



**CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**A virtual meeting of the CABINET will be held on
Thursday, 24th June, 2021 at 10.30 am**

Contact: Emma Wilkins - Council Business Unit (Tel No. 07385401935)

Councillors and members of the public wishing to request the facility to address the Cabinet on any of the business as listed below, must request to do so by 5pm on the Tuesday, 22 June 2021 Councillors and Members of the public should stipulate if this address will be in the medium of English or Welsh.

It must be noted that the facility to address the Cabinet is at the discretion of the Chair and each request will be considered based on the agenda items being considered, the public interest/interest of the member in each matter and the demands of the business on that day. To make such a request please email:- ExecutiveandRegulatoryBusinessUnit@rctcbc.gov.uk

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest: and
2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they must notify the Chairman when they leave.

2. ACCESS AND ENGAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN DEMOCRACY

To receive the report of the Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication, which provides Members with an update in respect of the introduction arrangements to enable the broadcasting of committee meetings and the ability to operate through a hybrid approach.

3. ADDITIONAL REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE INVESTMENT IN SCHOOLS

To receive the report of the Director, Education and Inclusion Services, which provides Members with details of further repairs and maintenance works for approval for 2021/22 as a result of additional funding awarded by Welsh Government in March 2021 and supplemented by the Council's earmarked reserves.

(Pages 19 - 34)

4. PRE SCRUTINY - DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY (2021-2025) CONSULTATION RESPONSES

To receive the report of the Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication, which provides the Cabinet with the feedback of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which met on the 14th and 15th June 2021, respectively, to consider the report on the Draft Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025) Consultation Responses, which is attached for Members consideration.

(Pages 35 - 98)

5. THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY PROJECT 2021-22 - RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

To receive the report of the Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication, which provides Cabinet with the observations of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group, which met on the 14th June 2021, to consider a report on the Queen's Green Canopy Project 2021-22.

(Pages 99 - 112)

6. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any urgent business as the Chairman feels appropriate.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Stanger', is written over a faint, circular official stamp.

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

Councillors: Councillor A Morgan (Chair)
Councillor M Webber (Deputy Chair)
Councillor R Bevan
Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor M Norris
Councillor J Rosser
Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor G Hopkins

Officers: Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Nigel Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services
Paul Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources
David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Barrie Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Louise Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Derek James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development
Paul Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24TH JUNE 2021

ACCESS & ENGAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN DEMOCRACY

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPUTY LEADER, COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCILLOR M WEBBER.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update in respect of the introduction arrangements to enable the broadcasting of committee meetings and the ability to operate through a hybrid approach. These developments aim to encourage engagement and improve public participation in the democratic process.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Note the development of the provision of webcasting within Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, in line with the requirements of the Local Government & Elections Wales Act, 2021.
- (ii) Note the development of webcasting to further assist with the promotion of public engagement and transparency of decision making by the Council;
- (iii) Note the decision of the Democratic Services Committee in respect of the meetings that are proposed to remain as virtual meetings and those that will be facilitated through a future hybrid approach, subject to the caveats outlined within the report
- (iv) Note the meetings that will be webcast and live streamed through the Council website and the roll out of such meetings.
- (v) Note the move to the Modern.Gov system to publish information to the Council website, including Member attendance details.
- (vi) Note the funding received via the Digital Democracy Fund to further support the developments needed to be taken forward with webcasting within the Council Headquarters.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act places a duty on principal councils to put in place arrangements for the broadcast of council meetings so that members of the public who are unable to attend meetings are able to see and hear proceedings as they happen. Recordings of meetings should also be publicly available for a reasonable period after the meeting.
- 3.2 There are a number of benefits achieved through webcasting which include:
- A positive demonstration of accountability and transparency;
 - Encouraging engagement and debate, by creating more opportunities for the public to access meetings;
 - Accuracy of recording of meetings including recording of decisions, voting and attendance;
 - The opportunity to raise the profile of the work of Councillors, and the discussions behind the decisions of Council and its committees.
 - Assists in supporting our paper light approaches to meetings moving forward as some facilities in the Council chamber are currently inhibiting the role-out of a paper-light approach.
- 3.3 On the 15th April 2021, following significant delays to the implementation of the webcasting equipment due to the covid pandemic, the webcasting equipment within the Council Chamber was signed off and the Council Business Unit, along with colleagues from ICT and the Welsh Language Unit undertook socially distanced training on the new equipment at the beginning of May 2021.

4. WEBCASTING GOING FORWARD.

- 4.1 The introduction of a webcasting service will require the Council Business Unit to conduct a number of trial meetings to ensure the final product is a professional webcast stream of Council meetings. For this reason, it is recommended that the introduction of live webcasting be rolled out on an incremental basis to allow for experience to be gained with the live system operations.
- 4.2 It is intended to adopt the same incremental approach as was utilised for the roll-out of virtual meetings during the summer of 2020.
- 4.3 This approach would initially prioritise Cabinet, Democratic Services, Planning and Development and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. This would include a number of 'dress rehearsal' sessions before using the equipment in a formal setting. The table set below provides an indication of the timeline to be utilised:

Next Steps	Outcome	Scheduled (dates to be confirmed for formal report)
Briefing on new arrangements to Cabinet members and officers	To familiarise Cabinet & SLT with the new operation arrangements for webcast and hybrid meetings	Late June/early July
Briefing on the new arrangements to members of the Democratic Services Committee (DSC)	To familiarise the DSC with the new operation arrangements for webcast and hybrid meetings	Late June/ early July
Briefing on new arrangements to Overview & Scrutiny Committee (O&S) members	To familiarise O&S members with the new operation arrangements for webcast and hybrid meetings	July
Broadcast meeting of Cabinet	Utilise the Public-I infrastructure to webcast a Cabinet meeting including hybrid attendance	July
Briefing on new arrangements to Planning & Development (P&D) Committee members	To familiarise P&D members with the new operation arrangements for webcast and hybrid meetings	August
Broadcast meeting of Democratic Services Committee (DSC)	Utilise the Public-I infrastructure to webcast a DSC meeting including the ability for hybrid attendance	September
Broadcast meeting of Planning & Development Committee	Utilise the Public-I infrastructure to webcasting a P&D meeting including the ability for hybrid attendance	September
Broadcast meeting of Overview & Scrutiny	Utilise the Public-I infrastructure to webcast a O&S meeting including the ability for hybrid attendance	September
Review progress to date	DSC to review progress and feedback from members	September
Wider briefing on new arrangements to all members, including committee by committee engagement	Subject to review To familiarise members not already briefed on new ways of working (including specific session for Chairs & Vice-Chairs)	September
Wider committee roll-out	Subject to review work towards Implementing webcasting and hybrid arrangements across all functions	September

- 4.4 The next phase would see the adoption, on an incremental basis by thematic scrutiny committees following the schedule of the committee calendar, with a hybrid Council meeting being enabled at the end of this process.
- 4.5 This technology will provide the opportunity to 'lock-in' the opportunity already created, through the virtually meetings arrangement via Zoom and the publication of meeting recordings on the Council website.
- 4.6 It will be important to maintain flexibility in our approach to each specific committee, between full attendance, hybrid and virtual, to maintain and build upon the positive enhancements, which have been achieved over the last twelve months.
- 4.7 A full programme of training will be needed to be developed for members over the coming weeks to provide the opportunity for members to familiarise themselves with this technology. Again this support would be provided through 'mock' meetings to enable members and officers to become familiar with the arrangement before public use.
- 4.8 The Council's Rules of Procedure were considered at the Constitution Committee on the 13th May and ratified at the Council's 26th Annual General Meeting to allow for the introduction of hybrid meetings and webcasting. Further amendments to the constitution may need to be taken forward as we still await the publication of the Welsh Government guidance into hybrid meetings. It is also suggested that a multi-location policy is taken forward by the Democratic Services Committee to further support the implementation of hybrid meetings.
- 4.9 Due to the current Covid restrictions and to ensure Member and Officer safety we will need to ensure that the number of Members that choose to attend a meeting physically does not exceed the recommended Chamber capacity of 26 (socially distanced). This figure will need to include officers from Democratic Services to run the hybrid infrastructure. It is therefore proposed that attendance will be proportional to the political balance, with Group leaders confirming physical attendance within those numbers in advance of a meeting.
- 4.10 Going forward, in advance of any hybrid meeting, Members will be asked to attend a meeting at least 30 minutes in advance of the meeting to check for any potential technical problems and to check Members are comfortable with the systems.
- 4.11 Alongside the discussions with the Democratic Services Committee, the Head of Democratic Services will continue to engage with Group Leaders in respect of these developments and future roll-out plans.

5 COUNCIL CHAMBER AND COMMITTEE ROOM 1.

- 5.1 As well as the introduction of webcasting the Council Chamber has undergone significant amendments to ensure accessibility and to improve the democratic

environment. The new webcasting equipment improves the audio within the Chamber, the addition of screens will make it easier for Members to engage in the process and the new furniture arrangements addresses accessibility requirements. The pavement outside of the Council Chamber has also been lowered due to accessibility issues. These issues have been identified via the Diversity in Democracy Working Group.

- 5.2 To further enhance the translation facilities provided during Committee meetings the chamber now consists of an integrated translation booth, which will benefit members of the welsh language team to undertake this vital role and further enhance diversity in the democratic process.
- 5.3 In addition to the expansion of webcasting infrastructure equipment the procurement of new headset systems for all Members / Officers and Members of the public when in attendance at meetings will be taken forward, to ensure the translation provided within a meeting is easily accessible for all. The current headsets are no longer compatible with the new system and there is a need for any new headsets purchased to be easily sanitised after each use, as is with current practice in the Council Chamber and which is even more important in the current climate. The provision of such headsets again ensures equality of provision for those Members / Officers / public that wish to transverse bilingually at meetings.
- 5.4 In December 2020, the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Julie James announced funding opportunities of £500,000 to support the digital transformation of democracy required to underpin many of the provisions contained within the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act, 2021. RCT Council submitted 3 bids to the fund:
- Expansion of the Webcasting infrastructure (Bid 1)
 - Strengthening of the Members Portal and voting Apps (Bid 2)
 - Support framework to further assist Town and Community Councils with the implementation of the Local Government & Elections Wales Act.(Bid 3)

Expansion of the Webcasting infrastructure (Bid 1)

- 5.5 Our first bid recognised that the Council's current investment in the webcasting infrastructure would only support webcasting of Chamber proceedings, with this facility supporting full Council and planning meetings. The bespoke set-up used for scrutiny proceedings, which as Members will be aware is often better facilitated within our smaller committee rooms would require regular reconfiguration. This funding will take forward a further purchase of webcasting infrastructure within our smaller committee room settings. The bid also recognized the importance of the provision to provide a hybrid platform for most meetings to support Members whether they attend remotely or in person at a meeting. The Council recognised there was a strong need to plan for future hybrid meetings for the benefit of all Members, ensuring meetings are accessible and Members are treated equally. There are always significant accessibility risks for hybrid meetings and enabling use of the smaller committee room settings in the first instance, learning where possible from other successful organisations who conduct hybrid meetings, would increase the

scope of engagement, not just formal committee meetings, but in terms of public and partner engagement and participation. It was therefore seen as essential that the smaller committee rooms were equipped with the webcasting facilities in the first instance.

Strengthening of the Members Portal and voting Apps (Bid 2)

- 5.6 The Second bid looked to further improve the facilities within the Members portal which is being developed for the benefit of Members. The need for an online voting system when undertaking hybrid meetings will be instrumental to the continuation of Council business in a timely and proficient manner, preventing a roll call basis as currently utilised. An online voting system for all Members to utilise regardless of their location at a meeting will ensure accessibility and equality without any discrimination for those outside of the Council Chamber and preventing any members who are attending a meeting virtually from feeling disengaged from the voting process. Through the current virtual meetings arrangements taken forward by the Council it had been considered that the Members Portal could serve as an important area for a voting system to be developed. Since these initial discussions, the facilitators of Modern Gov has since developed its own online voting system integrated within the Modern Gov App, which Members utilise to access Committee papers. The use of this voting system within ModernGov is considered to be the best way forward in respect of voting at Committee meetings, promoting Members use of the ModernGov app to access Committee papers and ensure ease of access for all Members.

Support framework to further assist Town and Community Councils with the implementation of the Local Government & Elections Wales Act. (Bid 3)

- 5.7 The third bid looked at supporting Community and Town Councils in responding to the Local Government & Elections Wales Act, particularly in respect of public engagement to assist in the diversity in democracy agenda. The bid included the development of a digital support framework to assist in the delivery of virtual and hybrid meetings and strengthen the opportunity such meetings will have in the diversity of democracy agenda and public engagement. Through the use of the digital support fund the Council would look to further support our Town and Community Councils with digital engagement as we recognise that Community and Town Councils offer a means of connecting with residents at a local level. This work would promote participation within communities and support broader diversity in terms of engagement and representation at a Community Council level. As a Council we feel we would be able to provide and work with Community and Town Councils to identify digital solutions to assist their democratic processes and respond to the Act. This funding will enable practical support to be provided to support Town & Community Council Clerks to develop their digital environment, ensuring that their Elected Members can represent and communicate with residents in a digital way. This funding would enable 'good digital working practices' to be shared with our respective town and community councils. Through this support we would provide access to training available to principal council members.

