided by the Council. Audit Wales noted that the Council's waste management performance had deteriorated in recent years with the percentage of waste reused, recycled, and composted lower when compared to other councils in Wales. The Audit Wales review focused on the extent to which the Council understood the reasons for the decline in its recycling performance and its plans to address this. The high-level summary from the review was that "Overall we found that the Council understands why its performance has declined but has been slow to address this; and whilst the Council is developing a draft strategy there remains significant risks to its successful implementation". The Report made 2 recommendations for improvement as noted in section 5.3.

The Chair invited the Officer from Audit Wales to provide the presentation.

Audit Wales confirmed that the report sets out the findings from the review which was carried out due to the Councils approach to recycling waste and how it plans to improve performance. It was identified that the Councils waste performance had deteriorated in recent years and had failed to reach statutory targets and members were advised that Welsh Government can levy penalties for non-compliance of targets, however Welsh Government have not yet imposed any penalties on the Council.

Members were advised that the content of the report and recommendations have been agreed and the Council are seeking to understand the root causes and address them to improve performance. Positive action taken by the Council has been set out in the report and areas for improvement are set out on page 12 of the report. Audit Wales are aware that the Council are working on producing a draft strategy and that it is intending to implement communications and engagement campaign across the County Borough for specific changes. The committee were advised that the Council have had costs for the draft strategy in the short term but will need to consider the costs for longer term and will also need to consider performance measures and think about the value for money aspect, which are included in the recommendations within the report.

The Chair thanked Audit Wales and invited the committee to ask questions.

A Member requested confirmation on what were the reasons for the decline in recycling over the periods 2017 – 2018 and 2021-2022 and confirmation that the Council are learning lessons. In addition, the Member sought confirmation that other Councils were using enforcement to a greater extent than Caerphilly Council was doing at present.

Audit Wales confirmed that Council officers would be best placed to confirm the reasons for the decline. In relation to the Council learning lessons question, it was confirmed that the Council has been looking at what other Authorities are doing and are working on improving their performance which demonstrates that lessons are being learned. Members heard that with regards to enforcement relating to collection services, this was not investigated in detail, but it was noted that other Councils have successfully introduced enforcement measures, but Caerphilly had previously chosen not to. However, this has been looked at recently by the Waste strategy review cross party group members. Following this a report has been presented to Cabinet and the use of the relevant enforcement powers has been agreed.

The Director for Economy and Environment advised that there were a multitude of factors that contributed to the decline in performance such as including an initial contractual problem with certain waste streams followed by the covid pandemic. Members were made aware that Caerphilly has more residual waste than any other authority in Wales and do not have as many restrictions on household recycling centres compared to other authorities. In relation to enforcement the Council has not used this approach to date and confirmed that a report was presented to Cabinet earlier this month and a decision was taken to only use enforcement if all else fails. Members were advised that the decline coincided with other authorities making changes which Caerphilly did not and the Council is now in the process of bringing a new waste strategy forward and has a cross party waste strategy group who are working on its development with officers. Members heard how there is a Joint Scrutiny Committee scheduled in the New Year for the new Waste Strategy to be discussed and then Cabinet will be asked to endorse a consultation process before the strategy is introduced.

The Chair thanked the Director of the Economy and Environment and confirmed the report had been duly noted.

The meeting closed at 18:43 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023, they were signed by the Chair.

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CHAIR



## **HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

**SUBJECT: HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE  
SERVICES**



### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Forward Work Programmes are essential to ensure that Scrutiny Committee agendas reflect the strategic issues facing the Council and other priorities raised by Members, the public or stakeholder.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That Members consider any changes and agree the final forward work programme prior to publication.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To improve the operation of scrutiny.

### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 The Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee forward work programme includes all reports that were identified at the Committee meeting on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023. The work programme outlines the reports planned for the period December 2023 until March 2024.
- 5.2 The forward Work Programme is made up of reports identified by officers and members. Members are asked to consider the work programme alongside the

cabinet work programme and suggest any changes before it is published on the council website. The Scrutiny committee will review this work programme at every meeting going forward alongside any changes to the cabinet work programme or report requests.

- 5.3 The Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1, which presents the current status as at 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The Cabinet Work Programme is attached at Appendix 2. A copy of the prioritisation flowchart is attached at appendix 3 to assist the scrutiny committee to determine what items should be added to the forward work programme.

#### 5.4 **Conclusion**

The work programme is for consideration and amendment by the scrutiny committee prior to publication on the council website.

### 6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 No assumptions are necessary.

### 7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 As this report is for information only an Integrated Impact Assessment is not necessary.

### 8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no specific financial implications arising as a result of this report.

### 9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no specific personnel implications arising as a result of this report.

### 10. **CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been included in this report.

### 11. **STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 The Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Mark Jacques, Scrutiny Officer jacqu@carphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive

Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment  
Gareth Jenkins, Assistant Director – Children’s Services  
Nick Taylor-Williams – Head of Housing  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/ Monitoring Officer  
Lisa Lane, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer,  
Legal Services  
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair of Housing and Environment  
Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Shane Williams, Vice Chair of Housing and Environment  
Scrutiny Committee

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
- Appendix 2 Cabinet Forward Work Programme
- Appendix 3 Forward Work Programme Prioritisation Flowchart

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## Forward Work Programme - Housing & Environment

| Date           | Title  | Key Issues   | Author                 | Cabinet Member          |
|----------------|--|--|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 12/12/23 17:30 | Grass Cutting Regimes – 2024 Season  |  | Williams, Mark S;      | Cllr. Morgan, Chris     |
| 12/12/23 17:30 | Decarbonisation Annual Report and Carbon Baselines   |  | Cooke, Paul;           | Cllr. Pritchard, Jamie; |
| 12/12/23 17:30 | Caerphilly Leisure and well being hub UPDATE   |  | Williams, Mark S;      | Cllr. Morgan, Chris     |
| 12/12/23 17:30 | Consultation on the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre  |  | Hartshorn, Rob;        | Cllr. Morgan, Chris     |
| 12/12/23 17:30 | Information Item - HRA Budget Monitoring Report Period 5   |  | Allen, Lesley          | Cllr. Cook, Shayne;     |
| 13/02/24 17:30 | Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy  |  | Davies, Claire;        | Cllr Cook, Shayne;      |
| 13/02/24 17:30 | Caerphilly Homes Tenant Satisfaction Survey  | To report the outcome of the Caerphilly Homes Tenant Satisfaction Survey (Autumn 2023) to Scrutiny prior to submission to Welsh Government by the March 2024 deadline.   | Taylor-Williams, Nick; | Cllr. Cook, Shayne;     |
| 13/02/24 17:30 | Allocation Criteria for Artificial Sports Pitches and the Ystrad Mynach Centre for Sporting Excellence | To seek Cabinet approval for amendments to the criteria for the allocation of bookings at Caerphilly Council managed artificial sports pitches (3G and ATP) and the Ystrad Mynach Centre for Sporting Excellence and to approve the delegation of future amendments to the allocation criteria to the relevant Director or Head of Service in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member. | Lougher, Jared;        | Cllr. Morgan, Chris     |
| 13/02/24 17:30 | Information Item - HRA Budget Monitoring Report Period 7   |  | Allen, Lesley;         | Cllr. Cook, Shayne;     |
| 13/02/24 17:30 | Information Item - Budget Monitoring P7  |  | Roberts, Dave;         | Cllr. Morgan, Chris     |
| 26/03/24 17:30 | Caerphilly Homes Presentation  |  | Taylor-Williams, Nick; | Cllr. Cook, Shayne;     |
| 26/03/24 17:30 | Residential Parking Permit Inquiry – Final Report  |  | Jacques, Mark;         | Cllr. Morgan, Chris     |
| 26/03/24 17:30 | FSA audit Report   |  | Hartshorn, Rob;        | Cllr. Morgan, Chris     |
| 26/03/24 17:30 | HRA Business Plan  |  | Allen, Lesley;         | Cllr. Cook, Shayne;     |
| 26/03/24 17:30 | Information Item - HRA Budget Monitoring Report Period 9   |  | Allen, Lesley          | Cllr. Cook, Shayne;     |
| 26/03/24 17:30 | Information Item - Budget Monitoring P9  |  | Roberts, Dave;         | Cllr. Morgan, Chris     |

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## Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 5th December 2023

| Meeting date:            | Report title:  | Key issue:  | Report author                                     | Cabinet Member:    |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|--------------------|
| 13/12/2023<br>13:00 p.m. | Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Proposal – Ysgol Y Lawnt / Upper Rhymney Primary | For Cabinet to consider the Consultation Report and approve the publication of a Statutory Notice.  | Sue Richards/Andrea West                          | Cllr Carol Andrews |
| 13/12/2023               | Proposal for the closure of Cwm Glas Infants School  | For Cabinet to consider the Consultation Report and approve the publication of a Statutory Notice.  | Sue Richards/Andrea West                          | Cllr Carol Andrews |
| 13/12/2023               | Housing Revenue Account Charges – 2024/2025 (Rent increase report)                           | For Cabinet to agree the level of rent increase for council contract holders (tenants) effective from April 2024  | Lesley Allen                                      | Cllr Shayne Cook   |
| 13/12/2023               | Housing Offices Rationalisation Report   | As part of a review of how we provide housing services to our customers and communities, and following a comprehensive customer consultation exercise, we are seeking approval to permanently close all existing Housing Offices, replacing them with a centralised Housing Office in Penallta House. This will facilitate service modernisation and improvements by reducing the need for customers to travel to a housing office to receive services, making housing officers more available to our customers through working agilely within our communities, | Fiona Wilkins/Julie Reynolds/Nick Taylor-Williams | Cllr Shayne Cook   |

## Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 5th December 2023

| Meeting date: | Report title:  | Key issue:   | Report author  | Cabinet Member:       |
|---------------|--|--|----------------|-----------------------|
|               |  | thereby increasing opportunities for access and engagement and building better relationships with our customers.   |                |                       |
| 13/12/2023    | Greater Blackwood Masterplan   | For Members to consider the Draft Greater Blackwood Masterplan. The report will seek the views of members prior to its presentation to Cabinet, where Cabinet will be asked to endorse the Draft Masterplan as the basis for a public consultation exercise. | Rhian Kyte     | Cllr James Pritchard  |
| 13/12/2023    | New Listed Buildings at Risk Strategy  | To seek Cabinet approval for the Authority's Buildings at Risk Register and Strategy which sets out a framework for the preservation and enhancement of listed buildings at risk over the period 2023-2028.  | Rhian Kyte     | Cllr Philippa Leonard |
| 13/12/2023    | Council Tax Base 2024/25   | For Cabinet to agree the calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2024/25 financial year.   | Sean O'Donnell | Cllr. Eluned Stenner  |
| 13/12/2023    | Consultation on Proposals to Implement Council Tax Premiums on Long-term Empty Properties and Second Homes | To seek Cabinet approval to undertake a consultation process on the implementation of premiums.  | Sean O'Donnell | Cllr. Eluned Stenner  |

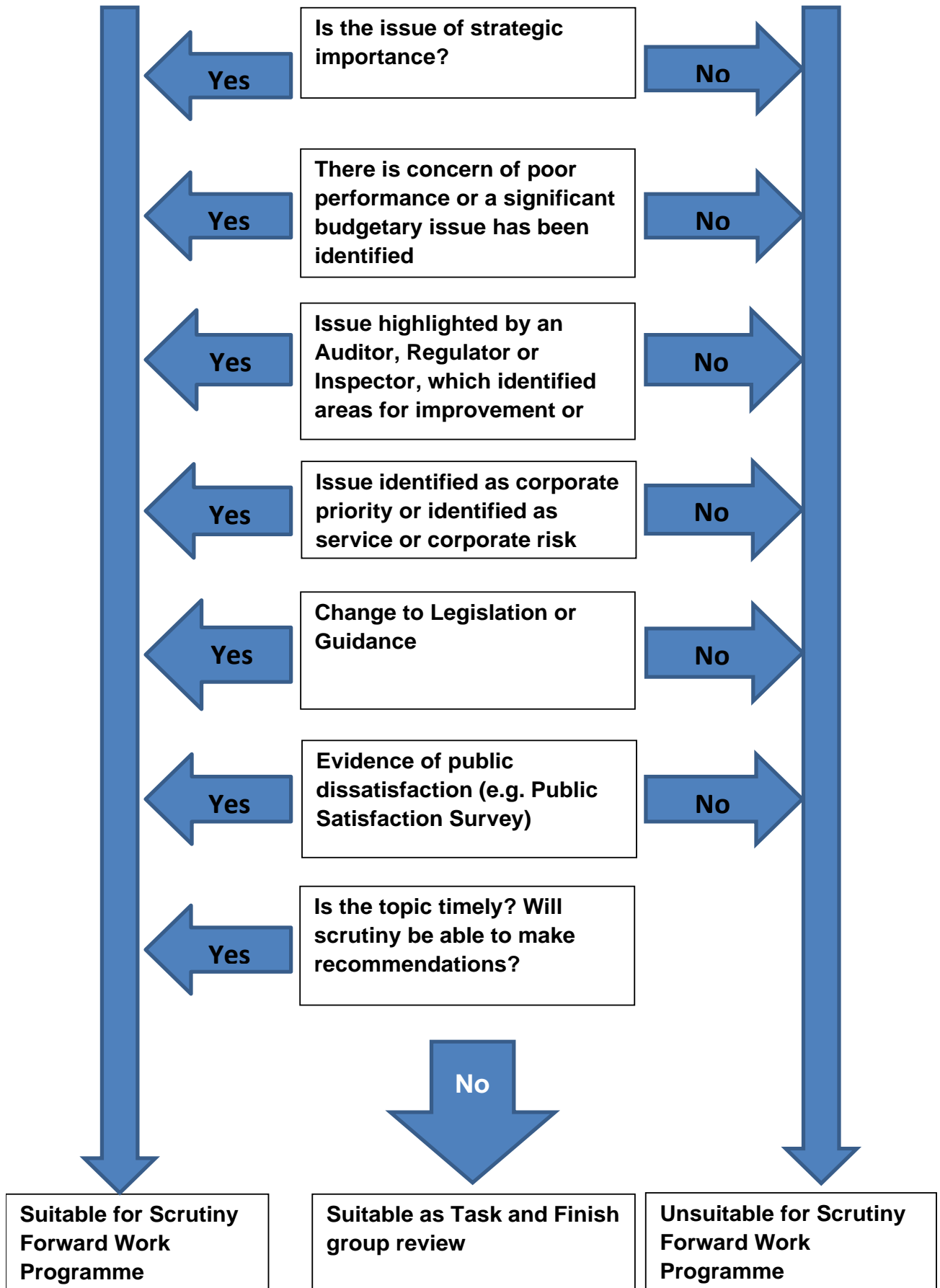
**Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 5th December 2023**

| <b>Meeting date:</b>     | <b>Report title:</b>  | <b>Key issue:</b>  | <b>Report author</b>               | <b>Cabinet Member:</b> |
|--------------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 13/12/2023               | Cwm lfor Solar Farm final business case - EXEMPT ITEM   | Subject to Public Interest Test.   | Anna Lewis/Paul Cooke/Sue Richards | Cllr James Pritchard   |
| 17/01/2024<br>13:00 p.m. | Caerphilly Cares Support Package for families eligible for free school meals                              | Welsh Government withdrawal of free school meals for eligible families during the school holidays.   | Tina McMahon                       | Cllr Carol Andrews     |
| 17/01/2024               | Grass Cutting Regimes – 2024 Season   | To consider options and proposals for grass cutting for the 2024 cutting season.   | Rob Hartshorn                      | Cllr Chris Morgan      |
| 17/01/2024               | Draft Waste Strategy  | To approve the draft waste strategy for public consultation.   | Marcus Lloyd/Hayley Jones          | Cllr Chris Morgan      |
| 17/01/2024               | Draft Budget Proposals for 2024/25  | To present Cabinet with details of the draft budget proposals for the 2024/25 financial year to allow for a period of consultation prior to a final decision by Council on 27 February 2024. | Christina Harray/Stephen Harris    | Cllr Eluned Stenner    |
| 17/01/2024               | Audit Wales Output Report on Setting of well-being objectives for Caerphilly County Borough Council 22-23 | To receive the Audit Wales examination report on whether the Council applied the sustainable development principle in the setting of its Well-being Objectives for 2022-23                   | Ros Roberts/Sue Richards           | Cllr Eluned Stenner    |

**Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 5th December 2023**

| <b>Meeting date:</b>     | <b>Report title:</b>  | <b>Key issue:</b>  | <b>Report author</b>                   | <b>Cabinet Member:</b>                     |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| 21/02/2024<br>13:00 p.m. | Support for pupils unable to attend school (formerly “Tuition” report).   | To seek Cabinet approval for proposals for revising the model of support for pupils accessing tuition.   | Keri Cole                              | Cllr Carol Andrews                         |
| 21/02/2024               | Community Benefits Guidance - for projects and developments with the potential for significant community impact | Setting out the council’s advice on how community benefits contributions from projects and developments within the county borough might be agreed and distributed.   | Sue Richards/Heather Delonnette        | Cllr James Pritchard/Cllr Philippa Leonard |
| 21/02/2024               | Private Wire Arrangement from Bryn Group to Tredomen Campus   | To advise Cabinet of a proposal to secure a "Private Wire" renewable energy solution from Bryn anaerobic digester to the Tredomen Campus which will achieve significant carbon and financial savings and to seek approval for the initial feasibility work to be funded from the Licence to Innovate fund. | Ben Winstanley/ Paul Cooke/ Anna Lewis | Cllr James Pritchard/ Cllr Nigel George    |
| 27/02/2024<br>13:00 p.m. | Budget Proposals for 2024/25  | To seek Cabinet endorsement of the 2024/25 budget proposals prior to final determination by Council on 27th February 2024.   | Stephen Harris                         | Cllr Eluned Stenner                        |

**Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme Prioritisation**



Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



## **HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

**SUBJECT: GRASS CUTTING REGIMES**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND  
ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek the views of the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee prior to a further report being presented to Cabinet in relation to grass cutting regimes across the county borough and proposals to enhance and promote biodiversity.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Council has a legal duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and in so doing, promote the resilience of ecosystems under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The Council is also responding to the challenges of climate change and declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. Welsh Government declared a 'Nature Emergency' in Wales on the 30th of June 2021.
- 2.2 The Council has a schedule of grass cutting frequencies through the growing season across the county borough. Grass cutting was one of a range of services that was paused in the national lockdown in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic and the Council has been developing its approach to grass cutting since.
- 2.3 On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 Cabinet agreed to continue the Council's commitment to the UK wide 'No Mow May' campaign and biodiversity with further revisions to the Council's grass cutting regime in 2023. This included an additional list of areas which were also allowed to flourish during the summer period. An all-Members Seminar was held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 where feedback on the 2023 grass cutting season and an update on the proposed approach for 2024 were provided.
- 2.4 It is proposed that the grass cutting regime in 2024 continues with the current adopted approach to highway verges and by-pass routes and includes a continued commitment to the UK wide 'No Mow May' campaign. The list of

selected areas which will be allowed to flourish during the 2024 growing season has been reviewed and revised following feedback during 2023 and these are detailed in Appendix 1. An example of the revised approach includes more grass cutting on housing estates as this was a particular issue raised in the feedback on the 2023 cutting season.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and comment upon the following recommendations prior to their presentation to Cabinet for approval:

- i. The approach adopted since the 2021/22 cutting season continue to be the adopted grass cutting standard in relation to our highway verges and by-pass routes where mowing is kept to a minimum, in accordance with Traffic Wales guidance.
- ii. The Council continues its commitment to the Nature isn't Neat project, which is part of the Gwent Green Grid Partnership, establishing joined-up green space management to create wildflower-rich pollinator habitats across the Gwent local authority areas, which includes Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, and Torfaen.
- iii. Visibility splays and sight lines on highways; margins and access on footways/cycle routes; sports grounds; urban areas such as housing estates, municipal parks, older person accommodation, cemeteries; play/recreational public open spaces, will be maintained at the current cutting frequencies.
- iv. That Cabinet endorse the list of areas as set out in Appendix 1, which are to be allowed to flourish during the summer period.
- v. That the Authority continues to develop and enhance areas using bought in wildflower seed as set out in Paragraph 5.11 below.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To fulfil our statutory bio-diversity duty and to assist in our response to Climate change and the Climate Emergency, which this Council declared in 2019.
- 4.2 To reduce carbon emissions and to contribute to the targets within the Council's Decarbonisation Strategy.
- 4.3 To assist with the Wales 'Nature Emergency' declared by Welsh Government on the 30th of June 2021.



## 5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council has a schedule of grass cutting frequencies through the growing season across Parks, housing estates, other public open space, cemeteries, and older person sheltered accommodation. When the UK was placed into a national lockdown in 2020 in response to the global pandemic many of our services were paused and staff redeployed to focus on maintaining essential front-line services and delivering the new services created to support our communities at the height of the pandemic. One of the many services paused was grass cutting and this had an unexpected and welcome impact on our environment as we had inadvertently created many wildlife habitats and havens for pollinators.
- 5.2 The Council has a legal duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and in so doing, promote the resilience of ecosystems under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The Council is also responding to the challenges of climate change and declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. Welsh Government declared a 'Nature Emergency' in Wales on the 30th of June 2021. The management of green and blue spaces should be directed by the Green Infrastructure Strategy, which was formally adopted in November 2020 and such changes will enable multiple benefits such as improving mental and physical health and increasing biodiversity, which will lead to more resilient communities, more resilient habitats and ecosystems and a more resilient local economy.
- 5.3 The Council has been developing its approach to grass cutting over the last few grass growing seasons whereby cutting along our highway verges and roundabouts was kept to a minimum in support of the 'No Mow May' campaign. Following an all-Member Seminar in October 2022 additional areas were identified to be allowed to flourish during the summer of 2023. With the endorsement of Sustainability and Environment Scrutiny Committee Cabinet agreed to continue the Council's commitment to the UK wide 'No Mow May' campaign and biodiversity with further revisions to the Council's grass cutting regime in 2023.
- 5.4 In 2023 formal grass cutting did not commence until June with the exception of designated areas including: visibility splays and sight lines on highways; margins and access on footways/cycle routes; sports grounds; urban areas such as housing estates, municipal parks, older person accommodation, cemeteries; play/recreational public open spaces, which were maintained at regular cutting frequencies. Grass cutting across the county borough still took place in order to: -
- Maintain visibility for road users;
  - Keep traffic signage and sight lines clear;
  - Maintain margins and access on footways and cycle routes;
  - Maintain parks, sports grounds, cemeteries, housing estates, play and recreational public open spaces.

