



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

GWŶS I GYFARFOD O'R CYNGOR

C.Hanagan
Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf
Y Pafiliynau
Parc Hen Lofa'r Cambrian
Cwm Clydach, CF40 2XX

Dolen gyswllt: Hannah Williams - Busnes Uned y Cyngor (01443 424062)

DYMA WŶS I CHI i gyfarfod rhithwir o'r **Grŵp LLYWIO'R CABINET AR FATERION YR HINSAWDD** yn cael ei gynnal ar **Dydd MERCHER, 17EG MAWRTH, 2021** am **2.00 PM**.

Caiff Aelodau nad ydyn nhw'n aelodau o'r pwyllgor ac aelodau o'r cyhoedd gyfrannu yn y cyfarfod ar faterion y cyfarfod er bydd y cais yn ôl doethineb y Cadeirydd. Gofynnwn i chi roi gwybod i Wasanaethau Democrataidd erbyn Dydd Llun, 15 Mawrth 2021 trwy ddefnyddio'r manylion cyswllt uchod, gan gynnwys rhoi gwybod a fyddwch chi'n siarad Cymraeg neu Saesneg.

AGENDA

Tudalennau

1. DATGAN BUDDIANT

Derbyn datganiadau o fuddiannau personol gan Aelodau, yn unol â gofynion y Cod Ymddygiad.

Nodwch:

1. Mae gofyn i Aelodau ddatgan rhif a phwnc yr agendwm mae eu buddiant yn ymwneud ag ef a mynegi natur y buddiant personol hwnnw; a
2. Lle bo Aelodau'n ymneilltuo o'r cyfarfod o ganlyniad i ddatgelu buddiant sy'n rhagfarnu, mae **rhaid** iddyn nhw roi gwybod i'r Cadeirydd pan fyddan nhw'n gadael.

2. COFNODION

Cadarnhau cofnodion cyfarfod Grŵp Llywio'r Cabinet ar faterion yr Hinsawdd a gynhaliwyd ar 16 Tachwedd 2020 yn rhai cywir.

3. STRATEGAETH DDRAFFT Y CYNGOR 2021-2025 – MYND I'R AFAEL Â NEWID YN YR HINSAWDD

Trafod adroddiad y Prif Weithredwr, sy'n amlinellu Strategaeth Ddrafft y Cyngor 2021-2025 – Mynd i'r Afael â Newid yn yr Hinsawdd.

11 - 34

4. CYNLLUN CYFATHREBU AC YMGYSYLLTU AR FATERION NEWID YN YR HINSAWDD

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu, sy'n rhannu'r newyddion diweddaraf am y dull arfaethedig ar gyfer cyfathrebu ac ymgysylltu â thrigolion a'r gymuned mewn perthynas â Newid yn yr Hinsawdd.

35 - 56

5. MATERION BRYD

Trafod unrhyw faterion sydd, yn ôl doethineb y Cadeirydd, yn rhai bryd yng ngoleuni amgylchiadau arbennig.

Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu

Cylchreliad:-

Y Cyngorwyr Bwrdeistref Sirol:

Y Cyngorydd R Lewis, Y Cyngorydd M Webber, Y Cyngorydd M Norris,
Y Cyngorydd A Crimmings, Y Cyngorydd S Belzak ac Y Cyngorydd E Webster

Swyddogion:

Chris Bradshaw, Prif Weithredwr

Christian Hanagan, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu

Nigel Wheeler, Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran – Ffyniant, Datblygu, a Gwasanaethau Rheng-flaen

Louise Davies, Cyfarwyddwr, Iechyd a Diogelwch y Cyhoedd, a Gwasanaethau'r Gymuned

Simon Gale, Cyfarwyddwr Materion Ffyniant a Datblygu

Richard Evans, Cyfarwyddwr - Materion Adnoddau Dynol

Barrie Davies, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Cyllid a Digidol

David Powell, Cyfarwyddwr Materion Eiddo'r Cyngor

Lesley Lawson, Rheolwr Cyflawniad

Cynrychiolaeth Allanol:

Cyfeillion y Ddaear

Croeso i'n Coedwig



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP
Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group held on Monday, 16
November 2020 at 2.00 pm

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

Councillor R Lewis Councillor M Webber
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 S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Lawson, Performance Manager
Mr M Crumbie, Head of Procurement Delivery
Mr S Lock, Head of Energy Project Management
Mr R Wistow, Ecologist

Invited External Representatives of the Steering Group:-

Mr C Harries – Friends of the Earth
Ms M Newton – Rhondda Skyline

1 Chair's Welcome

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the meeting of the Climate Change Steering Group and acknowledged that there had not been a meeting in some time due to the global pandemic. The Chair took the opportunity to assure the Steering Group that despite the difficult circumstances, officers had maintained momentum in terms in the Climate Change agenda and the Council's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillor M Norris and the Welcome to our Woods representative.

2 Declaration of Interest

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

3 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2020 as an accurate reflection.

4 Nature's Assets

The Council's Ecologist provided the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group with a report, which provided information on issues relating to Nature's Assets and the climate and biodiversity emergencies.

The Chair thanked the officer for the information and was interested to note the opportunities to maximise carbon storage through the natural assets, commenting that RCT was fortunate enough to have a plethora of biodiversity on its doorstep.

The Deputy Leader spoke of a local Community Group, which planted 5000 bulbs locally in the previous year. The Cabinet Member explained that, as part of the exercise, the Group had identified the benefits of planting the bulbs and successfully reinvigorated the ground to bring back the natural wild flowers, which were previously dormant. Nonetheless, the Cabinet Member spoke of the importance of ensuring that any trees planted in specific areas are manageable and do not affect the water course. The Deputy Leader continued and emphasised the need to engage with the community and with local farmers.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services echoed the Deputy Leader's comments in terms of communication and engagement with the community. The Cabinet Member was pleased to note that the Council's internal departments had worked in partnership, such as Environmental Health, the Planning department and the Education department.

One Member was particularly interested in the natural regeneration of the woodland. The Member raised concerns in relation to the damage caused to tree saplings by mountain fires and questioned if there were mitigations in place to prevent it. The officer advised the Member of the 'Healthy Hillside Project' approach, which ensures conservation management/conservation grazing in areas which are not subject to wildfire problems, in order to maintain fern whilst promoting wildflowers, wildlife and woodland regeneration.

The Chair emphasised the importance of education and spoke of the high profile campaigns involving the fire service and police service, which sought to educate young people on the importance of the hillsides and its wildlife. Furthermore, the Chair was pleased to note that there was potential for a Graduate Officer and Apprentice roles to work alongside the Council's Ecologist.

An External Representative echoed earlier comments in relation to community involvement and questioned what areas in RCT had been identified for rain gardens. The officer advised that the rain garden developed on Mill Street, Pontypridd was the first to be identified as a problem site and approved for funding. The officer advised that in the coming year, Welsh Government were due to allocate funding for Urban Greening and as such, new sites would be identified. It was also explained that officers had been tasked with incorporating green infrastructure into the designs of sustainable drainage features.

The External Representative acknowledged the work undertaken to maximise natural carbon storage by restoring peat bogs on publicly owned land and questioned whether there were similar plans for privately owned land. The officer

advised that advice and support is provided to private land owners through the Biodiversity Action Plan and the new Local Nature Plan but due to costs and lack of funding, the Local Authority could not undertake the work. In addition, the officer informed the Group that the focus on publicly owned land provides assurance of delivering outcomes and best practice.

Another Member spoke of the drainage at the Albion Tip, Cilfynydd, which had changed significantly over the last decade and as a result, had affected the farmland to the north. The Member questioned whether it would be appropriate to contact local farmers to include them in any such scheme. The officer acknowledged that many sites had become wetter over the years, which was possibly due to the change in climate. In terms of working with third party land owners, the officer suggested that the Local Authority firstly prove its model on publicly owned land before moving forward.

Following the number of questions in relation to drainage, the Chair recommended that a report is brought forward to a future meeting of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group, which provides information in relation to the work undertaken in the water catchment areas, mitigations, culverts, land usage, tree planting and the Local Authority's relationship with NRW.

The Chief Executive suggested that he commission a review to be undertaken by the Director, Corporate Estates and the Council's Ecologist to identify those sites which are most suitable for peatbog restoration on land owned by the Local Authority and NRW. The review would consist of identifying the priority areas and the cost implications, in order to present a report back to the Steering Group of the findings for its consideration. The Chief Executive emphasised the importance of planning ahead, should Cabinet agree to set money aside within the Capital budget.

The Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group **RESOLVED:**

1. To comment on the issues raised in this report;
2. That the Director, Corporate Estates and the Council's Ecologist undertake a review of the publicly owned land, to identify those sites which are most suitable for peatbog restoration and the cost implications; with a report presented back to the Steering Group for its consideration; and
3. That the feedback and comments of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group are reported to Cabinet for their consideration.

5 Strategic and Local Development Plans - Their Policies and Commitments to ensuring Housing, Transportation and Business Infrastructure minimises the Carbon Footprint

The Director, Prosperity and Development provided the Steering Group with the report, which set out what the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and the Revised Local Development Plan (LDP) are required to address with regards to policies and commitments to minimise our Carbon Footprint; and the opportunities that would present themselves during the preparation and formulation of these plans, (particularly from an LDP perspective), to expand upon these standard requirements from an RCT perspective.

The Director drew Members' attention to Section 6 of the report and explained that there were a number of areas that can be researched further with regards to their relationship with Climate Change and Carbon Reduction; and ultimately

considered for inclusion within it. The Director suggested the following questions for the Group's further consideration:

- What percentage of car parking spaces should have charging points in new non-residential developments?
- Should there be a similar policy for new residential developments?
- Should all new homes in RCT be built as zero carbon?
- What is the role of RCTs uplands in combating Climate Change?
- What is the group's view on the density of development around Metro nodes and car free policies on new development?

The Chair thanked the Director for the report and acknowledged the amount of work undertaken to prepare the revised Local Development Plan. The Chair acknowledged Welsh Government's ambition for Wales to become Net Zero by 2050 and the other positive initiatives such as the Cardiff Capital Region, the South Wales Metro, sustainable travel and sustainable ways of creating employment.

