

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: SPECIAL REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- 16TH MARCH, 2020**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR L. PARSONS (CHAIR)

Councillors J. Hill
M. Day
P. Edwards
M. Holland
J. Millard
M. Moore
K. Pritchard
K. Rowson
B. Willis

AND: Managing Director
Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community
Services
Head of Governance & Partnerships
Service Manager
Policy Officer
Marketing Projects Officer
Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u> Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G.A. Davies and G.L. Davies.	

<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>DECARBONISATION PLAN 2020-2030</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Managing Director which presented the Council's Decarbonisation Plan which sets out a data driven strategic approach to addressing the carbon emissions in response to climate change.</p> <p>The Managing Director presented the report and highlighted the main points contained therein including that the Welsh Government had published a delivery plan 'Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales' with the ambition for the Welsh Public Sector to be carbon neutral by 2030. The Decarbonisation Plan sets out how the Council intend to deliver on this ambition over the next ten years. The Council had already taken a number of actions to reduce the carbon impact, such as, reducing energy use in schools through the Re:Fit programme by installing energy saving measures across a range of buildings; fleet review and reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill.</p> <p>A Member enquired regarding the Breakdown of Nine Carbon Transitions in relation to Waste. The Policy Officer said that emissions from the transport used to collect waste was taken into account and there was an element of double counting which could not be separated.</p> <p>A Member raised concerns regarding achieving the deadline to be carbon neutral by 2030 and the massive impact this would have on industry and businesses. The Managing Director said that as a public sector organisation, how we respond in a public leadership role was important and started with addressing the climate impact of our own operations. With regard to the impact on industry and businesses, there was a need for behavioural change as part of a larger transformation of working practices. There may be huge opportunities for new renewable industries to emerge to address demand and for Blaenau Gwent to be part of an emerging low carbon technology industry.</p>	

The Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services echoed the Managing Director's comments, and said that opportunities were rapidly developing for renewable industries to emerge, and the Council would work with businesses to move towards a carbon neutral transition pathway. There were already a number of battery companies in Blaenau Gwent developing a network of local charging points for electric vehicles.

In response to a Member's question regarding Scope 3 (other indirect emissions) such as woodland and urban trees, the Managing Director said that the calculation in the Decarbonisation Plan showed a small allowance as it only related to the Council's Local Nature Reserves which were only a small part of the Council's total land holdings. The Council had adopted five new Local Nature Reserves, and in relation to tree planting consideration would need to be given to the types of trees and the most suitable locations.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services commented that there was now an opportunity to increase significantly the number of trees being planted to encourage biodiversity, it was particularly important to get the right types of trees e.g. native species. Progress had also been made to reintroduce trees into residential developments for economic purposes and help decarbonisation.

A Member commented that he welcomed the adoption of the Local Nature Reserves and would like this to be included as part of the Local Development Plan (LDP) Review.

The Committee AGREED this course of action.

Another Member commented on the amount of data in the Decarbonisation Plan and enquired if Officers were confident that the evidence was accurate. The Service Manager said that international standards had been used to calculate the data and most of the data had already been in existence. International formulas had been applied to the existing data and he was fairly confident with the accuracy of the data.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the proposed

Decarbonisation Plan be supported and the five newly adopted Local Nature Reserves be included in the Local Development Plan (LDP) Review prior to approval by Executive and Council.

Councillor Mark Holland requested that it be noted that he did not support the Committee's recommendation.