

Committee: **Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **6th January 2020**

Report Subject: **Climate Ready Gwent**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels**

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Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	Info Item 17.12.19	17.12.19			06.01.20			PSB SSG

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To consider the Climate Ready Gwent Overview Report that captures case studies of lived experiences relating to climate change issues affecting the Gwent region.

2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Met Office’s UK Climate Projection has identified several disruptive climate changes for Wales in the years ahead, including increases in temperatures and frequency of extreme weather events. Climate adaptation means taking action locally to deal with these changes.

 - 2.2 Most people are familiar with climate change mitigation, reducing greenhouse gases entering the atmosphere (through cutting fossil fuel combustion emissions and increasing the ‘sinks’ that capture and store the gases). The other element of responding to climate change, adaptation is much less familiar. Adaptation means making the changes necessary to cope with the impacts of climate change, including those that are already happening, and is something that largely takes place at a local level.

 - 2.3 The Gwent Strategic Well-being Action Group (GSWAG) commissioned Netherwood Sustainable Futures and Wellbeing Planners in 2018/19 to carry out a project called ‘*Climate Ready Gwent: Capturing the Lived Experience*’, recognising that adapting to climate change was a common across the five well-being plans for Gwent.

 - 2.4 The project looked to identify methods of working with local communities on climate adaptation, to ensure that adaptation is directly informed by the lived experience of communities and landscapes which have been exposed to extreme weather events in the past. The overview report for the project is presented at Appendix 1.

2.5 Nine different case studies were developed with different communities across Gwent, including the 50+ Forum and Children's Grand Council in Blaenau Gwent. The two case studies carried out in Blaenau Gwent are summarised in appendices 2 & 3.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The Committee to recommend option 1 or 2; and consider further recommendation of Option 3.

3.2 **Option 1**

For the PSB Scrutiny Committee to consider and accept the overview report and supporting case studies;

Option 2

For the PSB Scrutiny Committee to consider the overview report and supporting case studies and make recommendations to the PSB for consideration based on the report's findings;

and

Option 3

Recommend to the PSB that the Committee remains actively involved in work to support the PSBs climate change action for 2020.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The PSB is looking to take forward a high-level action on climate change in 2020 as part of Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan, in-line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. An inception paper will be considered by the PSB on 20 January 2020.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

The 'Climate Ready Gwent' report was funded by Welsh Government through GSWAG. In the longer term the significant cost implications of climate impacts for local infrastructure and communities could be greater if adaptation does not take place.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Climate adaptation actions may be less effective if the public are not engaged in playing their part.

5.3 ***Legal***

Climate adaption potentially overlaps with various statutory duties including land planning, flood management, and protecting and enhancing biodiversity

5.4 **Human Resources**

The report was written by external consultants. Future engagement will require staff time from PSB partner staff.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The 'Climate Gwent Report' (Appendix 1) describes:

- The methods used to engage people with climate adaptation, which were based on capturing their lived experience of local climate (page 7).

Group workshops started with a presentation to community groups to introduce climate adaptation. The groups then shared their experiences of past and present weather events and impacts. Followed by discussing potential future impacts, how to manage the risks they pose and the role of public services and communities in adapting to these risks.

- Public perceptions of climate risks in Gwent (page 12).

People had noticed significant changes in weather patterns and were concerned about their vulnerability to these changes, particularly given they felt communities were becoming less mutually supportive and resilient. People were concerned both about the potential impacts on them personally, and also to infrastructure, landscape and nature.

- People's views on how to manage climate risk in Gwent (page 17).

People engaged strongly with climate change through their identification with local place and were keen to know what was being done to proactively adapt to these risks. People generally wanted more clarity on the roles and responsibilities of residents and public services in taking action, but they did not adopt an 'us and them' attitude towards public service providers or blame them for the risks.

- A climate engagement model based on the lessons learnt from this report (page 23).
 - *Provide sufficient time and information for people to engage with adaptation, because it is not a familiar subject for most people. People need concrete information about local risks and impacts to engage (not necessarily big picture climate science). Groups received 10 minute presentations about the local impacts and risks of climate change prior to structured workshops. Given this support people are capable of wide ranging engagement with climate adaptation.*
 - *Avoid generalised questions about climate change in abstract*
 - *Use specific information and data from local plans*

- *People will focus on carbon reduction actions without clear guidance on difference*
 - *Starting by thinking about past, present and future climate helps people to engage*
 - *Don't start from specific actions or possible solutions, which limits responses*
 - *Time and capacity needed for engagement; surveys, pop up stalls, generic information provision, web base information on its own will not provide the quality of information that is needed to inform adaptation planning*
 - *Integrate adaptation planning into wider plans for 'place' and well-being*
 - *Elected representatives need to be engaged with process*
- Recommendations how the PSB can progress climate adaptation (page 28).
 - *'Working with one or two communities for an extended period to better understand how to motivate and engage communities to plan for adaptation'*
 - *'Integrating climate adaptation engagement into existing or planned projects and programmes of work at a regional or local level'*
 - *'Develop examples of a climate adaptation narrative which can be used for site interpretation, education and wider community engagement'*
 - *'Raise the policy profile of adaptation, engage with infrastructure and landowners.'*

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

Greater public engagement with climate adaptation. The report found that people had noticed significant changes in weather patterns and were keen to know what was being done to proactively adapt to these risks. The PSB will be looking to take this forward through the high-level climate action.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

'Climate Ready Gwent' developed an engagement model for future adaptation projects (see page 27). Recommending that involvement should be based on providing people with concrete information about local risks and impacts. Time and staff capacity are also required for people to engage meaningfully with this unfamiliar topic.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

The aim of the project is to identify how to adapt to the long term impacts of climate change in Blaenau Gwent.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

In terms of preventative response climate change adaptation comes after mitigation actions that aim to prevent climate change taking place by reducing carbon emissions. Adaptation actions aim to reduce the potential damage from the worst impacts of climate change prior to these impacts

occurring. Meaning that they precede civic contingency planning to respond to these impacts when they occur.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

The report recommends that the PSB uses this model to engage with utilities, transport providers and landowners about long term climate adaptation planning.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

By looking at adaptation at the community level the report seeks facilitate the integration of existing or planned projects and programmes of work of different partners.

6.8 EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)

Poorer neighbourhoods tend to be disproportionately exposed to environmental risks. In the case of climate change this is likely to include vulnerability to impacts such as flooding. Likewise, at the individual level many people with one or more protected characteristics are likely to be less able to adapt to the impacts of climate change due to lower levels of financial and cultural capital. Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out as required on specific future climate adaptation projects.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 Future climate adaptation work based on 'Climate Ready Gwent' taken through the PSB high-level action will be monitored in-line with the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan 2018/23.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Climate Ready Gwent: Capturing the Lived Experience Overview Report*
- *Appendix 2 – Blaenau Gwent Children's Council Case Study*
- *Appendix 3 – Blaenau Gwent 50+ Forum Case Study*