

## ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 APRIL 2024

Present: Councillor Owen Jones(Chairperson)  
Councillors Derbyshire, Green, Lancaster, Lloyd Jones,  
Jackie Parry, Proctor and Wood

### 63 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Gibson

### 64 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were received:

#### Item 4

Cllr Proctor	Personal	Employed by Community Housing Cardiff
Cllr Jones	Personal	Employed by Bute Energy/Green GEN Cymru
Cllr Wood	Personal	Employed by Cardiff University (a member of Race to Zero)

### 65 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2024 were approved by the Committee as a correct record and were signed by the Chairperson.

### 66 : RACE TO ZERO

*The following Members declared an interest in this item in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct:*

<i>Cllr Proctor</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Employed by Community Housing Cardiff</i>
<i>Cllr Jones</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Employed by Bute Energy/Green GEN Cymru</i>
<i>Cllr Wood</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Employed by Cardiff University (a member of Race to Zero)</i>

The Committee received briefing from Climate Cymru about Race to Zero, a global campaign to halve global carbon emissions by 2030. Climate Cymru want Wales to be the first Race to Zero nation and explore how this global framework can support a just transition to net zero, specifically in Cardiff.

The Chairperson welcomed Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, David Kilner of Climate Cymru and Liz Hutchins of Bannau Brycheiniog (Powys Public Service Board) to the meeting. Following a brief statement from the Cabinet Member David Kilner and Liz Hutchins were invited to deliver a presentation on the Race to Zero campaign.

The Chairperson opened the debate on this item. Members were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- A Member noted that the Scottish Government had recently announced a 'rolling back' on its climate commitments as they were considered to be unachievable. Cardiff's progress towards net zero had also been hampered by issues such as energy infrastructure and the continued use of fossil fuels in energy production and powers to address those issues were not within the Council's or the Welsh Government's remits. The UK Government will need to drive the move toward decarbonising the energy grid. The Member asked whether it was possible for cities to achieve net zero when some of the basic fundamentals were not within their control. David Kilner stated that Race to Zero focuses on what cities are able to do and the Carbon Assessment provides a baseline that identifies what the Council is able to change. Once that assessment is undertaken then work can begin reducing carbon emissions. Liz Hutchins considered that Wales was not 'joined up' in terms of its carbon planning. The new CJsCs have responsibilities for transport, regional planning and regional economies but not for regional energy. There is no requirement on the CJsCs align on decarbonisation and there is no requirement for CJsCs to work with the local authorities beneath them in a co-ordinated manner. If local authorities, the region and Welsh Government all signed up to Race to Zero then a responsibility matrix would be developed to clearly identify who should be doing what. Organisations around the world that have joined Race to Zero have undertaken their assessments and have clarity about the projects they are prioritising. Therefore, they are more likely to have access to the funding that is available.
- A Member asked whether it was possible to persuade people to support decarbonisation efforts during a cost of living crisis. David Kilner considered that the cost of living crisis and the climate crisis are interconnected and they have similar solutions. For example, a rapid increase in the insulation of homes would result in warmer homes that cost less to heat with lower energy bills. Similarly, a return to market gardens and more local food supplies would result in greater food security and better access to healthier food options. In terms of persuading the wider public, surveys of the broader public have indicated that 75% of people support climate action. David Kilner considered that there was a perception gap between the narrative promoted by some media outlets and what people are actually saying about climate action. Liz Hutchins stated that a group called Bannau Brycheiniog Community Race to Zero are a group of community based climate activists who are leading local initiatives and reaching out to other people within their communities, rather than having a 'top down' way of organising.
- A Member asked whether there are mechanisms in place to ensure that organisations that sign up to Race to Zero follow through on their commitments. Liz Hutchins advised that Race to Zero provides a transparent, rigorous approach to declaring what organisations are doing in terms of outputs and outcomes. Governance arrangements are disclosed with the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) and organisations also report on their carbon footprint analysis, report on their action plan and report on the delivery of that plan. Organisations are

provided with a 'Carbon Coach' who will provide feedback, identify strengths and weaknesses and facilitate contacts with other organisations who are excelling in particular areas. If an organisation was not standing by their commitments then they would be asked to leave Race to Zero.

- A Member noted that during recent scrutiny of Cardiff's One Planet Cardiff Strategy it was estimated that decarbonising just the schools estate would cost in the region of £700 million. The Member asked how the Race to Zero action plan would equate with financial realities, who pays for the actions, how much it would cost to deliver and where would Race to Zero differ from what the Council is already seeking to achieve through its One Planet Cardiff Strategy. Liz Hutchins stated that Race to Zero was not seeking to cut carbon at the expense of everything else. The aim is to build a greener future. The overall cost of shifting to net zero is far exceeded by the cost of climate change impacts but the question of who pays is an important one. At present, those who benefit most from a high-carbon society are not paying enough. These are national, geo-political questions but unless we understand what needs to happen and how much they would cost progress would be impossible. Once those are known it is possible to consider options for fundraising. Race to Zero is a pledge to maximise effort and would develop the One Planet Cardiff Strategy by introducing more data and analysis and give a more rounded view about what interventions are needed.
- A Member asked whether Wales would benefit from the scheme to reduce pollutants in the River Wye. Members were advised that that scheme was based in England but the National Park is leading on a similar scheme on the River Usk.
- A Member asked what personal accountability people could take to help moves towards net zero. David Kilner stated that 50% of global emissions come from 1% of society and that is where individual accountabilities need to sit. That message needs to be clear.
- A Member requested further clarification on what Race to Zero would do to enhance or accelerate what the Council is already doing or knows that it needs to do. For example, decarbonising social housing stock in Wales would cost in the region of £5-6 billion. The Member asked whether Race to Zero would provide innovative finance solutions or lobby the finance sector to bring that funding forward. Members were advised that organisations that produce an action plan can be brought together into wider coalitions that may attract greater levels of funding from investors. Race to Zero puts organisations into a global network that can learn from other places in terms of where they access funding, leverage public and private sectors and work in the most cost efficient way. This point was considered to be particularly relevant for Cardiff. Having an evidence base would also assist accessing funding.
- A Member observed that enabling communities to transition towards net zero is a slow moving process and asked where it sits alongside the climate emergency

need for rapid change. David Kilner stated that Climate Cymru represents 370 organisations across Wales that are already doing this work on the ground. There is public support to see the transition to net zero happen more quickly.

- Citing opposition to proposals to change farming in Wales, a Member asked whether Race to Zero would provide support for bold climate emergency initiatives. Liz Hutchins stated that a global network of city mayors and leaders in particular are rapidly learning from each other regarding how to counter opposition to climate emergency schemes from particular interest groups. The network can also provide an opportunity to learn from successes other countries and unlock change.
- A Member asked whether Race to Zero provides support to enable young people to stay in the local areas and not move out in order to access employment or education. Liz Hutchins stated that Bannau Brychneiniog stated that the issue is recognised. The National Park has embarked on a project to improve the health of the River Usk to restore the ecological health of the river partly to allow the building of low cost social housing along the river which local young people can afford. Sustainable agriculture initiatives, growing more food local, also require more labour than extensive sheep farming. The National Park Authority also working in partnership with the Black Mountains College which provides the skills needed to respond to the climate emergency. David Kilner referenced the Botega Project in which young people come together to learning the skills required to builds micro-homes and then get to keep the homes they build.
- A Member asked how people, and in particular young people, can be convinced to move towards a more meat free diet without thinking that their liberty or choices are being taken away. Liz Hutchins stated that the National Park had recently started a project that visits schools aimed at starting a conversation with young people around moving towards meat free options. Size of Wales, a sustainable food network, lets pupils know where their food comes from and what is fed to cattle. Young people are then much more open to trying alternatives. However, examples of good practice need to be scaled up and the public sector is able to instigate change in local food production.
- A Member asked whether there were any models across the UK that assist communities move towards net zero and find the balance between ambition and the realities of the regulatory regime/budgetary restraints. David Kilner considered that an honest conversation was needed from the start. Volunteers in communities are already doing this and are arguably achieving more. It was suggested that Citizens Assemblies could be held across the city to establish what the public's priorities are, in addition to other established ways of engaging with communities. Liz Hutchins stated that it was important to have informed conversations about the realities of the climate emergency and treating people as active citizens who are part of the solution.

- A Member noted the comments made about the fragmented approach to carbon reduction across Wales. The Member asked whether the Council was advised to tackle carbon emissions from Scope 3 sources (emissions which are the result of activities from assets that are not owned or controlled by the Council, but that the Council indirectly effects) as an individual Council or whether there would be more impact taking a City regional approach. The Member also asked whether there were quick wins for the Council. Liz Hutchins considered that the focus should be on food and drink supplies in should start in schools. There was a lot the Council could be doing in terms of Scope 3 emissions relating to food and drink supplies in addition to having a wider voice on a regional level.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson writes to Race to Cardiff on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations captured during the way forward.

## 67 : SHARED REGULATORY SERVICE UPDATE

The Committee received a report providing update on meetings of the Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) Joint Committee.

Members were asked to note the following:

- The results of a survey in relation to sunbed safety following an undercover investigation by the consumer programme X-Ray.
- Welsh Government have started the consultation process in relation to draft regulations and statutory guidance prior to the introduction of mandatory licencing scheme for acupuncture, body piercing, electrolysis and tattooing, although the anticipated date for introduction has been slightly delayed to October 2024.
- In relation to Air Quality in addition to information that was included in the Annual Report it was noted that the Council had submitted an updated Final Plan, which was being reviewed by Welsh Government's Expert Panel, and a final decision on funding for the Castle Street Scheme is anticipated by the end of March 2024. Although potential delays were raised with a new First Minister and Cabinet being in post.
- The XL Bully ban came into force on 1st February 2024 which places additional requirements on owners under the Dangerous Dogs Act. SRS are working with South Wales Police and Cardiff Dogs Home and others to confirm the process for typing and assessing any strays that are suspected of being XL Bully's.
- The outcomes of investigations and prosecutions are provided including 2 Cardiff businesses prosecuted regarding food hygiene failings and Illegal dog breeding

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

68 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Committee received a report providing an update on the development of the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2023/24 and asks members to note the Environmental Scrutiny Committee section of the draft Annual Report.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

69 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items.

70 : WAY FORWARD

71 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 9 May 2024.

The meeting terminated at 6.45 pm