- 5.8 On the 10th March, the Head of Democratic Services received notification that RCT had been successful with each of the bids submitted. Going forward this means, that the Council will look to procure additional equipment to support the webcasting provision and future hybrid meetings. In respect of the voting app the Council Business unit will work with the Modern Gov to pilot the voting facilities and to take forward any bespoke requirements potentially needed.

6 WEBCASTING RECORDINGS.

- 6.1 A webcast is a transmission of audio and video over the internet. The webcasting equipment within the Council Chamber and going forward Committee Room 1 captures the live information of a Committee meeting and sends it to a central server, which in turn sends it to anyone that would like to view the meeting. Through the use of a persons internet Members of the public can view Council meetings live from the comfort of their own home.
- 6.2 The system also allows viewers to watch / re-watch meetings following closure of the meeting through the publication of such materials on the Councils website. The archives allow viewers to view the meeting at their leisure and, through the use of the index points, allow viewers to jump to a specific agenda point or speaker.
- 6.3 The webcasting system is fully integrated within the Modern.Gov system, which further enhances a viewers understanding of a meeting. Through such integration agenda items are easily accessible and in addition viewers can find out further information about a member speaking by linking to a Members profile page in the Modern Gov system.
- 6.4 For such information to be available, it will be necessary for RCT to push the Modern.Gov system 'public'. Currently the Council have been utilising a 'restricted' version of the system. This means only RCT members / co-opted Members and Officers have access to its content. When the system becomes public the information published on the system will be pushed to the Council website and the Modern. Gov app, therefore in the public domain, unless a report is an exempt item, where system parameters are in place to prevent public view. The benefits of this publication prevents the duplication that is currently being undertaken by the Council Business unit (Officers publish agendas within the modern gov system and then further have to publish through the contensis system on the Council website); The Modern. Gov system will populate the Council website in respect of a Members profile data, including extra features such as party logos. The system will also capture details in respect of Member attendance and details such as Member training. The recording of Member attendance will become a seamless and real-time public-facing record of members attendance. Attendance will be 'live' with the information being made available a few days after a meeting. Currently the recording and updating of Member attendance records is input manually by the Council Business Unit which often requires an updating period before up-to-date attendance is subsequently published on the web. Another benefit of the system is the timely notifications of Member Attendance to the Council

Business unit if a Member has not attended a meeting for a four month consecutive period.

- 6.5 Another benefit of the Modern.Gov system is the availability of a 'live calendar of meetings'. This calendar will illustrate all meetings that are scheduled in line with the agreed Calendar of Meetings and will illustrate all documentation linked to these meetings when such documentation has been published in line with current publication requirements. Any amendments to the calendar will automatically be updated so always providing a 'live' calendar of meetings.
- 6.6 Members must be mindful that the publication of the information to the web via the modern gov system will need to be from a point in time. Therefore it is proposed that the system is pushed live at the start of the new Municipal Year. Committee agenda's, minutes and things such as Member attendance details will be available on the system prior to this start point due to the details already being recorded by the Council Business Unit, but for accuracy going forward the details should be viewed from June 2021.

7. COMMITTEE MEETINGS GOING FORWARD.

- 7.1 Following the need to conduct virtual meetings through the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 and in readiness for the forthcoming requirements of hybrid meetings and remote attendance through the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act the Council already have well established practices in place to conduct such meetings through the zoom platform, with the recording following these meetings being available on the Council website.
- 7.2 Going forward, and with the future steady move (restrictions permitted) to undertake physical meetings for most Committee meetings it is proposed that some of the smaller Council meetings that are undertaken are continued to be held through a virtual meeting setting. The reason for such a proposal is following consideration of:
- The likely duration of the meetings – Consideration of the agenda item content and also using Councillor and Officers time more sensibly by reducing the travel requirements;
 - Promote diversity in Democracy by encouraging the flexibility of remote access to virtual meetings and thereby attracting more people who work and young parents
 - Contribute to the carbon reduction agenda by reducing travelling and reducing travelling costs.
- 7.3 At the Democratic Services Committee meeting on the 10th May, Members supported the proposal that the following meetings are undertaken on a virtual basis only and reviewed annually to ensure the arrangements are fit for purpose:
- LEA Governors
 - VER Panel
 - Llwydcoed Crematorium Joint Committee
 - Ynysangharad War Memorial park Cabinet Committee

- Community Liaison Committee
- Pensions Fund Committee
- Corporate Parenting Board
- Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group
- Arts & Strategic Culture Steering Group
- City Deal Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Cwm Taf PSB Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 7.4 In addition, it was proposed that appropriate flexibility is provided for the Head of Democratic Services and the responsible Committee Chair to determine whether a meeting should be convened virtually, through a hybrid set-up or at a physical location. This should be determined by the nature of business being considered.
- 7.5 Subject to the above proposal it was also suggested that where necessary, the Chair of the Committee will be able to hold a meeting with Members present in a specific location if in the interests and benefit of the Committee ...i.e Site visits / meetings on location to assist Members with their role and understanding of work being undertaken.

8 HYBRID MEETINGS

- 8.1 The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 modifies the provisions in the 2011 Measure with the intention of making it easier for remote attendance to operate. Essentially, the conditions attached to the operation of remote attendance within the 2011 Measure are removed, in favour of leaving the principal council's standing orders to specify the conditions about how it should operate within that council. In addition, the Chair and Proper Officer of the meeting will need to be happy that the conditions for remote attendance are satisfied in the case of any particular meeting before business should proceed. A local authority must ensure that the facilities necessary to satisfy the conditions set out in its standing orders are available where the meeting is being held.
- 8.2 The Council are in a good position to undertake hybrid meetings and working with the webcasting facilitators will enhance the process going forward.
- 8.3 Going forward, any member attending a meeting remotely ("remote attendee") must, when they are speaking, be able to be seen and heard by the members who are attending the meeting at the place where the meeting is held ("members in actual attendance") and the remote attendee must, in turn, be able to see and hear those in actual attendance. In addition, a remote attendee must be able to be seen and heard by, and in turn see and hear any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting and who exercise a right to speak at the meeting. If there is more than one remote location, all the members attending remotely must be able to hear – but not necessarily see – the other remote attendees.

- 8.4 Practicalities surrounding confidential, or “exempt” issues in consideration at a meeting – as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 – will need to be considered. It would be important to ensure that there are no members of the public at remote locations able to hear or see the proceedings during discussions of such confidential items. Any member in remote attendance who failed to disclose that there were in fact persons present who were not so entitled would be in breach of their Code of Conduct responsibilities.
- 8.5 The inclusion of the online voting system will need to be in place prior to the roll out of hybrid and webcasting meetings.

9 TRAINING.

- 9.1 Members have previously positively taken forward training in respect of the zoom platform to assist them in undertaking virtual meetings. Future training will need to be taken forward on the equipment within the Council Chamber, when safe to do so, to allow for hybrid meetings to take place.
- 9.2 Training to Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees will also be provided to assist in the chairing of hybrid meetings.
- 9.3 Once in place, training will also be provided on the voting app that will be available for Members to utilise through the Modern.Gov app.

10 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 10.1 The provision of a webcasting service would promote democracy and encourage public engagement. By removing potential barriers for members of the public to attend meetings at the chamber, webcasting opens up opportunities for wider public engagement and transparency. The aspect of hybrid and virtual meetings also promotes the democracy agenda, allowing the undertaking of Council business by Members to be more accessible and manageable.
- 10.2 The provision of an online voting app will help ensure the accessibility and inclusion of all Members in the democratic process regardless of their location. Where a member is unable to access the Modern.Gov app an alternative provision of a manual hand raising will need to be taken forward for those Members.

11 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The developments within the Council Chamber and webcasting infrastructure will further strengthen the welsh language within the democratic process. Members of the public will be able to live stream meetings or watch pre-recorded meetings and choose the floor language used.ie When Members /

Officers converse at a meeting through the medium of welsh they can either choose to hear these discussions in welsh or the alternative of the English translation, which is currently unavailable through the current zoom recordings.

12 CONSULTATION

- 12.1 The opportunities offered by web-casting have been considered by members as part of the business of full Council, Cabinet, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Corporate Governance and Constitution Committee, formal meetings of Chairs & Vice-Chairs.
- 12.2 Promoting public engagement in the democratic processes, including webcasting, has also been discussed in the recent introduced meeting between the Chief Executive and Political Group Leaders, which the Head of Democratic Services attends.

13. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 13.1 The associated funding to deliver these improvements were included as part of the Council's 2020/21 Budget, following support provided previously by the Democratic Services Committee. Additional funding has also been sought from Welsh Government in respect of further advancements with webcasting equipment as outlined within the report.

14. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 outlines a mandatory requirement for Local Authorities to provide a webcasting service.
- 14.2 The implementation of webcasting require amendments to the Council's Constitution which were taken forward at the Council's 26th Annual General meeting

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

- 15.1 The provision of webcasting would link to the Corporate Plan priorities with particular reference to 'living within our means' and an 'efficient and effective Council', ensuring transparency with our decision making process for the benefits of our residents.
- 15.2 Ensuring that there are greater opportunities for public engagement through webcasting links to the Wellbeing of Future Generations goals of a more equal Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities. This proposal would further support the ability of this council to involve communities in key decisions.

16 CONCLUSION

- 16.1 Through the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 Councils will be legally required to webcast meetings to strengthen local democracy and encourage public participation.
- 16.2 The provision of webcasting, has received cross-party support in the Council for the reasons set out, in particular for supporting positive engagement with the public going forward.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATION**

ACCESS & ENGAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN DEMOCRACY

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24TH JUNE 2021

ADDITIONAL REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE INVESTMENT IN SCHOOLS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION (COUNCILLOR MRS J ROSSER)

**Author(s): Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Andrea Richards, Temporary Service Director 21st Century Schools and Transformation**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with details of further repairs and maintenance works for approval for 2021/22 as a result of additional funding awarded by Welsh Government in March 2021 and supplemented by the Council's earmarked reserves.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agree the additional schemes for 2021/22 as outlined in Appendix 1 and to approve scheme commencement.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To continue to deliver the Council's long term school modernisation improvement programme supporting one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper'.
- 3.2 These works will continue to support schools, improve our building stock and address essential condition and health and safety issues across the school estate. It will also continue to ensure school buildings are able to comply with Welsh Government operational guidance as we continue to work with the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Members will be aware that additional funding of £3.580M has been allocated to the Council for the repairs and maintenance of our schools. This investment has been allocated by the Welsh Government and generously topped up with Council Investment funding, providing support to continue to deliver the Council's long-term strategic investment programme of modernisation. This additional funding, approved by Cabinet on the 29th April 2021, will build upon the success already realised through our school modernisation programme and will create more 21st Century School environments to provide the best learning provision, supporting successful outcomes for our young people and the wider community.
- 4.2 The Council, over the last year, has supported schools to meet Welsh Government's Covid-19 operational guidance. This has proved challenging given the diverse nature of our school sites and buildings. Some of our schools are better placed to accommodate the required safety protocols than others due to the age, design and the type of buildings we have in our portfolio, and as a result we have faced challenges in terms of providing flexible spaces, adequate circulation areas, well-ventilated areas and fit for purpose spaces to support outside learning.
- 4.3 This additional investment will deliver improvements to the learning environment, as well as ensuring we provide well-ventilated spaces and enhanced outdoor areas, that allow pupils to move around the school premises safely whilst adhering to the safety guidance. One of the Council's most successful interventions in schools over the last difficult year has been the provision of outdoor canopies. These have been well utilised for both teaching and learning and provide that all important additional, useable, external space, taking the pressure off the indoor environment. The Council is keen to replicate this success and deliver even more provision in our schools.
- 4.4 The proposed investment in schools will have an immediate impact and the table below provides details of the focus on ventilation, outdoor teaching spaces, hygiene and essential repairs to the school buildings, allowing maximum use of spaces whilst continuing to improve the learning environment.

Schools	£M
External canopies to create outdoor teaching areas	0.700
Improved ventilation	0.300
New toilet and hygiene areas	0.600
Roofing works	0.500
General repairs to the fabric of buildings	0.680
Upgrade classrooms to 21 st Century Schools Standard	0.500
New external doors and windows	0.300
Total	3.580

4.5 Appendix 1 provides more details of the proposed schemes across our school sites, broken down by each of the funding categories.

4.6 Given the already busy programme for the summer period, these works will be carried out as soon as practicable, in full consultation and collaboration with the individual schools, to mitigate any disruption and ensure continued operation of all schools at this challenging time.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 The proposed schemes have given due consideration to equality issues particularly in relation to access to our school premises. Schools are a key part of our communities and as such it is important that they are well maintained, accessible and 'fit for purpose'.

5.2 As this report isn't seeking permission to implement a proposal in respect of a change of function, service, strategy or policy, it is deemed that an EqIA is not required in this instance. To clarify, the funding arrangements as detailed within this report were previously approved by Cabinet on the 29th April 2021.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 As this report isn't seeking permission to implement a proposal in respect of a change of function, service, strategy or policy, it is deemed that a Welsh Language Impact Assessment is not required in this instance. The funding arrangements as detailed within this report were previously approved by Cabinet on the 29th April 2021.