The External Representative questioned whether it was the intention to develop a wider Climate Change Strategy for the Local Authority, which could tie in with the work of the revised LDP. The Chief Executive confirmed that a Climate Change Strategy would be developed, following the Group's consideration of various key reports in relation to topics such as transport, housing, biodiversity, plastics and energy. The Chief Executive hoped to present the initial draft of the Strategy to the Steering Group in the New Year in readiness to engage with the wider community.

The Director explained that the LDP would act as the land use expression of the Council's aspirations, including climate change and carbon reduction, which ensures that key elements are allocated. The Director referred to the Group's Peatbogs recommendation in the previous report on Nature's Assets and explained that the priority areas identified could be allocated within the revised LDP.

The Deputy Leader informed the Steering Group that electrical vehicle charging points had been installed in Tesco carpark and commented that the LDP could act as a persuasive document for developers to consider eco-friendly options moving forward.

The Chair added that the City Region had agreed funding for electrical vehicle charging points for taxi and transportation services in the first instance; and noted that officers were undertaking an exercise to look at Council car parks to consider any opportunities for charging points.

One Member did not agree with the assumption that the current way of life could be maintained, by simply switching to electricity and was of the view that there was an insufficient amount of energy available to power the current fleet of vehicles. The Member spoke of the average capital energy cost to manufacture a car, in addition to the ongoing energy cost of running the vehicle.

The External Representative acknowledged the Member's views and added that a wider emphasis should be placed on improving public transport and reducing the need to travel.

One Member noted the speed of technology development and felt it would be

wise to move forward at a steady pace.

The Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group **RESOLVED:**

1. To comment on the issues raised in this report, and in particular the discussion points set out in paragraphs 6.9 to 6.15; and
2. That the feedback and comments of the Steering Group are reported to Cabinet for their consideration

(**Note:** At this point in proceedings, County Borough Councillor M. Webber left the meeting)

6 Reducing the Use of all Single Use Plastics in all Council Contracts and Premises

The Head of Procurement Delivery provided members of the group with an overview and update following the report presented to the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group in [December 2019](#).

The report included the progress made in respect of the in-depth audit on those categories of spend where single use plastics are currently in circulation and a detailed Action Plan, aimed at reducing or, where it is practical to do so, eliminating the use of single use plastics across the Council by the end of 2020.

The Chair thanked the officer for the update and was encouraged by its momentum, despite progress being slightly hindered in recent months due to Covid-19. The Chair noted that the Action Plan sought to identify those areas where more audit work is required and the use of plastics in PPE, which was a new area that has resulted from the impact of Covid-19.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services spoke of the importance of RCT delivering the recommendations detailed within the action plan to ensure its residents and young people note the commitment.

One Member questioned the approach for schools and whether children would be forbidden to use plastics. The officer advised that the ambition was to speak with catering suppliers and identify where the plastic is utilised, in order to identify suitable alternatives.

The Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group **RESOLVED:**

1. To acknowledge the impact that Covid-19 has had since the previous report to the Group, on our ability to put in place and action tangible outcomes that aim to reduce the use of single use plastics within the timeframe set out in the previous report
2. To agree the action plan provided in Appendix A that sets out the arrangements to eliminate/reduce the use of single use plastics across the Council; and
3. To note the intention to remove all single use plastics from Council and School catering facilities by 31 March 2021 with an environmentally friendly alternative.

7 Local Procurement of Supplies and Services

The Head of Procurement provided the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group with an update on the planned work that aimed to ensure the local economy of the Council receives the maximum possible benefits from the Council's

procurement arrangements.

The officer reminded the Steering Group that it was previously agreed that an in-depth review of the Council's top 50 suppliers (based outside of RCT) would take place. It was explained that the necessary data was prepared and the survey compiled but due to the nationwide lockdown, the review had not taken place. As such, it was now considered that the time would be better spent looking forward and ensuring that the positive outcomes when contracting are fully considered when preparing tender documents in future.

The officer informed the Group of the lessons learned from the pandemic and provided details of how the Council could make its contracts more accessible to businesses. Members were informed that the Council was keen to explore the potential of how it can utilise local SME's more and its aim to identify potential opportunities to introduce them into the supply chain in the future.

The Chair thanked the officer for the update and acknowledged the importance of supporting local businesses during such a challenging time. The Chair was pleased to note that many businesses had adapted to meet the change in needs throughout the period.

The Chair was pleased to note the split-contract approach detailed at Section 7 of the report, which would spread the benefits across local businesses. From a climate change perspective, the Chair was happy to support SME's within the Borough, particularly in terms of supply chains to ensure products aren't travelling large distances, which would reduce the carbon footprint and grow the local economy.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services referred to the athletic track in Aberdare, where the majority of the workforce were within a maximum of a 20 mile radius, which created a local and community ownership.

The Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group **RESOLVED:**

1. To agree with the approach of the Council advertising its tenders more clearly with the local market, and for the Procurement Service to challenge each tender at its early stage with a view to establishing if appropriate lotting would be applicable; and
2. That an update on these actions be presented back to the Group at a future meeting.

8 Energy Generation and Related Issues

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the Director, Corporate Estates and the Head of Energy Project Management provided the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group with an update on the progress of the development of renewable energy projects and certain other related issues up to 30th September 2020.

The officers outlined the Council's current energy strategies, current renewable energy projects and the potential expansion of renewable energy ambitions.

The Chair thanked the officers for the update and noted the various ambitious and positive energy generation initiatives such as the development of Taffs Well Thermal Spring, which would produce energy for the local school and hub and the development of an Eco Park on undeveloped land at Bryn Pica.

One Member referred to Section 5.5 of the report and questioned how the estimated Carbon Benefit of 2,323 Carbon Tonnes per annum had been calculated. The Director advised that further information would be circulated following the meeting but explained that the figure had been determined by a standard calculation process in conjunction with the Welsh Government Energy Service. The calculation had been comprised by focussing on the carbon savings in use for the generated energy only, based on investment and not the embedded carbon in delivering the project up to that point. The Director recognised that the embedded carbon would need to be considered if the Council were to claim that the project would be Net Zero in its own right.

The External Representative questioned what the recycling of rain water would be used for in the Taffs Well Thermal Spring. The Director advised that rain water harvesting was a standard installation, which was also used within the Council's schools and that its purpose was to flush the toilets within the buildings.

The External Representative was pleased to note that a range of energy options had been explored, such as wind, solar and hydro energy. The Director advised that RCT had provided support to the Cambrian Trust in Tonypany, to deliver its hydro scheme.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services thanked the officers for the detailed report and noted the sheer volume of work undertaken within her Cabinet portfolio, in relation to the climate change agenda, such as transport, electric vehicle charging points and lighting changes made throughout Council buildings.

The Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the contents of the update report as part of the ongoing work of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group;
2. To continue with ongoing discussions with third parties with a view to maximising the energy generation subject to the final Welsh Government carbon footprint calculator; and
3. To receive a further report in early 2021 providing a further update on progress.

9 Urgent Business

- With the agreement of the Chair, the Rhondda Skyline Project Manager, Ms M Newton provided the Climate Change Steering Group with the key progress milestones of the Rhondda Skyline Project:
 - Discussions were underway with NRW in terms of how community land stewardship is managed, which is the aspiration of the Skyline Project;
 - Successfully secured £238,000 from the Climate Action Fund Developing Fund, to develop the following business streams:
 - To support the setup of the Community Land Trust and the Community Stewardship Agreement with NRW;
 - A Biochar programme to look at wood as a waste material and how it can be utilised in other ways;
 - Timber framed housing and how to build sustainable housing with local skills;
 - Community Horticulture;

- Timber Enterprise and the development of a timber site at the old brewery site in Treherbert; and
- Electric Vehicles and whether there is a demand for an electric vehicle car pool for use by the community.
- If the above-mentioned initiatives were to be secured, the intention was to bid for a further £2.5M of funding to implement the work.
- The Foundation Economy Challenge Fund had a significant underspend as a result of Covid-19. As a consequence, Skyline were working with Social Farms and Gardens as one of three pilots to look at controlled environment agriculture. The aim was to set up temporary units on the old tapas site, Treherbert and the project was due to be completed by end of March 2021.

The Steering Group commended Skyline for their work and the exciting initiatives planned for the upper Rhondda area, which meets a number of needs and ambitions.

- The Chair informed the Steering Group that the next meeting would take place on Monday 18th January 2021 at 2pm and wished attendees a happy Christmas and New Year.

This meeting closed at 3.40 pm

**COUNCILLOR R LEWIS
CHAIR.**



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

17TH MARCH 2021

DRAFT COUNCIL TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2021-2025 FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH CABINET'S CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPION (COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS)

AUTHOR: Chris Bradshaw: 01443 424026

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group with an opportunity to consider the Draft Council Tackling Climate Change Strategy and agree to engage and consult with residents and businesses on the Council's response to Climate Change.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report and the Draft Council Tackling Climate Change Strategy in the Appendix.
- 2.2 Consider the Draft Council Tackling Climate Change Strategy and make recommendations to the Council's Cabinet on the Strategy before the Cabinet considers the Strategy at its meeting later this month. Cabinet will be requested to consider whether it wishes to commence a wide ranging engagement with residents and businesses on the Council's response to Climate Change starting in April 2021.
- 2.3 Request that the results of the consultation on the Draft Council Tackling Climate Change Strategy are considered by the Climate Changing Steering Group in June prior to the June meeting of Cabinet.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 For the Council to become Carbon Neutral by 2030.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 There can be no doubt of the speed of change required to reduce carbon emissions to protect the planet, or the need for us all to work together more quickly to do so.
- António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations **"If we don't act now on climate change, this coming century may be one of humanity's last"**.
 - Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission **"fighting Climate Change has become the greatest responsibility of our times"**.
 - Boris Johnson **"no-one can say they didn't see climate change coming"**.
 - Mark Drakeford **"Tackling the climate emergency requires a level of collective action we have not seen since the days of the Second World War"** and he urged the people of Wales to **"Think Global: Act local"** to make a difference.
 - David Attenborough has described climate change as **"our greatest threat in thousands of years"**.
 - Greta Thunberg **"This is the biggest crisis humanity has ever faced. This is not something you can like on facebook"**.
- 4.2 The science has never been clearer and the call to action, never louder. This Council is also clear that it must play its part in taking urgent action to mitigate the risks and tackle the catastrophic effects of the planet's rising temperatures. In doing so it has recognised the fundamental changes that are needed to the way we all live our lives.
- 4.3 The Council has already shown a positive commitment to meet and contribute to global, national and local targets to reduce carbon across the Council's services. The Council already purchases 100% of its electrical energy supply from renewable energy sources and has reduced its carbon footprint by 37% or 12,725 tonnes over the past five years. Examples of the action taken to date by the Council include:
- The upgrading of all street lights to efficient LED units and turning off street lights in specific localities;
 - Investing in solar panels, LED lighting, wall and roof insulation, energy efficient gas boilers, and combined heat and power units in many schools, leisure centres and council buildings. The solar panels fitted on council buildings are the equivalent size of two football fields;
 - Installed electric cooking equipment in all new kitchens to benefit from the renewable electricity we procure;
 - Significantly reduced the amount of waste that is disposed of by landfill or through energy for waste;