An additional list of areas nominated by both relevant officers and local members within their respective wards were also allowed to flourish during the summer period.

- 5.5 A lot of feedback was received regarding grass cutting across the year, both positive and negative, and lessons have been learned from the new approach. Unfortunately the service was unable to complete the first cut of all areas as a result of staffing issues associated with some key staff leaving the organisation combined with sickness absence causing operational difficulties. However, this must be balanced against the compliments also received from residents. Our approach to grass cutting has been reviewed taking into account the range of feedback received and the need to be mindful of our statutory biodiversity duty and the need to significantly reduce our carbon footprint.
- 5.6 A number of measures are in place to improve performance in the 2024 cutting season. Upgraded cutting equipment (flails) has been purchased for use during the cutting season and all additional flails will be in place ahead of the 2024 season. Key experienced staff left the organisation ahead of the 2023 season and these posts are now filled. It is also proposed to begin cutting cycles at the beginning of March 2024 (weather permitting) to enable the service to manage demand and potential changes to our climate / growing conditions.
- 5.7 The list of selected areas which will be allowed to flourish during the 2024 growing season has been reviewed and revised following feedback during 2023 and these are detailed in Appendix 1. The edges of these areas will continue to be maintained to prevent any overgrowth affecting pedestrians. Where appropriate, walking routes will also be cut.
- 5.8 Wildflowers and grasses thrive in nutrient poor soil, leaving grass cuttings uncollected allows nutrients from the grass to go back into the soil, which is not good for the wildflowers we would like to encourage. Areas that are left to grow need to be cut and collected at the end of the summer. Removing the arisings deprives the soil of nutrients and thus creates the perfect environment for more species of flora and fauna to flourish, but capacity issues both in terms of staff and machinery available to undertake this task dictates the number of areas where this is achievable. As we make changes to our grass cutting regimes, we are also developing our approach to the removal of grass cuttings in order to promote a good growing environment for wild flora and fauna. The list of selected areas has been refined to indicate those areas where biodiversity will be further enhanced with the removal of grass arisings following cutting, these are set out in Appendix 1.
- 5.9 These proposals have been developed in conjunction with our participation in the Gwent Green Grid Partnership which includes the 5 Gwent local authorities, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Research, and Severn Wye Energy Agency. Officers will continue to work and engage with local members, and other stakeholders and environmental groups to develop the list of areas in Appendix 1.

- 5.10 Site specific recommendations to enhance biodiversity have been made for each of the sections of roadside verge and a series of more general measures have been produced that can be applied at verges across the county borough. The most important of these is to leave verges uncut through the spring and early summer to allow plants to flower and set seeds and to remove grass cuttings to reduce the dominance of coarse grasses.
- 5.11 Training and awareness raising sessions with frontline staff have taken place via the Nature isn't Neat campaign, this will continue via tool box talks and appropriate publications. In previous years, wildflower seeds have been made available free of charge. To manage the correct locations and successful integration of wildflower swathes within areas identified in Appendix 1, Members and Community Groups are invited to liaise with respective Area Parks Officer before the Spring to plan additional wildflower planting. Parks Operations have invested in equipment to create wildflower swathes to further enhance these identified areas of green space.
- 5.12 Members will be aware of the Council's commitment to be a net zero carbon local authority by 2030. The revised approach to grass cutting regimes contributes to this and is one of the measures set out within the Council's Decarbonisation Action Plan. Any reduction in grass cutting, either the frequency of mowing or the reduction in the sizes of the areas that are mown, reduces the use of diesel or petrol and the carbon emissions associated with them. As well as reducing emissions from mowing there are also significant emission reductions in travelling to and from individual sites. As an example an assessment of carbon reduction has been undertaken at seven of the sites at: -
- Snowdon Close, Ty Sign.
  - Highfields Way / Montclair Avenue, Blackwood.
  - Blackwood Road, Pontllanfraith to Plaza.
  - Ael-y-Bryn, Rhymney.
  - Pengam Road, Aberbargoed.
  - Addison Way, Trethomas.
  - Frontages of Lansbury Park and Porset Park, Caerphilly.

It is estimated that reducing the frequency of grass cutting at these sites from 6 times per year to once has achieved an annual saving of 7,740kgCO<sub>2</sub>e. The promotion of grasses and wildflowers in this way also offers the potential for additional carbon sequestration (the storage of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in vegetation).

## **CONCLUSION**

To allow specific areas across the county borough and our roadside verges to flourish will not only enhance the local environment but will assist in fulfilling our statutory bio-diversity duty and assist in our response to Climate change and the Climate Emergency, which this council declared in 2019.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made within this report. The CO2 savings figures have been calculated using emissions factors from the Welsh Government Net Carbon Zero Reporting Tool, and estimated fuel savings based on the size and location of the sites.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has identified a number of both positive and negative impacts; however, the recommendation is to proceed with the proposal. The proposal would have a positive impact in that it would enhance our local environment and create habitat for wildlife and areas where wildflowers could flourish. It will also assist with residents' physical and mental well-being regardless of protected characteristics and support the council's Biodiversity Duty and Decarbonisation Strategy but also assist with the Climate Emergency which the Council declared in 2019.
- 7.2 However, areas left to flourish may give an untidy and unmanaged appearance, which could result in complaints from residents. This potential negative reaction will be mitigated by the installation of a sign or stencil on the ground where areas are being managed in an alternative manner to advise residents and to highlight the benefits.

[Link to IIA](#)

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 A saving of £59,000 was identified as a result of implementing the amended grass cutting regime in 2023 and this sum featured as a permanent saving in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) budget savings report for 2023/24, which was presented to Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report. Staff are already engaged in the revised approach to grass-cutting and this will develop further as it is progressed in additional areas.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 The views of the listed consultees have been reflected within this report.

## 11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Environment (Wales) Act 2016,  
The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981  
The Highways Act 1980

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### Consultees:

Councillor Chris Morgan, Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces  
Morgac15@caerphilly.gov.uk  
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
whitca@caerphilly.gov.uk  
Councillor Shane Williams, Vice Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
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David Roberts, Interim Finance Manager Roberda@caerphilly.gov.uk  
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Paul Cooke, Transformation Manager - Decarbonisation Cookepa@caerphilly.gov.uk  
Maggie Iles, Ecologist ilesm@caerphilly.gov.uk

### Background Papers:

**Cabinet Report 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021: 'Grass Cutting Regimes'**  
**Cabinet Report 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023: 'Grass Cutting Regimes'**

### Appendices:

Appendix 1 List of areas identified to flourish during the 2024 growing season.

## **Appendix 1**

### **List of areas identified to flourish during the 2024 growing season.**

Within the selected areas listed, we aim to mow a swathe along footpaths and roadsides maintaining safety for pedestrians and clear site lines. Additionally, in larger areas we aim to mow swathes throughout the areas creating desire lines/paths and where the site allows maintain areas for recreational use.

#### **Rhymney**

- Rhymney Bypass/Rhymney roundabout to Butetown /Butetown to Heads of the Valley roundabouts.
- Verge in front of Travellers site, Rhymney
- Maerdy Park, Rhymney
- Areas in Rhymney War Memorial Park

#### **New Tredegar / Phillipstown**

- New Tredegar Bypass
- White Rose Way Business Units
- 'Daisy Field' and area to entrance of Phillipstown

#### **Aberbargoed / Britannia**

- Area front of Scandinavian Design and opposite side of road, Aberbargoed

#### **Fleur de lys / Pengam**

- Banking and surrounds at Trelyn Park, Fleur de lys
- Area below St Davids Football field, Pengam
- Area between High St, Pengam and St David Ind. Est

#### **Trinant**

- Banking on entrance to Trinant via Kendon Hill

#### **Blackwood / Cefn Fforest**

- Bedwellty Rd/Heol Y Cefn, Cefn Fforest
- Highfields Way banking
- Blackwood Showfield (specific areas)
- Cwmgelli verges

#### **Pontllanfraith**

- Lower Islwyn Park banking
- Blackwood Road (From Traffic lights opp. Police Station to former Tredegar Junction PH)

#### **Penllwyn / The Bryn**

- Bryn Playing Fields (specific areas)

#### **Oakdale**

- Waterloo
- Oakdale Bypass verges

## **Nelson**

- Nelson Wern Park
- Large Grass area Ynys Las Nelson

## **Bargoed / Gilfach**

- Triangle in front of Ty Bargoed Offices
- Angel Way (Bargoed Bypass)
- Large area between William Street/St Marys Street, Gilfach
- Large grass area The Avenue, Gilfach
- Large grass area Fairways

## **Hengoed / Cefn Hengoed**

- Bank area to the of Raglan Road to Main Road Hengoed
- New Road RBT to Viaduct

## **Llanbradach**

- Llanbradach Park
- Banks in Llanbradach Park and flat area behind Library
- Llanbradach Bypass and layby

## **Maesycymmer**

- Maesycymmer verges Main Road/The Boot
- Areas at Maesycymmer Playing Fields

## **Gelligaer**

- Areas at junction by The Cross Inn on Gelligaer Road

## **Penpedairheol / Cascade**

- Large area with pylon rear of Burnet Drive, Penpedairheol
- Area from Clos Mynach to Bryn Awelon/Bryn Siriol

## **Abercarn / Cwmcarn**

- Banks at Abercarn Welfare
- Persondy Bankings
- High Meadow Old Swimming baths plot

## **Hafodyrynys / Crumlin**

- Hafodyrynys wide verges
- Herbert Avenue Banks

## **Treowen**

- Rear of Ael Y Bryn

## **Newbridge**

- Newbridge RBT (McDonalds)
- Torlais Street
- Verges at former Aiwa Site, Newbridge

**Wattsville / Cwmfelinfach / Ynysddu**

- Surrounds of Wattsville Lower Football pitch
- Rear of Alexander Road, Ynysddu

**Risca / Pontymister**

- Snowdon Close

**Caerphilly**

- Verges from Treceenydd to Penrhos
- Penrhos RBT
- Watford Road turning circle
- Caerphilly Mountain Verges
- Verges from Cedar Tree RBT to Bedwas RBT
- Crescent Road Floral Area
- Morgan Jones Park - Tump & woodland

**Aber Valley**

- Senghenydd Recreational Ground

**Penyrheol**

- Hendredenny - large field by Angel PH.

**Castle View Estate**

- Roundabout by Cwrt Rawlin PH.

**Bedwas & Trethomas**

- Upper Glyn Gwyn – Large area Upper Glyn Gwyn Street (leave kickabout area)

**Rudry / Machen / Draethen**

- Top Orchard above Mountain View, Machen





## HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023

**SUBJECT:** DECARBONISATION ANNUAL REPORT NOVEMBER 2023

**REPORT BY:** CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND  
ENVIRONMENT

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the scrutiny Committee with an update on the work undertaken across the authority to deliver the aims of the Decarbonisation Strategy and to seek any comments prior to the report being presented to Cabinet in January 2024.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In June 2019 Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) declared a Climate Emergency and committed to 'making Caerphilly County Borough Council a net zero carbon local authority by 2030'.
- 2.2 On the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Cabinet approved 10 recommendations related to implementing the Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan. These recommendations included reviewing the Action Plan, and preparing an annual progress report each November.
- 2.3 The Action Plan has been reviewed and the number of actions reduced from 122 to 76. Updates have been provided for each of the new actions, and an assessment of progress against each action has been undertaken. Of the 76 actions:
- 12 have been completed,
  - 31 are making good progress,
  - 26 are making reasonable progress,
  - 7 have not yet started.

A full update of all the actions and their assessed progress is attached as Appendix 2.

- 2.4 Carbon baseline data was submitted through the Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Scheme in September 2023, in line with the Welsh Government reporting requirements. For the reporting year 2022/23 CCBC reported an emissions total of 103,308,185 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e (22,110,491 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e operational emissions plus 81,197,694 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e supply chain emissions). This was offset by -7,413,691 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e through our land use, giving a submitted carbon emissions figure of 95,894,494 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e (or 95,894 tCO<sub>2</sub>e).

- 2.5 The reported emissions for 2022/23 were an increase of 1,637,192 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e or 1.74%. The increase is as a result of changes to Welsh Government reporting methodologies which have brought in additional areas; better data and increased overall expenditure. The changes mean that it is difficult to make direct comparisons of year-on-year trends, but this should be easier as the methodology improves.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Scrutiny Committee notes the progress made to date on the actions set out in the Decarbonisation Annual Report and comments on the approach taken in relation to, and the content of this first annual progress report.

### 4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To contribute to the Council's commitment to become net zero carbon by 2030.

### 5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 In June 2019 Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) declared a Climate Emergency and committed to 'making Caerphilly County Borough Council a net zero carbon local authority by 2030'.

- 5.2 2022/23 marked the first year with a dedicated Decarbonisation team in place within the organisation. Recruitment of a team of four officers was completed in January 2023. The first 9 months of work has focused on establishing structures to take forward the work, including reviewing the Decarbonisation Action Plan that was approved in November 2020. Several significant projects including the 20MW Cwm Ifor Solar Farm, and Covid Memorial Woodland have been progressed, as have opportunities to reduce revenue costs as part of the Mobilising Team Caerphilly work.

- 5.2 On the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Cabinet approved 10 recommendations related to implementing the Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan. These recommendations included reviewing the Action Plan, and preparing an annual progress report each November.

- 5.3 The Strategy and Action Plan were structured on four pillars with an overarching section on corporate or cross-cutting actions. The pillars are:

- **Reduce** - Focussing on reducing the amount of energy we use through good housekeeping, changing behaviour and capital investment including insulation, low energy lighting or more efficient heating systems.
- **Produce** - Generating our own 'green' electricity and heat through technologies such as photovoltaic systems or solar thermal.
- **Offset** - Offsetting any carbon emissions through habitat management or tree planting.
- **Buy** - Everything we purchase has embedded carbon associated with it and this will need to be considered in the procurement process.

- 5.4 In line with recommendation 4, in the June 2023 Cabinet report, working groups were established to drive forward the work on each of the 4 pillars. Each working group reviewed the actions relating to that group to focus on the 2030 organisational requirements, and to align with the WG route map and timeframes. Actions relating

to the Welsh Government territorial emissions aspiration, that each geographic area is net zero carbon by 2050 were removed.

- 5.5 As a result of the reviews of the Action Plan the number of actions has reduced from 122 to 76. Updates have been provided for each of the new actions, and an assessment of progress against each action has been undertaken. Of the 76 actions:
- 12 have been completed,
  - 31 are making good progress,
  - 26 are making reasonable progress,
  - 7 have not yet started.

### **Corporate and Cross-Cutting Actions**

- 5.6 The Corporate and Cross-Cutting section of the Decarbonisation Action Plan focuses firstly on measuring and understanding organisational emissions so that actions for emissions reductions are targeted and measurable. Secondly, there is a need for dissemination of this information and knowledge. A program of awareness raising, and skills development is key to ensuring that decarbonisation is embedded into the organisation's ways of working.
- 5.7 The Decarbonisation Team reviewed the previous Action Plan, revised and agreed the Corporate and Cross-Cutting section into 11 actions (See Appendix 2).  
Of these actions:
- 1 has been completed
  - 4 are going well with good progress
  - 3 have had reasonable progress
  - 3 are not yet started.
- 5.8 For the reporting year 2022/23 CCBC reported an emissions total of 103,308,185 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e (22,110,491 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e operational emissions plus 81,197,694 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e supply chain emissions). This was offset by -7,413,691 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e through our land use, giving a submitted carbon emissions figure of 95,894,494 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e (or 95,894 tCO<sub>2</sub>e). The reported emissions for 2022/23 were an increase of 1,637,192 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e or 1.74%.
- 5.9 The overall increase was in part driven by an increase in third party spend of £31.1 million which resulted in an increase in supply chain emissions of 2,080,108 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e or 2.63%. Operational emissions decreased by 449,714 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e or 2% as a result of reductions in streetlighting, buildings and waste emissions. Emissions from business travel (grey fleet) and commuting increased due to improvements in data collection. Reporting on F-gases (Fluorinated gases) was included for the first time resulting in a 9,187 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e increase.
- 5.10 Changes to the Welsh Government methodology and scope of reporting mean that it is difficult to make direct comparisons of year-on-year trends, but this should be easier as the methodology improves.
- 5.11 The Decarbonisation Team has produced emissions baselines and footprints for each Directorate and Service Area, aligned with Welsh Government Net Zero Carbon Reporting for 2021/22 and 2022/23. The data is contained in spreadsheets and visualised using Power BI reports. To enable understanding of these emissions presentations have been developed with delivery and timeline to be agreed.

- 5.12 An initial cohort of 22 officers have completed Carbon Literacy training accredited by the Carbon Literacy Project and delivered by Cynnal Cymru. The included officers from the Decarbonisation Strategy Working Groups, the wider Transformation Team and colleagues who had completed the Infuse Programme with a focus on Accelerating Decarbonisation.

### **Reduce Actions**

- 5.13 The scope of the work under the Reduce heading means that this section of the Decarbonisation Action Plan is the largest, crossing many services and existing work streams. The identified targeted areas for action are:
- Existing Buildings – Corporate and Domestic
  - New Developments – Corporate and Domestic
  - Streetlighting
  - Travel & Transport
  - Waste Management
- 5.14 The Reduce working group and other stakeholders reviewed the previous Action Plan, revised and agreed the Reduce section into 30 actions (See Appendix 2). Of these actions:
- 4 are completed
  - 13 are going well with good progress
  - 11 have had reasonable progress
  - 2 are not yet started
- 5.15 Caerphilly CBC is responsible for 778 non-domestic sites with a combined gross internal area of 475,534 m<sup>2</sup>. Reducing energy consumption of buildings is mostly achieved by improving the fabric of the buildings, improving the regulation of energy consumption, and reducing the emissions of the energy used through generating or using renewable energy.
- 5.16 The Energy Team have reviewed the existing backlog maintenance requirements for non-domestic buildings alongside Energy Performance and required upgrades for improved energy efficiency. From this exercise, priority sites for upgrades have been identified to form the initial phase of a full programme of works to improve the energy efficiency of non-domestic buildings. High-level costings of technologies to reduce carbon emissions of buildings have been provided which can be extrapolated based on internal floor area. These numbers will be improved as we move through the programme of works. From these high-level costings, a framework for contractors will be produced through the works can be procured. Funding opportunities for these works are continually being explored to include the Salix Invest to Save Scheme as well as Welsh Government Low Carbon Heat Grants.
- 5.17 Service Asset Management Plans (SAMPs) have been reviewed by the Asset Management Working Group and a list of identified properties that will be targeted in the short, medium and long term for vacating by services has been produced. As part of this options appraisal, the number of sites, running costs, backlog maintenance costs, lease costs, potential rental revenue and potential capital receipts are considered alongside the needs of the Service. This process has the potential to reduce number of Corporate Office sites, to streamline the estate and achieve

improved efficiencies at remaining sites.

5.18 As of 30th September 2023, a total of 544 vehicles made up our fleet. This number represents a decrease of nearly 80 vehicles from 620 in the summer of 2020. Installation and commissioning of EV charging infrastructure to date provides the charging capacity for around 100 fleet EVs. The breakdown is as follows:

- Ty Penallta charging hub – 15 double 7kW chargers.
- Tir y Berth charging hub (old Meals on Wheels site) 7 double 7kW chargers.
- We now have a total of 53 charge points on the CCBC charging network.
- This work includes the setting up of the back-office system to manage the charging network, monitoring of charge sessions (including electricity use and CO2 savings) and, where necessary, internal recharging.

5.19 A programme to convert all the county borough's street lanterns to LED was completed in January 2021. Concurrently, the authority has implemented part night lighting, between the hours of midnight and 5.30am, to all lighting, except at junctions and in major town centres. Cabinet approved the continuation of reduction in streetlight operating hours in November 2022, which resulted in a further 18.33% reduction in energy consumption from streetlighting in 2022/23.

### **Produce Actions**

5.20 The Decarbonisation Strategy acknowledged the importance of generating our own "green" electricity and heat. The group has reviewed the Produce actions contained within the original Decarbonisation Action Plan under the Produce Pillar. The agreed new Produce Action Plan contains 12 actions (see Appendix 2).

Of these actions:

- 2 have been completed
- 6 are going well with good progress
- 3 have had reasonable progress
- 1 is not yet started

5.21 The authority has already installed Photovoltaic (PV's) panels on the roofs of 63 of its buildings. In some instances, these are small demonstration arrays on schools, but the authority has also installed larger arrays to good effect and is currently investigating its collective non-domestic roof space for medium sized PV arrays. In total 594,863 kWhrs of renewable energy is generated from these schemes.

5.22 The development of the flag ship, 20MW Cwm lfor Solar Farm is progressing well with a planning decision expected in February 2024 and probable construction, subject to Cabinet approval, in 2025. It is anticipated that when operational the solar farm would generate 23GWhrs of electricity per year, or enough to power around 6,000 homes. At current energy prices it will create income of between £669,000 and £892,000 per year over the 35-year life of the project.

5.23 The authority has undertaken a review of its capacity to generate hydroelectricity from rivers and streams on Council owned land. To date there is limited opportunity to progress projects although Cwmcarn Forest has been identified as offering some opportunity to generate electricity for onsite use at the visitor centre. An assessment has been commissioned to determine costs and potential payback for the scheme. It is estimated that a 27kW turbine could be installed onsite, which would produce at least half of the visitor's centre annual electricity requirements.

- 5.24 The original Decarbonisation Strategy identified that the Council has local arrangements in place at Bryn Quarry where Council collected food waste is converted into green energy via an Anaerobic Digester. Discussions have begun with the Bryn Group to identify opportunities, with an initial study being initiated to review options and to develop an outline business case. This has included assessing the best route for any hardware, to identify any land studies or further ecological studies that may be required. As part of understanding the viability of the project, negotiations have begun on Heads of Terms and the principles of any potential power purchase agreements. A report on progress and business case development is due to be considered by the Corporate management Team.