7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

7.1 There are no statutory consultation implications as a result of the recommendations set out in this report. Schools have been consulted with individually and have identified priority areas for consideration at their school sites, and these are reflected at Appendix 1. Subject to the decision of Cabinet, further collaboration will be undertaken with each school setting to deliver the agreed programme of works in a suitable and mutually agreed time period.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 The financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. The proposed investment priorities are fully funded from flexibility provided by WG grants and Council resources already set aside for this purpose.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 The legislation considered in compiling this report is the 'Keeping Learners Safe' - the role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002.

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

- 10.1 There are links to RCTCBC's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:
- Prosperity
 - Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper;
 - Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education.
- 10.2 Due regard has been made to all seven well-being goals and the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of decisions, on communities to prevent consistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

This proposal would contribute to achieving the wellbeing goals by:

- Planning for the 'long term', helping to 'prevent' problems occurring or getting worse in the future and delivering services in 'collaboration' with others.

This proposal would achieve the five ways of working by:

- Improving school environments that can deliver the new Curriculum for Wales.
- Improving sustainability of school buildings in the Council portfolio through a commitment to reducing our carbon emissions.
- Provide first class learning facilities for pupils and the wider community and contribute towards a healthier Wales by providing additional outdoor facilities for pupils.
- Contributing towards a prosperous Wales by committing to opportunities for local tradespeople and to use local resources, wherever possible to undertake the works to schools.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 This report recommends opportunities to invest £3.580M of additional works at our schools, through funding supported by WG and the Council. The recommendations set out in the report will have an immediate impact on improving the fabric of the schools, enhancing the learning environments both internally and externally, and providing improved facilities for the schools' communities that they serve. The plan of improvement works will contribute to improvements in a wide range of physical environments benefiting pupils, staff, young people and members of the public.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24TH JUNE 2021

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION (COUNCILLOR
MRS J ROSSER)**

Item:

Background Papers

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

Officer to contact:

Lisa Howell 21st Century School Organisation and Business Manager

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ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME GRANT 2021-22**Window & Door Replacements**

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Llanhari Primary School	Replace windows throughout main school building	£ 50,000.00
Llwynypia Primary School	Replace windows in the Nursery	£ 21,000.00
Pontygwaith Primary School	Replace windows nursery block	£ 22,000.00
Pontypridd High School	Replacement timber windows and external doors old	£ 90,000.00
SS Gabriel & Raphael RC Primary School	Replacement windows and adaptations to reception area to increase entrance	£ 17,000.00
Treorchy Comprehensive School	Replace rotten timber windows to swimming pool	£ 15,000.00
St John Baptist C in W High School	Replace existing timber windows	£ 25,000.00
Tref Y Rhyg Primary School	Replacement timber windows for one elevation	£ 35,000.00
Treorchy Primary School	Window replacements at the rear of the main building	£ 25,000.00
Total		£ 300,000.00
Budget Total		£ 300,000.00

ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME GRANT 2021-22

Roof Renewal

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)	
Abernant Primary School	Roof repairs new fascia, RWG and ceiling tiles works due to water damage	£	70,000.00
Cwmclydach Community Primary School	Phase 3 replacement roofing works	£	50,000.00
Dolau Primary School	Replacement RWGs and external decoration of new block	£	20,000.00
Hendreforgan Primary School	Replacement Flat Roof	£	20,000.00
Miskin Primary School	Roof Replacement - Phase 1	£	75,000.00
Pengeulan Primary School	Roof Replacement - Phase 1	£	120,000.00
Ton Pentre Junior School	Replacement RWG's and fascias/soffits	£	45,000.00
Tref Y Rhyg Primary School	Replacement roof - Phased 1	£	100,000.00
Total		£	500,000.00
Budget Total		£	500,000.00

ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME GRANT 2021-22

Toilet Refurbishments

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Brynnau Primary School	Refurbishment works to pupil toilets	50,000.00
Cefn Primary School	Minor refurbishment to Junior Boys and Girls toilets	£ 50,000.00
Craig Yr Hesg Primary School	Essential repairs to toilets (flooring and pipework)	£ 10,000.00
Gelli Primary School	Refurbishment to Infant Toilets	£ 25,000.00
Llanhari Primary School	Refurbishment to Nursery and Infants Toilets	£ 50,000.00
Llantrisant Primary School	Refurbishment to toilets	£ 25,000.00
Mountain Ash Comprehensive School	Upgrade boys and girls toilets on ground floor	£ 50,000.00
Parc Primary School	Refurbishment to Foundation Phase Toilets	£ 25,000.00
Penrhys Primary School	Refurbishment to toilets including DDA facilities	£ 50,000.00
Pontygwaith Primary School	Refurbishment to Boys toilets	£ 20,000.00
Ponty High School	Refurbishment to toilets	£ 30,000.00
St John Baptist C in W High School	Refurbishment to pupils toilets	£ 40,000.00
Tonysguboriau Primary School	Refurbishment to Infants toilets	£ 25,000.00
Ysgol Garth Olwg	Replace cubicles for floor to ceiling anti-bullying open plan cubicles	£ 30,000.00
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bodringallt	Refurbishment to Infants and girls toilets	£ 50,000.00
YGG Bronllwyn	Refurbishment pupil toilets	£ 20,000.00
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen	Refurbishment to Boys and Girls toilets and Nursery toilets	£ 50,000.00
Total		
Budget Total		£ 600,000.00

ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME GRANT 2021-22

Canopies

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Aberdare Community School	Canopies and Seating areas	£ 10,000.00
Aberdare Town C in W Primary	Canopy in Nursery Play Area and Foundation Phase a	£ 20,000.00
Bodringallt Primary School	Canopy in front yard	£ 10,000.00
Capcoch Primary School	Canopy in yard	£ 10,000.00
Caradog Primary School	Canopies various positions	£ 30,000.00
Cefn Primary School	Canopy on yard	£ 10,000.00
Cilfynydd Primary School	Canopy on yard	£ 10,000.00
Coedpenmaen Primary School	Canopy for Key Stage Two yard	£ 10,000.00
Craig Yr Hesg Primary School	Canopy on yard	£ 10,000.00
Cwmclydach Community Primary School	Canopy on yard	£ 10,000.00
Cwmdar Primary School	Canopy	£ 10,000.00
Cwmlai Primary School	Canopy	£ 10,000.00
Cymmer Primary School	Canopy for Infant yard and Junior Yard	£ 20,000.00
Dolau Primary School	Canopy for Infant yard	£ 10,000.00
Ferndale Community School	Canopy	£ 10,000.00
Hafod Primary School	Canopy over part of Infant yard	£ 10,000.00
Hawthorn Primary School	Canopy for back elevation	£ 30,000.00
Llanhari Primary School	Canopy rear of school for SEBD pupils	£ 10,000.00
Llantrisant Primary School	Canopy/Outdoor Learning area KS 2	£ 10,000.00
Llwyncrwn Primary School	Canopy	£ 10,000.00
Llwynypia Primary School	Canopy for outside eating/learning	£ 10,000.00
Mountain Ash Comprehensive School	Canopies various positions	£ 20,000.00
Pontrhondda Primary School	Canopy	£ 10,000.00
Pontygwaith Primary School	Canopy for Foundation Phase class and storage for the outdoor equipment	£ 12,000.00
Pontypridd High School	Canopy to rear of canteen for eating outdoors	£ 20,000.00

Porth Community School	Canopy on the yard rear of Science used by year 7 and 8	£	15,000.00
Rhigos Primary School	Canopy and safety fencing	£	10,000.00
St John Baptist C in W High School	Canopy/Outdoor Learning	£	10,000.00
St Margaret's RC Primary School	Canopy for Nursery class	£	10,000.00
Ton Infants School	Canopies various locations	£	20,000.00
Tonysguboriau Primary School	Canopy	£	10,000.00
Trealaw Primary School	Roof canopy and development of green space	£	20,000.00
Trehopcyn Primary School	Canopy for KS2 yard and also development of a green space for wellbeing/outdoor learning activities	£	20,000.00
Williamstown Primary School	Canopy for Junior Yard	£	10,000.00
Ynysboeth Primary School	Canopy	£	10,000.00
Ysgol Cwm Rhondda	Canopy	£	10,000.00
Ysgol Garth Olwg	Canopies - Outside shelters for Middle and Upper school	£	25,000.00
Cardinal Newman Comp	Canopy	£	20,000.00
Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun	Replacement of 2 covered areas by front of school and seating area development	£	48,000.00
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Abercynon	Canopies for Junior yard and top yard	£	20,000.00
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail	Canopy	£	10,000.00
Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Gymraeg Llantrisant	Canopy	£	10,000.00
Ysgol Hen Felin	Canopies various locations	£	50,000.00
Ysgol Llanhari	Canopies/Outdoor learning spaces at 2 primary area locations	£	20,000.00
Ysgol Nantgwyn	Canopy and seating area development	£	20,000.00
Total		£	700,000.00
Budget Total		£	700,000.00

ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME GRANT 2021-22

General Repairs

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Abercynon Community Primary School	Replace retaining timber logs supporting banking	£ 15,000.00
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	Upgrades to outdoor dilapidated sports courts and refurbishment of the sports hall	£ 75,000.00
Cefn Primary School	Create new entrance door at the side of a classroom for a new play area which would lead out to the canopy for Class 2	£ 15,000.00
Cwmbach C in W Primary School	Repainting the outside of the lower building. Repair to steps	£ 20,000.00
Darrenlas Primary School	Decoration in Junior hall,canteen/kitchen area and e	£ 30,000.00
Ferndale Community School	Traffic management improvements and devopment of former demolished 3 story area at front of school and extend current turning circle for buses	£ 100,000.00
Ferndale Community School	Replacement curtain walling to Gym/Hall main buildi	£ 35,000.00
Penderyn Primary School	Repainting and external decoration	£ 40,000.00
Penyreglyn Primary School	External decoration/repairs to cracks in render	£ 25,000.00
Perthcelyn Community Primary School	Replacement heat exchanger and boiler replacement	£ 18,000.00
Ysgol Ty Coch (Buarth y Capel Site)	Additional basic need accomodation and improvements to path ways	£ 104,000.00
YGG Abercynon	Repairs to window reveals	£ 18,000.00
Trallwng Infants School	Externally seal, repair walls and internal repair and decoration of window reveals	£ 20,000.00

Trealaw Primary School	Install security/safeguarding fencing and gates on the main school grounds	£ 20,000.00
Treorchy Comprehensive School	Replace cladding to r/h elevation to Block 6	£ 80,000.00
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda	Demolition of portacabin building and improve outdoor area	£ 20,000.00
Ysgol Nantgwyn	Improvements to ground floor corridors,classrooms and replace new ceiling grid and tiles	£ 45,000.00
Total		£ 680,000.00
Budget Total		£ 680,000.00

ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME GRANT 2021-22

21st Century Upgrades

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)	
Bodringallt Primary School	Classrooms upgrades	£	50,000.00
Caegarw Primary School	Classroom refurbishment Foundation Phase block	£	30,000.00
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	Upgrading of classrooms	£	50,000.00
Cwmdar Primary School	Internal refurbishment to classrooms	£	25,000.00
Ferndale Community School	Improved classroom facilities for SEBD class	£	25,000.00
Llwynypia Primary School	External works to prevent water ingress window from reveals and making good internal damage	£	50,000.00
Maesycoed Primary School	Classroom upgrades	£	25,000.00
Maerdy Primary School	Classroom upgrades top block	£	30,000.00
Penrhiwceibr Primary School	Classroom upgrades	£	50,000.00
Treorchy Primary School	Essential works to the Infant building	£	40,000.00
YGG Bodringallt	Classroom upgrades	£	40,000.00
YGG Abercynon	Classroom upgrades	£	25,000.00
Ysgol Nantgwyn	Classroom upgrades in Humanities Block and other associated works (6 classrooms in total)	£	60,000.00
Total		£	500,000.00
Budget Total		£	500,000.00

ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME GRANT 2021-22

Ventilation

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Caegarw Primary School	Replace windows in classes 3, 4 and 6 to improve ventilation	£ 30,000.00
Ferndale Community School	Replacement doors to sports barn including roof works	£ 20,000.00
Glenboi Primary School	Ventilation required in upper floor classrooms	£ 2,000.00
Mountain Ash Comprehensive School	Additional funding required to support Capital programme essential works - windows	£ 25,000.00
Penrhys Primary School	Replace existing curtain walling and windows in the hall.	£ 20,000.00
Treorchy Comprehensive	Pool ventilation and changing room refurbishment	£ 30,000.00
Ysgol Llanhari	Essential repairs to windows to allow ventilation and additional funding for curtain walling to support the Capital programme	£ 100,000.00
Various Schools	Ventilation units	£ 73,000.00

Total
Budget Total

£ 300,000.00

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24TH JUNE 2021

DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY (2021-2025) CONSULTATION RESPONSES - FEEDBACK OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP AND THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION IN CONSULTATION WITH COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS (CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPION)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Cabinet with the feedback of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which met on the 14th and 15th June 2021, respectively, to consider a report on the Draft Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025) Consultation Responses.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report considered by the [Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group](#) and the [Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#);
- 2.2 Note the comments and observations of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group following consideration of the report at its meeting on 14th June 2021; and the comments and observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following pre-scrutiny of the report at its meeting on 15th June 2021 as referenced within the report.
- 2.3 Subject to 2.1 – 2.2 agree to the recommendations presented within the Draft Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025) Consultation Findings, which is attached as Appendix 1 to this report, and for ease of reference listed below:
- i. Request that Officers use the feedback to inform the development of the final Climate Change Strategy.
 - ii. Agree to support the approach of facilitating an ongoing climate change conversation with residents, local businesses and partners, linked to the final Climate Change Strategy workplan.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The need for Cabinet Members to be aware of the comments and observations of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to consideration of the Draft Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025) Consultation Responses.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council's draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy has been subject to a comprehensive public consultation over two months to 31 May 2021.
- 4.2 The Council's draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy seeks to set the overall direction for the Council over the coming five years, describing its vision, purpose and ambition in respect of the Council's carbon footprint and the carbon footprint for the County Borough.
- 4.3 It is recognised that scrutiny is a vital component of good governance and improves Councils' decision making, service provision and cost effectiveness. The undertaking of pre-scrutiny by the Overview and Committee and consideration by the Council's Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group in this area will strengthen accountability and assist Cabinet Members in taking any future decisions on these matters.

