

Partnership Council for Wales – 2nd March 2023 – WLGA Climate Change Update

Purpose

1. This standing item on climate change at the March Partnership Council will primarily involve a presentation from the UK Climate Change Committee. However, for information, this report updates on progress since the last Partnership Council meeting. It includes details of a review of the Climate Strategy Panel's ways of working as the focus of work switches from investigation / prioritisation to delivery/ implementation.

Background

2. A report to the last Partnership Council **meeting on 24th November** provided an update on the work of the Climate Strategy Panel and the WLGA's Transition and Recovery Support Programme (TaRSP).
3. There have been three meetings of the Panel since the last meeting of the Partnership Council. The meeting in November concentrated on **sources of funding** to take forward councils' Net Zero commitments (attached again at Appendix 1). The Panel heard from the Welsh Government Energy Service about invest to save opportunities in terms of transitioning councils' fleet to electric vehicles, especially when powered from locally generated renewable energy. WRAP provided examples of whole-life costing and the benefits of repair and re-use. Welsh Government outlined steps it is taking to support the work of the panel, including allocation of £20m p.a. for the next three years to support investment in low carbon heating in council buildings. Grant Thornton, one of five consultants on the TaRSP framework, identified opportunities to draw in private sector finance.
4. The December meeting looked at **measurement of progress** against the commitments. It received a preview of this year's emission reporting results and confirmed details of a more qualitative review of councils' progress on both decarbonisation and adaptation. In addition, the Panel discussed how best to take forward the **procurement toolkit** reported to, and agreed by, the WLGA Executive Board on 16th December.
5. The December meeting also agreed that the time is right to review the way the Panel operates. During the '*Moving up a Gear*' phase of the Public Sector route map (2021-22) work was needed to identify and prioritise actions with the greatest potential impact, that will enable an acceleration of work in a co-ordinated way across councils. That phase has developed a number of steps to support councils, including the following:

- a **procurement toolkit** that will enable carbon implications of purchased goods and services to be consciously considered, driving change through supply chains
 - input to Ystadau Cymru work on **buildings**, to review decarbonisation plans in respect of public sector property assets, with pilot work in North Wales and £20m p.a. allocated
 - work with Society of Welsh Treasurers and WGES on transport proposals, including plans for the co-ordinated **transition of fleet** and grey fleet to electric vehicles
 - development of a **land-based decarbonisation tool** that can be used to inform council decisions that impact on land use, so there is conscious consideration of decarbonisation opportunities
 - **leadership work** with Members and officers to build consensus and enhance capacity to progress all of the above
 - raising of the profile of **adaptation and resilience** work, with a study commissioned to identify areas where councils are seeking, and would benefit from, support.
6. As we move into the '*Well on our way*' phase of the route map (2022-2026) it is vitally important that the above measures are put into practice. Panel members were asked to feed in views on changes needed to ensure effective implementation.
7. There was no meeting in January to allow time for views to be submitted, collated and considered. A report on the review was produced, drawing on the suggestions received. That report was considered at the Panel's February meeting.

Main points arising from the Review

8. There was a good degree of consensus in terms of points raised by Panel members. These were grouped under two main headings – 'delivery' and 'operational'. Following discussion, **proposals for effective delivery** were agreed as follows:
- The Panel to take a more directive role, agreeing arrangements needed to drive delivery, and overseeing progress whilst remaining accountable to Partnership Council
 - The Panel to agree priorities and be clear on anticipated outputs/outcomes, ensuring that form follows function. Accordingly, an appropriate balance is needed in terms of:
 - i. ensuring councils work towards/achieve net zero by 2030
 - ii. stimulating work on adaptation and resilience

- iii. developing links with other public sector partners to share learning and identify opportunities for joint working
- iv. wider 'territorial' achievement of net zero by 2050
- Task and finish groups to be established, led by Panel members: one for each of the four route map headings, charged with programme/project managing the work above, to ensure it is put into practice.
- Other working sub-groups to be agreed as necessary. For example, these could focus on communications; developing metrics to estimate and then measuring the impact of interventions; adaptation; funding.
- There is a need for improved co-ordination and joint working with existing groups in each region working on net zero and on adaptation, using them as the 'eyes and ears' and to lead on delivery where appropriate, including updates on work with trade unions and others at local/regional levels to meet the commitment to a 'just transition'
- Stronger links to be developed between Panel and the Climate Change Officer Group (CCOG), which has officer representatives from each council
- Masterclasses to continue to be used to share good practice
- Information to be collated on the WLGA website as a 'go to' place for councils seeking advice and information (including results of all commissioned work).

9. As far as the **proposals on operational matters** were concerned, the following main points were agreed:

- Papers for Panel meetings to be circulated earlier, enabling necessary soundings to be taken and ensuring informed comment and feedback at meetings
- Reports to follow a consistent format
- Regular, brief reports from sub-groups/task and finish groups to be received as standing items
- Fewer presentations, with external speakers brought in only when essential
- Panel meetings to be kept focused and shorter or less frequent
- Communications to be issued after meetings and widely disseminated, identifying significant developments, decisions taken, next steps agreed etc.

10. This will represent a significant change in emphasis, with greater focus on following up action in individual councils, seeking to ensure that work is co-ordinated as far as possible. In this way, we should start to see strategic programmes of activity with clear goals that can be monitored over time to assess progress.

Recommendations

11. It is recommended that Partnership Council:

- notes developments since the last Partnership Council meeting
- endorses the planned change of approach following the review, as outlined in paras 8 and 9.

APPENDIX 1 – TaRSP work plan against LG commitments

Net Zero Wales LG Commitments

	TaRSP Support
<p>Buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and deliver a strategic plan for decarbonising local authority estate. <p>Ystadau Cymru as strategic lead;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decarbonisation Masterclass on Buildings held on February 16th. Sharing best practice on Re:fit programme and retro fitting older buildings. • Resource bank on website. Ongoing and being updated regularly.
<p>Procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioned support on procurement and scope 3 emissions • Masterclass on Procurement in planning for later this year. • Resource bank on website. Ongoing and being updated regularly
<p>Mobility & Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioned targeted support on low carbon infrastructure and transport that focuses on skills, making the business case, planning and grey fleet. • Masterclass on Transport held 19th January, currently planning a masterclass on Active Travel with case studies from Nottingham City Council • Resource bank on website. Ongoing and being updated regularly
<p>Land Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioned support on land based decarbonisation that includes guidance to embed LBD across relevant service areas and establishing a streamlined tool for councils • Masterclass on Land Use held in March • Resource bank on website. Ongoing and being updated regularly