- Invested in the Healthy Hillides project with Welsh Government and the Fire Service with benefits for carbon reduction, biodiversity and air quality;
- Through planning agreements with windfarm developers, hundreds of hectares of peat and associated habitats have been targeted for restoration and their carbon and water storage has been increased;
- Invested in 20 micro generation Hydrogen Fuel Cells for our highest energy users (care homes, large schools and leisure centre) with the ambition to do more – this has a significant impact on the emission of greenhouse gases;
- Ensured all new schools and other council buildings are certified as BREEAM “Very Good” or “Excellent” with EPC ratings of A;
- Through various government grant schemes, enabled many residents on low incomes to improve the heat insulation in their own homes;
- Worked with partners to develop renewable energy projects such as, Clydach hydroelectricity, Vattenfall Wind Farm, Gasification Boiler at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, and Bryn Pica Eco Park.

4.4 Furthermore, in the autumn of 2019, the Council created this Steering Group, the Climate Change Steering Group, a sub-committee of the Council’s Cabinet, which is charged with developing the Council’s response to the Climate Change agenda and supporting Cabinet to achieve the 2030 Net Zero target. As you are all aware, the focus of this Steering Group is to understand the various carbon issues within the County Borough, make a series of recommendations to the Council’s Cabinet and gather information to inform the development of the Council’s Tackling Climate Change Strategy.

4.5 Whilst, the Covid19 Pandemic has had an impact on the work of the Steering Group, good progress has been made, and to date it has:

- **Biodiversity** - Considered, and challenged the Council’s Biodiversity Plan and Cabinet has approved the Plan and considered and adopted the Wildflower Grassland Management Policy;
- **Community use of vacant/unused land** - Simplified the Council’s processes and procedures to enable community groups to use underused or vacant Council land for environmental purposes;
- **Waste Management Strategy** – Recommended that Cabinet consider increasing the Council’s waste recycling target from 70% of its household waste by 2025 to 80% by 2025 and challenged other public sector and private sector organisations to do the same. This new target will be the most challenging in the UK;
- **Local Procurement of Supplies and Services** –Currently, the Council spends £227m on supplies and services of which £51m is

spent with businesses registered in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and £138m on businesses registered in South East Wales. The Steering Group agreed to the Council advertising its tenders with the local market and wherever possible break the tenders into lots which enables small and medium sized companies to compete for parcels of the supplies and services being tendered. The Steering Group has requested a regular report on whether this change in approach is increasing the amount of money the Council spends locally;

- **Elimination of single use plastics in all Council contracts and premises** – Agreed an action plan that sets out the arrangements to eliminate/reduce the single use of plastics, and in particular seeks to remove all single use plastics from Council and school catering facilities by 31 March 2021 where there is an environmentally friendly alternative;
- **Taffs Well Thermal Spring – Generating carbon free energy for the community of Taffs Well** – Made a recommendation for Cabinet to consider at its [January 2020](#) meeting to invest in the technology to use the natural heat from Taffs Well Thermal Spring to heat the local school and community centre;
- **Transportation – how do we reduce our carbon emissions and change our modes of transport?** - This report focused on maximising the benefits of the South Wales Metro; considered electrical vehicle charging; opportunities to significantly increase active travel options; how we reduce the impact of the Council's fleet of vehicles, commissioned/subsidised public transport, licenced taxis and home to school transport. Progress is being made and a further report on electric vehicle charging is being considered by the Steering Group on 17th March 2021;
- **Air Quality – how do we improve air quality, and eliminate the “hotspots”, the Air Quality Management Areas in the County Borough** – The report considered what proactive action the Council is taking to tackle air quality in the air quality management areas, to ensure air quality improves across the County Borough. The Steering Group made a series of recommendations to Cabinet in respect of schemes/actions to be implemented to improve air quality in the air quality management areas;
- **Energy Generation – What opportunities do we have to generate energy on public sector land and/or rivers in Rhondda Cynon Taf** – This report set out a series of proposals for the Council to build and finance potential solar, wind and hydro schemes on Council or other public sector owned land and rivers, that will make a significant contribution to the Council achieving its Carbon Neutral target. The Steering Group supported the proposals and they were considered by Cabinet in [January 2021](#);

- **Nature's Assets - Using the Natural Environment to reduce carbon emissions and the effects of climate change** – This report focused on opportunities to maximise carbon storage through natural assets in the County Borough. The Steering Group recommended that Cabinet identify a number of potential suitable sites and consider funding the development of these sites including allocating funding within the 21/22 capital budget. A range of projects, were considered such as a long term native woodland programme, urban green infrastructure schemes in town centres, and peatbog restoration schemes which will have a positive impact on improving air quality, supporting flood management and prevention schemes, reducing noise and vehicle pollution and generally improving the living environment of residents. We are currently working with National Resources Wales to identify the land in the Council's and NRW's ownership suitable for carbon sequestration;
- **Strategic and Local Development Plans – How do we plan for the future, and ensure new homes, new buildings, and other infrastructure are carbon neutral?** – Cardiff Capital Region and the Council are planning to prepare a regional SDP and a RCT LDP. It is essential that these ten year plans include new policies and commitments to ensure our housing, transportation and business infrastructure minimises our carbon footprint and it is fit for purpose in the 21st Century and beyond. This will include commitments to ensure offices and homes are well connected with public and active travel options; town centres become places to live as well as work and socialise; and the natural environment is enhanced. The Steering Group has provided its views on a range of topics that need to be considered by the LDP, and this feedback was also considered by Cabinet in progressing the LDP process;
- **Quantifying Rhondda Cynon Taf's carbon footprint on Wales and the World** – The Welsh Government's planned carbon footprint measurement tool has yet to be released. Therefore, the Carbon Trust has been commissioned to establish a robust baseline for the County Borough which will be considered by the Steering Group early in the new financial year, in order to understand the data and to use it to determine the next steps to prioritise interventions and investments.

5 THE TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

- 5.1 The Council's draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy set out in Appendix A seeks to set the overall direction for the Council over the coming five years, describing its vision, purpose and ambition as local authority in respect of the Council's carbon footprint and the carbon footprint for the County Borough.

5.2 The Council's proposed vision is:

By 2030

- Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will be carbon neutral;
- The whole County Borough will be as close as possible to carbon neutral;
- Our work with partners will have contributed to reducing carbon emissions across the County Borough by *****.

5.3 In order to deliver our Vision, the Council will continue to provide strong community leadership and create a cleaner, greener environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous and for natural eco systems to thrive. We will play our part in tackling climate change and protecting the planet.

5.4 In our Corporate Plan 2020-24, [Making A Difference](#), the Council acknowledged that delivering our Climate Change commitment is our greatest challenge. In our plan we committed to delivering three main priorities, all of which will contribute to and benefit from tackling climate change:

- Ensuring **People**: *are independent, healthy and successful;*
- Creating **Places**: *where people are proud to live, work and play;*
- Enabling **Prosperity**: *creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.*

5.5 Our Climate Commitments underpin each of our priorities. These commitments have been developed using the best information available at a time of significant and competing local, regional, national and global priorities with new and fast-moving opportunities being presented by governments and businesses alike. The pace of change is also being accelerated by the growing pressure of people across the world to take climate action.

5.6 No single plan can set out the many ways in which we are working to reduce carbon emissions in to achieve our commitments in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This plan is a framework to guide us and shape what we do to reduce both the Council's carbon footprint and that of the County Borough. We will also be working within the Welsh Government's Delivery Plan for a [Low Carbon Wales](#) and its 'Route Map' to decarbonise the public sector in Wales.