5. THE CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

- 5.1 The Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group met on the 14th June 2021 to consider a report on the Draft Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025) Consultation Responses.
- 5.2 The Steering Group acknowledged the work undertaken to establish the robust Strategy, which had incorporated the key topics discussed at its meetings:
- Biodiversity;
 - Community use of vacant/unused land;
 - Waste Management Strategy;
 - Local Procurement of Supplies and Services;
 - Elimination of single use plastics in all Council contracts and premises;
 - Taffs Well Thermal Spring;
 - Transportation;
 - Air Quality;
 - Energy Generation;
 - Nature's Assets; and
 - Strategic and Local Development Plans.
- 5.3 Members took the opportunity to thank officers for the wide-ranging consultation and continuing the on-going climate conversation with the residents of RCT.

- 5.4 One Member was disappointed to note the level of engagement by residents, despite the various online tools and platforms utilised by the Council but acknowledged the restrictions of a digital consultation process during a pandemic. The Member spoke of the importance of undertaking face-to-face consultation with residents in town centres, when safe to do so, to reach a wider audience.
- 5.5 Members spoke of the importance of exploring various social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, as well as utilising more traditional methods, such as email and letters to engage with a wide range of residents.
- 5.6 It was noted that the vast majority of respondents had indicated their concern about the impact of Climate Change in their local area and that that 81.9% of respondents felt that they didn't have enough information about the impact of climate change. Again, Members acknowledged that not all residents had participated in the survey to give a full picture but agreed that the information would act as a positive foundation for the Council to build upon as the overall understanding of climate change develops.
- 5.7 Members stressed the importance of continuing to engage, educate and involve residents in the Climate Change conversation going forward.

6. PRE SCRUTINY BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on the 15th June 2021 to undertake pre-scrutiny of the report on the Draft Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025) Consultation Responses.
- 6.2 Members welcomed the 'much needed' draft Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025), which had initiated a positive debate amongst the residents and businesses of RCT. They noted the appetite for green initiatives being undertaken by numerous community groups across the county borough but stressed the importance of coordinating the good work locally to avoid a 'scattergun approach'
- 6.3 One Member raised concern regarding the questioning within the consultation which they found to be too 'apple pie' and encouraged only the right responses. The Member felt that more could be done to engage with residents and businesses, asking harder and more challenging questions about the dis benefits and setting priorities.
- 6.4 Members made comments and sought assurance that ongoing climate conversations and the draft strategy would consider:
- Support for tree planting which would help mitigate against flooding;
 - Community groups purchasing woodland and developing urban garden projects;
 - Adopting national minimum standards for contractors and suppliers to encourage them to support the council to become carbon neutral;
 - Hydro schemes;

- Appropriate infrastructure to support and facilitate home EV charging and to investigate ways to realise on-street charging, how to make this feasible;
 - Early discussions with developers to install EV facilities into all new builds
- 6.5 Members were keen to applaud that new- build houses will be carbon zero but acknowledged the number of older properties and homes across the county borough that would benefit from retrofit schemes to prevent them from 'leaking energy'
- 6.6 One member was disappointed that only 56% of respondents thought that the Climate Commitments would help the Council to meet its carbon reduction targets.
- 6.7 Members agreed with the main themes identified within the consultation responses such as 'everyone must play a part' and 'engagement and education' with the suggestion that all councillors can play a key role in influencing their local communities and schools through their roles as Governors.
- 6.8 Committee recognised that this is the starting point of the climate change discussions with residents and businesses across RCT with further public engagement to follow.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from the report.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no equality or diversity implications as a result of the recommendations set out within the report.

9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no welsh language implications arising from the report.

10. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 10.1 The draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy has been subject to a comprehensive public consultation over the two months to 31 May 2021.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

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

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

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 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.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 The draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy has been subject to a comprehensive public consultation over the two months to 31 May 2021.
- 13.2 The Council's Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on the 14th and 15th June 2021, respectively, to consider its findings.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24TH JUNE 2021

**DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY (2021-2025) CONSULTATION
RESPONSES - FEEDBACK OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING
GROUP AND THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND
COMMUNICATION IN CONSULTATION WITH COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS
(CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPION)**

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24TH JUNE 2021

**DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY (2021-2025) CONSULTATION
FINDINGS**

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

Author(s): Chris Bradshaw 01443 424026 & Chris Davies

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline the findings from the recent consultation on the Council's Draft Climate Change Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note and consider the feedback received on the Draft Council Tackling Climate Change Strategy.
- 2.2 Request that Officers use the feedback to inform the development of the final Climate Change Strategy.
- 2.3 Agree to support the approach of facilitating an ongoing climate change conversation with residents, local businesses and partners, linked to the final Climate Change Strategy workplan.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In March 2021, the Cabinet and the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group received a report that provided the opportunity to consider the Draft Council Tackling Climate Change Strategy and agreed to engage

and consult with residents and businesses on the Council's response to Climate Change.

- 4.2 The Council's draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy 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.

- 4.3 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 *****.(We are working with the Carbon Trust to better understand the Council's Carbon Footprint and that of the County Borough, and in the next few months this information will be available. We will then set specific targets based on this detailed carbon footprint).
- 4.4 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.*
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 No single plan can set out the many ways in which we are working to reduce carbon emissions in order to achieve our commitments in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Draft Climate Change Strategy 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.

- 4.7 The Draft Strategy has been subject to a wide-ranging consultation, as part of a new ongoing [Climate Conversation](#).

5 THE CLIMATE CHANGE CONVERSATION

- 5.1 The Climate Change Strategy engagement was branded as [“Let’s Talk Climate Change RCT”](#) and used a [new online engagement platform](#), which hosted key consultation documents, including the strategy itself, a plain English version of the strategy and other relevant links. The methods of engagement on the site included an online survey, a number of short polls, the ability to map localised comments, a stories box and a section where users are invited to provide their ideas on a certain topic (stories).
- 5.2 A “Think Climate” YouTube video was used to outline and promote the consultation - <https://youtu.be/lyq5c4XABdk>
- 5.3 The online tools and information were promoted through all social media channels, print media and the Council’s corporate website. A number of emails/letters were sent to a range of stakeholders.
- 5.4 The Council’s social media team linked to a number of campaigns that ran through the consultation period, including, Earth Day, National Gardening Week and Water Saving Week.
- 5.5 Staff were provided with the main tools on the site to provide feedback, as well as a separate survey, which asked them if they had ideas about how we can do more to tackle Climate Change within any of our Council services.
- 5.6 Over 1000 businesses across RCT were emailed a link to the consultation, from the Council databases and also directly from the BIDs in Pontypridd, Treorchy and Aberdare.
- 5.7 All primary and secondary schools were sent the consultation links and asked to share with parents and children through the school communication channels. In addition, we developed a young persons’ approach using Instagram, and promoted through the WICID website, supported by the Council’s Youth Engagement and Participation team and our schools.
- 5.8 We held a number of Online engagement sessions with the Older Person’s Advisory Group, the Community Council Liaison Committee and a Youth Forum.
- 5.9 The Council provided 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 included 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 In addition to a specific consultation on the Draft Climate Change Strategy, we have also started to develop an ongoing Climate Change conversation. The aim is to work with services and partners to develop appropriate engagement for individual climate change projects based on the detailed action plans that underpin the climate change strategy.

5.11 As part of the conversation we launched a second project in April to gain views to inform a future RCT Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging and Infrastructure Strategy. The consultation ran 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 **KEY FINDINGS**

6.1 The following provides a summary of the main findings from the Let's Talk Climate Change RCT consultation.

- 76% of respondents to the survey agreed that the Council's work to tackle Climate Change should be set out in one plan.
- 90% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the Council's Climate Change **PLACE** commitments. The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions.

%	Yes	No	Don't know
Using wind, water, waste and energy from the sun to generate clean energy that we can use in local buildings and homes	94.9	2.9	2.3
Using and recycling more of the waste we collect	94.9	1.7	3.4
Helping people to get about more easily using more buses, trains and bikes	88.0	6.9	5.1
Making sure that traffic fumes from traffic are kept as low as possible	90.9	5.1	4.0
Helping put in charging points to make it easier for people with electric cars to use	87.9	6.4	5.8
Using natural ways to help stop flooding, wildfires and keep carbon in the ground	97.7	0.0	2.3

Helping more people to get together to enjoy and protect nature and wildlife across RCT	93.7	2.9	3.4
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- 90% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the Council's Climate Change **PROSPERITY** commitments. The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions.

%	Yes	No	Don't know
Making sure that our plans that set out how and where we build do not add further carbon emissions into the air and protect the high and hilly land across the County Borough	92.0	2.9	5.1
Helping people to use less energy in their homes	96.0	1.7	2.3
Helping to make sure new houses are not built in places that haven't already been built on and people can get to them without a car	82.9	7.4	9.7
Helping to make sure that new houses and commercial buildings can make and store their own energy and have charging points for electric cars	93.1	1.1	5.7
Helping people and landlords to make changes to homes so they use less and greener energy	94.3	1.7	4.0
Encouraging and helping local businesses to find ways to waste less, reduce pollution and protect the environment	98.3	1.1	0.6
Helping local businesses to find products less harmful to nature locally	94.9	1.1	4.0
Finding ways to buy more of what the Council's services need locally	89.7	4.0	6.3
Planting trees and shrubs in town centres	88.0	5.1	6.9
Helping children and young people in our schools to understand more about nature and climate	93.7	2.9	3.4
Helping people of all ages to train or retrain for new skills so that they can find jobs and create changes in companies that will help to protect the planet	87.4	2.9	9.7

- 87% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the Council's Climate Change **PEOPLE** commitments. The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions.

%

Yes	No	Don't know
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Providing information that will help people to make choices in their lives that can help put less carbon in the air. For example, wasting less, recycling more, driving less, driving more slowly and not running the engine when the car is stopped	82.3	9.7	8.0
Encouraging and helping people to make their homes more energy efficient	98.3	0.6	1.1
Making space in Ynysangharad Park where people can learn about local nature, practice new skills and take part in activities that will help the climate and grow fresh vegetables for local foodbanks	76.6	10.9	12.6
Encouraging more people to join with others to enjoy and help nature	84.6	5.1	10.3
Offering land to people and groups so that they can grow their own fruit and vegetables and to share them with others	91.4	4.0	4.6
Giving more vegetarian meal choices to children and young people in schools and people who receive Meals on Wheels	72.0	16.0	12.0

- 56% of respondents thought that the Climate Commitments would help the Council to meet its carbon reduction targets.
- The following are the overarching, main themes taken from the open responses, which were identified as priorities by respondents;
 - Electric Vehicles/charging
 - Housing and Renewable energy
 - Active Travel/alternatives to the car/working from home
 - Biodiversity, wildflowers and tree planting
 - Education/projects in schools
 - General communication and education of the public
 - Reducing Waste/recycling
 - Businesses/local trade
 - Vegetarian and Plant based meals
- 81.9% of respondents felt that they didn't have enough information about the impact of climate change.

- The majority of respondents said they were very concerned or concerned about the impact of Climate Change in their local area.

6.2 Overall, 392 people took part in the engagement on the Climate Change Strategy, with 220 people engaged directly in the engagement via the Let's Talk Climate Change engagement tool. 349 were informed (viewed documents and multiple pages) and 608 were aware (visited the site).

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

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

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The consultation was bilingual.

9. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

9.1 The draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy has been subject to a comprehensive public consultation over the two months to 31 May 2021.

9.2 The consultation responses has been subject to consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Climate Change Steering Group.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

10.1 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.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

11.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

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

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 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.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 In March 2021, the Cabinet and the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group agreed to engage and consult with residents and businesses on the Council's response to Climate Change.
- 13.2 A consultation was undertaken in April and May 2021 and the findings show that the majority of respondents are in support of the draft Climate Change Strategy and the priorities within.
- 13.3 The attached report provides a summary of the findings. A wide range of comments were received to inform the final Strategy, all of which will be circulated to the responsible Officers, so that as much feedback as possible can be fed into the process.
- 13.4 The Consultation Team will continue to develop an ongoing Climate Change conversation, working with Council services and partners to develop appropriate engagement for individual climate change projects, based on the detailed action plans that underpin the final Climate Change Strategy.