### **Offsetting Actions**

- 5.25 The Offset Working Group has been established and has reviewed the Offset actions contained within the original Decarbonisation Action Plan under the Offset Pillar. The agreed new Offset Action Plan contains 14 actions (see Appendix 2). Of these actions:
- 4 have been completed
  - 5 are going well with good progress
  - 4 have had reasonable progress
  - 1 not yet started
- 5.26 Detailed land mapping and evaluation has been undertaken to identify existing habitats to be protected and to identify land for tree planting. The authority owns 1,143 hectares of forest land which offset 8,306,886 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2022/23
- 5.27 Planting has been agreed on Countryside land for the 23/24 planting season. Designs and plans have been produced and agree for sites at Ynys Hywel and Parc Cwm Darran. Approximately 15,000 trees will be planted at those sites, with around 3,000 being planted by volunteers. Initial sites on Housing and Infrastructure land for planting during the 2024/25 planting season have been identified with ecological surveys and initial feasibility work being undertaken.
- 5.28 One of 3 Covid Memorial Woodlands across Wales has been developed at Ynys Hywel. The new memorial park, covering an area of 7 hectares, seeks to complement the existing country park, and importantly retain key views across the valley and the overall rural character of the site. A total of 36,500 native trees and shrubs were planted in 2022/23, with 3,700 planted by volunteer groups. Further volunteer planting will continue for the next 5 years.
- 5.29 A Cabinet commitment was given to “set a target of planting 300,000 trees by 2030, where land availability allows”. To date a total of 81,000 trees have planted since the Decarbonisation Strategy was approved.

### **Buy Actions**

- 5.30 The Buy Working Group has been established with core members from Decarbonisation and Procurement alongside nominated representatives from each Directorate. This group has reviewed the existing Decarbonisation Action Plan under the Buy Pillar and agreed an updated Action Plan with 10 actions (see Appendix 2). Of these actions:

- 1 has been completed
- 5 are going well with good progress
- 2 have had reasonable progress
- 2 have not yet started

- 5.31 Analysis of 22/23 spend data from Spikes Cavell has been completed to identify priority areas for further investigation. Similar to other local authorities, a large proportion of spend sits with a small number of suppliers and so understanding these emissions and taking steps to reduce them will initially require engagement with a relatively small group of our suppliers.
- 5.32 Social care services spend contributes the most carbon to supply chain emissions using current methodologies as it represents the largest spend. More detailed analysis of this spend and the constituent parts has been completed for the previous year's spend. And as such social care has been identified as a priority area for trial of new carbon calculating toolkits and engagement with suppliers.
- 5.33 A list of upcoming contracts which might be suitable for further consideration as part of this work is being compiled to understand the actual emissions associated with these contracts so that improved methodologies can be used for emissions reporting.
- 5.34 Various decarbonisation and carbon calculating toolkits have been reviewed by the working group to determine which toolkits best suit each service within the organisation.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 It has been assumed that the WG guidance and net zero carbon reporting methodology will not change again. Previous reporting has changed which has made it impossible to compare year on year progress.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The IIA identifies that as this covers a strategy there is no direct impact to service delivery from the provision of the strategy document. Impacts that come about as a result of the implementation and roll out of the strategy will be assessed in due course.

There will be CO<sub>2</sub> and greenhouse gas savings which will provide health and wellbeing benefits, and other advantages to be gained from the implementation of the strategy.

[Link to IIA](#)

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 A budget of £500,000 was allocated for decarbonisation work by Cabinet in 2020/21. As of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 £56,344, has been spent from this budget. An additional £140,000 has been allocated to Cwm lfor solar farm. Further expenditure has been identified against hydrogen feasibility work, carbon literacy training, the hydro-electric scheme at Cwmcarn and private wire costs.

- 8.2 The internal Salix Local Authority Energy Fund (LAEF) invest to save scheme has invested over £2 million in energy efficient technologies in projects in corporate, non-domestic buildings which meet the scheme and pay back criteria. This will continue to be an important element in delivering our net zero ambitions.
- 8.3 The authority has been successful in securing funding from various grant sources to support this work. Identifying and securing grant support is an important element of achieving our decarbonisation targets.
- 8.4 Calculating the cost of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 is extremely difficult. Tools and studies to identify the cost of various elements of the work are in progress. This will provide high level costings for the decarbonisation of non-domestic buildings, investment in renewable energy generation to meet future needs, and offsetting forecasted residual emissions by 2030 to achieve Net Zero Carbon. This work is to be prioritised for the next year as a key action for the Decarbonisation Team.
- 8.5 Specific, detailed, and costed proposals for future work will be developed and brought forward as future reports for consideration.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Corporate Director Lead will be the Corporate Director for Economy and Environment. The Decarbonisation agenda is currently being driven by the decarbonisation team as well as the energy team in property services and in the longer term it would be more appropriate to create a single structure for delivering decarbonisation with all staff reporting to a single Head of Service. The decarbonisation performance data will feature in the Economy and Environment Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA) and Annual reports on progress against the agreed Decarbonisation Action Plan will be provided to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee followed by Cabinet. Annual reports to Welsh Government through the Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Scheme will also be required.
- 9.2 For the authority to become carbon neutral by 2030 a whole organisation approach and cultural shift will be required. Service areas will need to allocate staff resources to understand and to reduce their emissions. Significant work will be required to build knowledge, understanding, and the skills required to enable all employees across the authority to play their part in delivering the Decarbonisation Strategy
- 9.3 The Decarbonisation Team will have a key role to play in driving forward this agenda, co-ordinating work, facilitating training and managing individual projects. The establishment of the four corporate pillar groups; Reduce, Produce, Offset and Buy are an important element, which should be the catalyst to drive culture change in services but also requires continuation of specific input from services. These groups are being co-ordinated by the Decarbonisation Team. The Team will also work with each directorate to enable them to understand their emissions, to identify priorities for reduction and to support with decarbonisation projects. Project specific work will be undertaken with all services, but will require input from Finance, Procurement, Legal and Property, plus support from HR, IT and Policy on specific work. Additionally, opportunities will be considered to engage employees in a “bottom up” approach to assist in mobilising employees in this programme of works.



## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 The views of the listed consultees have been reflected within this report.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Climate Change Act 2008.

Author: Paul Cooke, Transformation Manager, Decarbonisation,  
cookepa@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Cllr James Pritchard – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change  
Cllr Nigel George – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Property and Highways  
Cllr A Whitcombe Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr S Williams Vice Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education and Corporate Services  
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive  
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director of Economy and Environment  
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services/ Monitoring Officer  
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S.151 Officer  
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy  
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer  
Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services  
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure  
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning  
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services  
Nick Taylor-Williams, Head of Housing  
Jo Williams, Assistant Director – Adult Services  
Gareth Jenkins, Interim Director of Social Services  
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager  
Allan Dallimore, Regeneration Services Manager  
Paul Rossiter, Energy and Water Officer  
Heather Richardson, Decarbonisation Project Officer  
Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1. Decarbonisation Annual Report November 2023

Appendix 2. Updated Decarbonisation Action Plan November 2023

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

**Appendix 1**  
**Decarbonisation Team Annual Report**  
**November 2023**



## **Introduction**

In June 2019 Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) declared a Climate Emergency and committed to 'making Caerphilly County Borough Council a net zero carbon local authority by 2030'. A Decarbonisation Strategy and accompanying Action Plan, containing 122 actions was approved in November 2020. A Decarbonisation Team was appointed in 2022.

This report highlights the work of the Decarbonisation Team in 2023. The Team works in partnership with multiple teams and service areas internally including Procurement, Land & Property Services, Fleet, Housing, Regeneration & Planning, Sustainable Communities for Learning, Social Services, Highways, Countryside, Community & Leisure and Parks.

Aligned with the structure of the Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan, the work of the Team is divided under the following five headings:

- (i) Corporate and Cross-Cutting Actions
- (ii) Reduce
- (iii) Produce
- (iv) Offset
- (v) Buy

This Annual Report is structured to reflect these areas of work.

## Corporate and Cross-Cutting Actions

To achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2030 it is fundamentally important that the organisation is able to measure its carbon emissions. Without measuring emissions and ascertaining the effect of targeted actions, the commitment to Net Zero Carbon is unachievable.

The Corporate and Cross-Cutting section of the Decarbonisation Action Plan focuses firstly on measuring and understanding organisational emissions so that actions for emissions reductions are targeted and measurable. Secondly, there is a need for dissemination of this information and knowledge. A program of awareness raising, and skills development is key to ensuring that decarbonisation is embedded into the organisation's ways of working.

The Decarbonisation Team reviewed the previous Action Plan, revised and agreed the Corporate and Cross-Cutting section into 11 actions (See Appendix 2).

Of these actions:

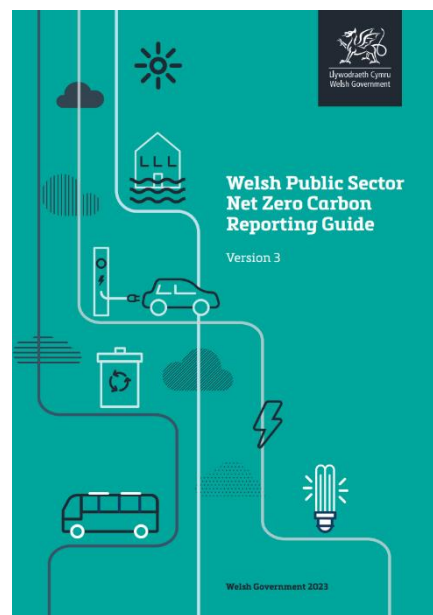
- 1 is completed
- 4 are going well with good progress
- 3 have had reasonable progress
- 3 are not yet started

## Emissions Reporting

For the reporting year 2021/22 Caerphilly CBC reported an emissions total of 101,677,791 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e (22,560,205 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e operational emissions plus 79,117,586 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e supply emissions). This was offset by -7,420,489 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e through our land use, giving a submitted carbon emissions figure of 94,257,302 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e (or 94,257tCO<sub>2</sub>e).

For the reporting year 2022/23 Caerphilly CBC reported an emissions total of 103,308,185 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e (22,110,491 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e operational emissions plus 81,197,694 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e supply chain emissions). This was offset by -7,413,691 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e through our land use, giving a submitted carbon emissions figure of 95,894,494 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e (or 95,894 tCO<sub>2</sub>e).

The reported emissions for 2022/23 were an increase of 1,637,192 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e or 1.74%. Changes to reporting methodologies which have brought in additional areas,



and better data mean that direct comparison of year on year trends is not possible at this stage.

The overall increase was in part driven by an increase in third party spend of £31.1 million which resulted in an increase in supply chain emissions of 2,080,108 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e or 2.63%. Operational emissions actually decreased by 449,714 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e or 2%. Despite emissions from business travel (grey fleet) and commuting increasing and the introduction of reporting on F-gases, the reduction in emissions from streetlighting, buildings and waste led to the 2% reduction operationally.

| Emissions Source                   | 2021/22           | 2022/23           | Difference       | % Change      |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Buildings                          | 14,461,974        | 13,154,526        | -1,307,448       | -9.04%        |
| Streetlighting                     | 976,579           | 797,619           | -178,960         | -18.33%       |
| Fleet and equipment                | 4,107,401         | 3,988,849         | -118,552         | -2.89%        |
| F-Gases                            |                   | 9,187             | n/a              | n/a           |
| Agriculture                        | 49,972            | 49,355            | -617             | -1.23%        |
| Business travel                    | 298,704           | 637,343           | 338,639          | 113.37%       |
| Commuting                          | 1,299,784         | 2,124,885         | 825,101          | 63.48%        |
| Homeworking                        | 886,897           | 912,032           | 25,135           | 2.83%         |
| Municipal waste                    | 478,894           | 436,695           | -42,199          | -8.81%        |
| <b>Total Operational Emissions</b> | <b>22,560,205</b> | <b>22,110,491</b> | <b>-449,714</b>  | <b>-1.99%</b> |
| <b>Total Land Use emissions</b>    | <b>-7,420,489</b> | <b>-7,413,691</b> | <b>6,798</b>     | <b>-0.09%</b> |
| <b>Supply chain - Tier 1</b>       | <b>79,117,586</b> | <b>81,197,694</b> | <b>2,080,108</b> | <b>2.63%</b>  |
| <b>Total Emissions</b>             | <b>94,257,302</b> | <b>95,894,494</b> | <b>1,637,192</b> | <b>1.74%</b>  |

Table 1, Breakdown of Organisational Carbon Emissions 2021/22 – 2022/23

Following deeper analysis of the reported emissions from 2021/22 it was anticipated that emissions would rise in 2022/23 as data collection and analysis improves year on year. This results in emissions that were previously unable to be collected and reported on being included in the organisational report, giving a more accurate representation of Caerphilly CBC emissions.

The increase in emissions from Business Travel and Commuting are due to improved data collection for the most recent reporting year. Previous year's emissions omitted HART mileage from Business Travel and Schools from Commuting.

There were a number of changes to emissions factors from 2021/22 to 2022/23, most noticeably in the supply chain. The grid electricity emissions factor now includes a proportion of emissions outside of scope, so whilst consumption has increased, associated emissions have decreased.

The increase in supply chain emissions highlights once again the need for improvement in methodology for calculating these emissions; spend went up and so emissions went up – despite the emissions factors being re-calculated so that many fell. Also, with the ability to analyse the spend more closely, emissions that previously would have been classified just as construction or food were able to be more accurately classified to the specific SIC code relating to the product. This in some cases placed more spend in categories with slightly higher emissions factors leading to higher emissions.

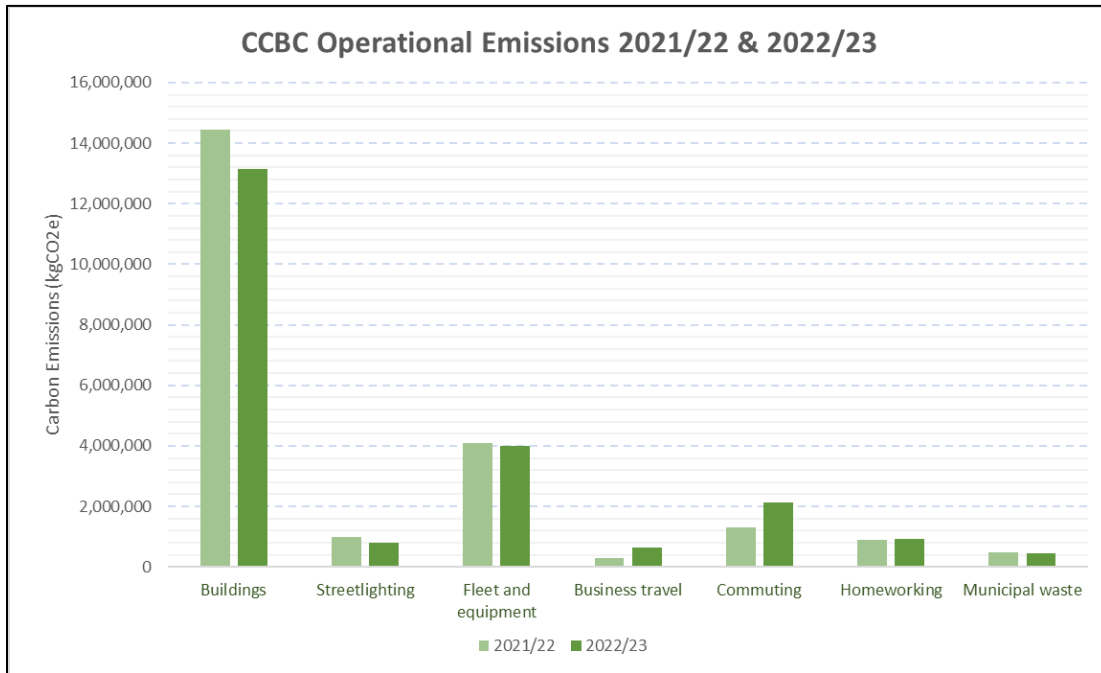
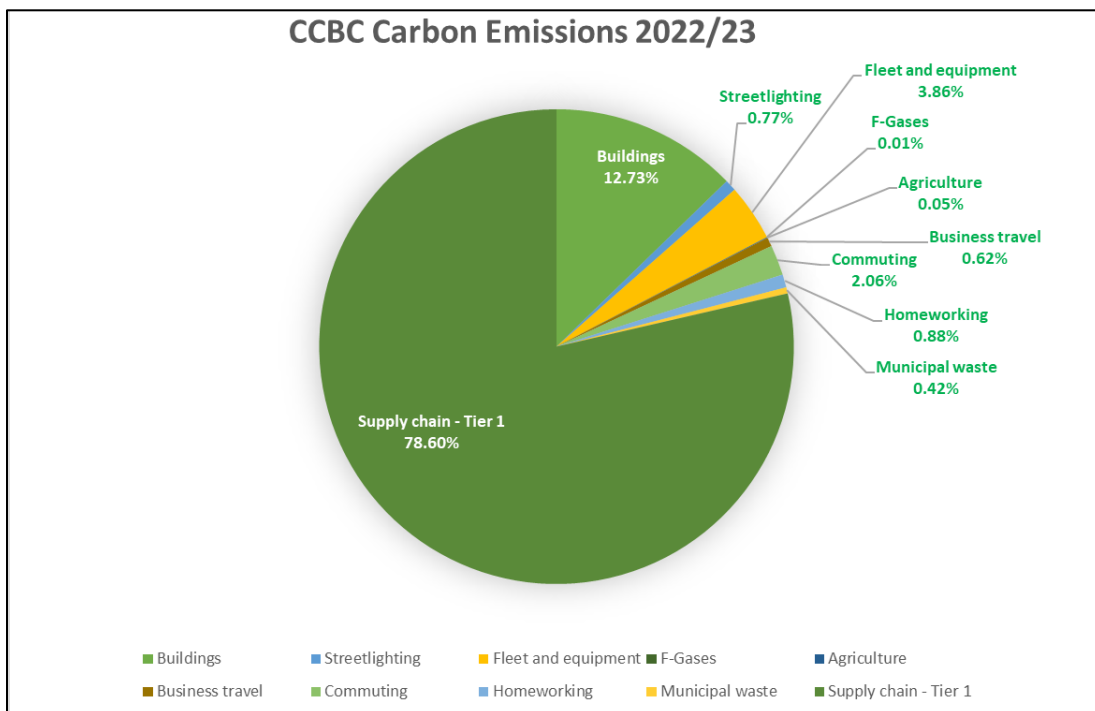


Figure 1, CCBC Operational Emissions 2021/22 & 2022/23



## Service Area Baselines

In June 2023 a Cabinet recommendation was approved (Recommendation 2), that **“each Directorate and Service Area is given a copy of their carbon baseline, and that during 2023/24 financial year work is done to support them to fully understand and analyse those emissions and to identify priority areas for reduction.”**

The Decarbonisation Team has produced emissions baselines and footprints for each Directorate and Service Area, aligned with Welsh Government Net Zero Carbon Reporting for 2021/22 and 2022/23. The data is contained in spreadsheets and visualised using Power BI reports. To enable understanding of these emissions presentations have been developed with delivery and timeline to be agreed.

Following the presentation of baselines to services, further analysis of these emissions in partnership with services can begin. This will enable budgets to be set for carbon emissions from 2024/25 as approved in June 2023 by Cabinet (Recommendation 3).

A calculation of residual operational emissions will help to inform this work and is being completed as part of an offsetting project detailed below.



## Carbon Literacy Training

Aligned to Recommendation 6 approved by Cabinet in June 2023, there are three actions in the Corporate and Cross-Cutting section of the Decarbonisation Action Plan focused on carbon literacy training and developing a carbon literate organisation. This is because achieving Net Zero Carbon will require the efforts of every member of Team Caerphilly. Every person has an impact on the carbon emissions produced by the organisation and will have agency within their role to consider these impacts and ways that they can reduce them. To enable this, each person should understand what Net Zero Carbon is, why we are

working towards it and how they can make a positive difference.

The first action is to raise awareness of Carbon Literacy. Healthy Schools have organised and funded 12 schools to attend Carbon Literacy for Educators training via Keep Wales Tidy, and a further 3 schools were funded by Keep Wales Tidy.



Additionally, an initial cohort of 22 officers have completed Carbon Literacy training accredited by the Carbon Literacy Project and delivered by Cynnal Cymru.

The initial cohort comprised of officers from the Decarbonisation Strategy Working Groups, the wider Transformation Team and colleagues who had completed the Infuse Program with a focus on Accelerating Decarbonisation.

Feedback was collected from the attendees and from those that responded:

- 100% would recommend the training to a friend/colleague, of which 57% are extremely likely to recommend.
- 100% found the training relevant to their role, of which 57% finding it extremely relevant.
- 100% found the information present to be clear, of which 71% found the information to be extremely clear.
- 85% found the course to contain about the right amount of information with 15% finding there to be too much information.
- 100% of attendees are clear on the takeaways from the training and 100% are confident that they will be able to achieve their pledges.
- 71% would consider undertaking 'Train the Trainer' training to deliver an in-house course to others within their service area.

All attendees are required to commit to two pledges in the workplace, one personal and one group. Examples of these pledges have been uploaded to the Decarbonisation intranet pages to provide insight for those who will be undertaking the training in future to understand what is required for accreditation.

One attendee commented,

*"I believe this was an excellent introduction to the topic and could be delivered in house with the suitable Carbon Literacy Trust accreditation ... We all have a part to play and whilst very much focused on the workplace from a pledge perspective, will undoubtedly impact on the home as well."*

This demonstrates the value of delivering the training and the potential impact of a wider rollout of training on the organisation and our commitment to achieving Net Zero Carbon.

Two further actions are aspirations to become accredited as a Carbon Literate Organisation. There are tiers of accreditation beginning with Bronze, running through Silver and Gold and ending with Platinum.

As an organisation the requirements for the Bronze award have been satisfied and an application to the Carbon Literacy Project to receive this award will now be submitted. The Team anticipates achieving Silver accreditation by March 2025.

Becoming accredited signifies our commitment to achieving Net Zero Carbon and acting upon the declaration of the climate emergency in 2019.

Two further actions centre on developing a skilled workforce. Carbon literacy is the first step of this process, but it is not enough to do this training once. In delivery of these actions, we propose integration of decarbonisation skills into existing people management processes. This will ensure the understanding, knowledge, skills and behaviours are embedded into our culture. It is also important to gauge what skills already exist, and which skills are needed for each role within the organisation. Through the Infuse programme, research has been undertaken to understand what the skills requirements are and how we can assess the skills that currently exist. The next stage of this experiment is to prototype the skills assessment with teams to develop an internal mechanism for decarbonisation specific training needs. This will in turn inform the development of training programmes to upskill the workforce.