5.7 Our commitments to reduce carbon within the Council include:

- Reducing our carbon footprint in respect of all the Council's activities.
 - Reducing the demand for energy and embedding carbon reduction into everything we do.
 - Using public sector land for green energy generation and/or carbon storage.
 - Investing in solar energy installations in Council buildings and making sure that all new schools, offices, homes and commercial buildings within the County Borough are built to a Net Zero standard.
 - Supplying all our buildings and offices with low carbon heat and/or generating our own electricity.
 - Further developing the use of hydrogen for fuel cells in Council vehicles and buildings.
 - Ensuring we recycle or reuse 80% of all municipal waste by 2025.
 - Continuing to locate services closer the people that use, work and visit them.
 - Procuring a vehicle fleet that is fit for purpose yet has a limited impact on the environment and replacing all our new cars and light goods vehicles with ultra low emission vehicles **by 2025**
 - Taking a sustainable approach to the supplies and services we buy within the Council, from major building projects to eliminating single use plastics, so that we better support the local and green economy.
 - Reducing staff travel by car by continuing to maximise the use of technology, encouraging active travel and greater use of public transport significantly reducing car commutes and business travel.
- 5.8 To achieve the 2030 target and respond to increasing public expectations, will require the Council to invest significant sums in ensuring its day to day activities become Carbon Neutral. This means that the Council must plan for the fact that this additional cost will not be met from simply doing more of what it is currently doing, but from making other difficult choices on what it does or does not provide.
- 5.9 Responding to the pandemic and the impact of Storm Dennis has had impact on the Council's financial position, in the short term. Longer term, the UK Government will have to repay the enormous sums spent in protecting jobs and the economy during the long periods of lockdown. This will inevitably have an adverse impact on public sector funding. Therefore, it is important that the Council, despite these significant financial challenges in the years ahead, ensures its longer term financial planning can meet the challenge to be carbon neutral by 2030. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2022-25 will consider this in detail in July 2021 after the Council's Tackling Climate Change Strategy, as set out in the Appendix, is consulted upon and residents and businesses feedback their views and priorities for the future.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required with regard to this report.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy will be subject to a comprehensive public consultation over the two months to 31 May 2021, the strategy will be scrutinised by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and it will be important to involve all elected members in the consultation.
- 7.2 It is proposed to involve as wide a range of stakeholders as possible during the two months in order to engage as many as possible in the conversation of “how do we all tackle climate change?”. The Council will work with national and local environmental groups to engage residents and businesses and to also encourage them to engage in changing their behaviours. To raise awareness, the Council’s social media and marketing expertise will be used to develop and deliver targeted campaigns for specific audiences, as well as more general awareness raising of the impact of climate change. In particular, we will be keen to engage with the Rhondda Cynon Taf Youth Forum, schools and other youth groups, in addition to the various groups that the Council has traditionally engaged with for consultation processes.
- 7.3 The lockdown will inevitably limit the opportunity for face to face engagement, however, the Council will make best use of the variety of social media, remote meetings and digital tools to engage with stakeholders.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report. Any investment required to address the priorities being consulted upon will be reported and considered separately as part of the Council’s Medium Term Plan to be considered in July 2021. Nevertheless, over the course of the next few years the Council will seek to realign its revenue and capital budgets to ensure that it has the financial resources to invest in major projects that can have a positive impact on reducing the Council’s carbon footprint.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

10 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

10.1 The Council has committed to becoming a Carbon Neutral organisation by 2030 and to work with residents and businesses to ensure the whole County Borough is Carbon Neutral as close as possible to the 2030 target. This supports the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan "Making a Difference" – 2020-24.

10.2 This report reflects the Sustainable development principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and will contribute to all seven national goals, with more immediate direct contributions to a Globally Responsible Wales, a more Resilient Wales, a Healthy Wales and a Wales of Cohesive Communities.

11 CONCLUSION

11.1 The Council has set the ambitious target to become a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030, along with the residents and businesses of the County Borough. The draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy sets out the action the Council will take over the next four years to make significant progress and lay the strong foundations to enable the Council to make progress towards achieving the 2030 target.

11.2 Achieving the 2030 target requires the communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf to work together. The Council, therefore, welcomes the opportunity to consult and engage with elected members, other public and private organisations, community and environmental groups and individuals in seeking their views how we can all help to achieve this ambitious target.

Tudalen wag



**Tackling Climate Change
in
Rhondda Cynon Taf
(2021- 2025)**

(Think Climate RCT)

**Making Rhondda Cynon Taf
Carbon Neutral by 2030**

DRAFT

Introduction/Context

Our County Borough has many stunning and unique features which can and will continue to benefit the residents, businesses and visitors to Rhondda Cynon Taf. These features include a huge area of semi-natural landscape, with a high level of tree cover and a wide variety of wildlife, both common and rare, close to where we live. Even our mining heritage offers the potential to produce energy for us. We also face unique challenges. The devastating impact of the 2020 floods, Ciara, Dennis and Jorge on Rhondda Cynon Taf and the surrounding areas, is an early indication of the impact of projected warmer, wetter winters in the northern hemisphere arising from the impact of Climate Change. The ecological emergency is affecting our plants and animals and affecting the natural processes on which we all depend.

Welsh Government [data](#), set out in its [Future Trends Report 2017](#), indicates that by 2050, in Wales,

- daily maximum summer temperatures are projected to rise by 3.4°C
- daily minimum winter temperatures are projected to increase by 2.5°C
- rainfall is projected to increase by 14% in winter and decrease by 16% in the summer.

Across Wales, rising temperatures are already changing habitats [affecting plants and wildlife as well as soil conditions and landscapes](#). Rising sea levels in coastal regions are threatening sea defences, frequent and more intense storms bring increased risk of flooding. More winter rain, too much rainfall in a short period and changes across the seasons will contribute to both flood and drought conditions. We are already seeing increasing numbers of heavy rainfall events, and expect this increase to continue, with greater risk of river and flash flooding. More extreme weather events also include more frequent heat waves which will affect our health, livelihoods and for many older and vulnerable people, life expectancy. For the ageing population in Rhondda Cynon Taf, this is one of the significant risks that need to be managed.

As a Council, over the last few years, we have put in place energy efficiency measures in our buildings, schools and street lighting and increased the amount of residents' waste recycled. As a result of this work, between 2014/15 and 2018/19 we reduced the amount of carbon emitted across the Council by 15,884 tonnes, a reduction of 45.24%. Our positive progress in waste recycling has led us to increase our recycling target for 2024/25 to 80%, which exceeds the national target set by Welsh Government.

We have also increased the amount of renewable energy we generate by investing in solar and wind power plants, using the energy produced to deliver Council services. In 2019/20 we generated 2,667,743 kWh – **equivalent *******

More widely, we know that in 2018, **1065.8** kilotonnes of CO₂e was emitted across the County Borough, 32.1% or 504.9 kilotonnes, less than in 2005.

We are making progress, but we need to do more, and faster, if we are to reduce our carbon emissions and help to reverse the damage to our planet, both as a Council and community leader. We will continue to lead by example, particularly in those areas where we have the greatest impact.

DRAFT

This is our plan to meet our commitment to reduce the carbon emissions in RCT and in doing so play our part in tackling Climate Change.

By 2030

- Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will be carbon neutral and
- the whole County Borough will be as close as possible to carbon neutral
- our work with partners will have contributed to reducing carbon emissions across the County Borough by *****.

In order to deliver our Vision, the Council will continue to provide strong community leadership and create a cleaner, greener environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous and for natural eco systems to thrive. We will play our part in tackling climate change and protecting the planet.

In our Corporate Plan 2020-24, [Making A Difference](#), the Council acknowledged that delivering our Climate Change commitment is our greatest challenge. In our plan we committed to delivering three main priorities, all of which will contribute to and benefit from tackling climate change:

- Ensuring **People**: *are independent, healthy and successful;*
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Our Climate Commitments underpin each of our priorities. These commitments have been developed using the best information available at a time of significant and competing local, regional, national and global priorities with new and fast moving opportunities being presented by governments and businesses alike. The pace of change is also being accelerated by the growing pressure of people across the world to take climate action.

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- Supplying all our buildings and offices with low carbon heat and/or generating our own electricity.
- Further developing the use of hydrogen for fuel cells in Council vehicles and buildings.
- Ensuring we recycle or reuse 80% of all municipal waste by 2025.
- Continuing to locate services closer the people that use, work and visit them.
- Procuring a vehicle fleet that is fit for purpose yet has a limited impact on the environment and replacing all our new cars and light goods vehicles with ultra low emission vehicles **by 2025**
- Taking a sustainable approach to the supplies and services we buy within the Council, from major building projects to eliminating single use plastics, so that we better support the local and green economy.
- Reducing staff travel by car by continuing to maximise the use of technology, encouraging active travel and greater use of public transport significantly reducing car commutes and business travel.

The Council is one area's largest employers, and over 80% of staff are resident in the County Borough. The Council's property portfolio includes 447 Council sites 937 individual buildings, of varying sizes located throughout the County Borough. Through councillors representing their communities, Council playing its part in providing strong community leadership, support and scrutiny, and with Council staff trained and encouraged to support climate initiatives, there is much that we can do locally to be part of the global climate solution.

Our approach

Across the wider County Borough, our success will be dependent on the Council playing its part to protect the planet for future generations, and also working with other public bodies and organisations to maximise the impact of this work. This includes encouraging and facilitating changes in lifestyle in all staff and their representatives, elected Members, residents, local business as well as our visitors to Rhondda Cynon Taf. The involvement of younger people will be key to creating, developing and delivering this strategy over the long term and we are seeking this involvement through school eco councils and our Youth Fora and through other community organisations.

As well as listening to what people, communities and businesses are telling us, we also need to support and challenge the Welsh Government to do better and to break down any national barriers that mitigate against local action.

Think Climate – PLACES

Using RCT's resources to generate green energy for use in local buildings and homes

We will:

- Explore opportunities to develop micro hydro-electric schemes on rivers and streams.
- Investigate the potential to progress wind and solar energy schemes with a view to supporting the Council's aim to be carbon neutral and generate all our energy needs.
- Progress existing energy generation schemes, including wind turbines at Nant Y Gwyddon and Bryn Pica.
- Consider ways to use existing carbon free energy sources to provide sustainable heat and power to local communities e.g. Taffs Well Thermal Spring.
- Explore potential options to utilise existing energy sources including:
 - waste heat generated at Bryn Pica
 - geothermal energy from abandoned coal mines.
- Contribute to actions within the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal to explore options for a hydrogen economy and to generate green energy to fuel our industrial and commercial businesses.

Potential measures/targets

- *Increase local renewable energy generated (MW numerical)*
 - *Solar - currently 1.5 MW of roof top solar installed on Council assets*
 - *Wind – no council owned*
 - *Hydro – no council owned**(targets tbd)*

Making waste work for RCT

We will:

- Increase the amount of waste we reuse and recycle locally by investing in technology, and supporting businesses and residents.
- Adopt a circular approach to recycling and reusing waste material that includes:
 - Ensuring the maximum service life from our resources and finding ways to recycle what is left.
 - Creating outlets for the sale of recycled goods that would have otherwise gone to landfill.
 - Investigating how hard plastic waste can be processed into useable products.
- Reduce transport emissions through improved processes for sorting and transporting cardboard maximising the cardboard capacity transported in a single journey.

- Continue to develop Bryn Pica Eco Park to its completion in 2023.