Dewch i
siarad RhCT
Let's talk
RCT

Rhondda Cynon Taf

**Hinsawdd
Ystyriol**

**Think
Climate**

Rhondda Cynon Taf



Consultation on the

Draft Climate Change Strategy

June 2021



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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SUMMARY

- This section provides a summary of the main findings from the Let's Talk Climate Change RCT consultation on the draft strategy.
- The consultation was conducted in-house using the Council's new consultation and engagement website, Let's Talk RCT. The consultation started on the 9th April and ended on the 31st May 2021 and used a range of methods. The digital approach used a new online consultation tool called ["Let's Talk RCT"](#).
- The Climate Change Strategy engagement was branded as ["Let's Talk Climate Change RCT"](#) and hosted key consultation documents, including the strategy itself, a plain English version of the strategy and other relevant links. The methods of engagement on the site included an online survey, a number of 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 (stories).
- In addition to the specific consultation on the Draft Climate Change Strategy, we have also started to develop **an ongoing Climate Change conversation**. The aim is to work with services and partners to develop appropriate engagement for individual climate change projects based on the detailed action plans that underpin the climate change strategy. As part of the conversation we launched a second project in April to gain views to inform a future RCT Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging and Infrastructure Strategy.
- 76% of respondents to the survey agreed that the Council's work to tackle Climate Change should be set out in one plan.
- 90% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the Council's Climate Change **PLACE** commitments. The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions.

%	Yes	No	Don't know
Using wind, water, waste and energy from the sun to generate clean energy that we can use in local buildings and homes	94.9	2.9	2.3
Using and recycling more of the waste we collect	94.9	1.7	3.4
Helping people to get about more easily using more buses, trains and bikes	88.0	6.9	5.1
Making sure that traffic fumes from traffic are kept as low as possible	90.9	5.1	4.0
Helping put in charging points to make it easier for people with electric cars to use	87.9	6.4	5.8
Using natural ways to help stop flooding, wildfires and keep carbon in the ground	97.7	0.0	2.3
Helping more people to get together to enjoy and protect nature and wildlife across RCT	93.7	2.9	3.4

- 90% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the Council's Climate Change **PROSPERITY** commitments. The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions.

%	Yes	No	Don't know
Making sure that our plans that set out how and where we build do not add further carbon emissions into the air and protect the high and hilly land across the County Borough	92.0	2.9	5.1
Helping people to use less energy in their homes	96.0	1.7	2.3
Helping to make sure new houses are not built in places that haven't already been built on and people can get to them without a car	82.9	7.4	9.7
Helping to make sure that new houses and commercial buildings can make and store their own energy and have charging points for electric cars	93.1	1.1	5.7
Helping people and landlords to make changes to homes so they use less and greener energy	94.3	1.7	4.0
Encouraging and helping local businesses to find ways to waste less, reduce pollution and protect the environment	98.3	1.1	0.6
Helping local businesses to find products less harmful to nature locally	94.9	1.1	4.0
Finding ways to buy more of what the Council's services need locally	89.7	4.0	6.3
Planting trees and shrubs in town centres	88.0	5.1	6.9
Helping children and young people in our schools to understand more about nature and climate	93.7	2.9	3.4
Helping people of all ages to train or retrain for new skills so that they can find jobs and create changes in companies that will help to protect the planet	87.4	2.9	9.7

- 87% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the Council's Climate Change **PEOPLE** commitments. The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions, however the levels of agreement were lower than for the places and prosperity priorities.

%	Yes	No	Don't know
Providing information that will help people to make choices in their lives that can help put less carbon in the air. For example, wasting less, recycling more, driving less, driving more slowly and not running the engine when the car is stopped	82.3	9.7	8.0
Encouraging and helping people to make their homes more energy efficient	98.3	0.6	1.1
Making space in Ynysangharad Park where people can learn about local nature, practice new skills and take part in activities that will help the climate and grow fresh vegetables for local foodbanks	76.6	10.9	12.6
Encouraging more people to join with others to enjoy and help nature	84.6	5.1	10.3
Offering land to people and groups so that they can grow their own fruit and vegetables and to share them with others	91.4	4.0	4.6
Giving more vegetarian meal choices to children and young people in schools and people who receive Meals on Wheels	72.0	16.0	12.0

- 56% of respondents thought that the Climate Commitments would help the Council to meet its carbon reduction targets
- The following are the overarching, main themes identified in the open responses, which were identified as priorities by respondents;
 - Electric Vehicles/charging
 - Housing and Renewable energy
 - Active Travel/alternatives to the car/working from home
 - Biodiversity, wildflowers and tree planting
 - Education/projects in schools
 - General communication and education of the public
 - Reducing Waste/recycling
 - Businesses/local trade
 - Vegetarian and Plant based meals
- 81.9% of respondents felt that they didn't have enough information about the impact of climate change.
- 100% of respondents said they were very concerned or concerned about the impact of Climate Change in their local area.
- Overall, 392 people took part in the engagement on the Climate Change Strategy, with 220 people engaged directly in the engagement via the Let's Talk Climate Change engagement tool. 349 were informed (viewed documents and multiple pages) and 608 were aware (visited the site).

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the Let's Talk Climate Change RCT Draft Strategy consultation (2021-25).
- 1.2 Section 2 outlines some background to the consultation process.
- 1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.
- 1.4 Section 4 provides the results of the online questionnaire, ideas tool, stories and a number of polls.
- 1.5 Section 5 presents the feedback from a Virtual Young Persons Engagement meeting and Instagram engagement.
- 1.6 Section 6 presents the feedback received from the Older Persons Advisory Group.
- 1.7 Section 7 provides feedback on the staff survey.
- 1.8 Section 8 provides feedback via email.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council's draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy 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.
- 2.2 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 ***** ((We are working with the Carbon Trust to better understand the Council's Carbon Footprint and that of the County Borough, and in the next few months this information will be available. We will then set specific targets based on this detailed carbon footprint)).
- 2.3 In order to deliver the 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.
- 2.4 In the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24, Making A Difference, it is acknowledged that delivering the Climate Change commitment is the Council's greatest challenge. The plan is 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*.
- 2.5 The Climate Commitments underpin each of the 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.
- 2.6 The Council's 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.
 - 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.
- 2.7 The success of the Climate Change Strategy 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. We all have a part to play.
- 2.8 In early 2021 the Council and Council's Cabinet agreed that the draft Climate Change Strategy be subject to a comprehensive public consultation over the two months to 31 May 2021. The approach for a consultation on the draft Climate Change Strategy was agreed, as well as a plan for an ongoing climate change conversation.
- 2.9 The COVID 19 pandemic and associated challenges presented a unique set of circumstances for engagement. Face-to-face engagement is not currently possible and may not be for quite some time. As a result, the Council undertook a digital by default approach.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The consultation on the draft Climate Change Strategy used a range of methods. The digital approach used a new online consultation tool called [“Let’s Talk RCT”](#).
- 3.2 The Climate Change Strategy engagement was branded as [“Let’s Talk Climate Change RCT”](#) and hosted key consultation documents, including the strategy itself, a plain English version of the strategy and other relevant links. The methods of engagement on the site included an online survey, a number of 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 (stories).
- 3.3 A “Think Climate” YouTube video was used to outline and promote the consultation - <https://youtu.be/lyg5c4XABdk>
- 3.4 The online tools and information were promoted through all social media channels, print media and the Council’s corporate website. A number of emails/letters were sent to a range of stakeholders, including, environmental groups, the Council’s Citizens’ Panel, The Disability Forum, Older Persons Forums, Councillors, MPs, MSs, staff, community hubs, Welsh language groups and other local Authorities.
- 3.5 The Council’s social media team linked to a number of campaigns that ran through the consultation period, including, Earth Day, National Gardening Week and Water Saving Week.
- 3.6 Staff were provided with the main tools on the site to provide feedback, as well as a separate survey, which asked them if they had ideas about how we can do more to tackle Climate Change within any of our Council services.
- 3.7 Over 1,000 businesses across RCT were emailed a link to the consultation, from the Council databases and also directly from the BIDs in Pontypridd, Treorchy and Aberdare.
- 3.8 All primary and secondary schools were emailed the consultation links and asked to share with parents and children through the school communication channels. In addition, we developed a young persons’ approach using Instagram, and promoted through the WICID website, supported by the Council’s Youth Engagement and Participation team and our schools.
- 3.9 We held a number of Online engagement sessions with the Older Person’s Advisory Group, the Community Council Liaison Committee and representatives from Taf Youth Forum.

- 3.10 2 stakeholder email responses were received from Dr. Beth Winter (MP for Cynon Valley) and Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council. A summary of the main points are found in section 8.
- 3.11 The Council provided 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 included 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.
- 3.12 In addition to a specific consultation on the Draft Climate Change Strategy, we have also started to develop **an ongoing Climate Change conversation**. The aim is to work with services and partners to develop appropriate engagement for individual climate change projects based on the detailed action plans that underpin the climate change strategy.
- 3.13 As part of the conversation we launched a second project in April to gain views to inform a future RCT Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging and Infrastructure Strategy. The consultation ran 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.
- 3.14 Overall, 392 people took part in the engagement on the Climate Change Strategy, with 220 people engaged directly in the engagement via the Let's Talk Climate Change engagement tool. 349 were informed (viewed documents and multiple pages) and 608 were aware (visited the site).

4 Key Findings

- 4.1 The following section outlines the results from the questionnaire, which received 175 online responses. A selection of the main themes and associated comments are provided, and the full list of comments will be provided to Cabinet and senior officers to assist with decision making.
- 4.2 In the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24, Making A Difference, it was acknowledged that delivering the Climate Change commitment is the greatest challenge. In the plan the Council is 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.

The Climate Commitments underpin each of the priorities.

- 4.3 Respondents were asked if they agreed that the work to tackle Climate Change should be set out in **one plan**.

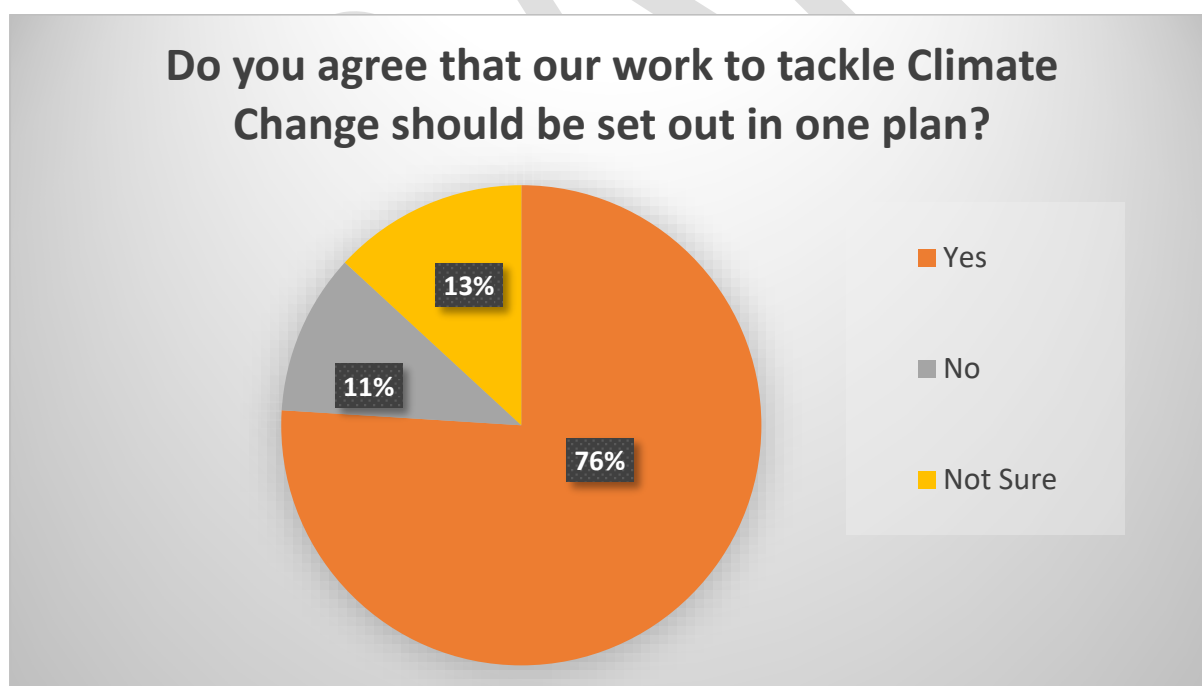


Figure 1 – Agreement with one Climate Change plan

- 4.4 76% of respondents to the survey agreed that the Council's work to tackle Climate Change should be set out in one plan. 24% disagreed or were unsure.

- 4.5 The respondents who disagreed or were unsure (24%) that the Council should have one plan were asked to explain their answers.

A number of people suggested that the **Council needs to have separate plans**;

"There should be three separate plans, each priority could then be evaluated in a more measured way."

"I think it may be better to have separate plans so you can explain on areas that may need to be looked into further as time goes on."

"This is a very BIG task and putting it all in one plan may water down or even damage the ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030....Also by splitting these up into a few separate plans with their own budgets etc you will have a greater chance of meeting these goals."

"Inevitably tackling climate change will cut across many portfolios and should be considered as part of those and not a standalone report."