## **Cultural & Behavioural Change**

The shift to working in ways compatible with achieving Net Zero Carbon requires a cultural and behavioural change throughout the organisation. Carbon literacy training and other skills development will provide the knowledge and understanding, whilst other strategic policies will determine the application of these skills and guide Team Caerphilly to embedding low carbon considerations.

One of the Five Corporate Commitments approved by Cabinet in June 2023 (Recommendation 5) was that “**Net Zero Carbon considerations should be included in all major decisions as part of the Integrated Impact Assessment process**”. The Team has drafted an addition to the organisation’s Integrated Impact Assessment. This will require officers to consider the impacts that projects will have on each of the four pillars of the Decarbonisation Strategy. Resources to help with these considerations will be uploaded to the Decarbonisation section of the new CCBC Intranet. Carbon Literacy training will support the implementation of these considerations as officers develop the understanding and knowledge to enable them to ascertain how major decisions can impact upon the Net Zero Carbon status of the organisation.

## **Corporate Energy Usage Patterns**

Identifying energy usage patterns of non-domestic buildings is key to assessing sites and the opportunities for actions under the Reduce or Produce pillars. Electricity that is consumed by Caerphilly CBC in any non-domestic building from the grid carries a carbon footprint. As detailed above, energy consumption accounts for 13% of all emissions. Those emissions come from natural gas usage as well as electricity but as we reduce the use of fossil fuels in our heating systems, electricity consumption will increase. The focus therefore is to reduce electricity consumption as much as possible, whilst also generating renewable energy which will reduce the carbon emissions for the consumption which is unavoidable.

A data science MSc student from the Data Science Academy based at Cardiff University collaborated as part of their summer dissertation project to create visualisations of energy consumption and headroom at 28 sites across the estate

where half-hourly electricity consumption data was available. The headroom at each site is the difference between the energy being consumed and the supply's maximum demand (the total amount of energy that can be imported during each half hour period) over each half hour period. Using minimum headroom, we can make assumptions on the available energy which can be utilised at each site without having to increase the supply's maximum demand.

### **Corporate Case Study – Data Science Academy Data Student**

Through participation in the Infuse Programme, an opportunity to offer a summer placement of a Data Science MSc student was offered by Y Lab and the Cardiff University Data Science Academy. The purpose of this collaboration was to provide a MSc student with a topic for their dissertation whilst also providing a practical application of data science skills that would benefit the student as well as the organisation they were working with.

The Decarbonisation Team had set a Corporate and Cross-cutting Action to “Establish energy usage patterns across corporate buildings” and as such agreed that this would be a fantastic opportunity to complete this work and benefit from the skills of a data scientist.

An application for 3 students was submitted with the proposed project outcomes:

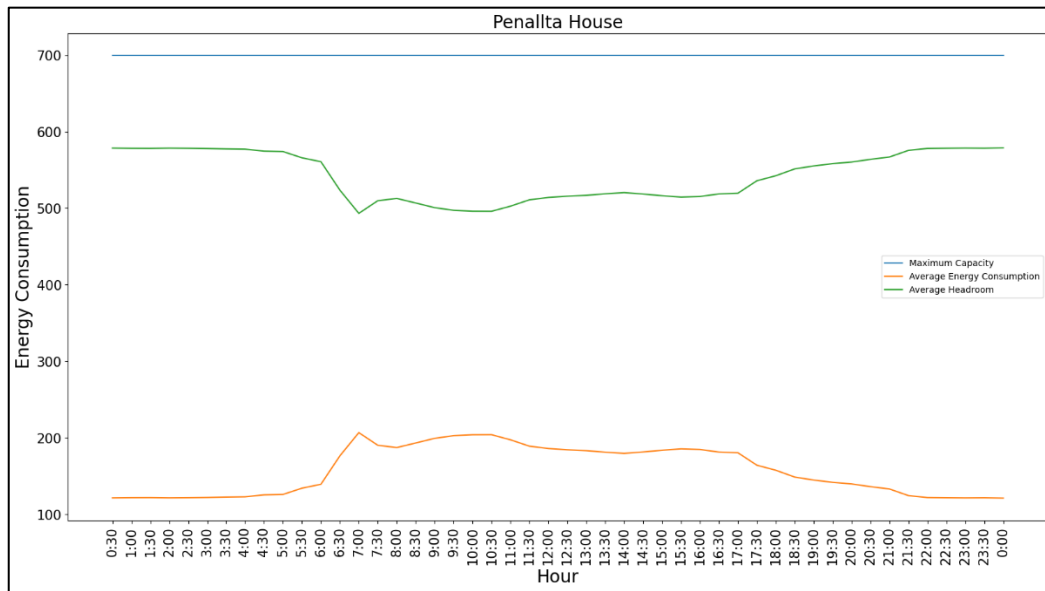
- (i) Establish energy usage patterns for corporate buildings where half-hourly data is available;
- (ii) Map this usage against current maximum demand for electricity supply;
- (iii) Use existing site headroom to determine number and size of potential EV chargers;
- (iv) Use sub-station headroom data to show opportunities for export/import of additional energy;
- (v) Additional supply from renewable energy projects to be modelled with existing grid capacity and energy demand to determine where additional supply would be best utilised.

The application was accepted in April 2023. The Team learned at the end of May 2023 that we had been successful and had been allocated 1 student for the project.

As part of the project, we asked for a collaboration agreement to be signed to protect the information that was going to be shared with the student. Once the agreement had been checked by the Legal and Information Governance teams, it was signed and returned to the Data Science Academy. An initial kick off meeting with the data student was then organised for the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2023. At this meeting we agreed frequency of future meetings and how data would be shared.

An external sharepoint folder was arranged for the Decarbonisation Team so that large data files could be shared securely with the student. Half-hourly electricity consumption data for 28 sites were shared with the student alongside maximum demand values (the maximum amount of energy that can be imported from the grid at a time), generation headroom (substation level) and demand headroom (substation level) for each site.

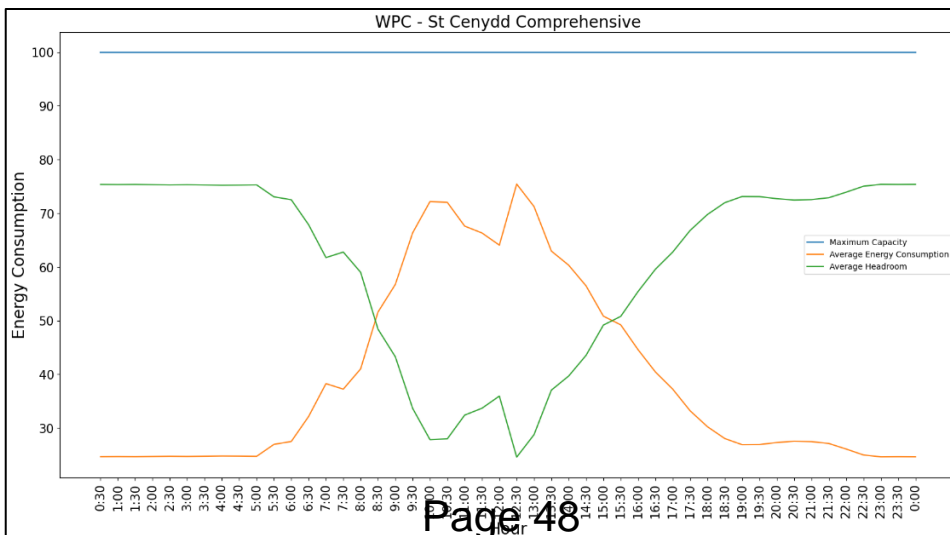
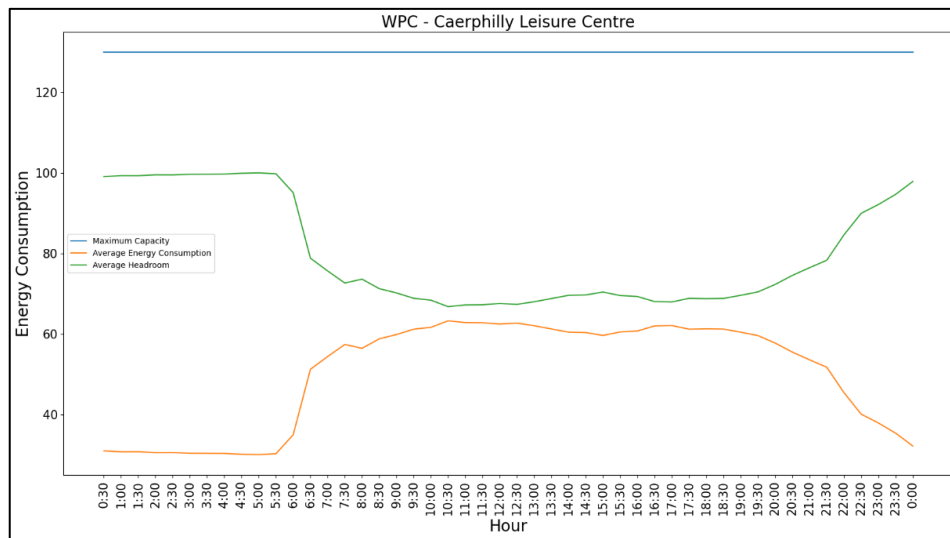
From this data the student was able to generate code to visualise energy usage patterns for each site looking at usage daily, weekly, monthly and seasonally. Maximum demand information was then added to each pattern to demonstrate the existing electricity headroom at each site. The student used the minimum headroom data to estimate the number of chargers which could be situated at each site without the need for additional supply.



Unfortunately energy modelling from the Cwm Ifor Solar Farm project was not available in time for the student to complete output (v) listed above.

A full folder of the modelling, coding and outputs has been shared with the Team and will be invaluable in assessing sites as part of future energy projects. The coding can then be replicated to reflect energy consumption data from year to year.

Opportunities to collaborate with a data science MSc student from the Data Science Academy arise every Spring and the connections made with the Academy and others at Cardiff University will enable academic support with ongoing decarbonisation projects.



## **Fossil Fuel Divestment**

The Wales Pension Partnership (WPP) has now implemented a decarbonisation overlay on all of its equity sub-funds. For the Greater Gwent Fund, this means that there is a 25% reduction in carbon exposure relative to the respective benchmark on £1.13bn of its assets (which equates to c. 30% of total assets).

The WPP launched its Active Sustainable Equity (ASE) sub-fund in June 2023 and the Greater Gwent Fund invested £150m in this product. Collectively this sub-fund equates to £1.3bn of assets across Wales (c. 8% of total WPP assets) and this is expected to increase over time as the product develops.

The WPP is working closely with its advisors in preparing an “All Wales Climate Report” which is intended to highlight the collective exposure of investments and to demonstrate decarbonisation progress over many years. The report will also offer insight into forward looking objectives and various milestones that will need to be achieved if the WPP (and its underlying investor funds) are to achieve net zero by 2050 or sooner where possible.

The Greater Gwent Fund has continued to selectively invest in renewable energy infrastructure throughout the UK (with some investment now specifically in Wales) and this has increased to £130m (up from £70m quoted in last year’s update). The Fund continues to work with specialist investment managers and explore further opportunities that are consistent with its fiduciary duty. The Fund is actively considering its approach to “levelling up” or local impact investment opportunities (local defined as UK wide) in light of Government policy and its encouragement of the LGPS to invest in this area. As a result and alongside the investment strategy review we are preparing a high level policy covering the proposed approach which will likely be available in early 2024 for publication.

# Reduce

Through delivery of services the authority will emit carbon. Whilst emitting some carbon is unavoidable, reducing the quantity of carbon emitted as much as possible is vital to achieving Net Zero Carbon.

The Decarbonisation Strategy recognised that reducing operational emissions through reducing energy consumption is imperative. The identified targeted areas for action are:

- Existing Buildings – Corporate and Domestic
- New Developments – Corporate and Domestic
- Streetlighting
- Travel & Transport
- Waste Management

The nature of this work has meant that the Reduce section of the Decarbonisation Action Plan is the largest, crossing many services and existing work streams.

The Reduce working group and other stakeholders have reviewed the previous Action Plan, revised and agreed the Reduce section into 30 actions (See Appendix 2).

Of these actions:

- 4 are completed
- 13 are going well with good progress
- 11 have had reasonable progress
- 2 are not yet started

## Corporate Buildings

Reducing energy consumption of buildings is mostly achieved by improving the fabric of the buildings, improving the regulation of energy consumption, and reducing the emissions of the energy used through generating or using renewable energy. Caerphilly CBC is responsible for 778 non-domestic sites with a combined gross internal area of 475,534 m<sup>2</sup>. The building condition on the sites varies depending on the nature of the site (see figure 3).

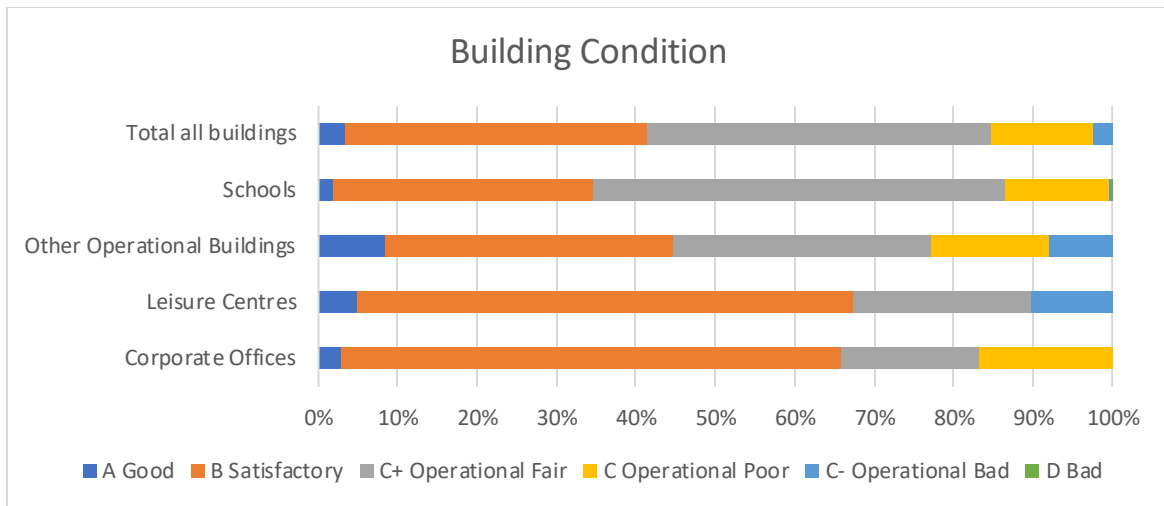


Figure 3, Building condition, type of site (non-domestic)

The condition of the sites detailed above is also reflected in the current cost of the backlog maintenance of the sites (see table 2). Improving the fabric of the building will improve energy efficiency but is a large programme of work requiring detailed analysis of each building and its requirements.

| Category                    | Priority 1 (Urgent) | Priority 2 (Essential) | Priority 3 (Desirable) | Total       |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Corporate Offices           | £30,000             | £902,000               | £1,518,000             | £2,450,000  |
| Leisure Centres             | £73,000             | £1,220,000             | £2,230,000             | £3,523,000  |
| Other Operational Buildings | £638,000            | £5,003,000             | £5,999,000             | £11,640,000 |
| Schools                     | £440,000            | £14,113,000            | £20,661,000            | £35,214,000 |
| Total for all sites         | £1,181,000          | £21,238,000            | £30,408,000            | £52,827,000 |

Table 2, Site Category, backlog maintenance costs by priority

There is a rolling maintenance programme in place with refurbishment schemes undertaken. This means that condition survey ratings and backlog maintenance costs are not always reflective of current condition or the level of required repairs. These existing costs will affect the work to decarbonise the authority portfolio by assisting with the prioritisation of works for sites.

The Energy Team have reviewed the existing backlog maintenance requirements for non-domestic buildings alongside Energy Performance and required upgrades for improved energy efficiency. From this exercise, priority sites for upgrades have been identified to form the initial phase of a full programme of works to improve the energy efficiency of non-domestic buildings. High-level costings of technologies to reduce carbon emissions of buildings have been provided which can be extrapolated based on internal floor area. These numbers will be improved as we move through the programme of works. From these high-level costings, a framework for contractors will be produced through the works can be procured.

Funding opportunities for these works are continually being explored to include the Salix Invest to Save Scheme as well as Welsh Government Low Carbon Heat Grants.

## **Asset rationalisation**

An asset rationalisation mechanism has been reviewing corporate buildings to identify and assess options for continued use and ownership of the assets. Service Asset Management Plans (SAMPs) have been reviewed by the Asset Management Working Group and a list of identified properties that will be targeted in the short, medium and long term for vacating by services has been produced. As part of this options appraisal, the number of sites, running costs, backlog maintenance costs, lease costs, potential rental revenue and potential capital receipts are considered alongside the needs of the Service. Consultation with Service area/s to fully understand needs and requirements is key. By understanding what elements of the service can be relocated to a central location and what (if anything) need to remain in current location/s, we can make informed and data enabled decisions which benefit Services, Service Users and the authority.

This process has the potential to reduce number of Corporate Office sites, to streamline the estate and achieve improved efficiencies at remaining sites.

## **Corporate Landlord Model**

Through Mobilising Team Caerphilly, the Decarbonisation Team, worked as part of the 'Assets Efficiency' workstream. A key project proposal from this was the recommendation that the authority adopt a 'Corporate Landlord Model' to control assets. The Corporate Landlord model centralises property management and associated budgets and removes the demands of managing property from individual service areas, freeing them up to deliver the services our residents, businesses, and visitors expect.

The Corporate Landlord model will deliver a better strategic understanding of our asset base, and the costs of investing in them over time, as well as the day-to-day costs of managing and maintaining them. Managed strategically, our assets can address the challenges of saving money, and at the same time help us align with partners to achieve more effective use of assets to deliver common objectives.

At present, responsibilities for these assets rests largely with the individual service areas. The current approach does not allow for the maximising of efficiencies or optimum value for money and is inefficient in the allocation of resources. A move to a Corporate Landlord model proposed would see a change in responsibility for management, maintenance and investment in relation to the council's non HRA buildings and assets.



In short, the Corporate Landlord model seeks to ensure better governance and value for money, enhanced customer service (particularly when considering our customers internally) and a greater consistency of approach across all buildings and assets. It would ensure better quality of decisions being taken based on a sound evidence base, helping to ensure best value for money, and more efficient procurement of works and allocation of resource, across all of the council's non HRA estate.

## **Community Asset Transfer**

A Community Asset Transfer (CAT) happens when a Public Sector Body transfers the management and/or ownership of a property asset to a community council or Third Sector/ Community Group. This will sometimes include the delivery of any associated services. Through Mobilising Team Caerphilly, the question of whether the authority should use CAT to contribute to savings was raised and discussed.

There may be services that are currently being delivered by the authority that might be better suited being delivered by the communities of the borough. There are things to consider as potential issues to transfer for example backlog maintenance considerations, covenants, restrictions on title e.g., charitable trusts etc, interest from management committees or groups. Through the Asset Efficiency workstream it was established that we would consider asset transfer of any asset in the portfolio in its current condition but also in an improved condition. By improving the fabric of the asset and decarbonising the site, the authority could ensure that an asset is being transferred rather than a liability.

## **Existing Housing**

Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) has driven improvements to existing housing stock within the borough. The energy consumption of existing housing stock does not contribute to the authority's organisational carbon footprint reported annually through Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting. However, reducing energy consumption through more efficient homes will reduce carbon emissions and contribute to the All Wales Net Zero Carbon by 2050 ambition set by Welsh Government, as well as easing cost of living pressures on residents by reducing energy bills.

WHQS23 has recently been agreed and will focus on further improvements to council owned housing stock. Target Energy Pathways will be undertaken for each CCBC owned property to formulate a whole stock assessment. Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) assessments will be completed for each home to establish their energy rating and identify the least energy efficient stock for prioritisation. The energy efficiency of domestic properties will be improved through the UPVC triple glazing window replacement programme that will introduce high specification energy

efficient glazing. This glazing is being manufactured by the authority and there is an install programme of 84 properties in this financial year.

Energy efficiency is also being improved in council owned sheltered housing schemes and measures are being delivered to two schemes – Maesteg and Oaklands – through the Optimised Retrofit Programme. A fabric first approach is being taken to address issues tenants were experiencing, aligned to PAS2035. Measures being taken include External Wall Insulation, Photo-voltaic installation, Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery and low energy windows and doors. This will directly impact the operational carbon emissions of the authority, as the energy consumption within sheltered housing schemes is within scope for Public Sector Net Zero Carbon reporting. Surveying has started for the properties that will be included in next year’s decarbonisation programme.

## Fleet

As of 30th September 2023, a total of 544 vehicles made up our fleet. This number represents a decrease of nearly 80 vehicles since the requirements of COVID-19 resulted in significant increases in our fleet numbers, reaching highs of over 620 in the summer of 2020. There has also been a change in the breakdown of the fleet with an increase in hired vehicles to replace those leased from Specialist Fleet Services (SFS) as that agreement comes to an end.

The 544 vehicles are made up of 94 vehicles that we own, ~170 vehicles on hire and 278 vehicles on long term lease (generally 5 years) with SFS. We now have 12 fully electric vehicles in the fleet.

Figure 4 below shows the total number of vehicles in our fleet since August 2019, and how this breaks down between owned, leased and hired.