Potential measures/targets

- *By 2025, at least 80% of all RCT waste will be recycled.*
- *Tonnage of 'hard to recycle' waste diverted from landfill or incineration through specific recycling partnerships (e.g. 'TerraCycle' or equivalent).*

Putting in place low carbon infrastructure for travel

By 2030, we need to ensure that over half of all journeys are taken by public transport, bike or walking, with journeys where this is not possible using electric vehicles

We will:

- Invest in alternative transport options including:
 - Improved public transport through the development of the South Wales Metro;
 - Active travel initiatives that encourage walking and cycling, and which create wider County Borough wide networks;
 - Investing in safe routes to schools across the County Borough
- Work with Welsh Government and the Regional Transport Authority to continue to improve access to public transport and explore opportunities to bring back disused public transport, such as rail lines, for bus routes and active travel.
- Explore opportunities to develop a cycle network to major destinations in the County Borough without impeding main traffic routes.
- Work with private sector to put in place and invest in accessible County Wide network of electric vehicle (EV) charging opportunities, to stimulate market and widen EV charging opportunities.
- Develop an electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and electrical grid at the Eco Park in Bryn Pica, using green energy sourced from waste.
- Use enforcement, where appropriate, to improve air quality, reducing idling traffic and congestion in air quality monitoring zones.

Potential measures/targets

- *No of EV charging points installed at council premises over next 5 years*
- *% shift to zero emission passenger vehicles by 2030*
- *By 2025, 25% of journeys done by foot, bike or public transport*
- *By 2025, 20% more passengers using public transport vs 2009*
- *5% of bays in council owned car parks will be charging bays by 2023 (subject to funding)*
- *KM of safe routes to schools within County Borough*
- *KM active travel routes within County Borough*

Protecting and enhancing our wild spaces and work with nature to tackle both the Climate and Nature emergencies

We will:

- Minimise flood risk by promoting nature based solutions in appropriate locations as well as traditional engineering works, for example Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- Increase area of Woodland regeneration, protecting/storing carbon and reducing the risk of flooding.
- Protect and enhance our most valuable carbon stores, in undisturbed soils and semi-natural vegetation that reside in woods, heathland and grasslands across the County Borough.
- Restore selected local peatbogs following a review of publicly owned land.
- Develop a 'Living Landscape' bringing together existing wildlife sites, local communities and wildlife organisations, sharing knowledge and skills to protect, manage and use these sites to help address the Climate and Nature emergencies.
- In the wider countryside investigate and promote opportunities to use natural processes, green infrastructure and management techniques to reduce environmental risks such as flooding and wildfire, for example, [The Healthy Hillides Project](#).
- Manage our green spaces so they are better able to cope with a changing climate and enhance the benefits they provide to communities.
- Work with partners to expand green infrastructure and limit deforestation which in turn will significantly increase flood defences

Potential measures/targets

- *% of public sector land in RCT managed for the benefit of wildlife by 2030*
- *No of areas set aside for peat bogs (increase)*
- *Number of Properties protected from the risk of flooding for extreme weather events (increase)*
- *Number of nature based flood risk reduction projects (increase)*
- *Area of Woodland in RCT (increase)*
- *Area of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation lost*
- *Areas of/Number of peatbog restoration projects*

Think Climate – PROSPERITY

Setting out Zero carbon ambitions for future development in our Local Development Plan

We will put climate change at the centre of our new development plan for adoption in 2024, addressing carbon reduction measures including proximity of development to public spaces, standards of new house building and protection of RCT uplands.

Potential measures/targets

- *By 2030 all new housing developments carbon neutral*
- *% of developments zero carbon*
- *proximity of new developments to public transport routes/hubs and/or active travel*

Making places easily accessible without a car through active & green travel

By 2030, we will ensure that over half of all journeys are taken by public transport, bike or walking, with other journeys, where this is not possible, using electric vehicles

We will:

- Invest in park and ride facilities across the County Borough, including key metro sites and transport hub sites.
- Ensure all new housing and commercial developments are easily accessible by active travel and/or public transport.
- Support the development of an Ultra Low Emission vehicles charging network.
- Ensure that the transport services we commission, inc. Home to School, are zero or low carbon where possible.
- Support operators to make the switch from diesel to electric taxis and buses.

Potential measures/targets

- *No. of EV charging points installed*
- *% of buses/taxis zero emissions*

Aiming for Zero carbon new homes

By 2025, all new homes in the County Borough will be carbon neutral

We will:

- Support housing development on existing brownfield sites, in particular Town Centres, rather than building on 'green' sites.
- Increase the land supply for new Zero carbon homes through our local development plan making sure the sites reduce the need for car use.
- Ensure that new housing and commercial developments include solar, where feasible, and have the capability to generate, store and use renewable energy onsite and offer EV charging points.

Potential measures/targets

no. of sustainable/zero carbon homes delivered

Making existing homes more energy efficient:

We will work with landlords and homeowners to reduce the amount of energy used in existing homes, reaching Zero carbon where this is feasible to do so, by 2050, *in line with Better Homes Better Wales.*

We will:

- Investigate innovative ways of decarbonising all the housing stock, exploring the Heat Pump systems and hydrogen opportunities.
- Increase the energy efficiency of privately owned and rented homes through our RCT Warmer Homes Fuel Poverty strategy 2019-2023 through supporting improvements to insulation and using more efficient low carbon appliances.
- Work with Registered Social Landlords to make their existing housing more energy efficient.

Potential measures/targets

No. of energy saving measures installed

Supporting local businesses to become more sustainable and capitalise on the new opportunities offered by the green economy

We will:

- Consider how our business grants can support local businesses to become more sustainable.
- Work with Welsh Government to help businesses eliminate waste and implement circular economy principles such as reducing pollution and extending the life of products and materials.
- Work with local businesses to help them source more sustainable products locally and sell to local markets.
- Increase the amount of supplies and services the Council procures from local small and medium sized enterprises by disaggregating the contracts into smaller lots that are more suitable for local businesses to tender for.
- Use natural planting in public areas of our town centres to improve air quality and well-being, reduce flood risk and provide cooling during heatwaves.
- Promote Carbon and Eco-Literacy in our schools and across the Council.
- Work with Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, universities and schools to provide opportunities for people to acquire the skills they need for jobs in the green economy, including tourism.
- Continue to work in partnership with schools to deliver and encourage the use of ecology areas on 21st Century School sites for learning.
- Bring together public and third sector, business and academia to maximise our work so that we can all meet our Carbon reduction targets.

Potential measures/targets to be developed

Think Climate – PEOPLE

Supporting and encouraging different lifestyle choices

We will work with residents to develop the Council's plans to tackle Climate Change and also encourage and support them to make changes to their lifestyles and make the choices that will help RCT to become Carbon Neutral by 2030.

We will

- Lead by example, e.g. eliminating our use of single use plastics, installing solar panels on our Council buildings etc. and encouraging our staff to make sustainable travel choices.
- Encourage people to reduce, reuse and recycle waste, which will also help us to achieve our recycling target of 80% by 2025.
- Encourage people to move away from carbon fuelled transport so that half of journeys are walking, cycling or made by public transport by 2030.
- Encourage people to support improvements in air quality by promoting good driving behaviours including implementing no idling zones and reduced speed limits.
- Encourage and support homeowners to improve the energy efficiency of their homes aiming for Zero carbon homes by 2050.
- Develop a training centre at Ynysangharad park that will engage people in their local environment and contribute to activities with positive climate impact, increasing expertise and a love of nature.
- Involve and work with residents and community groups to develop biodiversity initiatives including 'Grab a Rake' (verge management), 'Action for Nature', protecting peatbogs, recording our wildlife and developing a 'Living Landscape' project, bringing together wild places and local groups to benefit nature.

Promoting sustainable, local food

We will:

- Work with partners to develop a Food Prosperity network for creating an RCT sustainable food facility.
- Develop 'park to plate' activities in Ynysangharad Park, to grow fresh vegetables for local foodbanks.
- Enable residents to be more active in their communities in community projects, community use of green space and community food growing projects.
- Increase the number of plant based meal options in our schools and offered by our community meals service.
- Work with community groups to offer Council land to be used for community gardens.
- Increase the number and the accessibility of allotments to residents to enable more people to grow their own fresh food.

Raising Climate Awareness

We will

- Provide clear, simple and practical ways to encourage everyone to play their part.
- Listen to and understand what our residents are telling us.
- Invite and encourage residents, staff and their representatives and also businesses to discuss what the Council can do to help them to reduce their carbon footprint and what they can do for themselves.
- Work with young people, including through schools and their eco councils, youth groups and Arts projects so that their voices are heard and they help shape our plans for their future.

In preparing this Climate Change Plan the Council has taken account of the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Act focuses on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It makes public bodies, such as the Council, think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. This will help us to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. To make sure we are all working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven national Well-being Goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

The Council's approach to the [Well-being of Future Generations Act](#) is to embed its requirements into the Council's business including our Climate Commitments.

This Plan sets out a vision and Climate Commitments that will continue to maximise the Council's contribution to the seven national Well-being goals. The national goals, together with the five Ways of Working, will continue to be incorporated into the detailed action plans that will deliver the Council's climate commitments.

