

Partnership Council for Wales – 10th February 2022 – WLGA Decarbonisation Update

Purpose

1. To provide an update on the work of the **Decarbonisation Strategy Panel (DSP)** ¹ and ask for Partnership Council endorsement of support planned for local authorities as they work to deliver the commitments in the *Net Zero Wales* plan.

Background

2. At the Partnership Council meeting on 7th July a number of local government **commitments** under the four themes of the [Route Map to Net Zero](#) were proposed and endorsed (on procurement, transport, buildings and land use).
3. At the next meeting, on 24th November, an update was provided. The findings from a review of local authority climate change and decarbonisation plans were presented. It was noted that commissions for work were being drawn up, making use of the consultancy framework established by WLGA². These commissions are focused on areas councils had identified in the review where they need additional advice and support. All of this work is being undertaken as part of the WLGA's **Transition and Recovery Support Programme (TaRSP)**, funded by Welsh Government.
4. It was also agreed at the last Partnership Council meeting that there should be a collaborative effort to develop **innovative, Wales-wide, multi-year programmes of work**, with specific targets aligned. Reporting arrangements were outlined, to ensure progress towards targets can be measured over time.
5. Finally, it was agreed that the Panel should extend its remit to consider **adaptation and resilience** as well as mitigation/decarbonisation.

Progress

6. Plans for a series of **seminars/masterclasses** were outlined at the November meeting. The first two have taken place and been very well attended. At the first, Denbighshire County Council talked about steps they have taken to embed decarbonisation into their operations. At the second, officers from Ynys Mon, Pembrokeshire and Blaenau Gwent spoke about their innovative work in relation to transport and fleet management, including use of, and plans for, electric and/or hydrogen vehicles. Three more sessions are

¹ The Decarbonisation Strategy Panel was established at the request of the Partnership Council meeting in June 2020.

² The five consultants on the WLGA framework are: Netherwood Sustainable Futures, Miller Research, Cylchog, Grant Thornton and Costain.

already scheduled on buildings, land use and procurement.

7. A number of briefs for **research by the consultancy framework** are in the process of being agreed with the consultants, with work already underway in some cases. The table in Appendix 1 provides an overview of the work being undertaken by the TaRSP in relation to each of the commitments.

8. To take an example, one of the commitments listed in Appendix 1 in relation to **land use** was for councils:

“In collaboration with NRW/WLGA/WG to map out LA land holdings by the end of April 2022 to identify types of land and their sequestration potential to develop plans to maximise carbon benefits, renewable energy and to identify potential flood protection management measures”.

9. A wide range of support will be offered to LAs via the programme in pursuing all of the commitments, and to help move resulting plans forward toward implementation. As part of this, for the land use commitment above, two of the consultants on the WLGA Framework have been commissioned to:

- establish a detailed and up to date understanding of needs in this area of work
- thoroughly examine the tools already available and their appropriateness to meet these needs
- take stock and develop guidance on not only baseline production, but ways for officers and members to build the business case for land-based decarbonisation
- work with vanguard authorities to support them to take a whole authority approach to land-based decarbonisation, for others to learn from
- and finally; to engage officers and members together (post-election) in regional workshops to consider both local and regional approaches to land decarbonisation.

10. As a result of this work, local authorities should be in a better position to consider the potential of their land holdings in terms of carbon sequestration. There will be the possibility of developing **regional or national programmes**, with support from Welsh Government, NRW and others to ensure follow-up action is undertaken in an efficient, informed and co-ordinated way.

11. The same approach is being followed in relation to the other commitments – i.e. commissioning of work that will assist all 22 LAs in honouring the commitments and meeting targets that are set.

12. Other developments since the last meeting include:

- **Adaptation and resilience** – at its January meeting the DSP received a presentation from Welsh Government officials on plans to update adaptation plans for Wales. This work will be undertaken working closely with local authorities and other partners. The Climate Change Committee has been invited to attend one of the next meetings of the DSP to share their expertise on adaptation from a UK perspective.
- **Website development** – web pages on the WGLA website ([Decarbonisation Support Programme for Welsh Local Authorities - WLGA](#)) are being created with information and resources to support local authorities in their climate change and decarbonisation activities. This should help them to make sense of the vast array of information that already exists. As reports are produced, they will be uploaded so that all 22 LAs are able to draw on the information being generated in an 'easy to use' format.
- **Climate Change Officer group** – a group of officers leading on climate change in each LA has now been formed and will be a vital link in the communication chain between the TaRSP, the DSP and local authorities. The group has already been used as a sounding board for the commissions being developed, to ensure they will deliver on what is really required
- **Communications and engagement** – work is underway to develop clear processes for gathering and disseminating information in ways that raise awareness whilst also avoiding duplication of effort
- **Action logging and process monitoring** – a dashboard is being developed, using 'RAG' status (red, amber, green) that will help to present this information in an easily digestible format. This will feed into regular monitoring and progress reports over time.

Recommendations

13. It is recommended that Partnership Council:

- notes the progress of the WLGA's TaRSP support programme to date
- endorses the approach as set out, to support local authorities in working towards the previously agreed commitments.

APPENDIX – TaRSP work plan against LG commitments

Link to the NZW LG Commitments



Net Zero Wales Commitments

TaRSP

Buildings

- Develop and deliver a strategic plan for decarbonising local authority estate. Ystadau Cymru as strategic lead;
- Strategic plan for decarbonising buildings by end of 2023.
- All public buildings supplied with low carbon heat by 2030.
- All new public sector buildings are built to net zero standard.

- Decarbonisation Masterclass on Buildings taking place on February 16th. Sharing best practice on [Re.fit](#) programme and retro fitting older buildings.
- Resource bank on website. Ongoing and being updated regularly.

Procurement

- Develop understanding of emissions profile of all procured goods and services by end of 2022.
- Carbon reduction specifications in all new or reviewed contracts.
- Focus on a number of priority contracts and share learning re. decarb across LAs by end 2022 – to develop a decarb approach to be applied to all contracts by 2023.

- Commissioned support on procurement and scope 3 emissions
- Masterclass on Procurement in planning for April
- Resource bank on website. Ongoing and being updated regularly

Mobility & Transport

- Build on fleet reviews and develop plans for transforming fleet, inc. EV charging infrastructure, all new cars and light goods vehicles ULEV by 2025, reduce carbon footprint of buses, taxis and private hire vehicles to zero by 2030.
- Grey fleet review to be completed by end of 2022 (working with WGES)
- Support remote working where possible, at home or in hubs. Encourage active travel and public transport.

- Commissioned support on transport and low carbon infrastructure – skills, making the business case
- Masterclass on Transport 19th January
- Resource bank on website. Ongoing and being updated regularly

Land Use

- Map out local authority land holdings by April 2022 to identify types of land and their potential for carbon sequestration, renewable energy and flood management.
- Carbon sequestration seen as a core purpose for public land by leaders.
- Develop 5 year training and apprenticeship programme and peatland restoration to support the supply chain.

- Commissioned support on land use – establish baseline, measure potential of land, making the business case.
- Masterclass on Land Use in planning for March
- Resource bank on website. Ongoing and being updated regularly