- 4.6 Linked to the above, people felt that there was a need to ensure that the plan was flexible and there was a need to embed the climate change actions from the Strategy into other Council plans and policy;

"It may not be agile enough to respond to other external influences in a timely and flexible way. Having a vision is one thing, having a static plan reduces opportunity"

"This is the single biggest issue facing us all in the coming years, so the council needs to put it into every plan they have going forward and showing the way"

"It is a multi-faceted issue, and needs more than one directional plan"

"One plan would mean all the information / measures set out in one document, but there's the risk that it would be seen as separate to other Council work, or worse, just ignored if not used as a thread through existing plans"

Climate Change Strategy – Places

- 4.7 Table 1 below, shows respondents' views on the Council's strategy to tackle Climate Change, related to the **Places priority**. Respondents were asked whether they thought the following actions would help to make a difference.

The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions.

Do you think the following would help to make a difference? (%)

%	Yes	No	Don't know
Using wind, water, waste and energy from the sun to generate clean energy that we can use in local buildings and homes	94.9	2.9	2.3
Using and recycling more of the waste we collect	94.9	1.7	3.4
Helping people to get about more easily using more buses, trains and bikes	88.0	6.9	5.1
Making sure that traffic fumes from traffic are kept as low as possible	90.9	5.1	4.0
Helping put in charging points to make it easier for people with electric cars to use	87.9	6.4	5.8
Using natural ways to help stop flooding, wildfires and keep carbon in the ground	97.7	0.0	2.3
Helping more people to get together to enjoy and protect nature and wildlife across RCT	93.7	2.9	3.4

Table 1: Across the County Borough - *Thinking Climate: Places*

- 4.8 Respondents were asked what they thought of the overall Places priority. Figure 2 shows that 90% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the Council's Climate Change **PLACE** commitments.

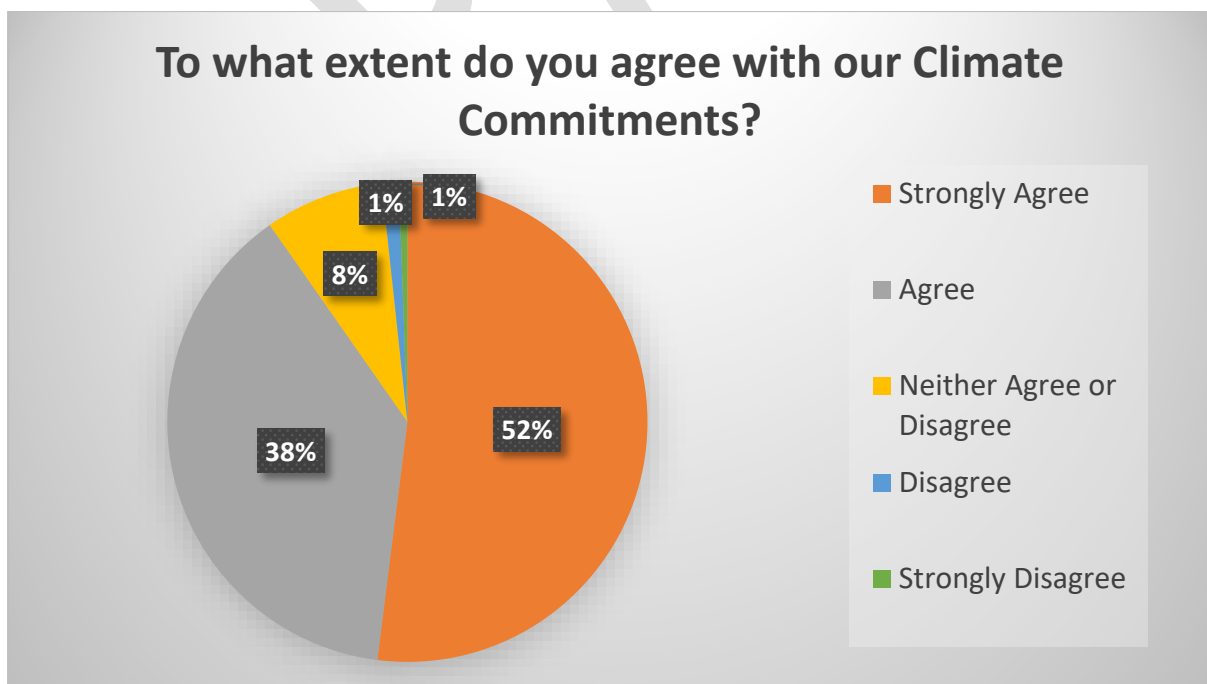


Figure 2 – Agreement with Climate Change Commitments (Places)

- 4.9 When asked if they had any ideas or suggestions, they would like to see added to the Council's Climate Change commitments in relation to places, the following themes emerged:

Electric Vehicles

"Support for early EV adopters to facilitate charging at home, and to somehow allow on-street charging at terraced houses"

"Infrastructure for electric vehicles has to be a priority - great that there are two points being put in at Porth station. Perhaps supermarkets should also follow suit (like Lidl in Dinas)."

Housing & Energy

"Insist that all new build homes in RCT have solar ..."

"Make it easier and cheaper to make eco changes to a new build or an existing house."

"Help homeowners reduce their reliance on fossil fuels."

Transport/Roads

"should commit to not building new roads and not introducing measures to increase road capacity. Making it easier to drive will not encourage people to use other forms of transport"

"Prioritising active travel over road users."

"Remove the "without upsetting drivers" statement from the section about providing active travel options."

Biodiversity

"A commitment to tree and wildflower planting, and less mowing to help biodiversity."

"Tree planting initiatives...."

"More trees to be planted. Areas of land given over to nature and wildlife. Grass verges allowed to grow and have wildflowers."

Education in Schools

"Education and practical projects in our schools and colleges"

"Community projects and education would be a good idea and including schools. There is a lot open ground not being used where wooden nature education classrooms could be set up and the area turned into mini nature reserves and ponds."

"Education on climate change to have a higher profile in schools and places of further education."

General Education/Communication

“Education around recycling and littering”

“Environmental officers are needed to enforce, inspire and educate”

Recycling

“Investment to recycle more waste on our doorstep”

“Focus on waste reduction as well as using and recycling waste”

“Recycling is the least good option - you need to move towards a more circular economy and do everything you can to encourage and support local businesses to do the same”

Climate Change Strategy - Prosperity

- 4.10 Table 2 below, shows respondents' views on the Council's strategy to tackle Climate Change, related to the **Prosperity priority**. Respondents were asked whether they thought the following actions would help to make a difference.

The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions.

%	Yes	No	Don't know
Making sure that our plans that set out how and where we build do not add further carbon emissions into the air and protect the high and hilly land across the County Borough	92.0	2.9	5.1
Helping people to use less energy in their homes	96.0	1.7	2.3
Helping to make sure new houses are not built in places that haven't already been built on and people can get to them without a car	82.9	7.4	9.7
Helping to make sure that new houses and commercial buildings can make and store their own energy and have charging points for electric cars	93.1	1.1	5.7
Helping people and landlords to make changes to homes so they use less and greener energy	94.3	1.7	4.0
Encouraging and helping local businesses to find ways to waste less, reduce pollution and protect the environment	98.3	1.1	0.6
Helping local businesses to find products less harmful to nature locally	94.9	1.1	4.0
Finding ways to buy more of what the Council's services need locally	89.7	4.0	6.3
Planting trees and shrubs in town centres	88.0	5.1	6.9
Helping children and young people in our schools to understand more about nature and climate	93.7	2.9	3.4

Helping people of all ages to train or retrain for new skills so that they can find jobs and create changes in companies that will help to protect the planet	87.4	2.9	9.7
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Table 2 - In homes, work and businesses - *Thinking Climate: Prosperity* (%)

4.11 Figure 3 shows that overall, **90% of respondents strongly agree or agree** with the Council's Climate Change Prosperity commitments.

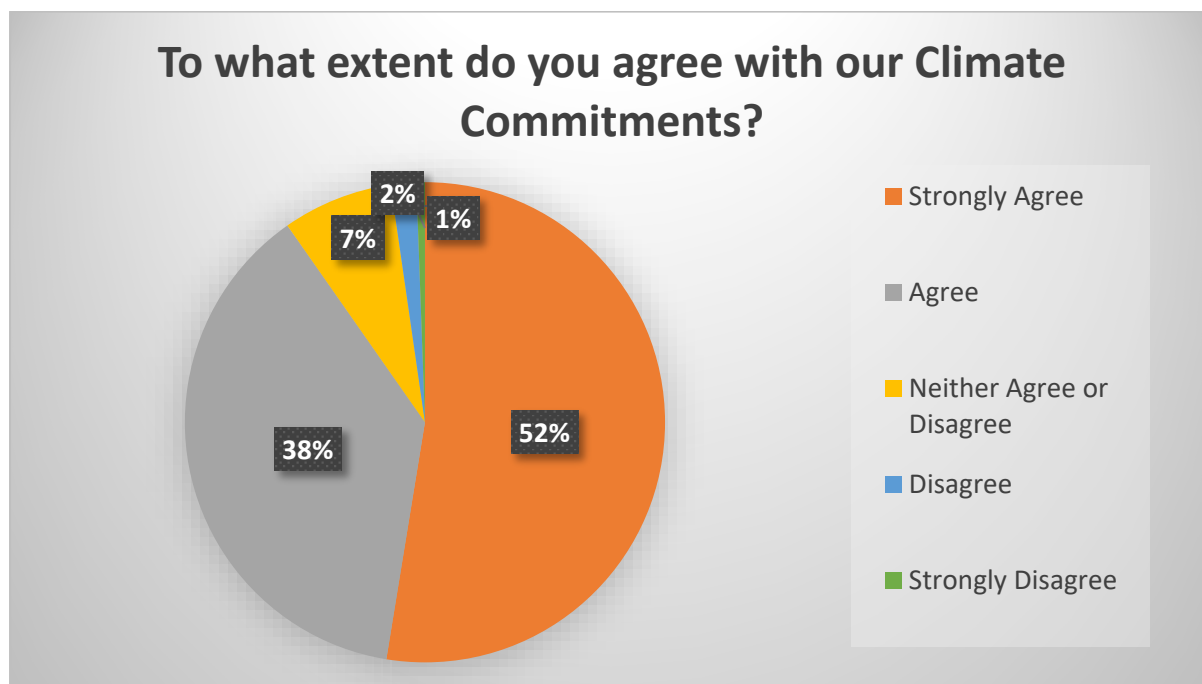


Figure 3 – Agreement with Climate Change commitments (*Prosperity*)

4.12 When asked if they had any ideas or suggestions, they would like to see added to the Council's Climate Change commitments in relation to prosperity, the following themes and comments emerged;

Young People

"Include children's voices and be creative help people imagine the future"

"... for children to have more organised outdoor activities local to them on weekends in order to learn about their environment and how to look after it"

"Empower children and young people to help make positive differences for their future by involving, listening and valuing their contributions."

Community Groups/Projects

"is there scope for more community owned energy projects?"

"....why not have community groups set up to litter pick/plant areas, create wildflower areas etc. More of a coordinated approach across RCT"

"Better communication and community involvement"

Reducing food waste

"I think work should be done with food retailers/ supermarkets and other food producers in RCT and school dinners to reduce food and packaging waste and increase, and educate on, plant-based meals (or at least meat reduction)"

"Making school meals low carbon, through eating less red meat and using more plant-based foods."

Businesses

"... I would like to see the Council support and promote local green businesses and social enterprises e.g. repair shops/zero waste stores"

"More onus on businesses to reduce packaging, collect waste packaging, recycle / reuse / repurpose products...."

"To focus on zero carbon inter trade, not just local trade. We need to be responsible citizens of the world, not just RCT."

Tree Planting

"Also add planting wildflowers to the tree and shrub planting."

"More fruiting plants & trees = free healthy food"

".....Must ensure we protect and enhance green space and biodiversity. 20-minute neighbourhoods and green space within 300 metres of every resident"

Climate Change Strategy - People

- 4.13 Table 3 below, shows respondents' views on the Council's strategy to tackle Climate Change, related to the **People priority**. Respondents were asked whether they thought the following actions would help to make a difference.

The majority of respondents agreed with all of the proposed actions, however the levels of agreement were lower than for the places and prosperity priorities.

%	Yes	No	Don't know
Providing information that will help people to make choices in their lives that can help put less carbon in the air. For example, wasting less, recycling more, driving less, driving more slowly and not running the engine when the car is stopped	82.3	9.7	8.0
Encouraging and helping people to make their homes more energy efficient	98.3	0.6	1.1
Making space in Ynysangharad Park where people can learn about local nature, practice new skills and take part in activities that will help the climate and grow fresh vegetables for local foodbanks	76.6	10.9	12.6
Encouraging more people to join with others to enjoy and help nature	84.6	5.1	10.3
Offering land to people and groups so that they can grow their own fruit and vegetables and to share them with others	91.4	4.0	4.6
Giving more vegetarian meal choices to children and young people in schools and people who receive Meals on Wheels	72.0	16.0	12.0

Table 3 - For people who live, work and visit Rhondda Cynon Taf - *Thinking Climate: People* (%)

- 4.14 Respondents were asked what they thought of the overall People priority. Figure 4 shows 87% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the Council's Climate Change **PEOPLE** commitments.