Examples of how our plans to tackle Climate Change contribute to the seven national Well-being Goals currently include
Will be updated once strategy is finished

National Well-being Goal	RCT Climate Action will support the 7 national Well-being goals by
Prosperous Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting new green jobs in a low carbon economy with locally procured goods and services and community benefit clauses. <i>Progressing schemes that will benefit communities now, and in the future including improved low carbon public transport and active travel.</i>
Resilient Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the use of natural resources creating healthier environments for people and all forms of biodiversity. <i>Investing in and valuing our Green Spaces</i> <i>Delivering natural carbon storage solutions such as those provided by trees, peat bogs, marshy grassland</i> <i>Promoting biodiversity by protecting existing habitats where possible</i> <i>Reducing site disturbance and material waste with shorter construction schedules.</i>
Healthier Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving air quality, access to green space and more Active Travel. <i>Ensuring new housing and commercial developments have capacity to generate, store and use reusable energy</i> <i>Make it easier for shoppers to use public transport or active travel to our town centres</i>
More Equal Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving housing conditions and warmth Addressing the inequalities faced by those who are most vulnerable to the effect of Climate Change including women and people on low incomes, allowing people to fulfil their full potential.
Wales of Cohesive Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling residents being more active in their communities in community projects and community use of green space. Working with partners to develop a Food Prosperity network for creating an RCT sustainable food place. Developing ‘park to plate’ activities in Ynysangharad Park, to grow fresh vegetables for local foodbanks

National Well-being Goal	RCT Climate Action will support the 7 national Well-being goals by
A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Welsh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting in place based bi lingual climate related activities, <i>using reclaimed and sustainable materials and methods in community arts, traditional crafts and trades and architecture which distinctly reflect the local area and culture.</i>
Globally Responsible Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitating sustainable behaviour and use nature's resources responsibly at home to contribute to protecting the countries and people that are most at risk and vulnerable to the effects of Climate Change around the world. • <i>Home to school transport vehicles, bus operators and taxi vehicles are fit for purpose and are as environmentally friendly as possible.</i> • <i>A Council fleet that limits impact on environment.</i> • <i>Circular approach to recycling and reuse.</i> • <i>Eliminating single use plastics across the council and schools</i> • <i>Progressing the Eco Park in Bryn Pica.</i> • <i>Opportunities to create and use our own green sustainable energy such as micro hydro-electric schemes which utilise natural river and water course feature.</i> • <i>Increasing the supply of low carbon homes.</i>



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

17TH MARCH 2021

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT PLAN

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION, CHRISTIAN HANAGAN & COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF THE STEERING GROUP IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET'S CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPION (COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS)

Authors: Chris Davies, Corporate Policy & Consultation Manager and Cerys Estebanez, Marketing & Press Officer.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the proposed approach to resident/community engagement and communication in respect of Climate Change. The update includes proposals for a consultation on the draft Climate Change Strategy and a suggested approach for an ongoing climate change conversation. The COVID 19 pandemic and associated challenges, present a unique set of circumstances for engagement. Face-to-face engagement is not currently possible and may not be for quite some time. This update report takes account of the impact of COVID 19 and suggests a virtual by default approach.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet Steering Group:

- 2.1 Agree the planned approach to consultation on the draft Climate Change Strategy and the supporting communications/promotion of the consultation, which will take place during April and May 2021.
- 2.2 Consider and support the revised approach to the ongoing climate change conversation.
- 2.3 Agree for officers to work in partnership with key environmental stakeholders and groups to develop the approach going forward and seek their involvement in specific communications and engagement activity.

- 2.4 Agree to receive updates on progress at future meetings, including feedback on the climate change strategy consultation.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the work of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group is driven by the involvement of all key stakeholders, raising awareness of best practice and ultimately encouraging residents and communities to change their behaviour.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council, through the development of a new Corporate Plan, is committed to becoming a Carbon Neutral organisation 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.
- 4.2 The Cabinet Steering Group has been established to ensure an Authority-wide approach to issues of climate change and the Council becoming a carbon neutral organisation.

The terms of reference of the group state that the Group will;

Provide the opportunity for persons, interested parties, and groups who live in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council the ability to engage in the wider response of the community to Climate Change;

- 4.3 The Council's Cabinet have agreed that the draft Climate Change Strategy will be subject to a comprehensive public consultation over the two months to 31 May 2021 and that the strategy will be scrutinised by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.4 The consultation will involve as wide a range of stakeholders as possible in order to engage as many people as possible in the conversation of "how do we all tackle climate change?". The Council will work with national and local environmental groups to engage residents and businesses and to also encourage them to engage in changing their behaviours.
- 4.5 To raise awareness of the consultation period, the Council's social media and marketing expertise will be used to develop and deliver targeted messages to encourage people to take part, as well as more general awareness raising of the impact of climate change. This will be built upon

and further developed when the final strategy is approved later in the year.

- 4.6 We will engage with the Rhondda Cynon Taf Youth Forum, schools and other youth groups, in addition to the various groups that the Council has traditionally engaged with for consultation processes.
- 4.7 This report outlines a virtual approach to community engagement that will help the Council to deliver the necessary actions to respond to the challenge of Climate Change. The ongoing pandemic will inevitably limit the opportunity for face-to-face engagement; however, the Council will make best use of the variety of social media, remote meetings and digital tools to engage with stakeholders.

5. Engagement on the Draft Climate Change Strategy

- 5.1 It is proposed to involve as wide a range of stakeholders, as possible, in the consultation, focussing on the key messages within the draft strategy, but also the delivery of the wider conversation.
- 5.2 The consultation will last between 6 to 8 weeks and will run from early April to the end of May.

Key actions will include:

- 5.3 The use of an online consultation tool called “Let’s Talk RCT”. The site will host the key consultation documents, including the strategy itself, an easy read version of the strategy and an involvement pack. Methods of engagement on the site include an online survey, related videos, short polls, the ability to map localised comments, a stories box (where users are invited to provide comment and can attach images or documents) and a section where users are invited to provide their ideas on a certain topic.
- 5.4 This tool and the various methods will be promoted through all social media channels, print media and the Council’s corporate website.
- 5.5 A number of virtual engagement events will take place via Zoom. These could be separate into the 3 main themes of the draft strategy, with engagement events split into “Think Climate Places”, “Think Climate prosperity” and “Think Climate people”.

- 5.6 The Council's social media and marketing expertise will be used to promote the consultation methods, with regular information and links provided, as well as the development of a video for social media channels that outlines the strategy and the consultation in an accessible format. There is also the option of a Facebook takeover.
- 5.7 We will work with local environmental groups to see how they can facilitate engagement with residents, groups and businesses and how this can be feedback into back into the consultation reporting process. We will also look to use key stakeholder channels e.g., twitter/Facebook/websites to promote the consultation by providing social media posts and graphics.
- 5.8 We will develop an appropriate young persons approach using online tools such as Instagram, tik tok and the WICID website, working with Youth participation team and our schools.
- 5.9 The Council will provide a number of alternatives to online engagement, as it is important to continue to consider hard to reach groups, those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods. This may include a telephone consultation option working with the Council's Contact Centre, paper surveys and information available on request and a consultation freepost address for postal responses.
- 5.10 If the headline approach to the engagement on the draft climate change strategy outlined is agreed we will work on a more detailed consultation plan that can be shared ahead of the consultation starting in April 2021.

6. Developing an Ongoing Climate Change conversation

- 6.1 As well as engaging on the draft climate change strategy we are also looking to develop an approach that will provide an ongoing conversation on climate change.
- 6.2 We will work with services to develop the appropriate engagement for climate change projects based on the detailed action plans that underpin the climate change strategy.
- 6.3 The first project we will engage on will be a consultation on a future RCT EV Charging and Infrastructure Strategy, which will aim to establish

views of potential EV users in RCT and help gauge potential take-up now and in the future. The consultation will run alongside the overall consultation on the draft climate change strategy. This is the first of many climate change conversations that will take place and we will work with service managers to assist them with any engagement requirements over the next year.

- 6.4 A Central Climate Change web portal to which all residents and stakeholders can be directed has been developed. A new online engagement tool will link to the web portal and will contain information that promotes and raises awareness of current projects, best practice and any case studies from across RCT as well as national and global events.
- 6.5 The online engagement tool can also be used to host online discussion forums or message boards, stories, ideas and also host information about the Climate Change Steering Group, engagement activities, milestones and successes.
- 6.6 The conversation will need to be continuous and the dialogue used to help enable better and more informed decisions. As well as the involvement of Environmental Groups, an ongoing conversation (virtual at first) will need to progress with the involvement of the following;
- *Generally, all residents through virtual meetings, online events, web and social media*
 - *Young people online e.g., through The Rhondda Cynon Taf Youth Forum and through schools and Youth Groups*
 - *Partner organisation through the Public Service Board*
 - *Older People e.g., through the 'Fifty plus' Older People's Forum*
 - *The RCT Disability Forum (telephone is preferred to online)*
 - *The Council's Citizens' Panel*
 - *Local Partnerships and Communities Together 'PACT' meetings*
 - *Health Forums*
 - *Service User Groups e.g., Transport, Carers*
 - *Community/Voluntary groups*
 - *Welsh Language Groups*
 - *Community and Town Councils*
 - *Councillors, MPs, AMs*
 - *Businesses*
 - *Staff*
- 6.7 The Council's staff will also have a key part to play, considering that 80% of our staff live within Rhondda Cynon Taf. There are a wide range of

methods that can be undertaken online, including the Staff Forum, the Council's Intranet, awareness raising through staff payslip information and virtual manager briefing sessions.

- 6.8 The Council's Community Council Liaison Committee is already undertaking meetings online and they will have a key role in supporting future projects at a local level.
- 6.9 The way in which the groups or individuals will be involved in all future climate change engagement activity will be dependent on what is appropriate for the audience. As already stated an online engagement Plan will need to be developed for each project. Methods could include:
- Virtual Face to face engagement events/Webinars
 - Online focus group events which lead to participation in a project
 - Working with community groups to facilitate conversations and links to develop future projects.
 - Virtual Citizen Juries, where a random group of residents work with the experts to deliberate and establish recommendations.
 - Online Polls/Questions – social media polls are a quick and easy way of reaching online residents, usually in the form of closed questions, but the comments can also be analysed. Polls can also be used on Zoom.
 - Future face to face road show events to raise awareness if this becomes possible.
- 6.10 Any approach will need to include engagement at a community level, to support project delivery in areas such tree planting and improved recycling performance as examples.
- 6.11 Through the knowledge gained by working with stakeholders and community groups, there will be the opportunity to utilise targeted online events to focus on encouraging wider participation in specific areas of behavioural change.
- 6.12 The potential engagement opportunities referenced will feed into the wider planned communications activities.
- 6.13 As community leaders, the wider engagement and involvement of all elected members is crucially important to the effective engagement of communities across all of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 6.14 Seeking the engagement of elected members in leading project delivery and those conversations with residents will make a positive difference and enhance progress. Examples such as the Rhys-cycle and Green

Village initiative led by members demonstrates the positive lead Councillors will play.

7 Ongoing Communications & Social Media activity

- 7.1 Through the development of a dedicated communication plan the Council will connect communications activity with key milestones and delivery of projects currently being considered.
- 7.2 In order to raise awareness and enable behavioural change the Council's social media and marketing expertise would be used to develop targeted campaigns for specific audiences, as well as more general awareness of Climate Change to RCT residents and businesses.