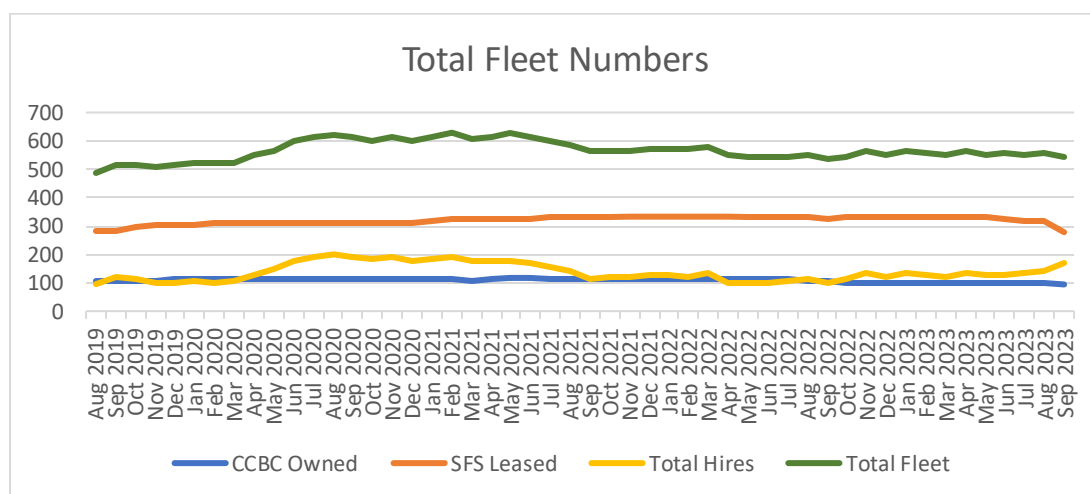


Figure 4, Breakdown of fleet vehicles by ownership, lease and hire 2019 – 2023

With the SFS contract ceasing at the end of January 2024, hired vehicles are replacing leased ones as the lease contracts come to an end. The cost of hired vehicles is about the same as SFS leased ones but have the added advantage that the arrangement can be terminated at any time. This means that we can easily remove them from our fleet if we find we no longer have a need for them or swap them for EV alternatives as service areas become ready to make the transition.

Table 3 below provides a breakdown of the end date of individual vehicle leases from SFS.

| Month lease ends | No. Vehicles |
|------------------|--------------|
| End January 2024 | 236          |
| Rest 2024        | 53           |
| 2025             | 6            |
| 2026             | 12           |
| 2027             | 8            |
| 2028             | 9            |

Table 3, Number of vehicles on lease from SFS with lease end date

This provides both a significant opportunity and challenge as theoretically these vehicles could be replaced with ULEV alternatives. This will require significant investment in and installation of infrastructure and resource to overcome the logistical challenge of the transition.

## EV Infrastructure

Installation and commissioning of EV charging infrastructure to date provides the charging capacity for around 100 fleet EVs. The breakdown is as follows:

- Ty Penallta charging hub – 15 double 7kW chargers.
- Tir y Berth charging hub (old Meals on Wheels site) 7 double 7kW chargers.
- We now have a total of 53 charge points on the CCBC charging network
- This work includes the setting up of the back office system to manage the charging network, monitoring of charge sessions (including electricity use and CO2 savings) and, where necessary, internal recharging.
- Total value of works let to date £437,000

Alongside this we have introduced staff/visitor personal vehicle charging with a system that allows those individuals who choose to charge their vehicles at a CCBC site to pay for the electricity used. The tariff covers



the electricity and admin costs only. This work included the provision of all relevant policies, notices, instructions and compliance practices.



## Optrak Consortium Project

CCBC secured funding from the Cardiff Capital Region Challenge Fund to run an innovation project looking at ways to effectively transition to electric vehicles and manage an electric fleet. This includes rationalising the fleet to gain the greatest advantages from a move to EV, managing vehicle charging requirements and providing suitable charging infrastructure.

A lot of work has been done scoping out our requirements from the project which including a 10-week initial investigation exercise using actual fleet data from the Quartix tracking system. This provided an initial assessment of the task in hand, a valuable insight to the working of our fleet and has been vital in identifying the specific outcomes we are looking for from the project.

Those outcomes include:

- Fleet Analytics Solution
- EV Charger Siting Tool
- Service Area Support (e.g. Housing Maintenance)
- Support with Vehicle Pooling Solution

There are other possibilities that the information gained from the analysis of the data could help with that are being investigated. It is important to underline the fact that all of these outcomes depend upon continued access to the vehicle tracking data.

## **New Development – Housing & Non-Domestic Buildings**

Whilst the energy consumption of authority owned housing doesn't sit in scope for Public Sector Net Zero Carbon reporting, the development and construction of housing is accounted for under scope 3 supply chain emissions. Currently, every £ spent on construction and materials will be translated into kgCO<sub>2</sub>e by multiplying the £ amount by an emissions factor determined by The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (formerly The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy or BEIS). The methodology constraints and issues of this process are discussed further in the "Buy" section of this report. Pertinent to reducing the carbon emissions relating to developments, is the adoption of lower carbon construction methods and measuring the impact of these.

Low carbon construction methods consider the carbon emissions at every stage of a construction project – cradle to grave. There is embodied carbon in the materials used to construct buildings, but there are considerations to be had in the transportation of materials to sites, the equipment and machinery used, and the waste created through the project. Cradle to grave then calculates the expected energy consumption and required maintenance of the building to estimate the carbon emissions of the building through its life cycle. Finally, the end of life of the building is considered – how will this building end its life and what will happen to the materials? These considerations and calculations are significant to all building and construction projects – housing and non-domestic buildings.

## **Housing**

Cabinet have approved a Development and Governance Strategy that sets out a policy framework which now applies to all Caerphilly Homes developments. The strategy is to build all new homes using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) fabric first principles and build to Building Regulations 2025 as a minimum thereby concentrating on thermal efficiency and ventilation. The strategy sets out an ambition to build to net zero carbon but recognises that reductions in embodied carbon are harder to deliver than operational reductions.

Caerphilly Homes have received planning approval for a 45 home, later living scheme at Ty Darran, Risca and 92 homes at the former Oakdale School site. All new homes built on both sites will be built with energy efficiency and lower costs for customers in mind. A report has been provided by Wilmott Dixon which discusses the ethical sourcing of the materials contained in photovoltaics and batteries together with the recycling options. At this time, Caerphilly Homes do not require the inclusion of renewables although that may change in the future. New homes in Oakdale and Risca do not require the introduction of renewables as they are designed to be super efficient using fabric first construction materials and methods.

The partnership with local steel frame manufacturer, Caledan – a company based in Ystrad Mynach – continues, however, Caerphilly Homes will shortly be bringing

forward a number of smaller sites and will seek to introduce a timber frame offer to the development programme. Caerphilly Homes is part of the All-Wales Net Zero Timber Frame group and will be offering a site to include in an all Wales project shortly.

United Welsh Housing Association (UWHA) have opened a new Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) factory in the borough with ambitions to increase the number of homes they build using MMC techniques. MMC projects use off-site manufacturing to build homes faster and with less waste. Timber frame for the Cwm Ifor developments (R25) were built in UWHA's MMC factory. UWHA has provided a presentation on the use of the MMC factory to the Affordable Homes Partnership and are in discussions with other community landlords about using the factory to build timber frames for their new developments.

Welsh Government now incentivises the use of MMC in new developments through the Social Housing Grant programme and, as a result, the Council expects to see an increase in the number of new homes developed using MMC.

## **Non-Domestic Buildings**

Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme ensures all new capital investment for schools support net zero commitments and meet required standards for decarbonisation in the choice of materials, transport and construction techniques. Welsh Government have specific requirements and standards for net zero schools – this is currently focused on net zero operation, however embodied carbon is being considered.

Schemes identified for the programme:

- A new replacement Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon on the former Cwmcarn High School site
- An extension of Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre
- The amalgamation of Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School to create a new Primary School provision
- A new replacement Plasyfelin Primary School on the existing site
- The establishment of a Centre for Vulnerable Pupils (Pupil Referral Unit) on the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive site

## **Streetlighting**

A programme to convert all the county borough's street lanterns to LED was completed in January 2021. Concurrently, the authority has implemented part night lighting, between the hours of midnight and 5.30am, to all lighting, except at junctions and in major town centres. Cabinet approved the continuation of reduction in streetlight operating hours in November 2022.

The reduction in operating hours of streetlighting has multiple benefits for the authority. Reducing energy consumption at a time when the unit cost price of electricity is increasing will reduce the cost to the authority of providing lighting. Reducing energy consumption will also reduce operational carbon emissions and contribute to achieving net zero.

Table 4 below shows the achievements of these measures. There is a noticeable change from the conversion to LED bulbs and as the authority continues with part lighting and the grid decarbonises, the carbon emissions from the operation of streetlighting will continue to fall.

| Year    | kWh       | % Change | kgCO <sub>2</sub> e | % Change |
|---------|-----------|----------|---------------------|----------|
| 2019/20 | 8,579,794 |          | 2,711,043           |          |
| 2020/21 | 5,565,418 | -35.13%  | 1,603,564           | -40.85%  |
| 2021/22 | 3,352,484 | -39.76%  | 976,579             | -39.10%  |
| 2022/23 | 3,049,585 | -9.04%   | 797,619             | -18.33%  |

Table 4, Streetlighting energy consumption and carbon emissions with % change year on year

## Waste

Carbon emissions from all waste collected or created by the authority is reported to Welsh Government through the Public Sector Net Zero Carbon reporting. Currently, municipal waste is reported alongside commercial and industrial waste collected by council vehicles. There is the opportunity to report on Organisational and Project waste. However, currently this data is not available for reporting.

The trend in waste emissions reported is detailed in table 5.

| Waste Type         | 2021/22        | 2022/23        | % Change      |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Mixed Recycling    | 374,930        | 343,397        | -8.41%        |
| WEEEE              | 5,782          | 4,990          | -13.69%       |
| Landfill           | 4,064          | 3,680          | -9.45%        |
| Combustion         | 39,630         | 36,581         | -7.69%        |
| Composting         | 28,008         | 23,920         | -14.59%       |
| Anaerobic Digester | 26,481         | 24,125         | -8.90%        |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>478,895</b> | <b>436,695</b> | <b>-8.81%</b> |

Table 5, Waste Emissions by Waste Disposal Method, 2021/22 – 2022/23

Actions for Waste align with the waste hierarchy – Prevent, Reduce, Re-Use, Recycle, Recover, Dispose. Actions to reduce carbon emissions from waste straddle the two distinct targets for Net Zero Carbon in Wales:

- (i) Net Zero Carbon Public Sector in Wales by 2030
- (ii) Net Zero Carbon Wales by 2050

The first of these targets is generally focused internally on organisational emissions, whilst the second is focused on the wider borough including residents and businesses. As we collect, handle and transport waste on behalf of our residents, we are responsible for reporting on the carbon emissions from this waste. Unlike most of the other actions aimed at the 2030 target, reducing emissions from waste will require higher levels of engagement with and action from our residents.

The Authority has signed up to the Public Sector Waste Minimisation Campaign and to this end provides infrastructure to facilitate recycling for its workforce. It has also recently signed up to the national WARPIT initiative (led by Procurement and FM) which reduces waste by redistributing office furniture and assets to increase the life-cycle of products and stop usable items from entering waste streams.

A Waste Strategy is in the process of being developed to enhance the sustainable management of municipal waste arising and in turn attain the statutory targets set by Welsh Government. There is a campaign in place to incentivise participation in the food waste recycling collection service which supplies feedstock for a local anaerobic digestion facility which is providing electricity for 2000 homes.

The Authority has committed to introducing a complete digital solution for waste. This will include back office and front-line functionality and capabilities that will allow for more efficient and paperless methods of working. Procurement is to conclude w/c 6th November and the implementation date is from February 2024. With the help of the successful supplier, we hope to be fully digital within 12 to 24 months.

Work is on-going as part of the Waste Route Map and Strategy to model the performance benefits and outputs of changing the recycling service to something more blueprint compliant. Collecting already separately presented items will result in a better quality of materials being collected. This will mean that there will be less dependence on a Material Recovery Facility to sort materials to transfer to market for sale and recycling. The Authority will have access direct to markets which will benefit carbon emissions and generate income.



## **Produce**

The Decarbonisation Strategy acknowledged the importance of generating our own “green” electricity and heat. This will reduce carbon emissions, give greater energy security, insulate us against volatile price fluctuations and will bring the added benefit of offsetting grid demand whilst reducing system losses associated with grid supplied electricity if it is produced at the point of demand.

The Produce Working Group has been established with members from Decarbonisation, Transformation, Property, Housing, Planning and Infrastructure. The Team, which also receives external support from the Welsh Government Energy Service, meets monthly.

The first piece of work undertaken by the group was to review the Produce actions contained within the original Decarbonisation Action Plan under the Produce Pillar. The agreed new Produce Action Plan contains 12 actions (see Appendix 2).

Of these actions:

- 2 have been completed
- 6 are going well with good progress
- 3 have had reasonable progress
- 1 is not yet started

## **Land mapping and evaluation**

The authority has significant land holdings. The review of land assets, in collaboration with the Welsh Government Energy Service with a view to identifying opportunities for renewable energy technology, is an ongoing process. The first round of reviews identified several sites which were progress to the next stage and were examined in greater detail to consider issues such as grid connection, planning, etc. This work identified potential opportunities for solar, on shore wind and hydroelectricity generation. Some examples of these projects are outlined below. The review process continues with further sites being assessed based on our energy needs.

## **Solar**

The authority has already installed Photovoltaic (PV's) panels on roofs of its buildings. In some instances, these are small demonstration arrays on schools, but the authority has also installed larger arrays to good effect and is currently investigating its collective non-domestic roof space for medium sized PV arrays.

# Produce Case Study 1 – Cwm Ifor Solar Farm

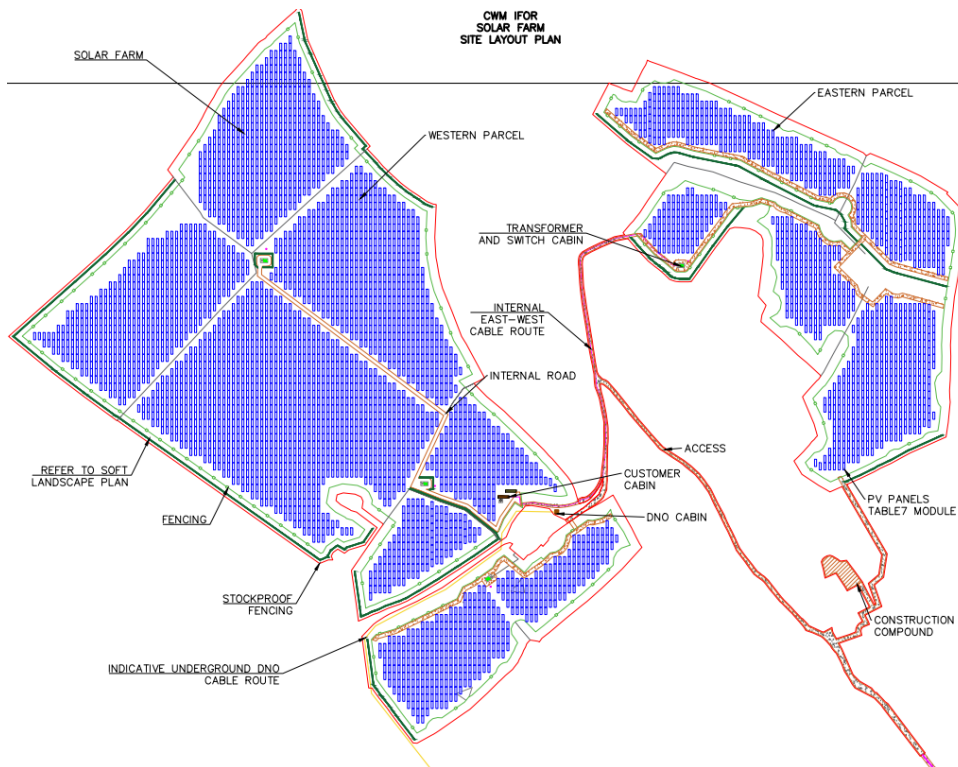
## Background

Cwm Ifor is a privately-owned farm at Penyrhoel, just north of the town of Caerphilly. The land is low-grade and currently used for agricultural purposes. However, it is on a hill side with steep south, southeast and southwest facing slopes, which is suitable for solar arrays.

The project and grid connection were novated to the Council in April 2020 after the developer decided not to progress the project due to existing covenants on the land and potential access issues.

## The Project

The project will develop a 20MW solar farm covering 36 hectares, which will potentially be the largest publicly owned solar farm in Wales. Grid connection is secured, and outline designs have been completed along with energy yield assessments so that financial modelling can be completed.



It is anticipated that when operational the solar farm would generate 23.5GWhrs of electricity per year, or enough to power around 6,000 homes. At current energy prices it will create income of between £669,000 and £892,000 per year over the 35-year life of the project.

As the solar farm is over 10MW in size it is deemed to be a development of national significance (DNS), and therefore the planning application will be determined by Planning and Environmental Decisions Wales (PEDW). The planning application was submitted in January 2023 with a decision anticipated early in 2024. As well as a generating significant amount of electricity the solar farm will also enhance biodiversity of the land, with the use of native plant species and the protection of bats and an owl nesting locally. The boundary will be protected by stock proof fencing to protect the solar farm from the farm animals.

The project has been a real team effort with internal representatives from Regeneration, Procurement, Communications, Transformation, Property Services and Finance. As well as external support from planning, landscape and visual and technical consultants, Welsh Government Energy Service, Local Partnerships and the Carbon Trust.

Consultees have included; the Local Planning Authority, Council Ecologist, Council Landscape Architect, Environmental Health, Highways, CADW, NRW, GGAT and the Fire Service. Ward Members, Community Councils and Cabinet have also been consulted along with communities local to the solar farm.

Life-time CO<sub>2</sub> savings are estimated at 55,300tCO<sub>2</sub>e, or approximately 1,580 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year which will contribute to decarbonising the electricity grid and will have a positive impact on air quality.

There will also be a community benefit fund made available to groups within the area as part of the solar project. This will support community decarbonisation projects as well as wider support for the community. Not only will the project improve air quality and wellbeing it will also bring in a revenue to support council services for the most vulnerable. Community benefits clauses will also be included in the contract for the solar farm build.

## Wind

As part of the land asset review, sites have been considered for wind turbine projects. The initial reviews have not identified significant opportunities. CCBC has been approached by developers to invest in wind developments in the county borough and this is the subject of ongoing discussions and evaluation.

## Hydro-electric

The authority has undertaken a review of its capacity to generate hydroelectricity from rivers and streams on Council owned land. To date there is limited opportunity to progress projects although Cwmcarn Forest has been identified as offering some opportunity to generate electricity for onsite use at the visitor centre. An initial feasibility study for a scheme at Cwmcarn was undertaken in 2012 but a lack of clarity over ownership of the stream bed meant that this wasn't pursued. The current proposed design for the scheme overcomes this risk as the stream bed will not be utilised.

A reassessment of the feasibility study has been commissioned with Wallingford Hydro Solutions and Heidra to determine updated costs and potential payback for the scheme. It is estimated that a 27kW turbine could be installed onsite, which would produce at least half of the visitor's centre annual electricity requirements. The

peak load of the site (maximum energy imported at one time) is 30kW and the base load is 14kW (typically what is being imported overnight). With a 27kW turbine, during times of base load, the excess electricity could either be exported to the grid or utilised onsite by charging electric vehicles. The group exploring this opportunity took a site visit to Margam Park to see their hydro-electric scheme and how it is



adding value to the site as an additional tourism attraction. Should the result of the study be positive, the Group are committed to ensuring that there is an educational aspect to the scheme which demonstrates not only the technology being used but also the carbon emissions being saved.

## **Green Hydrogen**

Significant work is being undertaken to develop partnerships and to secure funding to investigate the contribution that green hydrogen might play in delivering the authority's commitment to be net zero carbon by 2030 and its wider contribution to regeneration and decarbonisation in the county borough.

# **Produce Case Study 2 - Green Hydrogen Project**

## **Background**

Hydrogen is generated by splitting water (H<sub>2</sub>O) into its constituent parts, hydrogen and oxygen by electrolysis - passing an electrical current through the water. The term green hydrogen is used when the electricity used in the electrolysis is generated from renewable sources such as wind or solar.

The Green Hydrogen project has included a review of Council owned land to identify suitable sites. Two potential locations have been identified and are the subject of more detailed feasibility studies. The project also incorporates an ethical water source rather than mains drinking water, with the use of water from the Council owned reed bed facility in Nelson.

Green hydrogen production will potentially support the decarbonisation of the larger fleet vehicles owned by CCBC and the other 10 councils within the region.

## **The Project**

The green hydrogen project will see a 10MW electrolyser sited at one of two locations and will use water from the reed bed facility at Coed Top. 15MW of green energy will be needed for the project. This will be a mix of solar and wind. Ideally the green energy generation will be co-located with the electrolyser however if this is not possible then PPA arrangements for energy through the grid will be made.



Our estimated annual diesel use by our larger fleet vehicles is 69,000 gallons (315,000 litres) per year, at a cost of around £600,000 per year. The use of hydrogen has the potential to save around £60,000 per year, with an additional opportunity to sell hydrogen to the wider region.

There is potential to save 845,000 kg of CO2 emissions in the borough, equivalent to that emitted by 313 houses or 503 cars. This will also impact positively on local air quality.

Opportunities to inject hydrogen into the gas grid are also being investigated along with opportunities for heat networks and oxygen offtake, as well as selling hydrogen to businesses.

Funding for feasibility studies has been secured from two funding sources to date. Firstly, UK Government Funding of £72,496 from Innovate UK, for feasibility studies to examine the non-technical barriers to the project, for which CCBC is the lead partner. Secondly, £43,768.02 HyBRID funding from Welsh Government for feasibility studies investigating the technical barriers to the project, which is being led by the University of South Wales. Phase 2 HyBRID funding will also be sought as well as DESNZ, Cardiff Capital Region and Welsh Government funding. The Welsh Government Energy Service are also undertaking feasibility work around green energy and Wales and West Utilities around transport hubs.

The team developing the project includes External support from South Wales university, Cardiff University, Energy Systems Catapult, Wales and West Utilities, Welsh Government Energy Service, Jen Baxter Consulting and Prosona. A number of internal conversations have taken place with colleagues from Regeneration, Procurement, Communications, Transformation, Property Services, Planning, Highways, Parks and Countryside, Environmental Health and Finance.

## **Anaerobic Digester**

The original Decarbonisation Strategy identified that the Council has local arrangements in place at Bryn Quarry where Council collected food waste is converted into green energy via an Anaerobic Digester. The linked Energy Prospectus highlighted the opportunity to take electricity directly from this site and utilise it at the Tredomen Campus. Anaerobic Digesters (AD) break down feeder fuels such as food waste to generate a biogas which is used to generate electricity. By utilising a locally generated electricity supply it will reduce the transmission system losses (wasted electricity) and free up additional capacity on the local grid.

Discussions have begun with the Bryn Group to identify opportunities, with an initial study being initiated to review options and to develop an outline business case. This has included assessing the best route for any hardware, to identify any land studies or further ecological studies that may be required. As part of understanding the viability of the project, negotiations have



begun on Heads of Terms and the principles of any potential power purchase agreements.