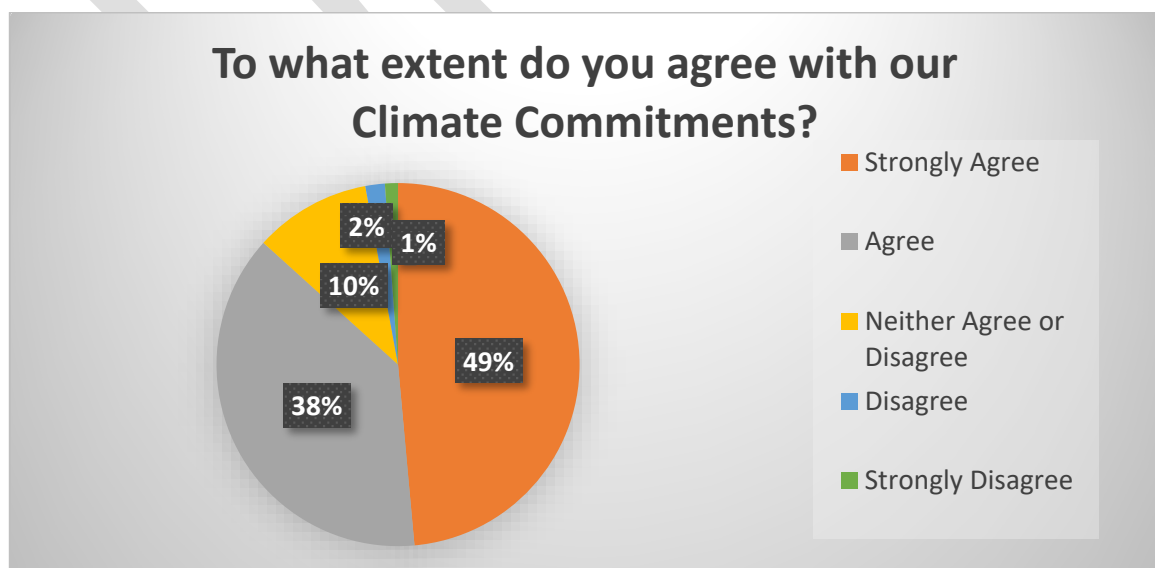


Figure 4 – Agreement with Climate Change commitments (People)

- 4.15 When asked if they had any ideas or suggestions, they would like to see added to the Council's Climate Change commitments in relation to the people priority, the following themes and comments emerged:

Vegetarian & Plant Based meals

"Am not sure information is sufficient for people to make lifestyle changes, also need to enable e.g. providing active travel routes, cookery classes to learn about local/vegetarian food etc."

"...I think the idea of encouraging vegetarian/vegan options in schools is great."

"Encouraging vegan diets. Educating people on the environmental damage caused by meat and dairy."

"Please extend the vegetarian options to plant based. even vegan junk food is healthier than its non-vegan alternative and would have a drastic impact on helping the environment :)"

Ynysangharad War Memorial Park for activities

"Ynysangharad Park should be a pilot and if successful rolled out to other places so people don't have to travel to join in."

"It's a good idea to make space in Ynysangharad Park for people to learn about nature etc, but we need things like this in all our communities in order for them to be easily accessed by more people."

"Why only Ynysangharad Park this would need people to travel from all parts of the borough, more carbon emissions, parking problems etc. Smaller hubs in more locations....."

Providing green spaces for growing vegetables

"Teach people to grow using their own space through vertical planting and permaculture is a better solution. This will reduce carbon release in the air"

"We need to encourage growth of fruit & veg locally, which should start in schools & can be sold to families for a small fee."

"I strongly believe in providing land for Allotments. This would be a huge step forward from the past into the future for the benefit of the People and Nature itself."

Community Gardens/Projects

"Building on stuff like community gardens, also providing land for community ownership projects like Skyline"

"Community gardens with mixed age groups and learning resources would be excellent."

“Having communal gardens in villages. Find ways to teach older children/people to respect their communities”

Education/Learning

“As RCT is such a large and diverse county, opportunities to learn about and experience environmental issues should be created in as many locations as possible. Co-ordination between all the various groups with environmental interests that exist.”

“Need to change peoples' mindsets so they "care" about where they live, work etc. Somehow, develop community pride and responsibility. How to make people care if they don't already?”

“Reduce the need for importing food with high food miles, especially things like strawberries out of season, and obviously other food products if there is an alternative or perhaps it's about educating people”

“Education is needed alongside encouragement”

Meeting our Climate Commitments

- 4.16 Figure 5 shows that 56% of respondents thought that the Climate Commitments would help the Council to meet its carbon reduction targets. 35% of respondents were unsure.

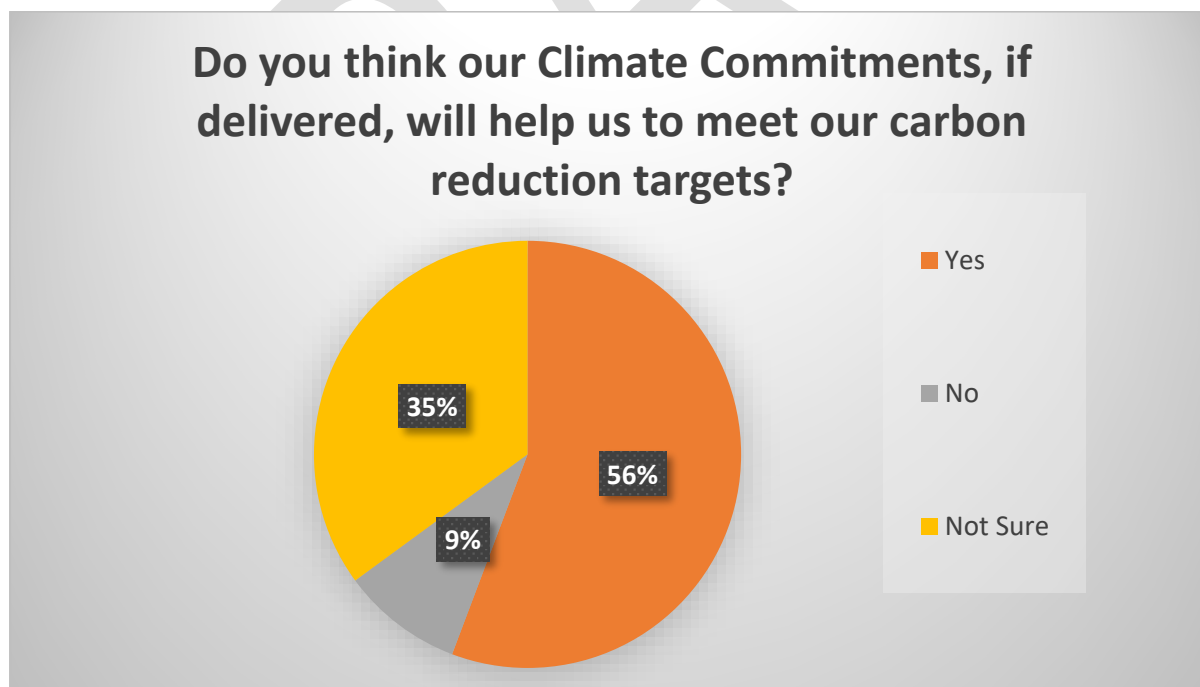


Figure 5 – Will the Council's commitments help to meet carbon reduction targets?

- 4.17 Those who were unsure or felt that the commitments wouldn't meet the carbon reduction targets had the opportunity to suggest what the Council should be doing to reach the carbon reduction targets.
- 4.18 The following are the main themes identified and some examples of the comments received;

Everyone must play a part

"The council can only do so much. It has to be the residents who change their lifestyles and reduce their impact on the environment..."

"I think it is a vital target to reach but it is an ambitious one which will require a big shift in the way we all live, work and deliver our services. It will require everyone to work together but if we do this, we can all make a difference!"

It will require some level of Intervention

"Tougher laws need to be imposed to make sure the transition to green homes and greener transport are achievable before 2030. People are too comfortable and rooted in their ways and won't change unless the law enforces it. Must push WG to impose new laws"

"Needs massive intervention from Government and we need to drastically cut fossil fuel use....."

".... Maybe recycling for homes and businesses needs to be mandatory."

More focus needed on Transport

"Much more of a focus on modal shift away from driving. Removal of all barriers on active travel routes so they can be used widely."

"Massively more ambitious on transport commitments. Set targets on 95% pupils walk/cycle to every school (similar to present day Dutch levels) reallocate road space to more efficient transport (cycling/buses)"

"Transport infrastructure has to be a priority too - I would use public transport if it could get me to work!"

Council Electric Vehicles

"Full electric fleet of trucks and vans free public transport."

"Investment in more electric vans and lorries for RCT staff use."

"Change council fleet and mowing equipment to cleaner fuels or electric."

Procurement

"Look at all products sourced and used, including cleaning: are they harmful to aquatic life, are they sustainable, are they made from recycled materials and can they be fully recycled?"

"..... needs to be some emphasis on improving skills of Council staff to make sustainable decisions e.g. procurement"

"Working with all your suppliers of goods and services to ensure they are also decarbonising their activities and those of their supply chain. We all have to commit to achieving the targets"

Engagement and Education

"This is a big challenge for all society, RCT needs to engage with us to ensure everyone meets their obligations....."

"People need to be educated in how to make small changes to their lifestyles (less consumerism, fast fashion/food, using their money to support local and sustainable businesses, etc.) is the only way to ensure a better future for us all"

"engage with the public; have a Public meeting in different areas. Leaflets through house doors"

Working from home

"Encouraging people to work closer to home and/or work from home."

"Encourage businesses to let people work from home where possible. Less cars on the roads, fewer office buildings means more land for other things"

Positive

"I'm not sure about "the target" but it will be a step in the right direction (hopefully)"

"It depends how many of the commitments are put into real action - if you do all the things suggested, then RCT could become a real model for best practice amongst local authorities."

Other

"Don't invest so much of the pensions in fossil fuels."

"Look to provide leadership and engage and empower people at all levels to take responsibility for their own and their communities actions"

"We need to get on with it. These are lovely words, let's act on them."



"Increase local self-sufficiency and set up a work reduction scheme where workers can spend the time giving back to their community."

Ideas

- 4.19 In addition to the survey, the Let's Talk Climate Change project asked site visitors to leave an "idea" on how they thought the Council could tackle Climate Change.






23 ideas were submitted to the Let's Talk Climate Change project as follows:

Electric Vehicles and charging points

Super Fast Electric Car Chargers

there is already a considerable noticeable increase in electric vehicles within the Rhondda, we MUST have a super charger in the borough (preferably a charging hub)
instead of allowing all our old petrol garages to become car washes, lets create super fast charge hubs not small scale supermarket drip feed chargers

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

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Recycling

Expand the repair cafe network

As a Welsh Government priority, RCT council should work with existing providers to ensure there is a reuse and repair network in the County Borough, with facilities available on all high streets.


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Encourage cafes and takeaways to use recyclable packaging and ditch single use plastic items such as straws and cutlery






Caerphilly is a Plastic Free Community, can our towns follow suit?


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Set up repair cafes to encourage residents not to buy new and reduce their consumption






Repair cafes

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Incorporate a new recycling system

In 2019, the BBC published a film by Douglas Shaw called "Would you sort your rubbish into seven different bags?" In the Swedish City of Eskilstuna, they recycle over half their waste and send nothing to landfill. In the home, they sort their waste into seven different coloured bags. The materials are sorted according to a colour coded system. At the recycling centre, scanners can separate the bags efficiently. I think it is worth consulting cities, councils etc that have carried out schemes like this to make recycling more engaging and fun.






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Housing


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New build houses and industrial units should be fitted with EV charging points.






EV charging points for all new builds along with renewable energy as a priority. Planning rules should include this as standard.

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Retrofit Older Properties

Work with Welsh & UK Govt to fund retrofit energy saving improvements to all properties.

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Renewable Energy suited to Housing

With so many providers of Solar and Wind Power, could the Council provide a grant or advertise reliable and reasonably cheap companies? It would be lovely to see every house with a renewable energy source, like when you go to Spain and see Solar Panels on nearly every house.

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Living in a terrace house it would be difficult to change electric car without rolling out the charging lead over the pavement.

More charging points needed in RCT. If possible in RCT car parks?

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Traffic and roads



Keep traffic flowing by building bus stop lay-byes, so when the bus stops the traffic keeps going and is not held up causing more pollution.

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Stop New Road Building

No more new roads.

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No New Roads



Transport emissions must be cut by 50% by 2030. You can not build new roads and achieve this - it's that simple. There are no ifs or buts.

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Public Transport






Electrification of all public Transport

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Safeguard rural bus services

For many outlying rural communities in our area the transport options are car or infrequent bus services. The timetables of these services should be expanded further to allow traveller flexibility, and subsidised with incentives for target users e.g. young people/families

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The 15 minute neighbourhood?

So many of our communities are almost set up for this, they might just benefit from better transport infrastructure, one more amenity, or increased support and investment in existing provision.

Share









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Looking at improving public transport would be better than spending £30 million on a mile of new road (Cynon gateway north)

No more new roads

Share










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Give us better cycle paths!

As regular bike users we need safer routes to get around, to travel to school, and between different areas of RCT. More cycle racks should be made available in towns, and railway stations. The cycling proficiency scheme should be relaunched to encourage more young people on their bikes.






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Other

Increased awareness raising of the climate crisis






Projects such as public artworks should be created to raise local awareness of the climate and biodiversity crises. A citizen's assembly, similar to that which has been created in Blaenau Gwent, would help find solutions and impacts on different people, as well as increasing awareness. People have shown that they are prepared to be more adaptable than RCT gives them credit for. People want things to change!