Key communication actions will include:

- *Launching the draft strategy consultation and promoting all activities alongside highlighting key successful projects already undertaken in RCT.*
- *Linking with key national and local climate change events, producing a focused programme of events that the council can promote and encourage residents to think about different aspects of climate change.*
- *Playing the leading role in support the Council's behavioural change campaign*
- *developing a dedicated #ThinkClimateRCT*
- *Did you know campaigns?*
- *Wider support for engagement and consultation activities*
- *Promoting good work already taking place at a local level*
- *Connecting with national groups who support behavioural change.*

Communicating behavioural change

- 7.3 The Council has a strong track record in delivering behavioural change campaigns. Communications activities have proactively supported the

Council's recycling improvements and the implementation of service change.

- 7.4 During the current coronavirus pandemic many people across the world retreated into radically different lives during the lockdown. The desire to stay safe has created some mass behavioural changes that have shown the positive impact that our actions can have on the planet.
- 7.5 The pandemic has had a big impact on something that is fundamental to addressing climate change — our values. Life under coronavirus has forced everyone to take collective action to protect each other's health, and to realise that distant threats are very real and definitely worth preparing for.
- 7.6 A draft behaviour change marketing campaign has been developed – see appendix A, once complete it will include story board visuals, digital content, and social media messaging. The approach is based on a successful campaign to raise awareness of recycling rates in RCT. The campaign aims to make the community “Think about the Climate in RCT” and about how they can make positive changes in their lifestyles to reduce their carbon footprint.
- 7.7 It is proposed that the campaign launches later in the year via Social Media highlighting the simple changes that residents have and can continue to make.. These include continuing to work from home, taking advantage of the various active travel routes we have in RCT, recycling one more item, shopping local on our award-winning high streets, taking advantage of the Heat and Save campaign, join/visit a local library or stay local and explore the great outdoors that RCT has to offer etc.
- 7.8 More generally, a range of social media channels can be used to communicate the general Climate Change agenda and the support of stakeholders will be key to signpost to social media discussions, already taking place. A toolkit could also be developed for partners to use on their communication channels.

8 Next Steps

- 8.1 A detailed engagement and communications plan will now be developed for the draft Climate Change Strategy, with the aim of launching in early April and running through till the end of May 2021.

- 8.2 Linked to the above, an engagement plan will also be developed for the electric vehicle charging strategy and this consultation will run alongside that of the climate strategy.
- 8.3 Following the completion of the consultation period and final strategy being agreed, the marketing and communications campaign may need to be revisited and finalised as the details and launch will be dependent on the time of year and where we are with regards to the Welsh Government Covid-19 restriction levels.
- 8.4 Engaging with local and national environmental campaigns.

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The engagement approach will provide opportunities for a diverse group of residents and stakeholders to get involved, providing a range of methods including online and specific engagement for targeted groups, such as young people and older people. The engagement will also involve the Council's Disability Forum.
- 9.2 We must ensure the online approach we will be developing continues to consider hard to reach groups, those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods. It's important to ensure that no stakeholders are excluded.

10. CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The recommendations outlined in the report seek to develop a virtual approach to Communication, Engagement and Involvement on Climate Change issues across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

11 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 11.1 There are no financial implications directly aligned to this report at this stage.

12 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 12.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.



13. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 13.1 The Council has committed to becoming a Carbon Neutral organisation 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. This supports the priorities of the Council's current Corporate Plan.
- 13.2 This work is fully reflecting the Sustainable Development principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and will contribute to all seven National Goals, with more immediate direct contributions to a Globally Responsible Wales, a more Resilient Wales, a Healthy Wales and a Wales of Cohesive Communities.

14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1 The communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf will need to work together to meet our targets on climate change. The Council, therefore, welcomes the opportunity to consult and engage with elected members, other public and private organisations, community and environmental groups and individuals in seeking their views how we can all help to achieve this ambitious target.
- 14.2 As well as providing an approach to involve people on the draft Climate Change Strategy, the approach outlined in the report will also provide an ongoing opportunity for persons, interested parties, and groups who in live in Rhondda Cynon Taf, to engage in the wider response of the community to the climate change challenge.
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APPENDIX - Proposed Campaign Outline

Think Climate RCT

The aim of the Think Climate RCT campaign is to promote the work of the Council in a bid to encourage residents to join the fight against climate change and “make a change for RCT”.

Key aims:

- To develop a distinctive **behavioural change initiative** to positively raise awareness of the importance of Climate Change and to educate residents on how we can all make small changes in RCT to help the global problem and save our planet.
- To promote what RCTCBC is doing as an employer to reduce its carbon footprint and become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030.
- Promote what RCTCBC is doing as a Local Authority to help its residents make changes, offer support and encouragement to reduce the County Borough’s overall carbon footprint.

Launch date: TBC.

Campaign roles:



- Press and Marketing lead: Cerys Estebanez (CE)
- Community Engagement lead: Chris Davies (CD)
- Social lead: Cerys Estebanez
- Web lead: Sam Akintoye and Gemma Smith (SA), (GS)

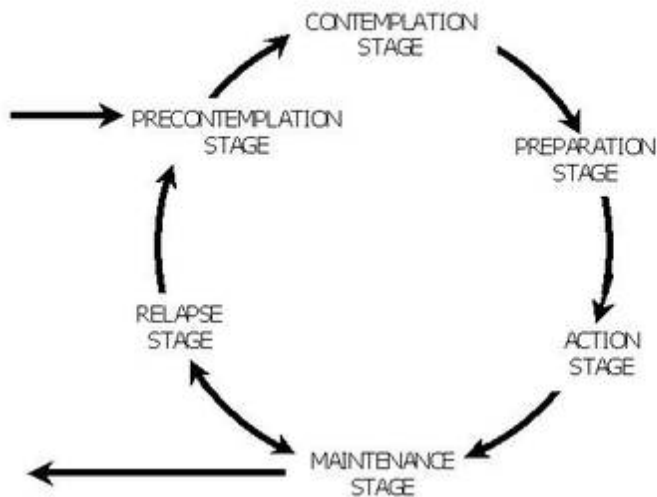
This plan will outline how the Council will promote the work its doing and how it will engage with its residents on how they feel the Council can support them in Making a Change to support the climate in RCT.

Social Marketing Communications

Social Marketing Definition:

Social marketing is designed to create social change, not to directly benefit a brand. Using traditional marketing techniques, it raises awareness of a given problem or cause, and aims to convince an audience to change their behaviours. Social marketing “promotes” a behaviour or lifestyle that benefits society, in order to create the desired change. This benefit to the public good is always the primary focus. And instead of showing how a matter is better than competing issues, social marketing “competes” against undesirable thoughts, behaviours, or actions. Well-executed social marketing captures attention, and spreads awareness about a social issue, through creativity and emotion. Most importantly, it presents a compelling, simple way to make the world better, and makes this beneficial behaviour more desirable than any “competing” behaviour. Through these elements, social marketing is able to successfully “promote” a beneficial behaviour.

The latest behavioural change rational suggests promoting positive behaviours and praising those that carry out this behaviour, encourages those who are not ‘conforming’ to take notice and change. However, there are four behavioural change stages that exist within each group and in order to successfully change behaviour, the campaign will need to target each of these behavioural stages.



There are four main stages: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation/action and maintenance. The additional stage of relapse is also sometimes included (as above) and highlight the fact that at any time people can “relapse” back to their former behavior, if their new behavior is not encouraged, praised or being carried out by peers.

1) Precontemplation

People in this stage don't want to make any change to their habits and don't recognize that they have a problem. They may be pessimistic about their ability to make change, or even deny the negative effects of their existing lifestyle habits. They selectively filter information that helps confirm their decision not to think about how their actions could impact climate change. This stage is many times referred to as the “denial” stage.

Unfortunately, it's difficult to reach people in the precontemplation stage. It may take an emotional trigger, or event of some kind that can snap people out of their denial. They will need to see how climate change will impact them and or their families on a local level before they will engage – this stage usually react when they face fines, or their lives are affected e.g., a removal of a service they use etc.

2) Contemplation

During this stage, you are weighing up the costs (i.e., effort, time, finances) and benefits of making changes to your lifestyle. You are contemplating whether it's something that will be worth it. People can remain in this stage for years without preparing to take action, unless the benefits are presented to them or they are forced to take action. Residents in this stage are potentially the main target for all communication as they “sit on the fence” and could potentially move to precontemplation if they feel pressured.



3) Preparation/Action

People in the preparation stage have decided to change their negative habits within one month and will potentially adapt to suggested changes without much resistance.

4) Maintenance

This stage relates to the residents that are already passionate about the environment and are aware how their actions can make a difference to climate change. These residents can be used as climate change champions and could be used to promote the overall benefits, in a bid to convert all other groups.

Target Audience

In every participative process, stakeholders are the key to effective communications and behavioural change. Stakeholders can be described in various different ways with the most common classifications being type or sector. Whilst an engagement process may have a full representation of stakeholder types, it may lack stakeholders with certain roles or types of interest so we may want to include those for the purpose of this project.

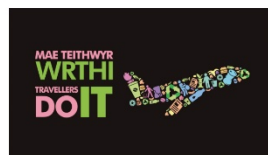
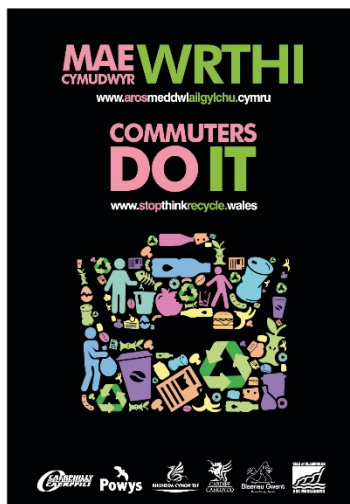
In order to raise climate change awareness and promote the changes the Council is making; the campaign communications will be targeted. The target groups will be: -

External	Internal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Householders • Schools – including Eco Councils and Champions • Community Groups • Residents Associations • Housing Associations • Older persons forums • Youth Forums • Voluntary Groups • NRW • Businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members • Directors • Heads of Service • Manager/supervisor • Customer Care Team • Communication and Marketing Team • All staff

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel operators • Climate Action groups • Welsh Assembly Government • Media 	
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Proposed Campaign Outline

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic there was a successful campaign running to raise awareness and increase recycling rates across the County Borough, this had been in place for around a year and has contributed to the increase in recycling rates.