### **Mine Water Heat**

The mine water heat network scheme is in the early stages; however, we are one of the first to engage with the coal authority and WG in this area we are already ahead of others and the mine water scheme at Pontllytyn is progressing through feasibility. CCBC will be in a good position for full funding for the project from WG. The coal authority has nearly completed the feasibility. There is a further report due from the coal authority on the best areas for mine water heat networks and CCBC is expected to be a potential hot spot for these networks from work undertaken so far.

**Total amount of renewable energy generated 594,863 kWhrs from 63 installed Solar PV schemes.**

# Offset

It is inevitable that through delivering its services the authority will emit carbon. Therefore, in order to achieve net zero carbon these emissions will need to be offset. There are two principal ways that this can be done, carbon sequestration (capturing carbon usually by planting trees or by habitat management) or by purchasing carbon units/offsetting credits.

The Decarbonisation Strategy acknowledged that carbon dioxide removal through tree planting will play a major role in CCBC achieving its net zero target, and that it is imperative that the Council effectively manages its current land holdings to ensure that its woodland remains healthy. The purchasing of carbon credits is seen as the last resort and therefore the authority will seek to offset its carbon at this stage by the management, maintenance and creation of new greenspaces, woodlands and wetlands.

The Offset Working Group has been established with members from Decarbonisation, Countryside, Rural Development, Housing, Planning and Infrastructure. The group meets monthly.

The first piece of work undertaken by the group was to review the Offset actions contained within the original Decarbonisation Action Plan under the Offset Pillar. The agreed new Offset Action Plan contains 14 actions (see Appendix 2).

Of these actions:

- 4 have been completed
- 5 are going well with good progress
- 4 have had reasonable progress
- 1 not yet started

## Land mapping and evaluation

In June 2023 a Cabinet recommendation was approved (Recommendation 8), that **“detailed land mapping and evaluation is undertaken to protect existing habitats and identify land for tree planting. Further work undertaken to assess the feasibility of a potential Caerphilly Forest programme and the potential for growing our own trees”**.

This mapping has been undertaken. Table 6 below sets out the total areas of land owned by the authority under the headings required in the Welsh Government reporting tool. The table also summarises the kgCO<sub>2</sub>e, sequestered, and therefore offset by the land use types.

The 1,143 hectares of forest land owned by the authority offset 8,306,886 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2022/23

| Land Use Type | Land Area (Hectares) | Carbon Emissions (kgCO <sub>2</sub> e) |
|---------------|----------------------|--|
| Forest Land   | 1,143                | -8,306,886                             |
| Cropland      | 48                   | 880,361                                |
| Grassland     | 825                  | 12,835                                 |
| Wetlands      | 20                   | n/a                                    |
| Settlements   | 1,398                | n/a                                    |
| Other         | 2                    | n/a                                    |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>3,436.55</b>      | <b>-7,413,691</b>                      |

Table 6, Land use type, land area and kgCO<sub>2</sub>e offset.

Following the mapping of all CCBC land, a review of this land is being undertaken to identify areas that should be maintained and protected, and areas where there are opportunities for new tree planting. An internal mechanism has been developed by the Offset Working Group to identify land for future planting projects. The Team have created a form, which is uploaded to the Decarbonisation section of the CCBC Intranet, which services wishing to complete planting projects can complete. This will begin a process of assessing the land's suitability for planting. An initial desktop exercise utilising GIS makes a first assessment of suitability. A legal check for deeds, covenants, rights of way etc is then completed. If the land is still deemed suitable, an ecological assessment will be carried out and designs for the planting will be completed. This will ensure a cohesive approach to tree planting and enable the Team to track the location and number of trees planted so that we can create a database which monitors progress towards our agreed targets. Through this process, land has been identified for tree planting projects for both the 2023/24 and 2024/25 planting seasons. It is integral to our legal biodiversity obligations that we plant the right tree in the right place. Establishing this mechanism fulfils that obligation.

## Tree planting programmes

Planting has been agreed on Countryside land for the 23/24 planting season. Designs and plans have been produced and agree for sites at Ynys Hywel and Parc Cwm Darran. Approximately 15,000 trees will be planted at those sites, with around 3,000 being planted by volunteers.

Initial sites on Housing and Infrastructure land for planting during the 2024/25 planting season has begun, with ecological surveys and initial feasibility work being undertaken.





## Offset Case Study 1 – Ynys Hywel Covid Memorial Woodland 2023

### Background

Ynys Hywel, a traditional working hill farm, forms part of the Sirhowy Valley Country Park, which is a popular location with people walking or cycling through the woodlands that rise from the riverbank and extend up the valley sides. Route 47 (the Celtic Trail) of the National Cycle Network runs the length of the park and beyond.

The Council owned farm was selected as the location for one of three covid memorial woodlands in Wales, to remember all those who have died during the pandemic. Funding of £499,000 was awarded from the Welsh Government to design, construct and maintain the memorial woodland for 5 years.

### The Project

The new memorial park, covering an area of 7 hectares, was designed and implemented by Caerphilly Council's Landscape Architects. The design seeks to complement the existing country park, and importantly retaining key views across the valley and the overall rural character of the site. This includes both hard landscaping in the form of paths, where possible following the lie of the land to improve access, new timber access gates, benches, drystone walling entrances and natural water features, along with extensive native woodland planting. These enhancements will allow visitors to enjoy more of the picturesque scenery, whilst being able to walk, relax, contemplate and reflect.



The new woodland also respects the environmental quality of the site, with a landscape lead approach, including both improving and retaining biodiversity with retention of the species rich acid grassland meadows, mature trees and hedgerows and the overall landscape qualities.

The recent woodland planting contains a broad mix of native deciduous species to provide a robust mix that it is hoped will be able to withstand the challenges faced by climate change. Shrubs and trees species, including climax trees, have been planted throughout. A small percentage of native evergreens, Holly, Yew and Pine, are complimented by standard trees species including native Beech, Oak and Hornbeam. An extensive area of meadow has also been planted with Welsh daffodil and bluebell bulbs.

A total of 36,500 native trees and shrubs were planted in 2022/23, with 3,700 planted by volunteer groups. Further volunteer planting will be continued for the next 5 years. It's intended that the site will be maintained during the 5-year establishment period, using part of the grant funding.

The Team collaborated with external partners GAVO, Groundwork Wales and Keep Wales Tidy to co-ordinate the volunteer planting. Over 100 volunteers from various organisations and the local community took part in planting the trees over between 20<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

The Team organised facilities and refreshments for volunteers on site which were kindly donated by GAP and Castell Howell.



Minister for Climate Change, Julie James MS visited the site on the 23<sup>rd</sup> to mark the third anniversary of the first Covid lockdown and join volunteers in planting a tree.

## **Total number of trees planted**

A Cabinet commitment was given to “**set a target of planting 300,000 trees by 2030, where land availability allows**”, as part of the Decarbonisation Strategy work.

**To date a total of 81,000 trees have been planted** since the Decarbonisation Strategy was approved.

## **Carbon Credits**

The purchasing of carbon credits for offsetting is a complex and evolving area. Offsetting and carbon trading schemes exist across the UK to purchase carbon credits, allowing organisations, businesses and individuals to offset their carbon emissions. Carbon credits can only be used once - you can sell them to a third party

to compensate for their emissions or you can use them yourself against your own emissions. Each Carbon credit purchased is equivalent to 1 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. The UK Emissions Trading Scheme is currently trading 1 tCO<sub>2</sub>e at £38/tonne.

Should CCBC have been required to be carbon neutral for the financial year 2021/22 we would have needed to purchase carbon credits to offset the 94,257 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e. The market cost in that year of £78/tCO<sub>2</sub> would have cost the authority £7,352,046. Should CCBC have been required to be carbon neutral for the financial year 2022/23 we would have needed to purchase carbon credits to offset 95,894 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e. The current market cost of £38.11/tCO<sub>2</sub> would have cost the authority £3,654,539.17. This highlights firstly, the turbulent nature of carbon markets, but secondly and more importantly, the potential ongoing costs of millions of pounds should the authority fail to meet its Net Zero Carbon commitments.

If we were to plant trees to offset this annual amount, we would need to plant an area around a third of the size of Caerphilly County Borough.

To better understand this area and to allow us to make informed decisions on this, the Offset Group has commissioned consultants to provide detailed advice. This includes an exploration of the business case for purchasing land for tree planting. This will compare the cost of acquiring land and planting, to the cost of purchasing alternative credits. This work will also identify the co-benefits of acquiring land such as delivering public access, employment and biodiversity.

# Buy

The Buy Working Group has been established with core members from Decarbonisation and Procurement alongside nominated representatives from each Directorate. This group has reviewed the existing Decarbonisation Action Plan under the Buy Pillar and agreed an updated Action Plan with 10 actions (See Appendix 2).

Of these actions:

- 1 has been completed
- 5 are going well with good progress
- 2 have had reasonable progress
- 2 have not yet started

Supply Chain emissions comprise nearly 80% of organisational carbon emissions annually. Tackling these emissions is key to achieving Net Zero. However, the methodology used to ascertain these emissions is the least accurate used in the reporting. Currently, every £ spent is multiplied by an emissions factor to calculate the amount of carbon. If spend goes up, so does the carbon, even if this is for the same amount of the same product. Therefore, the main focus of the Buy group has been initially to understand these emissions better and improve the methodology for calculating them.

Analysis of 22/23 spend data from Spikes Cavell has been completed to identify priority areas for further investigation. Similar to other local authorities, a large proportion of spend sits with a small number of suppliers and so understanding these emissions and taking steps to reduce them will require engagement with a relatively small group of our suppliers. From engagement we can ascertain which suppliers are already measuring emissions and implement methodologies to more accurately record our proportion of these emissions. A breakdown of the percentages of spend and transactions related to numbers of suppliers is in Table 7 below.

|                                  | % Spend | No. Suppliers | % Suppliers | % Transactions |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| Top 50 Suppliers                 | 44.8%   | 50            | 1.1%        | 27.1%          |
| Top 100 Suppliers                | 59.7%   | 100           | 2.2%        | 36.5%          |
| Total Spend with Supplier >£1mil | 48.20%  | 59            | 1.30%       | 30.30%         |
| Total Spend with Supplier >£500k | 63.70%  | 119           | 2.60%       | 39.80%         |
| Top 50% Spend (£135.8mil)        | 50.00%  | 64            | 1.40%       | 31.20%         |
| Top 25% Spend (£67.9mil)         | 25.00%  | 17            | 0.37%       | 20.95%         |

Table 7, Percentages of spend, suppliers and transactions 2022/23

It was reported to Cabinet in June 2023 that the majority of emissions from supply chain in 2021/22 were from Social Care Services, Construction and Computing and Electronic Equipment. This has continued in the 2022/23 data.

The top 50% of spend is concentrated in just 5 UK Standard Industrial Classification codes (SIC codes):

- 87-88 – Social Care Services
- 41.2 – Buildings and building construction works
- 26 – Computer, electronic and optical products
- 78 – Employment services
- 49.3-5 – Land Transport Services

Tables 8, 9 and 10 below detail the changes in £spend, kgCO<sub>2</sub>e and UK emissions factors from 2021/22 to 2022/23.

| UK SIC | Category                                  | £Spend 2021/22 | £Spend 2022/23 | % £Change |
|--------|---|----------------|----------------|-----------|
| 87-88  | Social Care Services                      | £73,642,254.16 | £90,490,180.90 | 22.88%    |
| 41.2   | Buildings and building construction works | £45,083,151.54 | £24,630,747.13 | -45.37%   |
| 26     | Computer, electronic and optical products | £25,309,025.02 | £23,283,039.79 | -8.00%    |
| 78     | Employment services                       | £19,936,622.19 | £19,135,875.76 | -4.02%    |
| 49.3-5 | Land transport services                   | £12,302,298.88 | £12,599,391.13 | 2.41%     |

Table 8, Top 5 spend categories with spend 2021/22 and 2022/23

| UK SIC | Category                                  | kgCO <sub>2</sub> e 2021/22 | kgCO <sub>2</sub> e 2022/23 | % kgCO <sub>2</sub> e Change |
|--------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 87-88  | Social Care Services                      | 21,356,253.71               | 11,854,213.70               | -44.49%                      |
| 41.2   | Buildings and building construction works | 16,680,766.07               | 5,911,379.31                | -64.56%                      |
| 26     | Computer, electronic and optical products | 10,376,700.26               | 10,896,462.62               | 5.01%                        |
| 78     | Employment services                       | 2,791,127.11                | 2,545,071.48                | -8.82%                       |
| 49.3-5 | Land transport services                   | 9,595,793.13                | 6,526,484.61                | -31.99%                      |

Table 9, Top 5 spend categories with carbon emissions 2021/22 and 2022/23

The tables above highlight the issues with the current supply chain methodology. Although spend for social care has risen nearly 23%, emissions have fallen nearly 45%. This is due to a change in the emissions factor as detailed in the table below. Whilst some emissions factors decrease, others rise, meaning that year on year comparisons can be difficult and improvements hard to ascertain.

| UK SIC | Category                                  | 2021/22 Emissions Factor | 2022/23 Emissions Factor | Difference |
|--------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| 87-88  | Social Care Services                      | 0.290                    | 0.131                    | -0.159     |
| 41.2   | Buildings and building construction works | 0.374                    | 0.240                    | -0.134     |
| 26     | Computer, electronic and optical products | 0.411                    | 0.468                    | +0.057     |
| 78     | Employment services                       | 0.138                    | 0.133                    | -0.005     |
| 49.3-5 | Land transport services                   | 0.776                    | 0.518                    | -0.258     |

Table 10, Top 5 spend categories with changes in emissions factors 2021/22 to 2022/23

Analysis of 22/23 spend data from Spikes Cavell has been completed to align the spend with UK SIC codes used for carbon emissions reporting. The top 25% of spend with most carbon emissions has been identified for each service area as part of the work developing carbon baselines. The next step is to have discussions with services as part of carbon baseline presentations to understand the spend and what

is being procured. Some engagement with services has taken place through the working group meetings.

Procurement have identified a list of upcoming contracts which might be suitable for further consideration as part of this work e.g. Home to School Transport. Work is being done to understand the actual emissions associated with these contracts so that improved methodologies can be used for emissions reporting.

Various decarbonisation and carbon calculating toolkits have been reviewed by the working group to determine which toolkits best suit which services within the organisation. External partners from other local authorities and public sector organisations have been engaged with an eye to collaborate on a unified approach to emissions reduction, with an initial emphasis on gaining a better understanding of these emissions so that targeted actions can be measurable. It is agreed that working with partners in the region to provide consistency for suppliers is favourable and the core membership of the group are beginning initial discussions on how new tools and supplier engagement can be rolled out.

Social care services spend contributes the most carbon to supply chain emissions using current methodologies as it represents the largest spend. More detailed analysis of this spend and the constituent parts has been completed for 2021/22. And as such, social care has been identified as a priority area for trial of new carbon calculating toolkits and engagement with suppliers.

## Key Priorities & Next Steps

2023 will have been the first full year with a dedicated Decarbonisation Team in place within the authority focused on achieving Net Zero Carbon.

Whilst there have been some achievements in delivering the Decarbonisation Strategy prior to this, now there are dedicated officers, there is the required drive to fulfil our objectives at scale and pace. This said, collaboration across all services and with external partners is key to delivery.

## Service Area Engagement

Services need to understand their emissions and the role that they need to play in reducing them before meaningful action at the scale and pace required can take place. The Decarbonisation Team have developed baselines for each Service with a view to presenting this information and building understanding so that targeted actions can be agreed, and budgets set. This process will begin as soon as possible, with initial presentations are delivered to senior leaders within each Service, before cascading down through the structure. A plan to engage all levels of each Service will need to be agreed and rolled out as part of this process.

## Audit Wales

In November 2022 Audit Wales published an Assurance and Risk Assessment Review for CCBC. This review considered the Decarbonisation Strategy and its delivery and made two recommendations:

R1: The Council should ensure its proposed actions to reach net zero by 2030 are:

- fully costed in terms of their carbon and financial impact to enable it to prioritise actions;
- fully reflected in its Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy: and
- integrated into Directorate Performance Assessments.

R2: The Council should develop a robust set of metrics to measure and report progress on its decarbonisation journey.

## Costed Plan

Costing the Decarbonisation Action Plan requires data from many sources and cuts across multiple areas of work. From three pillars of the Decarbonisation Strategy, tools and studies are being developed to achieve this.

Reduce:

- a) Local Partnerships in collaboration with the WLGA have developed a tool which will cost the decarbonisation of buildings based on internal floor area, current energy consumption etc. This tool, used in conjunction with the work already completed by the Energy Team will enable us to fully cost the programme of decarbonising non-domestic buildings.
- b) Tools to cost the transition to EV for fleet vehicles are being explored through the Optrak project.

Produce:

- a) The Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) being developed by Carbon Trust, ARUP and Afallen in collaboration with the authority will identify key opportunities to decarbonise the energy system within Caerphilly and provide clarity on the costs of decarbonising homes and other low-regrets decarbonisation measures.

Offset:

- a) The Offset Working Group has commissioned a study to be completed by City Science which will cost the offsetting required to achieve Net Zero Carbon in 2030 based on various scenarios of residual emissions. This will consider the cost to plant trees on land already owned by the authority and also the cost of purchasing land with the intention of planting trees on it.
- b) NRW in collaboration with Data Map Wales have produced shapefile layers of the borough which detail which areas of the borough are best suited for tree planting. This can be used in conjunction with the City Science study/tool to determine the costs of offsetting projects.

A priority for the next year for the Decarbonisation Team is to compile the data from each of these tools and generate a costed version of the Decarbonisation Action Plan which can then be reflected in the authority's financial plans and strategies.

## **Metrics**

The development of baselines for each Service will allow consistent gathering and reporting of data on carbon emissions for the authority. Targeted and measurable actions will be agreed with each Service, with the Outcome/Output recorded in the Decarbonisation Action Plan and reported annually by the Decarbonisation Team. Once Carbon Budgets have been set for each Service, these will be reported on through Directorate Performance Assessments as approved by Cabinet in June 2023.



## APPENDIX 2

# 2023/24 Corporate and Cross-cutting Actions

**Key**

|   |                      |   |                            |
|---|----------------------|---|----------------------------|
|  | Complete             |  | Making reasonable progress |
|  | Making good progress |  | Not yet started            |

| REF     | PROJECT | ACTION   | DELIVERY BY                                | TIMESCALES                                     | OUTCOME/OUTPUT  | DELIVERY NOTES  |
|---------|---------|--|--|--|---|---|
| Page 77 | C1      | Carbon Emissions for 2022/23. Identify emissions values via data capture for Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions as prescribed by Welsh Government. | Decarb Team                                | Submission Date 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 | <b>COMPLETED:</b> CO2 emissions data submitted to WG  | -Part of annual WG reporting requirements.<br>-Data collection, calculations and submission to be undertaken by Decarbonisation Team.<br><br><b>Report for 2022/23 submitted to Welsh Government</b>  |
|         |         | Establish carbon baselines for individual service areas in line with WG reporting  | Decarb Team                                | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023                    | Individual base line emissions data presented to each service area  | -Calculations to be undertaken by Decarbonisation Team.<br>-Presentation to be provided to Leadership Group explaining process, aims and timescales<br><br><b>Baselines developed detailing emissions from 2021/22 and 2022/23</b><br><b>Timeline for presentation to services to be agreed</b> |
|         | C3      | Establish Carbon Budgets with agreed savings for individual service areas using carbon baseline data                                       | CMT & Services co-ordinated by Decarb Team | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024                    | Individual emissions budgets agreed with each service area<br>Phased plan to reduce emissions for each service area | - Once understanding of baselines has been developed, SMART targets for emissions reductions can be set in collaboration with service areas<br><br><b>Not yet started</b>   |
|         | C4      | Establish energy usage patterns across corporate buildings   | Decarb Team & Property Services            | 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2023                | Portfolio of corporate building energy use patterns   | - Initial data analysis to be completed in partnership with Data  |

|    |  |   |                          |                                 |  |   |
|----|--|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
|    |  | maximised across all corporate buildings  |                          |                                 | with detail on available capacity  | Science Academy and Cardiff University<br><br><b>Project completed establishing usage patterns and energy headroom of corporate buildings where half-hourly energy consumption data was available. Outputs of project to be presented to Reduce Working Group to feed into the Asset Efficiency workstream.</b> |
| C5 | Raise awareness of carbon literacy                   | Develop carbon literacy approach/program  | Decarb Team              | 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 | Accredited carbon literacy training Program for training delivery<br>Decarb champion “train the trainer” network established   | <b>Initial cohort of 22 officers have completed carbon literacy training.</b><br><br><b>General awareness raising to form key part of introducing baselines to services</b><br><br><b>Further training to be agreed and rolled out across the authority.</b>  |
| C6 | Work towards becoming a Carbon Literate Organisation | Obtain a Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation award                                    | Corporate Responsibility | 30 <sup>th</sup> March 2024     | (i) Registered training initiative with CLP<br>(ii) Organisational Leader certified as Carbon Literate   | - Submit evidence to CLP that requirements for Bronze award have been met<br><br><b>Requirements for Bronze CLO award are met but this has not yet been registered with CLP</b>   |
| C7 | Work towards becoming a Carbon Literate Organisation | Obtain a Silver Carbon Literate Organisation award – 15% of workforce Carbon Literate | Corporate Responsibility | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025     | (i) 15% of workforce Carbon Literate<br>(ii) Carbon Literacy integrated into performance management<br>(iii) Visual promotion of organisation’s carbon literacy<br>(iv) Publication of one-page case study | - Carbon Literacy as a desirable in all job descriptions<br>- Carbon Literacy as part of new starter induction<br><br><b>See C5 above</b>   |

|         |  |   |                     |                                 |  |  |
|---------|--|---|---------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
| C8      | Develop skilled workforce  | Complete skills audit to identify skills gaps within workforce  | HR/Decarb Team      | 30 <sup>th</sup> March 2024     | Toolkit for skills assessment<br>Integration into HR portal<br>Integration into My Time Extra  | <b>Development of a tool to audit decarbonisation skills ongoing as part of Infuse program experiment. Timescales updated to reflect current resource capacity. HR to be approached to collaborate on the delivery mechanism for the tool</b>  |
| C9      | Develop skilled workforce  | Develop training programmes with our educational partners to upskill workforce                                    | HR/Decarb Team      | 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2024 | Development pathway for green skills<br>Integration of green skills into ways of working   | <b>See C6 above</b>  |
| C10     | All Council Strategic Policy Documents to have decarbonisation at their heart. | Decarbonisation to be incorporated into the Integrated Impact Assessment  | Transformation Team | 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 | Updated IIA which incorporates decarbonisation specifically  | - Decarbonisation section of IIA drafted and agreed<br>- Guidance on how to complete IIA developed<br>- Guidance held on Decarbonisation Intranet pages<br><br><b>Decarbonisation update to IIA process has been drafted, yet to be agreed.</b>  |
| Page 79 | <b>FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT</b>  |   |                     |                                 |  |  |
| C11     | Examine opportunities to decarbonise the authority's investments.              | Work with pension schemes and managers to reduce investment with fossil fuel based and high emissions businesses. | Corporate approach  |                                 | 25% reduction in carbon exposure relative to the respective benchmark on £1.13bn of its assets (which equates to c. 30% of total assets) | The Wales Pension Partnership (WPP) has now implemented a decarbonisation overlay on all of its equity sub-funds.<br>The WPP launched its Active Sustainable Equity (ASE) sub-fund in June 2023 and the Greater Gwent Fund invested £150m in this product.<br>The WPP is working closely with its advisors in preparing an "All Wales Climate Report" which is intended to highlight the collective exposure of investments and to demonstrate |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  | <p>decarbonisation progress over many years.</p> <p>The Greater Gwent Fund has continued to selectively invest in renewable energy infrastructure throughout the UK.</p> <p><b>It should be noted that carbon emissions associated with investments are not reportable as part of organisational emissions and so have no impact on the 2030 targets</b></p> |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

