

## Partnership Council for Wales – 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025 – Local Government Climate Strategy Panel update

### Purpose

To note:

- Progress and next steps for the Climate Strategy Panel (CSP), supported by WLGA's Climate Change Support Programme;
- Progress against the 'public sector route map to net zero'<sup>1</sup>;
- Progress against the local government commitments in the 'Net Zero Wales' carbon reduction plan for Carbon Budget 2 for 2021-25 (see Appendix 1) – in the mitigation areas of procurement, transport, buildings, and land use, alongside adaptation;
- Progress in developing adaptation commitments;
- A forward look to the support councils will need during Carbon Budget 3 (2026-30).

### Key points for consideration

- All five Climate Strategy Panel task and finish groups (the four mitigation areas addressing the Net Zero Wales commitments plus adaptation) have made good progress supported by the WLGA's Climate Change Support Programme in driving increased engagement and action from councils.
- The development of the new Net Zero Scenario Planner is an important addition to inform policy and spending decisions on buildings decarbonisation, whilst addressing the need to manage the scale and cost of the challenge.
- A new bespoke support offer to local authorities from the WLGA Climate Change Support Programme is about to be launched, to further improve and tailor support with progress towards the net zero mitigation and adaptation commitments.
- Progress towards the net zero commitments is not uniform and take-up of available support and sharing of good practice continues to be a focus.
- Ownership of driving the net zero agenda needs to be senior, corporate, and embedded across all services, not the responsibility of one officer.

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<sup>1</sup> [Net zero carbon status by 2030: A route map for decarbonisation across the Welsh public sector](#). The route map sets out three phases identifying where public bodies should aim to be at each stage: 'moving up a gear' (from 2021-2022); 'well on our way' (2022-2026); and 'achieving our goal' (2026-2030).

- The current methodology for public sector net zero annual reporting only enables a 'point in time' analysis and not a 'year on year' comparison which would be beneficial for councils' reporting mechanisms.

## **Recommendations**

- Partnership Council for Wales notes these key points and progress.
- Council members champion this work within their organisations and across networks, accelerating visibility, uptake, and progress.

## **Climate Strategy Panel (CSP) update:**

2. CSP, which brings together the LA Chief Executives (who also chair the T&F groups), NRW, National Parks and senior WG officials, met on 22 May 2025. The group continues to give strategic direction, including looking at the adaptation commitments, Local Area Energy Plans and the next steps on the UK Climate Change Committee's advice and pathways to net zero 2050. CSP also discussed a stocktake of Carbon Budget 2 (see section 7).

## **Progress of CSP's T&F groups**

3. Each T&F group reports to the CSP on progress against their respective Net Zero Wales commitments. A headline summary of progress is included below.

## **Progress against local government commitments**

### **(a) Procurement Decarbonisation Progress:**

- Finalising guidance on using carbon reduction plans with Miller Research.
- Discussing draft guidance on social care decarbonisation through the supply chain (also by Miller Research) with WG's Social Care Climate Emergency Project Group.
- Considering a collaborative 'Local Authority Roadmap to 2050' for reducing scope 3 emissions and improving tier 2 reporting. This would include alignment with Business Wales' carbon reduction services.
- *In relation to the (public sector) route map, partial progress has been made but emerging good practice amongst those 'well on our way' needs to be shared and spread before councils can claim to be 'achieving our goal'.*

### **(b) Transport Decarbonisation Progress:**

- Developing a shared learning paper to capture experiences, share lessons and help accelerate change across all councils.
- Devising a webinar to support councils with the key themes identified in the shared learning paper.
- Hearing and sharing the case study of Merthyr Tydfil CBC in purchasing electric vehicles on a cost parity with petrol / diesel equivalents.

- Keeping pace with and sharing WG developments through the Energy Service (WGES) and Commercial Procurement Services, including aligning this T&F group with the Fleet Managers' Group.
- *In relation to the route map, good progress has been made, but progress now depends, to an extent, on take-up of the support available, adopting learning from across Wales, and a pacier transition. It is also noted that there are a range of interconnected activities and opportunities taking place across the public sector which require improved join up, e.g. collaborative EV purchasing, sharing EVCI, and sourcing lower corporate rates for (renewable) electricity.*

### **(c) Buildings Decarbonisation Progress:**

- The Net Zero Scenario Planner has been launched<sup>2</sup>, and each council has received its personalised Planner and user-guide on accessing this resource to inform strategic decisions relating to buildings decarbonisation options. The CCSP is supporting councils to access the Planner and provide initial feedback.
- CCSP is working on a narrative with the Buildings T&F group to accompany Local Partnership's national report on the aggregated local data. This narrative will explain the primary costs (net zero measures), and secondary costs (supplementary building works), alongside the wider benefits of buildings decarbonisation, e.g. health and economy. The aim is to provide a comprehensive picture to WG to inform policy and spending reviews and maintain councils' engagement in buildings decarbonisation as the headline figure (primary costs) for the local government estate in Wales is over £2 billion, and this figure will be significantly higher with secondary costs.
- The next phase of this work is to shape a strategic approach for decarbonising local government buildings alongside identifying collaborative procurement opportunities for the measures in the Planner: heat pumps, insulation, and renewable energy.
- Receiving updates on WG support programmes including the Low Carbon Heat Grant (LCHG) and the work of Ystadau Cymru.
- *In relation to the route map, the availability of the Planner, alongside previously reported work by Miller Research, will enable work on a strategic approach to progress. Whilst some areas/buildings are 'well on their way', supported by the WG LCHG and Sustainable Communities for Learning programmes, the scale of work required is vast compared to the funding available if we are to 'achieve our goal'.*