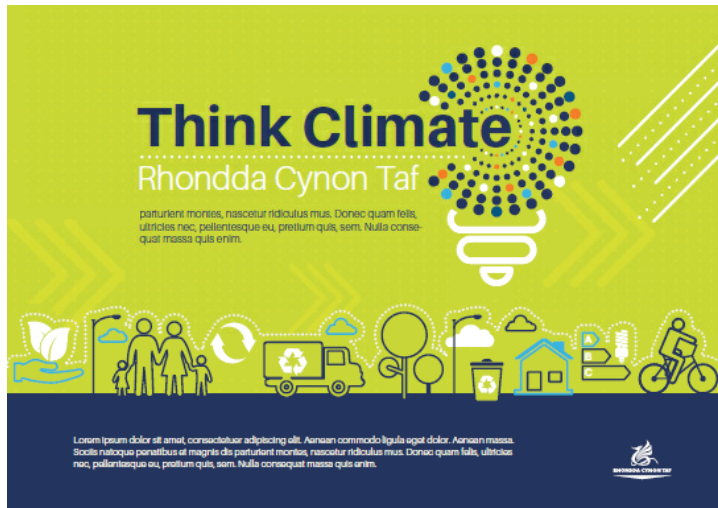
This campaign aimed to make people/residents Stop and Think about their lifestyles/actions and make a positive change by recycling because everyone is doing IT and showcasing recycling as the social norm.

It is therefore proposed that we build on this success and adapt the strapline to highlight the need for residents to make a change for RCT and Think Climate



RCT – the campaign will also bring Stop.SORT.Recycle into the concept under the new overall branding of Think Climate RCT.

It's time to 'Think Climate RCT' #ThinkClimateRCT



The campaign will look to incorporate the key themes from within the draft Climate Change strategy and will also link back to the Council’s Corporate Plan 2020-24.

The Council’s Corporate Plan 2020-24, Making A Difference, acknowledged that delivering our Climate Change commitment is our greatest challenge. In our plan we committed to delivering three main priorities, all of which will contribute to and benefit from tackling climate change:

- Ensuring People are independent, healthy and successful;
- Creating Places: where people are proud to live, work and play;
- Enabling Prosperity: creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.

By using these themes, we will look to promote what we are doing as a Council to reduce our impact on Climate Change and look to highlight how residents can make changes in their lives to for the benefit of not just Rhondda Cynon Taf but for the world – however small a part you play, you can still make a difference.

Here are some further examples of other topics that can be promoted under the same branding:



Think Climate
Rhondda Cynon Taf

Main Title Here
Sub heading/title

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Icons:



During the current coronavirus pandemic many people across the world retreated into radically different lives during the lockdown. The desire to stay safe created some dramatic mass behaviour changes that showcased the affect that our actions can have on the planet – the reduction in people’s movements ultimately led to a reduction in carbon. To refer back to the behavioural change cycle ‘Pre-contemplation’ and peoples need to see how their actions and changes could impact on their local and global environment. The pandemic has now highlighted the impact that we have, and it is hoped that it will lead people to behave differently. As many people continue to spend more time at home, they become aware of the amount of energy they consume and food they waste - which may make them think and change their behaviour for RCT.

There is currently a window for the Government and Local Authorities to reinforce the ‘climate-positive’ behaviours that have emerged during the lockdown, including increased remote working, cycling and walking. Local Authorities can look to promote and support this via positive communications.

The pandemic has had a big impact on something that is foundational to addressing climate change — our values. Life under coronavirus has forced everyone to take collective action to protect each other’s health, and to realise that distant threats are very real and definitely worth preparing for. This combined with the devastation caused by Storm Dennis in 2020 has shown RCT residents that the Climate can no longer be ignored for someone else to deal with- it’s time to Think Climate RCT.

It is proposed that the campaign launches via Social Media as part of the initial consultation phase of the project. This would look to support ‘the conversation’ and capture residents thought, feeling and ideas so that the final campaign can build on the results and help residents make the changes that they feel they



can make and promote the changes that they feel the Council should make to help them in doing so.

The main campaign will look to highlight the simple, 'quick-win' changes that residents have and can continue to make, to #ThinkClimateRCT. These include continuing to work from home, taking advantage of the various active travel routes we have in RCT, recycling one more item, shopping local on our award-winning high streets, take advantage of the Heat and Save campaign, join/visit a local library or stay local and explore the great outdoors that RCT has to offer etc.

Where possible messages can link to the changes the Council has made, e.g. "As a council we are supporting xx employees to work from home to keep them safe during the pandemic and to help reduce our carbon footprint. Have you made a change during this time that has helped the environment? It's time to #ThinkClimateRCT, visit www.rctcbc.gov.uk/ThinkClimateRCT to find out more."

"As we turn on our heating – Think! Could you turn the thermostat down just one degree? #ThinkClimateRCT. We can all make changes that will lead to big things for the environment. Visit www.rctcbc.gov.uk/ThinkClimateRCT to find out more."

Campaign Credibility – “The Science Bit”

In order to give the campaign credibility, we could consider the support of a science activist who could act as an advocate/endorser of the work the Council is carrying out. This person could host virtual sessions and demonstrations on how the planet is being affected and bring this to a local level e.g., increased temperatures and rainfall etc. This could be a lecturer or a paid person or an internal resource if available. This could be a key tool in terms of engagement.

We could also tap into local resources e.g., Pen-Y-Cymoedd to highlight how natural energy sources are being sought here in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Raise further awareness of the Recycling through the Education Visitors Centre officers at Bryn Pica, the Biogen AD plant and partner with DWR CYMRU – during the pandemic any education sessions or resources would need to be provided virtually or digitally.

Schools

Rhondda Cynon Taf Schools will play a key role in the success of this campaign, as what we promote to the younger generation will become the future. It is vital that we support schools to highlight simple changes and promote the works they do via eco councils etc. Due to the ongoing pandemic



access to schools will be limited, but information and resources could be supplies virtually and digitally.

Environmental Awareness Days

During environmental awareness days e.g., Clean Air Day #CleanAirDay2022 we could look to produce a video that highlights the actions the Council has taken so far. Also ask all schools to encourage active travel ‘walk to school day’ ask staff to bike to work (where appropriate) or get outdoors during their work from home lunch breaks – this could be incentive based using fit bit trackers, maybe xx team to complete the equivalent of a marathon in a week etc.

This will connect the campaign to what is topical at the time and place ‘Think Climate RCT’ in this space on social media, “what’s trending” – this enables the campaign to engage the key audiences and connect with them about the things that matter to them and showcase how the suggested changes can fit in to their life (or space) and what small changes they can continue to make to further enjoy what they do (social conscience). By doing this is it hoped that we can engage with those residents who haven’t thought about climate change or the effect that their actions could be having on the planet. Those who are passionate about the environment will always make changes and our messages to them will be based on service info e.g., new recycling methods, what we are doing and how they make a difference – these residents are also our Climate Change Champions and should be utilised.

April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Walk to Work Day</i> • <i>Community Garden week</i> • <i>International micro-Volunteering Day</i> • <i>International Mother Earth Day</i> • <i>The Big Pedal 2020*</i> • <i>National Gardening Week</i> • <i>Water Saving Week</i>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>National Clean Air Month</i> • <i>National Walking Month</i> • <i>Walk to School Week*</i> • <i>World Biodiversity Day</i> • <i>National Children's Gardening Week*</i>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>World Environment Day</i> • <i>World Ocean Day</i> • <i>Bike Week</i> • <i>National Clean Air Day</i> • <i>National Refill Day</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>International Clean Air Day</i>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Plastic FREE July</i> • <i>Don't Step on a BEE day</i> • <i>Love Parks Week</i>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bike to work day</i> • <i>International Youth Day</i> • <i>National Allotments Week</i>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>International day for the preservation of the ozone layer</i> • <i>International day of peace</i> • <i>World Car FREE Day</i> • <i>Recycle Week</i> • <i>Bike to School Week*</i>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>International Walk to School Month*</i>

Marketing Tools

Where possible all marketing tools should not add to our carbon footprint and printed materials should be kept to a minimum and digital/virtual content should be utilised in the first instance – this is now even more important as we face a number of restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic.

- ALL Council Social Media Channels will be utilised.
- Digital content
- Paid for Social Media Content
- Press Releases to announce key events, milestones and good practice across RCT, including work of schools and community groups.
- The Website will be used to showcase case studies and engage with residents – including the option to develop an online engagement hub/portal.
- Council Banner Boards
- Virtual information promo packs for schools – that could include info posters etc.
- Virtual Information packs for Climate Change Champion
- Web banners
- Internal comms via Inform/resource, staff briefings, all staff emails etc.

Launch

We could look to do a virtual soft launch of the campaign as part of the initial consultation on the draft climate change strategy and also gain useful feedback on the look and feel of the branding if appropriate. The launch would be



supported by a mix of the marketing tools highlighted above as and when appropriate.

- Press Release to announce the opening of engagement projects.
- Daily Social Media posts to promote engagement projects.
- Daily Social Media Post to promote what we as a Council have already achieved.
- Utilise roadside banners is appropriate with some active travel messages.
- Website banners linking to new website or consultation hub.

Messages can be tailored to showcase what we as a Council are doing, have already undertaken and plan to do, to reach the goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and achieve 100 per cent clean energy across Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's full range of functions by 2050.

Following the completion of the consultation period, the launch of the final campaign/strategy will need to be revisited as this will be dependent on the time of year and where we are with regards to the Welsh Government Covid-19 restriction levels.

Depending on the circumstances we would look to put together a weeklong activity programme to reach and engage residents of all ages and this will continue to be fully supported by virtual public engagement activities, asking as many partner agencies to get involved as possible.

Current and up-to-date information from all service areas across the Council will be pivotal to the success of the campaign and it is vital that the communications team are informed of any key changes that will help us to raise awareness of Climate Change in RCT and beyond.