



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

31 July 2019

Report of the Director of Environment

G.Nutt

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All

Consideration of: the 'draft Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy' and the publication/consultation procedures to be implemented.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To consider and agree the Consultation draft Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy (*the D&RE Strategy*) and the publication/consultation procedures to be implemented.

Executive Summary

- 2 Limiting future climate change is regarded internationally as the single most serious environmental issue faced by society. Tackling the issue requires collective action and the Council has an important role to play in this respect.
- 3 The draft D&RE Strategy outlines the Council's overarching vision and objectives, sets out what the Council has already achieved and identifies the potential future opportunities that exist.
- 4 The draft strategy is therefore an integral part of the Council's overall sustainability drive and the associated action plan framework will assist the Council in meeting its carbon footprint reduction aspirations.
- 5 This report seeks endorsement of the consultation draft D&RE Strategy and the approval of the consultation arrangements.

Background

- 6 On 30th April 2019, the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency. The announcement drew attention in Wales to the magnitude and significance of the latest evidence on climate change and highlighted the recent climate protests across the UK.
- 7 Tackling climate change requires collective action and there is a role to play for every community, business and public service in Wales. In making such a declaration, the Welsh Government is hoping that it will trigger a wave of action at home and abroad.
- 8 Neath Port Talbot Council has a range of legal duties placed upon it. These include economic development, proper stewardship of public monies and obtaining value for money. The Council is also a community leader, as well as being a landowner, an employer, a regulatory body and service provider.
- 9 It is imperative therefore that the Council leads by example and continues to commit to doing its fair share to reduce carbon emissions to help achieve national targets.

Draft Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy

- 10 The Council's draft D&RE Strategy is presented in full in Appendix 1. Once approved, the strategy will become an integral part of the Council's overall sustainability drive and the included action plan framework will assist the Council in meeting its carbon footprint reduction aspirations.
- 11 The draft strategy document is structured into the following five parts:
 - **Part 1: Introduction** – sets the context of the strategy.
 - **Part 2: Regulatory Framework & Key Drivers** – provides a summary of the legal requirements and identifies the key drivers in the national, regional and local context.
 - **Part 3: Neath Port Talbot Issues & Influences** – provides a brief summary of the issues, influences and challenges faced.
 - **Part 4: Strategy Development** – outlines the overarching vision and objectives, what the Council has already achieved and the potential future opportunities that exist.

- **Part 5: Implementation and Monitoring** – identifies an action plan detailing how the Council will set out to achieve the aspirations and monitor/evaluate the outcomes.
- 12 The Draft Strategy and Action Plan has been developed around three strategic themes including transportation; buildings and spaces; and influencing behaviour. Whilst the Council's Environment Directorate will therefore have more direct involvement in delivering the action plan, all directorates across the Council will be expected to contribute to driving the carbon reduction strategy forward. Furthermore, the Council will also seek to work collaboratively with a range of partner organisations where appropriate, including those from the public, private and community / voluntary sectors.

Consultation and Publication Procedures

- 13 Whilst this is not a statutory document, it is considered important to capture the observations and comments of interested parties prior to the council adopting this Strategy. It is therefore proposed to carry out formal consultation on this draft for a period of 6 weeks commencing in mid-August. Representations received as a result of this consultation will again be considered by Cabinet, together with any amendments needed to the document prior to final publication.
- 14 In order to raise awareness and facilitate a public/stakeholder consultation, the following will be undertaken:
- The Council's website will provide all relevant information and documentation; and
 - Press releases will be issued (including use of social media).
- 15 In accordance with the Council's Welsh Language Standards Policy all publicity/communication will be bilingual and the Consultation Draft D&RE Strategy will also be made available in Welsh.

Financial Impacts

- 16 Nothing additional at this point. However, moving forward funding will be required to deliver the Action Plan. There are a number of potential sources (national and regional) that could be accessed to deliver the various actions.
- 17 Securing external funding will therefore be a key activity and the Council must consider all alternatives for funding sources to obtain

solutions to the more difficult and expensive initiatives and to embrace renewable energy and low carbon technologies.

Integrated Impact Assessment

- 18 A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- 19 The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:
- **Equalities** – climate change affects all generations and all areas of society. Implementation of the Strategy/Action Plan will be inclusive and will involve the Council working with all staff, the wider public and a wide range of partner organisations including those from the public, private and community / voluntary sectors.
 - **Welsh Language** – there is no direct, clear link with the Welsh language. Opportunities arising from action to reduce emissions (e.g. local jobs in energy efficiency or community renewables), may however encourage people in rural areas where there is a higher proportion of Welsh speakers to remain in their communities, helping to sustain the language in those areas.
 - **Biodiversity** – climate change affects biodiversity in many ways. Reducing Neath Port Talbot's carbon emissions will help lessen the risks to biodiversity (e.g. risks to species/habitats due to inability to respond to changing climatic conditions; risks to soils and carbon stores etc.).
 - **Well-being of Future Generation (5 ways of Working)** – the Strategy/Action Plan embraces all five ways of working. The framework provides clarity of the Council's vision for, and commitment to, a longer term low carbon future; positively integrates with the Council's well-being objectives; involves people and partners in its development and implementation; and seeks to prevent problems getting worse.

Valleys Communities Impacts

- 20 No implications.

Workforce Impacts

21 No implications.

Legal Impacts

22 No implications.

Risk Management Impacts

23 No implications.

Recommendations

24 That having considered the report, it is resolved to make the following recommendations for approval:

1. That the Draft Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 is agreed as forming the basis for consultation.
2. The publication and consultation procedures as set out in the report are implemented.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

25 The recommendations are needed to:

1. Ensure that a clear Strategy / Action Plan is issued by the Council in respect of the Climate Change / Decarbonisation agenda.
2. Ensure that a consultation exercise is undertaken allowing interested parties the ability to submit observations and comments on the draft Strategy thus maximising its effectiveness.

Implementation of Decision

26 The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

27 Appendix 1 – Draft Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy (July 2019)

List of Background Papers

28 Draft D&RE Strategy – First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment.

Officer Contact

29 Ceri Morris – Planning Policy Manager
Tel: 01639 686320 or e-mail: c.morris1@npt.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Draft Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy (July 2019).....