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<sup>2</sup> [Net Zero Scenario Planner - WLGA](#)

#### **(d) Land use Decarbonisation Progress:**

- 166 delegates (officers and elected members) attended the Land Carbon Management training seminars and User Acceptance Training demonstrations on the Land Use Digital Mapping Tool in Quarter 4 of 2024-25, in partnership with Netherwood Sustainable Futures, Costain and DataMapWales.
- Following these sessions, the Digital Mapping Tool's technical functions will be further developed with the feedback gathered, and the Land Use Guidance<sup>3</sup> will be refreshed with a range of case studies highlighted.
- As good progress has been made with all three Land Use commitments, and whilst the production of Carbon Budget 3 is advancing, the meetings of this T&F group are on 'pause'.
- *In relation to the route map, whilst this needs to be embedded in councils before it can be claimed we are 'well on our way', the building blocks are in place.*

#### **(e) Adaptation Progress:**

- Draft adaptation commitments for LAs have been developed by the group and were presented to the CSP in May for input. These cover five main areas: Leadership, Collaboration, Service Resilience, Community Resilience, and Emergency Planning. Further views and feedback will be obtained from the Climate Change Officers' Group in June, before the final draft commitments are presented to WLGA's Executive Board in July to be discussed and agreed by LA Leaders.

#### **Climate Change Officers' Group (CCOG)**

4. The WLGA Climate Change Support Programme has facilitated two sessions for the group with WG and WGES on public sector net zero annual reporting, including on the new interactive dashboard. This group offers an opportunity for local government officers (and WLGA associate members) to be involved in new WG developments and provide feedback.

#### **WLGA Climate Spotlight Sessions**

5. In May, the latest 'Climate Spotlight Session' was delivered on the topic of the importance of a circular economy to delivering net zero goals, in partnership with WG. Since these introductory sessions, to hear about an area of practice, share learning and stimulate discussion, were introduced in January 2025, over 250 delegates (consisting of officers and elected members) have engaged. Future topics and speakers are being sourced to build on this encouraging start.

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<sup>3</sup> [WLGA Land Use and Carbon Sequestration Guidance and Tool - WLGA](#)

## **Cross-cutting work and bespoke support to local authorities**

6. Progress to report on wider work has been as follows:

- The Carbon and Biodiversity Guidance on a business case methodology is nearing the end of its testing period with Denbighshire County Council. This guidance has streamlined Ambition North Wales's earlier work on reducing emissions and supporting biodiversity with North Wales Growth Deal projects. A communications plan has been prepared for rolling out the guidance from the summer.
- From 2025-26, the WLGA Climate Change Support Programme will be offering bespoke support to LAs in lieu of renewing the framework of consultants. This approach has been preferred to better drive local initiatives and embed mitigation and adaptation practices within councils. The materials and communications are being finalised to announce this new offer to CEOs, Cabinet Members, and CCOG from late June.

## **Working towards the 2030 public sector net zero ambition and Carbon Budget 3**

7. During the stocktake of the Carbon Budget 2 item, in the May meeting of the CSP, the CEO T&F group chairs highlighted the importance of both the CSP and the WLGA Climate Change Support Programme in keeping net zero a priority and improving its visibility and decision-making within their authorities. The group felt that a 'bigger footprint' (wider reach) for this net zero work could be achieved through more regional working.
8. In all these areas of work progress, then, is being made both against the Net Zero Wales commitments and the public sector route map. Further progress will continue to be challenging considering budgetary constraints all councils face. However, some of the measures can save money and/or generate income over their lifetime, as well as opportunities through collaborative procurement, training, and 'green' skills development, and these are key messages to local authorities which continue through this programme.

## APPENDIX 1 – Local government commitments

The commitments made by local government and included in Net Zero Wales are shown in the table below.

Net Zero Wales LG Commitments
<b>Buildings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Develop and deliver a strategic plan for decarbonising local authority estate.</li></ul> <p>Ystadau Cymru as strategic lead;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Strategic plan for decarbonising buildings by end of 2023.</li><li>- All public buildings supplied with low carbon heat by 2030.</li><li>- All new public sector buildings are built to net zero standard.</li></ul>
<b>Procurement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Develop understanding of emissions profile of all procured goods and services by end of 2022.</li><li>- Carbon reduction specifications in all new or reviewed contracts.</li><li>- 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.</li></ul>
<b>Mobility &amp; Transport</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 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.</li><li>- Grey fleet review to be completed by end of 2022 (working with WGES)</li><li>- Support remote working where possible, at home or in hubs. Encourage active travel and public transport.</li></ul>
<b>Land Use</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 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.</li><li>- Carbon sequestration seen as a core purpose for public land by leaders.</li><li>- Develop 5 year training and apprenticeship programme and peatland restoration to support the supply chain.</li></ul>

## Adaptation

The Adaptation task and finish group, which held its first meeting in March 2024, is supporting the delivery of the Climate Adaptation Strategy for Wales 2024 through four areas of focus:

1. Partnership and Collaboration
2. Service Resilience
3. Community Resilience
4. Leadership