## REDUCE

| REF | PROJECT   | ACTION   | DELIVERY BY                       | TIMESCALES                      | OUTCOME/OUTPUT   | DELIVERY NOTES  |
|-----|---|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|---|
| R1  | Establish Reduce Working Group                              | Establish Working Group, Terms of Reference and initial priorities                       | Decarb Team/ Property Services    | 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 | <b>COMPLETED</b> | <b>Working Group established, meeting monthly</b>   |
| R2  | Develop actions and delivery plan                           | Review Reduce section of action plan. Develop and agree new actions and delivery plan    | Reduce Group                      | 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2023  |                  | Action plan review is underway and revised/updated plan to be agreed as part of the Annual Report process.  |
|     | <b>EXISTING NON DOMESTIC BUILDINGS</b>                      |  |                                   |                                 |                  |   |
| R3  | Identify buildings for upgrade works                        |  | Energy Team/ Reduce Working Group | 21 <sup>st</sup> December 2023  |                  | Spreadsheet info – get from minutes   |
| R4  | Develop Programme of works for initial delivery of upgrades |  | Energy Team/ Reduce Working Group | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024     |                  | Priority buildings have begun to be identified for works including LED lighting upgrades etc  |
| R5  | Provide energy efficiency training to key building staff.   | Provide training on Building energy management systems and good housekeeping techniques. | Property Services                 | Ongoing                         |                  | Training is provided on Building Energy Management Services as required. Training is provided to school staff and pupils on energy efficiency methods. Training has been identified for leisure |

|         |   |   |                   |                             |  |   |
|---------|---|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
|         |   |   |                   |                             |  | services and will be delivered as a group event.  |
| R6      | Asset Efficiency  | Assess and identify opportunities for portfolio rationalisation   | Property Services | Ongoing                     |  | Being undertaken as part of Mobilising Team Caerphilly. Social services buildings rationalised as part of phase 1   |
| R7      | Agile Working   | Review ways of working to allow implementation of the agile working strategy to maximise efficient use of buildings | Property Services | Ongoing                     |  | Agile work space created in Ty Penallta Rationalisation of work spaces in Ty Penallta to increase number of teams working from the building e.g. <b>Housing</b>   |
| R8      | Community Asset Transfer                                      | Assess and identify opportunities for community asset transfer  | Property Services |                             |  | Being reviewed and considered as part of Mobilising Team Caerphilly   |
|         | <b>EXISTING HOUSING STOCK</b>                                 |   |                   |                             |  |   |
| R9      | Target Energy Pathways and carry out a whole stock assessment | Undertake Target Energy Pathways to each CCBC owned property and formulate a whole stock assessment                 | Housing           | March 31 <sup>st</sup> 2027 |  | This is in line with WHQS23   |
| Page 81 | Optimised Retrofit Programme 3.2                              | Install energy efficiency measures in sheltered housing schemes.  | Housing           | Ongoing                     |  | Through the Optimised Retrofit Programme we are undertaking a fabric first and PV approach to Maesteg and Oakland to address the cold issues the tenants were experiencing, this is in line with PAS2035. EWI, PV, MVHR's, low energy windows and doors. Renewing the EWI to the defective properties in Panside. |
| R11     | Optimised Retrofit Programme 3.3                              | Survey properties to be included in next year's Decarbonisation programme   | Housing           | Ongoing                     |  | We are formulating a decarbonisation programme for next year, analysing our EPC data to enable us to look at our least energy efficient properties to improve the thermal performance of them.  |
| R12     | Triple Glazing Window Replacement Programme                   | Improve energy efficiency of Council owned domestic properties through the UPVc                                     | Housing           | Ongoing                     |  | We are manufacturing our own triple glazing and have an install programme of 84 properties this financial year.   |

|         |   |  |                  |         |                  |   |
|---------|---|--|------------------|---------|------------------|---|
|         |   | triple glazing window replacement programme  |                  |         |                  |   |
| R13     | Energy Performance Certificates   | Survey all CCBC owned homes to establish their energy rating and to identify least energy efficient stock.   | Housing          | Ongoing |                  | Ongoing   |
|         | <b>NEW DEVELOPMENT – HOUSING</b>  |  |                  |         |                  |   |
| R14     | Develop a Development and Governance Strategy that sets out a policy framework to apply to all Caerphilly Homes developments. | Promote and encourage carbon friendly construction methods and a reduction in energy consumption in all new housing development.   | Caerphilly Homes |         | <b>Completed</b> | Cabinet have approved a Development and Governance Strategy. The strategy is to build all new homes using MMC, fabric first principles and build to Building Regulations 2025 as a minimum thereby concentrating on thermal efficiency and ventilation. The strategy sets out an ambition to build to net zero carbon but recognises that reductions in embodied carbon are harder to deliver than operational reductions.  |
| Page 82 | Reduce energy consumption in new “Caerphilly Homes” properties.   | Introduce new build specifications that aim to minimise heat loss, introduce efficient internal heating systems and reduce overall levels of carbon.<br>Investigate utilising new battery technology to store energy within domestic properties. | Caerphilly Homes |         |                  | Caerphilly Homes have received planning approval for a 45 later living scheme at Ty Darran, Risca and 92 homes at the former Oakdale School site. All new homes will be built on both sites will be built with energy efficiency and lower costs for customers in mind. <b>A report has been provided by Wilmott Dixon</b> which discusses the ethical sourcing of the materials contained in photovoltaics and batteries together with the recycling options. All new Caerphilly Homes will be built using a fabric first approach and to Building Regulations 2025 standards. |
| R16     | Introduce carbon friendly construction methods in “Caerphilly Homes” new build programme.                                     | Secure partnership arrangement with local steel frame off-site modular build company to build new homes in Caerphilly County borough.  | Caerphilly Homes | Ongoing |                  | Caerphilly Homes have a relationship with Caledan, a Ystrad Mynach based company via Willmott Dixon. Caerphilly Homes will shortly be bringing forward a number of smaller sites and  |

|     |   |  |                                      |   |           |   |
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|     |   |  |                                      |   |           | will seek to introduce a timber frame offer to the development programme.   |
| R17 | Implement Modern Methods of Construction  | Investigate and develop other off- site modular construction methods (e.g. Timber frame) for use within the Caerphilly Homes new build programme. Work collectively with zoned RSL's to Introduce more modular off site construction techniques to reduce carbon used in construction. | Caerphilly Homes                     | Ongoing   |           | Caerphilly Homes is part of the All Wales Net Zero Carbon Timber Frame Consortium and will be offering a site to include in an all Wales project shortly. UWHA have opened a new MMC factory in the borough with ambitions to increase the number of homes they build using MMC techniques. Timber frame for the Cwm Ifor developments (R25) were built in UWHA's MMC factory. Welsh Government now incentivises the use of MMC in new developments through the Social Housing Grant programme and, as a result, the Council expects to see an increase in the number of new homes developed using MMC. All new Caerphilly Homes will be built using MMC. |
| R18 | Agree a policy for no new fossil fuel heating in Caerphilly Homes new build homes | Move away from traditional fossil fuel heating systems on Caerphilly Homes new builds.   | Caerphilly Homes                     |   | Completed | Cabinet approved policy of no fossil fuel heating systems to be used on any of Caerphilly Homes new build homes.  |
|     | <b>NEW DEVELOPMENT – NON DOMESTIC</b>   |  |                                      |   |           |   |
| R19 | Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme                                    | Ensure all new capital investment for schools support net zero commitments and meet required standards for decarbonisation in the choice of materials, transport and construction techniques.  | Sustainable Communities for Learning | Plasy Felin Primary School currently in Planning; Anticipated Completion Date July 2025 |           | Welsh Government have specific requirements and standards for net zero schools – currently net zero operation, however embodied carbon is being considered.   |
|     | <b>TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT</b>   |  |                                      |   |           |   |
| R20 | Reduce the number and size of and mileage driven by our fleet vehicles            | Undertake review of fleet vehicles with services to understand vehicle usage to enable plan for more efficient use of fleet vehicles   | Policy Team/ Fleet Management        | 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2024   |           | Being considered as part of Mobilising Team Caerphilly.   |

|     |  |  |  |                             |   |   |
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| R21 | Waste collection round re-configurations (route optimisation)                                      | Review current collection routes to assess the feasibility of re-balancing collection routes.                              | Waste Management                       | Short/Medium                | Lower emissions from waste vehicles   | Work has already been undertaken to 'zone' our collection rounds. This approach will see the department adopt a more collaborative and teamwork approach to collections. This has been working in parallel to the route map and waste strategy and fits in well with the decarbonisation agenda as collection routes will be more efficient, travel fewer miles and thus using less fuel. |
| R22 | Reduce the use of petrol and diesel vehicles through the transition to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles | Transition first 100 fleet vehicles to ULEV  | Decarb Team/ Fleet Management Services | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 |   | First 14 vehicles in service; Infrastructure is in place; vehicles to be transitioned will be identified through action R23 above.  |
| R23 | Home-based vehicle charging solution to enable transition to ULEV                                  | Undertake pilot to agree solutions for home-based vehicle charging   | Decarb Team/ Fleet / Housing           | July 2024                   |   | Optrak study to inform how home-based vehicles could be charged to enable transition to ULEV  |
| R24 | Reduce 'grey fleet' work mileage made by staff.  | Review Grey Fleet mileage claims. Develop and implement robust travel hierarchy, policies and actions to reduce emissions. | HR / Transformation Team               | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 |   |   |
| R25 | Reduce travel to work (commuting miles)  | Collect and analyse commuting data through use of staff survey to gain understanding of commuting patterns                 | HR / Decarb Team                       | 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2024  |   | To be implemented through service area baseline presentations and action plan development   |
|     | <b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>  |  |  |                             |   |   |
| R26 | Streetlighting Energy Efficiency   | Continue with programme of part light lighting in the county borough.  | Engineering                            | Ongoing                     | <b>Carbon emissions from the energy consumption of streetlighting decreased 18.3% from 2021/22 to 2022/23</b> | LED replacement completed January 2021. Cabinet approved continuation of reduction in street lighting operating hours in November 2022  |
| R27 | Material use   | Use natural materials where suitable and recycled products   | Engineering                            | Ongoing                     |   | Suppliers have begun using lower temperature aggregates for resurfacing   |



|     |  |  |                                   |                             |  |  |
|-----|--|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
|     |  | where possible such as bollards, bins, benches and curbs on street-scene projects.                                     |                                   |                             |  | works. County Surveyors Society (Wales), have engaged with Consultants to produce an all Wales policy to measure and reduce carbon output. The use of recycled materials is something we try to incorporate in all schemes.  |
|     | <b>WASTE MANAGEMENT</b>  |  |                                   |                             |  |  |
| R28 | Investigate opportunities for reducing waste within the local authority. | Reduce waste collected by the authority, reducing reportable emissions from the collection and disposal of this waste. | Corporate approach/Communications | Ongoing                     |  | <p>The Authority has signed up to the Public Sector Waste Minimisation Campaign and to this end provides infrastructure to facilitate recycling for its workforce. It has also recently signed up to the national WARPIT initiative (led by Procurement and FM)</p> <p>A Waste Strategy is in the process of being developed to enhance the sustainable management of its municipal waste arising and in turn attain the statutory targets set by Welsh Government.</p> <p>There is a campaign in place to incentivise participation in the food waste recycling collection service which supplies feedstock for a local anaerobic digestion facility which is providing electricity for 2000 homes.</p> |
| R29 | Digital Offer  | Paperless office and operational practices to be introduced through waste management's new digital solution            | Waste Management/IT               | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 |  | <p>The Authority has committed to introducing a complete digital solution for waste. This will include back office and front-line functionality and capabilities that will allow for more efficient and paperless methods of working.</p> <p>Procurement to conclude w/c 6<sup>th</sup> November and implementation date is from February 2024. With the help of the</p>   |

|     |  |   |                              |         |  |   |
|-----|--|---|------------------------------|---------|--|---|
|     |  |   |                              |         |  | successful supplier, we hope to be fully digital within 12 to 24 months.  |
| R30 | Assess opportunities to collect separately presented recycling | Less contamination and selling direct to market will improve the value chain of our recyclates. | Corporate / Waste Management | Ongoing |  | Work on-going as part of the Waste Route Map and Strategy to model the performance benefits and outputs of changing recycling service to something more blueprint compliant.<br>With better quality of materials collected and already separately presented items, there will be no depends on a MRF to sort materials and transfer to market for sale and recycling.<br>The Authority will have access direct to markets which will benefit carbon emissions and income generated. |

## PRODUCE

| REF | PROJECT  | ACTION  | DELIVERY BY                  | TIMESCALES                     | OUTCOME/OUTPUT               | DELIVERY NOTES                                      |
|-----|--|---|------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| P1  | Establish Produce Working Group                            | Establish Working Group, Terms of Reference and initial priorities                        | Decarb Team / Regeneration   | 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2023  |                              |   |
| P2  | Develop actions and delivery plan                          | Review Produce section of action plan. Develop and agree new actions and delivery plan    | Produce Group                | 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2023 |                              |   |
| P3  | Review drivers, policies and strategies                    | Identify and assess local, regional and national strategies related to energy generation. | Produce Group                | 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2024  |                              |   |
| P4  | Establish baseline for renewable energy generation by CCBC | Identify all renewable energy generation across the authority                             | Produce Group / Decarb Team  | 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2023 |                              |   |
| P5  | Roof mounted PV on council buildings                       | Install PV systems on suitable council building roofs                                     | Property Services            | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024    | 594,863kWh generated 2022/23 | 63 schemes currently installed on council buildings |
| P6  | Green hydrogen production & use                            | Undertake feasibility study on opportunities for green hydrogen production and use        | Decarb team / Transformation | 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023 |                              | Phase 1 study completed                             |
| P7  | Cwm Ifor Solar Farm  | Undertake work to gain planning approval for solar farm                                   | Transformation Team          | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024    |                              | See separate action plan/OBC                        |

|     |  |  |  |                             |  |   |
|-----|--|--|--|-----------------------------|--|---|
| P8  | Cwmcarn Forest Drive Hydro-electric Scheme | Reassess design and cost options for hydro-electric scheme                         | Decarb Team / Regeneration / Property Services | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 |  |   |
| P9  | Mine water heating                         | Review sites and opportunities for mine water heating with Coal Authority          | Decarb Team / Caerphilly Homes                 | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 |  | Coal Authority study highlighting opportunities for mine water to be published November 2023<br>Initial discussions held on the possibility of a scheme at St Clare's sheltered housing Pontlloftyn |
| P10 | Private wire                               | Evaluate feasibility of hardwire from anaerobic digester to Tredomen Campus        | Transformation Team/Property Services          | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 |  |   |
| P11 | Produce green on shore wind energy.        | Undertake feasibility for a wind turbine on Gelligaer Common with the commoners    | Transformation Team                            | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 |  | Initial studies underway  |
| P12 | Produce green on shore wind energy.        | Discussions with RWE and a decision made on taking a commercial stake in wind farm | Regeneration / Transformation                  | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 |  | Discussions ongoing   |

| REF | PROJECT                                 | ACTION  | DELIVERY BY               | TIMESCALES                  | OUTCOME/OUTPUT | DELIVERY NOTES   |
|-----|---|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|--|
| O1  | Establish Offset Working Group          | Establish Working Group, Terms of Reference and initial priorities                        | Decarb Team / Countryside | 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2023  |                | <b>Working Group established, meeting monthly</b>  |
| O2  | Develop actions and delivery plan       | Review Offset section of action plan. Develop and agree new actions and delivery plan     | Offset Group              | 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2023  |                | <b>Offset Pillar Action Plan reviewed, updated and agreed by Working Group</b>   |
| O3  | Review drivers, policies and strategies | Identify and assess local, regional and national strategies related to carbon offsetting. | Offset Group              | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 |                | <b>Action agreed to be completed internally<br/>Overview of policies to be included in external report assessing Caerphilly CBC offsetting requirements – see O6 below</b> |

|    |  |  |                           |                             |  |  |
|----|--|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| O4 | Identify opportunities for afforestation on CCBC land in the county borough. | Review land holding across the authority to identify opportunities for tree planting and habitat management.   | Offset Group and Services | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 |  | <b>Ynys Hywel and Parc Cwm Darran identified as sites for 2023/24 planting season</b><br>Housing sites reviewed and ecological assessments to be completed with a view to be included in the 2024/25 planting programme<br>Tip review for tree planting to be completed, with a plan for planting in 2023/24 planting season to be drafted |
| O5 | Habitat management   | Review land holding across the authority to identify opportunities for reintroduction of wetland/grassland habitats<br>Work to reduce active management and revert to natural processes to store carbon and improve biodiversity | Countryside               | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 |  | <b>Through the LDP and other initiatives sites are being investigated for re-wetting; grassland restoration is being revisited.</b>  |
| O6 | Develop business case for offsetting programme                               | Collate data, write brief and commission study to produce business case.   | Offset Group              | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 |  | <b>Study commissioned to assess offsetting requirements for Caerphilly CBC to achieve net zero; residual emissions to be calculated internally</b>   |
| O7 | Data Methodology   | Investigate improvement of land use carbon emission calculation methodologies, implement accurate methodologies and lobby Welsh Government to improve emissions reporting  | Decarb Team               | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 |  | <b>WG are developing a data map layer which will provide more accurate assessments of land use type across Wales</b><br>Discussions have been held with WG regarding how emissions are reported and offset   |
| O8 | Data collection  | Establish database and mechanism for collating the number of trees planted on CCBC land  | Decarb Team               | 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2023  |  | <b>Form developed for data collection, to be utilised for all planting to ensure data is held centrally</b><br>Form has been shared with members of the group and is live  |

|     |   |   |  |                 |                      | on the Decarbonisation section of the new intranet   |
|-----|---|---|--|-----------------|----------------------|--|
| O9  | Develop and implement tree planting programme | Develop phased and costed programme of tree planting to achieve target of 300,000 trees by 2030 | Decarb Team/Countryside/Parks              | 31st March 2024 |                      | See O6 above   |
| O10 | Implementation – Year 1                       | Implement planting programme for planting season 2021/22  | Countryside/Parks/Decarb Team/PSB Partners | 31st March 2022 | 35,000 trees planted | Trees planted at Ynys Hywel Farm   |
| O11 | Implementation – Year 2                       | Implement planting programme for planting season 2022/23  | Countryside/Parks/Decarb Team/PSB Partners | 31st March 2023 | 35,000 trees planted | Trees planted at Ynys Hywel Farm   |
| O12 | Implementation – Year 3                       | Implement planting programme for planting season 2023/24  | Countryside/Parks/Decarb Team/PSB Partners | 31st March 2024 | 35,000 trees planted | Designs to be completed by end of November 2023 for planting at Ynys Hywel and Parc Cwm Darran |
| O13 | Implementation – Year 4                       | Implement planting programme for planting season 2024/25  | Countryside/Parks/Decarb Team/PSB Partners | 31st March 2025 | 35,000 trees planted | Housing sites identified; ecological studies to be completed by end of October 2023            |
| O14 | Implementation – Year 5 -9                    | Implement planting programme for planting season 2025/26  | Countryside/Parks/Decarb Team/PSB Partners | 31st March 2026 | 35,000 trees planted | Not yet started  |

