



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the meeting of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group held on Wednesday, 18 December 2019 at 2.00 pm at the Bryn Pica Landfill Site, Merthyr Road, Llwydcoed, Aberdare CF44 0BX.

County Borough Councillors - Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group Members in attendance:-

Councillor R Lewis Councillor M Norris
Councillor A Crimmings Councillor S Belzak
Councillor E Webster

Officers in attendance:-

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Lawson, Performance Manager
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr M Crumbie, Head of Procurement Delivery
Ms E Dean, Environment Planner
Mr I Traylor, Service Director – Pensions, Procurement & Transactional Services
Mr S Lock, Head of Procurement and Energy Management
Mr S Vaughan, Service Manager E Procurement & Development

Invited External Representatives of the Steering Group:-

Ms H Richards - Friends of the Earth and Mr I Thomas - Welcome to our Woods

9 Apology for Absence

An apology for absence was received from County Borough Councillor M. Webber.

10 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

11 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18th November 2019 as an accurate reflection of the meeting subject to the following amendment:

- Minute No. 6 (third paragraph from the bottom) – Change 'no correlation' to 'almost complete correlation'.

12 Taffs Well Thermal Spring

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the Director, Corporate Estates and the Head of Energy Project Management provided the Steering Group with

information in respect of the current situation with regards to the Taffs Well Spring Renewable Energy Project and the proposed way forward for consideration.

The officers explained that Taffs Well Thermal Spring emerges on the eastern bank of the River Taff in Taffs Well in the south east part of the borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf and is the only natural thermal spring in Wales. The Steering Group were provided with the background to the project and were informed that work had been undertaken by the Council's Corporate Estates 'Energy' team in conjunction with two feasibility studies undertaken by the Friends of Taffs Well into developing the renewable energy potential of the Taffs Wells Spring in various ways. It was agreed to proceed on the basis of providing a heat network to replace the existing heating system at two adjacent RCT Council buildings. The officer continued by explaining that for the Taffs Well Park Pavilion, the intention was to replace the existing electric heating; and for Fynnon Taf Primary School, the plan was to replace or integrate with the existing gas fired system.

The officer advised that the cost of the development would unlikely exceed the expected range of £250k to £300k and by structuring the financial elements to maximise the Renewable Heat Allowance payment the pay-back on investment could be reduced by several years. Members were informed that the current expected core project was expected to save 37.1 tonnes of CO2.

One Member questioned whether the project would be subject to social media communication, to which the Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication confirmed that, as with all the positive work of the Steering Group, the project would be communicated with the public.

One Member praised the initiative and questioned whether the heat would be hydro powered, to which the officer explained that it would not be viable in its current form. However, it could be possible to extend the project in future.

The Chair thanked the officers for the comprehensive report and it was **RESOLVED:**

1. To recommend the approval of the project to Cabinet.

13 Future Work Programme

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication provided the Steering Group with the proposed list of matters requiring consideration by the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group Work during the 2019-2020 Municipal Year.

The Service Director explained that the Work Programme would ensure that progress is monitored and action can be proposed to Cabinet to respond to the Cabinet's commitment for the Council to be Carbon Neutral by 2030, and to work with residents and businesses within the Borough to ensure the whole County Borough is Carbon Neutral as close as possible to the 2030 target.

The Service Director concluded by informing the Steering Group that the programme is flexible and that should they wish to add future reports, officers would work with them to produce reports for consideration following March 2020.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and informed the Steering Group that Pontypridd Town Council were undertaking a piece of work in relation to biodiversity and as such, the Deputy Leader would add the topic as an item for discussion at the next meeting of the Community Liaison Committee in January 2020.

One Member raised concerns in respect of the 'Development of Infrastructure to support Low Carbon Vehicle Ownership' report, which was due to be considered by the Steering Group in January 2020. The Member spoke of the difficulty of installing the electric vehicle charging points throughout the Borough, with officers confirming that it would be discussed in depth at the next meeting.

The Steering Group **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group Work Programme for the 2019-2020 Municipal Year.

14 Local Procurement of Supplies and Services

The Service Manager for Procurement provided the Climate Change Steering Group with an overview of the Council's contracting arrangements and in particular how the Council is currently able to demonstrate spend with local suppliers within the boundary of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The officer explained that all Public Procurement is governed by the EU Procurement Directives and UK Procurement Regulations, and that the Council has an obligation to comply with this Legal Framework.

The officer provided an overview of the information contained within Section 5 of the report, which summarised the money spent locally in 2018/19 and in the first six months of the 2019/20 financial year. The officer confirmed that the data had been summarised using the postcode of each supplier, and in order to provide a more detailed analysis of how much of the Council spend benefits the local economy of Rhondda Cynon Taf, a more detailed review of the spend with the Council's top 50 suppliers would take place. It was confirmed that an update on this work will be reported back to the Steering Group in June 2020.

In addition to the review of the top 50 suppliers, the Officer confirmed that work was also taking place in consultation with the Council's Regeneration Service which aims to map those businesses that are based within the boundary of the Council. The outcome of this work would be used to identify potential suppliers of goods and services in the future.

Discussion ensued around fair trade with one Member confirming that the Council is a fair trade Council.

The Chair thanked the officer for the informative report and took the opportunity to speak of a robust piece of work undertaken by one of the Council's Graduate Officers to explore options for maximising Community Benefits derived from procurement contracts. Following this work Cabinet agreed that Community Benefits will now be incorporated into all relevant procurement exercises.

The Steering Group **RESOLVED:**

1. To agree that further work takes place to review the Council's top 50 suppliers with the aim of establishing the value that these arrangements have to our local economy;

2. To note the work that is taking place to develop a detailed understanding of the businesses that operate within the County Borough; and
3. That an update on these actions be presented back to the Group in June 2020.

15 Elimination of single use plastics in all Council contracts and premises

The Head of Procurement provided the Steering Group with an overview of the current guidance that is in place to support organisations when seeking to eliminate single use plastics.

The officer referred Members to Section 4 of the report, where the Waste Hierarchy was outlined, which set out a hierarchy of options for managing waste in terms of what is best for the environment. Members were informed that when reviewing the use of single-use plastics, the Waste Framework Directive (2008) provides a useful and valuable waste hierarchy.

The officer then referred Members to Section 5 of the report, where a table of the current use of single use plastics had been identified, along with examples of where single use products have been replaced with alternative products. The Steering Group were advised that the next step was to undertake a detailed and thorough audit of the areas with the aim of identifying quantities, evaluating the current disposal arrangements in place and overlaying the waste hierarchy principles, in consultation with suppliers to put in place appropriate alternative products. The outcome of this work will be presented to the Steering Group in April 2020, along with an action plan that aims to eliminate the use of single use plastics as far as is practicably possible by 2020.

The Chair thanked the officer for the detailed report and commented that it evidenced an honest picture of where the Council are and the issues experienced.

Discussion took place in respect of the use of single use plastics, with one Member stating that schools should be a flagship for the community. The Member identified potential schemes to complement the idea:

- Reward Scheme for reusable container at schools;
- Refillable water stations in place of vending machines; and
- Engaging with Eco Committees in schools

Members of the group also discussed and agreed with the principle of educating all staff on this important issue.

In relation to water stations, the Group Director, Prosperity, Development and frontline Services confirmed the Council's intentions of reviewing where these could be installed in each of the Council's major town centres. Furthermore, work is taking place to establish where refill stations can be provided in consultation with local businesses.

The Chair thanked the Members of the Group for their input.

The Climate Change Steering Group **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the contents of the report, in particular the importance of ensuring that the principles of the Waste Hierarchy are applied when establishing alternative products to single use plastics; and;

2. To note that a future report providing the outcome of the audit will be provided to the Group in April 2020.

16 Recycling with Rhondda Cynon Taf

The Group Director, Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services provided the Climate Change Steering Group with the report, which contained information on the recycling performance for the first 6 months of 2019/20, the new Materials Recovery Facility, future developments at Bryn Pica and potential legislative changes.

The Group Director explained that the Council has a statutory recycling target of 64%, which is set by Welsh Government and that failure to meet the target would result in the Council receiving a substantial fine.

Members were referred to Section 4 of the report, which outlined RCT's performance during the first 6 months of the financial year and evidenced that RCT had achieved the target set out by Welsh Government and were in a good position for the remainder of the year. The Group Director advised that the next target for the Council would be the 2024/2025 target of 70% and felt that it could be changed to 80%. He went on to discuss how the target could be achieved by improving the current performance and with the provision of the new MRF at Bryn Pica. The Group Director advised that of the need to put together a marketing campaign informing residents that enforcement action would be taken if they do not recycle, should Members recommend the change to Cabinet.

The Group Director spoke of the initiatives RCT had in place to improve recycling such as the interactive education centre in Bryn Pica, the Anaerobic Digestion Facility, the Mattress Recycling Facility and the Leachate Treatment Plant. Members were informed that the ambition was to develop an Eco Park on site, which would develop a recycling process for hard plastics whereby plastics are grinded down and washed to either sell the material or turn it into a product on site.

The Chair thanked the Group Director for the comprehensive report and praised RCT's simple recycling collection method in comparison to other Local Authorities.

Discussions ensued around black bag waste and the potential to further reduce its collection. The Group Director advised that although it was anticipated, fly tipping did not increase when the black bag collections were reduced. He confirmed that there were currently no plans to reduce the collection further, but instead, there was a need to educate the community on the appropriate waste to dispose of into the black bags.

The Chair spoke positive of the proposal and noted that RCT would lead the way in being the first Local Authority in Wales to set the target to 80%.

The Steering Group **RESOLVED:**

1. To recommend to Cabinet to change the recycling target to 80% by 2024/25

17 Urgent Business

- The representative from Welcome to Our Woods took the opportunity to provide the Steering Group with information in respect of a feasibility project, named 'Skyline', which had been funded by the Friends Provident Foundation. The representative spoke of the work undertaken across local communities to explore the history, meaning and visions of each valley.

Members were provided with detailed handouts of the project and agreed to receive further updates at future Committees.

The Chair thanked the representative for the information and spoke of the importance of Third Sector Groups leading the way on key initiatives.

- It was agreed that it would be beneficial for the Steering Group to undertake a tour of Bryn Pica in the summer.

This meeting closed at 3.30 pm

**COUNCILLOR R LEWIS
CHAIR.**