## BUY

| REF | PROJECT  | ACTION   | DELIVERY BY               | TIMESCALES                   | OUTCOME/OUTPUT  | DELIVERY NOTES   |
|-----|--|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|---|--|
| B1  | Establish Buy Working Group  | Establish Working Group, Terms of Reference and initial priorities | Decarb Team / Procurement | 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2023   | <b>COMPLETED</b>  | <b>Working Group established, meeting monthly</b>  |
| B2  | <b>Understanding the 22/23 carbon emissions associated with supply chain</b> | Undertake detailed spend analysis with service areas               | Decarb Team / Procurement | Phased delivery to be agreed | Assessments completed in partnership with services to understand detail of spends | - Analysis of spend and refinement of data to calculate accurate emissions and develop understanding<br><br><b>Analysis of 22/23 spend data from spikes cavell has been completed to align the spend with UK SIC codes used for carbon emissions reporting</b> |

|    |         |  |   |                              |  |  |
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|    |         |  |   |                              |  | <b>Next step is to have discussions with services as part of baseline presentations</b>  |
| B3 |         | Identify carbon emissions and embodied carbon related to goods and services to prioritise target areas | Decarb Team   | Phased delivery to be agreed | Prioritisation of spend categories determined by carbon implications | - Utilisation of refined data collected during service area assessments to identify key target areas<br><br><b>Top 25% of spend with most carbon emissions has been identified for each service area as part of the work developing carbon baselines</b>   |
| B4 | Page 90 | Identify key opportunities for intervention within upcoming and existing contracts                     | Procurement   | Phased delivery to be agreed | List/Plan of upcoming contracts<br>List/Plan of existing contracts   | - Assessment of upcoming contracts matched with identified target areas for carbon reduction<br>- Assessment of existing contracts with opportunity for intervention within contract management<br><br><b>Procurement have identified a list of upcoming contracts which might be suitable for this work e.g. Home to School Transport<br/>Forward Work Plan is regularly reviewed to identify opportunities.<br/>Fortnightly updates with Procurement team</b>  |
| B5 |         | <b>Working with Services</b>   | Provide training on the fundamentals of carbon emissions reporting related to goods and services that service areas procure | Decarb Team                  | Phased delivery to be agreed   | All staff with procurement responsibilities to have received training<br>Staff responsible for procurement within service areas understand principles of carbon emissions within goods and services<br><br>- Develop training specific for service areas focused on the key target areas of spend<br>- Agree delivery framework<br>- Agree delivery timeframe<br><br><b>Initial awareness raising to form part of the baseline presentations<br/>Further guidance and resources uploaded to the Decarbonisation intranet page<br/>Further training delivery to be agreed</b> |

|    |   |   |                                       |                              |  |   |
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| B6 |   | Provide clarity of understanding of the role of service areas in reducing carbon emissions in procured goods and services | Decarb Team / Procurement             | Phased delivery to be agreed | All staff with procurement responsibilities to have received training<br>Staff responsible for procurement within service areas are confident in their role in reducing carbon emissions through procurement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop training with an emphasis on pre procurement work, scoping and understanding sensitivities</li> <li>- Agree delivery framework</li> <li>- Agree delivery timeframe</li> </ul> <p><b>Training content and delivery to be agreed</b></p>   |
| B7 | <b>Providing Central Support &amp; Guidance</b> | Develop Decarbonisation approach to Procurement   | Procurement / Decarb Team / Buy Group | September 2023               | Clear procurement cycle mechanism to consider decarbonisation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify effectiveness of current systems including SRAs</li> <li>- Prototype approach with services to identify risks/issues</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussions with other local authorities in South East Wales have identified opportunities for collaboration on and the development of a unified and co-ordinated approach to considering decarbonisation in the procurement cycle</b></p>  |
| B8 |   | Identify Tools to be used through Procurement Cycle   | Procurement / Decarb Team             | September 2023               | Decarbonisation in Procurement Toolkit specific for CCBC   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review existing toolkits</li> <li>- Identify which tools exist for each section of the procurement cycle</li> <li>- Collate tools into one central toolkit</li> <li>- Include toolkit in Procurement training</li> </ul> <p><b>Various decarbonisation toolkits have been explored.</b><br/><b>Discussions with other local authorities in South East Wales have identified opportunities for collaboration on emissions toolkits and the development of a unified and co-ordinated approach</b></p> |

|     |  |  |                           |                              |  |   |
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| B9  |  | Develop standard clauses and requirements including continuous improvement clauses to be included in contracts | Procurement               | Phased delivery to be agreed | Continuous Improvement<br>Clauses included new contracts<br>Contract management ensures compliance and improvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review PPN for example clauses</li> <li>- Identify route for inclusion of clauses and mechanism for compliance</li> </ul> <p><b>Clauses have been drafted and included in certain contracts. Strategy on wider implementation to be agreed</b></p> |
| B10 |  | Research and identify potential funding streams to support low carbon procurement                              | Procurement / Decarb Team | September 2023 - Ongoing     | Portfolio of potential funding streams available to services (and suppliers)                                       | <b>Internal discussions with Business Development team have identified some funding streams that may be available to suppliers</b>  |





## HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023

**SUBJECT: PONTLLANFRAITH LEISURE CENTRE**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee's views on a proposal for Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre to remain permanently closed, with sporting facilities at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) including a 4-court sports hall, with associated changing facilities, and a 3G pitch being made available for community use outside of school hours upon opening in Spring 2025. The proposal would also see use of the 3G pitch on the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre site cease once the 3G pitch at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 In 2019, the Council adopted a Sport and Active Recreation Strategy for the period 2019-2029. The Vision for sport and active recreation is "to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be more active, more often". The strategy references poor levels of health in certain areas of the county; reducing budgets; the large number of facilities across the County and the deteriorating quality of our older buildings as well as increasing population and consumer demand as some of the key challenges it is seeking to overcome. The strategy also references the need to maximise the impact of all sport and recreation facilities.
- 2.2 Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre is now nearly 50 years old. The building has a significant maintenance backlog and the associated 3G football pitch is at the end of its lifespan. The indoor leisure facilities closed as a result of the UK national lockdown in March 2020 and have not re-opened for leisure use. The budget for running Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and 3G pitch is £179,360 per year.
- 2.3 The Leisure Centre formerly operated as a shared site with the adjacent Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School which closed in 2016. The school buildings are currently being demolished ahead of the construction under the Council's Sustainable Communities for Learning programme of a Centre for Vulnerable Learners. Due for completion in Spring 2025 the new Centre will include a 4-court sports hall, with associated changing facilities, and a 3G pitch (size 40 x 30 metres i.e. not full size) available for community

use outside of school hours. Artist's impressions of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners are included at Appendix 1.

- 2.4 Islwyn High School opened in June 2017 to replace the existing Pontllanfraith and Oakdale Comprehensive Schools and includes a 4-court sports hall and dual use 3G football and rugby pitch. A new dual use 3G pitch opened at Blackwood Comprehensive School in 2020. In 2021 the existing Artificial Turf Pitches (ATP) at both Lewis School, Pengam and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni, Fleur de Lys were upgraded to dual use 3G pitches and support community use. The Council is continuing to look at developing 3G pitch provision in the county borough.
- 2.5 Closing Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and the associated 3G pitch permanently is consistent with the Council's Sport and Active Recreation Strategy and the Mobilising Team Caerphilly principal of doing things differently. The case for closure is made in view of the need to invest significantly in the existing facilities to sustain their use let alone bring them up to current standards when there are new, alternate, and modern facilities available on the adjacent site and nearby. Additionally, these modern alternate facilities can be operated far more efficiently than the existing Leisure Centre as they are located on joint use sites with schools.
- 2.6 On 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Cabinet unanimously approved a consultation exercise regarding the proposal that Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remains closed permanently and that use of the existing 3G pitch ceases once the 3G pitch at the new Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use. The views of Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee are sought as part of that consultation exercise.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee provide views on the proposal that Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remains closed permanently and that use of the existing 3G pitch ceases once the 3G pitch at the new Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use. The views of Scrutiny Committee will be included in a further report to Cabinet on the outcome of the consultation exercise.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To ensure that the views of Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee are included within the consultation exercise.

### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 In 2019, the Council adopted a Sport and Active Recreation Strategy for the period 2019-2029. The Vision for sport and active recreation is "to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be more active, more often". The implementation of the Strategy encompasses a range of activity which supports the new Corporate Plan and in particular Well-being Objective 3 - Enabling our Communities to be Inclusive as well as the Council's broader Placeshaping plans.
- 5.2 The Strategy references poor levels of health in certain areas of the county; reducing budgets; the large number of facilities across the County and the deteriorating quality of our older buildings as well as increasing population and consumer demand as some

of the key challenges it is seeking to overcome. The strategy also references the need to maximise the impact of all sport and recreation facilities.

5.3 Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre opened in 1975 and its facilities include a five-court sports hall, two squash courts, small fitness suite, small multi-purpose dance studio and a 3G football pitch.

5.4 Now nearly 50 years old, Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre has a maintenance backlog estimated at £475,159 based on a condition survey undertaken in 2019. The 3G football pitch at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre was installed in 2011. The typical lifespan of a surface of this nature is 8 – 12 years depending upon use. In 2018/19 the last full operating year before the Covid-19 pandemic, the leisure centre site cost the Council £131,350 to operate. In that period there were 79,923 visits as shown in the table below

| AREA           | ADULT         | JUNIOR        | TOTAL         |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 3G Pitch       | 25,900        | 24,184        | 50,084        |
| Fitness Suite  | 6,729         | 1,361         | 8,090         |
| Squash Courts  | 1,060         | 56            | 1,116         |
| Holiday Camps  | 0             | 490           | 490           |
| Sports Hall    | 10,633        | 5,137         | 15,770        |
| Group Exercise | 4,373         | 0             | 4,373         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>48,695</b> | <b>31,228</b> | <b>79,923</b> |

5.5 On 10th April 2019 Cabinet resolved to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and on 24th June 2019 the High Court quashed that decision. There were 5 grounds of the Judicial Review and the Court dismissed 4, but did rule that there was insufficient evidence that Cabinet had properly discharged its duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. An Integrated Impact Assessment for this proposal has been undertaken, including full consideration of socio-economic duty as highlighted at Section 7. below.

5.6 The indoor leisure space at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre closed as a result of the UK national lockdown in March 2020 and has not re-opened for leisure use. Between September 2021 and June 2023, it was used by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board as a Mass Vaccination Centre to replace Newbridge Leisure Centre. All previous block bookings of the indoor sport and leisure space have relocated to other facilities across the county borough such as Oakdale Badminton Club at Islwyn High School for example.

5.7 The Leisure Centre formerly operated as a shared site with the adjacent Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School which closed in 2017. Under the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme the Council is developing a Centre for Vulnerable Learners on the former school site. Due for completion in Spring 2025 the new facility will accommodate between 80 - 120 pupils and will be equipped with high quality learning opportunities, indoor and outdoor sporting provision as well as access to first class support and will enable community use of the facilities outside school hours. Demolition of surplus school buildings is currently in progress. Artist's impressions of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners are included at Appendix 1.

- 5.8 Sporting facilities at the Centre for Vulnerable Learners will include a 4-court sports hall, with associated changing facilities, and a 3G pitch (size 40 x 30 metres i.e. not full size). The sports hall will have a minimum ceiling height clear of any obstructions of 7.5 metres accommodating at least the Club Standard for Badminton Basketball Netball and Volleyball. Parking spaces and EV charging points will be available to the public outside of school times. There will be a Joint User agreement between Sport & Leisure Services and the Centre for Vulnerable Learners, with the out of hours usage of the facilities managed by Sport & Leisure ensuring appropriate community use. The new 3G will support training provision but not competitive fixtures - although these can be played at Islwyn High, or Blackwood Comprehensive school.
- 5.9 The existing Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre sports hall is x 5-court (so a reduction of 1 court). The majority of sports halls across the county borough are x 4 courts. The sizes of both facilities are set out below:

| <b>Element</b>                         | <b>Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre Sports Hall (5 Court)</b> | <b>CVL Sports Hall (4 Court)</b> |
|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Overall Width                          | 17912mm  | 18250mm                          |
| Overall Length                         | 36000mm  | 34730mm                          |
| Wall to Badminton Court Baseline       | 2260mm / 2300mm  | 2425mm / 2425mm                  |
| Between Parallel Badminton Courts      | Varies (Min being 750mm)                                   | 2000mm                           |
| Wall from Side-line of Badminton Court | Varies (Approx. 1000mm)                                    | 2165mm                           |

In summary, the CVL is marginally wider, but slightly shorter than the existing sports hall at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre, however this is negligible given the move from x 5 to x 4 number badminton courts hall.

- 5.10 The CVL will not include a fitness suite, squash courts or dance studio, but there has been significant investment in the Fitness Suite at Newbridge Leisure Centre along with a smaller but targeted investment at Heolddu Leisure Centre in both the Fitness Suite and Squash Court, there is also a Fitness Suite at Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre. The Sports Hall in the CVL is multi-purpose and as such can accommodate aspects of provision that the Dance Studio previously offered and provided. Also a new Dance and Group Cycling Studio were provided as part of the Newbridge Leisure Centre Fitness Suite project.
- 5.11 Use of the outdoor 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith recommenced on a phased basis in April 2021 without access to the changing rooms, supported by the Covid 19 re-opening plan. The full size 3G pitch is well used and in 2022/23, there were 30,257 visits as shown in the table below:

| <b>AREA</b>   | <b>ADULT</b> | <b>JUNIOR</b> | <b>TOTAL</b> |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| 3G Pitch Hire | 10,913       | 19,344        | 30,257       |

- 5.12 The 3G pitch has been the subject of ongoing repairs for some time. An inspection report produced in 2022 confirmed that the condition of the pitch is as to be expected given its age and intense usage (particularly the usage level when the former

Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School was open) and that it is nearing the end of its lifespan. Any further repairs undertaken would only provide a short-term benefit and replacement must be considered. Replacement costs are approximately £280,000, although this does not include a review of the current 30 year old substructure that will require investigation to ensure that the integrity has not been compromised.

- 5.13 Islwyn High School is 3 miles away and opened in June 2017 to replace the existing Pontllanfraith and Oakdale Comprehensive Schools and includes a dual use 3G football and rugby pitch and 4-court Sports Hall. A dual use 3G pitch was also installed at Blackwood Comprehensive School and opened for use in 2020. In contrast to the single use, football only, 3G pitch provision at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre the 3G pitches at Blackwood Comprehensive School and Islwyn High School are capable of being used for both football and rugby (with resultant FAW and IRB approval).
- 5.14 The current 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre is one of the few pitches that meets the standard for Gwent County matches. The 3G pitches at Islwyn High School and Blackwood Comprehensive School do not meet that standard. However, Welsh League Reserve fixtures have been played at the Blackwood Comprehensive School 3G pitch this season along with FAW Academy fixtures over the past year. The county borough has six Gwent County level teams, and all of these teams play at their own local facility and have not expressed a desire to make any 3G their 'permanent' home. Should these teams aim to move through the league tiers then the options to support them in this would be discussed and explored.
- 5.15 It should also be noted that recent investment has taken place at both Lewis School, Pengam and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni, Fleur de Lys in relation to upgrading the existing Artificial Turf Pitches (ATP) to dual use Rugby & Football 3G pitches. The allocation of bookings is undertaken in collaboration with the host school and Sport & Leisure Services. The sport and community facilities at both Islwyn High and Blackwood Comprehensive School are delivering full community programmes at present, but there is scope at Islwyn High School for weekend usage of the 3G pitch and Sports Hall. The Council is also continuing to look at further developing 3G pitch provision in the county borough.
- 5.16 With the above detailed 3G provision and following the opening of the CVL it will be possible to accommodate all current 3G pitch bookings at alternative facilities if use of the 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith were to cease. Whilst the Sport and Leisure service would use best endeavours to meet the requests of users it is not possible to guarantee that all bookings could be transferred on a like for like basis in terms of time and day of the week. It should also be noted that the existing 3G pitch operates until 22:00 hours in the week and the CVL has a condition of planning consent permitting use of the 3G pitch until 21:00 hours. There are currently 2 bookings on the existing 3G pitch at 21:00 hours.
- 5.17 Closing the leisure facilities and 3G pitch would render the site surplus to requirements.
- 5.18 On 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Cabinet unanimously approved a consultation exercise regarding the proposal that Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remains closed permanently and that use of the existing 3G pitch ceases once the 3G pitch at the new Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use.

## **Conclusion**

- 5.19 The indoor leisure facilities at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre closed as result of the UK National lockdown in March 2020 and has not re-opened for leisure use since, with previous block bookings being relocated to other facilities across the county borough. The existing leisure centre has significant outstanding maintenance liabilities, is not energy efficient and does not meet the aspirations set out in the Sport & Active Recreation strategy 2019 – 29 of providing modern, fit for purpose leisure facilities.
- 5.20 The 3G football pitch is coming to the end of its lifespan and requires regular and ongoing repairs to ensure it remains safe for community use. The cost to replace the facility is estimated at approximately £280,000.
- 5.21 The Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) development provides an option to replace the majority of facilities within the existing leisure centre with a modern, fit for purpose offer that will also the help the Council meet its ambition in relation to carbon reduction.
- 5.22 The CVL will also offer a 3G facility, however it is acknowledged that the new offer will be smaller and only suitable for training purposes and not competitive matches. Most competitive matches are played on weekends, and as such can be relocated to Islwyn High School.
- 5.23 Closing Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and the associated 3G pitch permanently is consistent with the Council's Sport and Active Recreation Strategy and the Mobilising Team Caerphilly principal of doing things differently. The case for closure is made in view of the need to invest significantly in the existing facilities to sustain their use let alone bring them up to current standards when there are new, alternate, and modern facilities available on the adjacent site and nearby. Additionally, these modern alternate facilities can be operated far more efficiently than the existing as they are located on joint use sites with schools. These proposals support the new Corporate Plan and the Council's Placeshaping plans.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 As indicated in the report, a number of the financial figures are estimates. The completion and opening date for the Centre for Vulnerable Learners is based on current project projections.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken and overall, given that the indoor leisure facilities have been closed for three and a half years, the 3G pitch is at the end of its life, and together with the other facility developments within the county borough there are no significant adverse impacts identified. New facilities are being provided at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners and these together with other alternative facilities will provide more accessible modern, fit for purpose offer for all groups and will have a positive impact. There is a potential for a negative impact resulting from the additional travel distance to Islwyn High School. However, this will only impact on travel to competitive 3G pitch fixtures where this results in longer travel times to alternative facilities depending on point of origin and the extent to which they use current provision for competitive fixtures. Feedback from the consultation exercise will be used to further develop the Integrated Impact Assessment.

[Link to IIA](#)

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The budget for running Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and 3G pitch is £179,360 per year. It became more expensive to run following closure of the adjacent secondary school in 2016 with the ending of a joint user virement of circa £26,000 from Education (as a result of the Leisure Centre previously being classed as a joint use centre located on a school site) following closure of the school. Also, a new rating valuation following the school closure resulted in an increase in non-domestic rates of £17,000.
- 8.2 As detailed above, there is a maintenance backlog estimated at £475,159, based on a condition survey undertaken in 2019. The 3G football pitch was installed in 2011 and is at the end of its lifespan and replacement costs are approximately £280,000 – although this does not include a review of the current 30 year old substructure that will require investigation. Some consideration may also need to be given to changing room provision if the 3G pitch facility were to be retained.
- 8.3 As stated above, the indoor sport and leisure space has not been in use since the national lockdown in 2020 and has for a significant period been utilised as the county borough’s Mass Vaccination Centre. The majority of equipment in the Fitness Suite has either been relocated to other leisure centres or taken out of use to support ongoing maintenance and repairs across the other leisure centres. This would need to be purchased at a cost of approximately £60,000 - £80,000.
- 8.4 The likely savings between operating the CVL facilities in comparison to running the leisure centre will be determined upon developing the delivery model and clarifying the scope of public interest and the range of opening. Energy cost considerations are difficult to determine at this moment in time. It is proposed that there will be an agreement between Sport & Leisure and the CVL (Education) to reimburse the school for out of school hours usage with the facilities managed by Sport & Leisure – this will be covered by a Joint User agreement that sets out agreed areas of responsibility in support of ensuring appropriate community use.
- 8.5 In summary, whilst the annual revenue costs of operating facilities for community use at the CVL are not known currently they will be significantly less than the current annual budget for Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre of £179,360. New equipment would be required to reopen the Fitness Suite at a cost of approximately £60,000 - £80,000. Replacement costs for the existing 3G pitch which is at the end of its life are at least £280,000. In addition, the existing leisure centre has an estimated £475,159 maintenance backlog.
- 8.6 Closing the leisure facilities and 3G pitch would render the site surplus to requirements. Any potential capital receipt for the sale of the leisure centre and 3G pitch area would be dependent on a number of variables.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Any closure of the leisure centre will be progressed in accordance with relevant HR policies and in consultation with staff and Trade Unions as appropriate. The 3 staff based at the site have been working in support of the Mass Vaccination Centre along with a secondment to the Sport & Leisure Customer Services Team. The staff member

who supported the Contact Tracing Team has been reallocated to Cefn Forest Leisure Centre to support an existing vacancy. It is clear that the delivery of community based facilities from the Centre for Vulnerable Learners will require a dedicated and experienced staff resource and on that basis utilising the existing staffing would be advisable and support consistent and safe delivery practice.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 The consultees listed below have been consulted on this report and their views have been incorporated accordingly.

10.2 Following Cabinet approval on 15h December 2023 a 6 week public consultation regarding the proposed closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre commenced on Monday 20th November 2023 and will run until Wednesday 3rd January 2024. The consultation seeks views on the detail described within this report and will build upon the Integrated Impact Assessment for the proposal. The consultation exercise includes:

- Consultation process publicised including promotion of face-to-face drop in engagement session dates/locations;
- Consultation for period of six weeks;
- Digital engagement page along with frequently asked questions and survey. Hard copies of survey are also available at locations to be agreed prior;
- Email to signpost stakeholder groups to various opportunities to participate in consultation;
- Face to face drop in engagement sessions to be held. Locations and timings to be agreed in discussion with local members;
- Targeted engagement with existing users of 3G facility;
- Targeted engagement with stakeholders;
- This Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting provides a further opportunity for elected members to consider and comment upon the proposal.

10.3 Feedback from the consultation exercise will help shape recommendations within a further report for Cabinet consideration at a future date to be agreed.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Author: Robert Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services

Consultees:

Councillor Chris Morgan, Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces  
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Shane Williams, Vice Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Mike Adams, Pontllanfraith Ward Member  
Councillor Patricia Cook, Pontllanfraith Ward Member  
Councillor Colin Gordon, Pontllanfraith Ward Member  
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive



Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment  
Jeff Reynolds, Sport and Leisure Facilities Manager  
Jared Lougher, Sport and Leisure Development Manager  
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy  
Andrea West, Sustainable Communities for Learning Manager  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
David Roberts, Interim Finance Manager  
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer  
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning  
Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property  
Hayley Lancaster, Transformation Manager - Engagement

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Artist's impressions of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners

Background Papers:

- **Report to Cabinet 20th September 2017 – “Proposals to commence a consultation exercise to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting.**
- **Report to Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee 1st November 2017 – “Consultation with respect to the closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting**
- **Report to Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee 12th December 2017 – “Outcome of consultation on the potential closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting**
- **Report to Cabinet 13th December 2017 – “The future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting**
- **Report to Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee 18th January 2018 – “Consideration of call-in request – Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting**
- **Report to Cabinet 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018 – “Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre – Consideration of the call-in in the context of the leisure review” and relevant minute of meeting.**
- **Report to Cabinet 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018 – “Draft Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019-29” and relevant minute of meeting**
- **Report to Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019 – “Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant Minute.**
- **Report to Cabinet 10th April 2019 – “Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant Minute.**
- **Report to Cabinet 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – “Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and Link to meeting**

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

Appendix 1: Artist's Impressions of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners