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Install more hydro schemes like the one in Radyr, we have the weirs and rivers already.

Radyr Hydro Scheme on all weirs.

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Use Cardiff Bay to generate electricity as it flows out of the Bay, The Bay is already there just needs the equipment.

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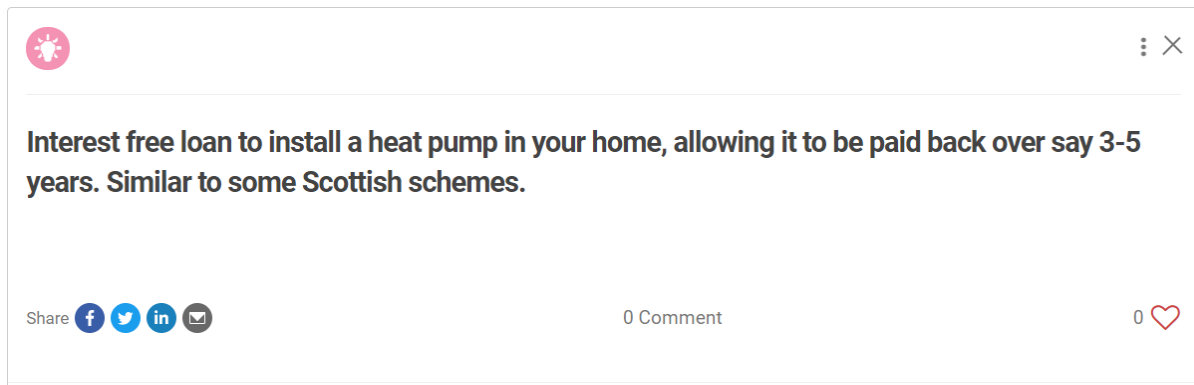
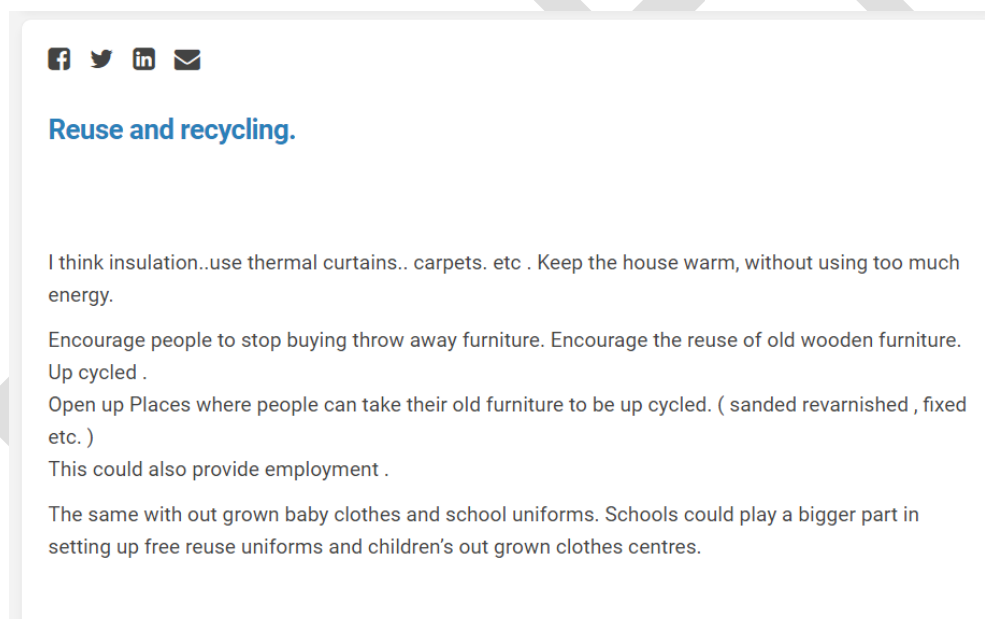


Figure 6 – Ideas - How can the Council do more to tackle Climate Change?

Stories

- 4.20 The purpose of the stories engagement tool was to encourage respondents to leave a more detailed account of what they are already doing to reduce the impact of Climate Change at home. Two stories were received:



Battery Power/Thank Heaven for Global Warming

The thought of having in the near future, to drive a Battery Powered Car is eased a little by the fact that the World is entering a phase of.....Global Warming!!!

During my Army service through a Korean Winter in . the 1950's the Arctic Weather made life a misery.

I was running our Units battery charging station in the back of a canvas sided Bedford lorry, facing every morning the task of thawing the Top Up water, and hopeful that the generator diesel would not run from the refuelling Jerry can like syrup.

At minus 20 and below, the storage capacity of the cells were reduced by much as half, making it necessary for very frequent replacement to take place to keep the communication circuits working, and making a nonsense of milder weather running schedules.

Therefore from this experience I will never feel confident to rely only on battery power for a long Winter journey.

The best solution would be to opt for a Hybrid compromise, or follow the birds and..... Move South in the Winter.

Mother Nature knows Best!

Figure 7 – How you are playing your part to protect the planet?

Quick Polls

- 4.21 3 quick web polls were set up within the Let's Talk Climate Change project, as shown in figure 8 below;

Quick Polls

Do you have enough information about the impact of Climate Change in Rhondda Cynon Taf?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't Know

[View Results](#)

SUBMIT

Quick Polls

How concerned are you about the impact of Climate Change in Rhondda Cynon Taf?

☐ Very Concerned
☐ Concerned
☐ Not Very Concerned
☐ Not At All Concerned

[View Results](#)

SUBMIT

Quick Polls

Who is responsible for tackling Climate Change in Rhondda Cynon Taf?

☐ Local People
☐ Environmental Groups
☐ The Council
☐ Businesses
☐ Community
☐ Welsh Government

[View Results](#)

SUBMIT

Figure 8 – Quick Polls

- 4.22 Quick poll 1 asked “Do you think there is enough information available for everyone to help tackle climate change?”

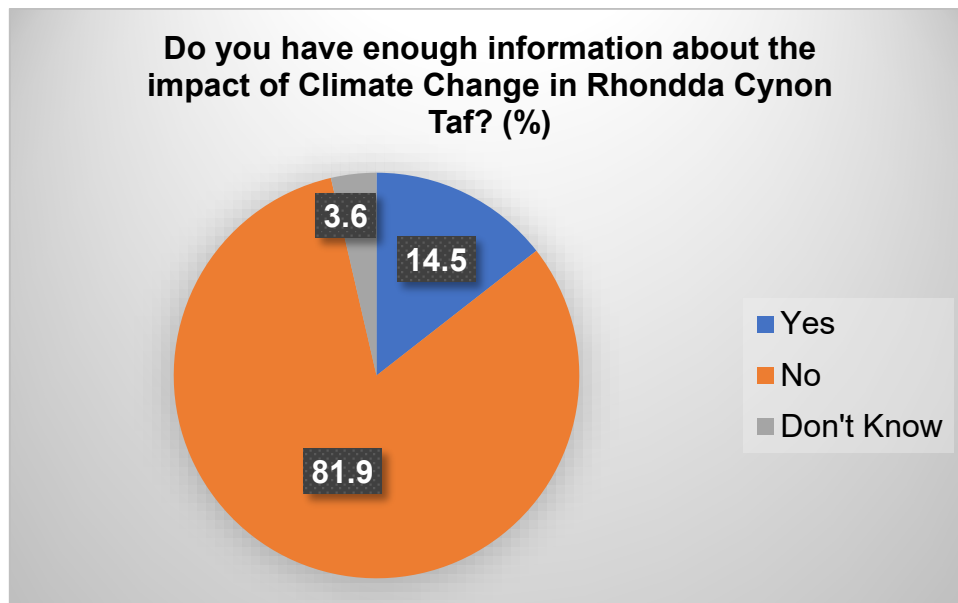


Figure 9 – Is there enough information available on climate change?

- 4.23 81.9% of respondents felt that they didn't have enough information about the impact of Climate Change. 14.5% said that they did.
- 4.24 Quick poll 2 asked “How concerned are you about the impact of climate change in your local area?”

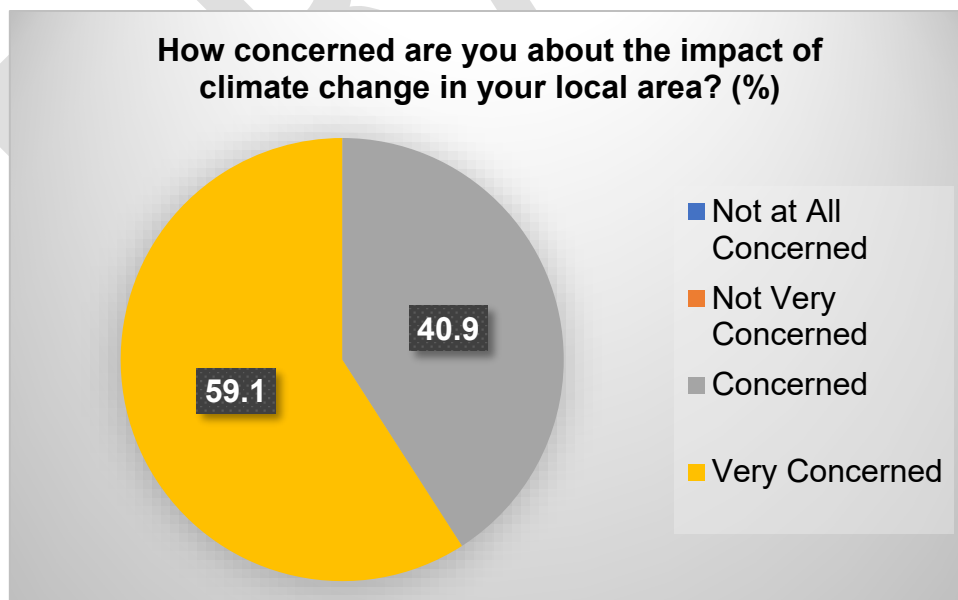


Figure 10 – Concerns about Climate Change in RCT

- 4.25 100% of respondents said they were very concerned or concerned about the impact of Climate Change in their local area.

- 4.26 Quick poll 3 asked “Whose responsibility is it to address the issue of climate change?”

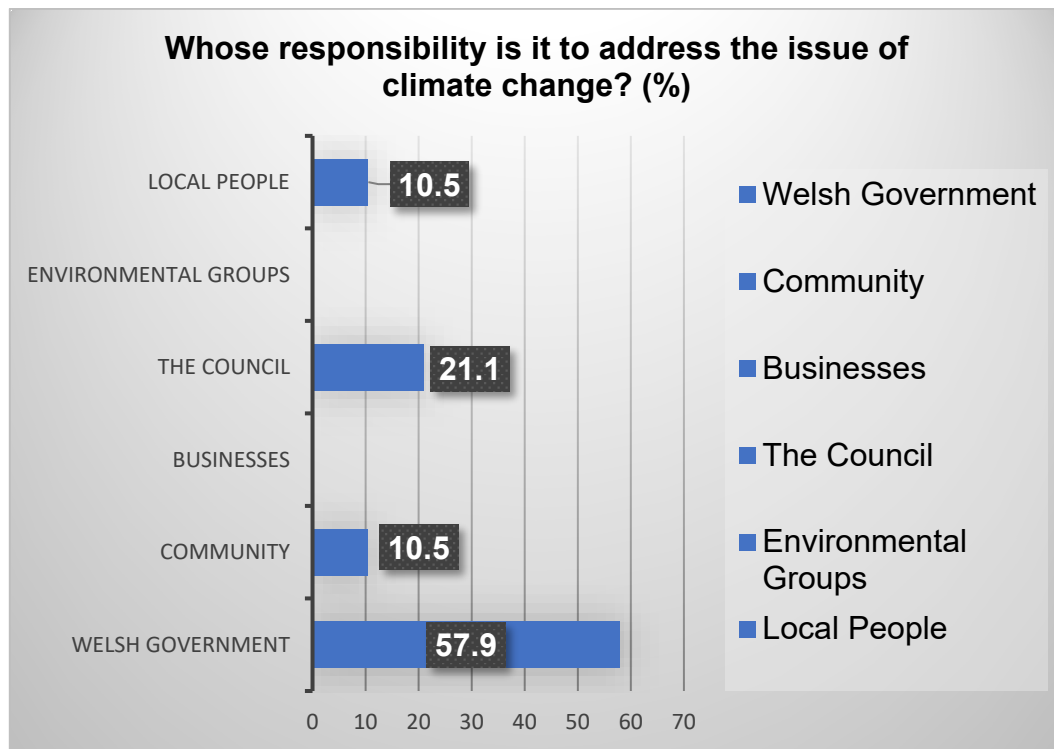


Figure 11 – Whose responsibility is it to tackle Climate Change?

- 4.27 Over 57% of respondents thought it was Welsh Government’s responsibility to tackle climate change, followed by the Council (21%).

Note: the response numbers were low for Poll 2 and 3

5 Young Persons Engagement

5.1 The Youth Engagement Participation Service (YEPS) promoted the climate change conversation by sharing existing RCT tweets and Facebook posts via the following website and social media platforms:

- Wicid.tv – average of 1,300 users monthly
- Twitter – 1,236 followers
- Facebook 2,507
- Instagram – 2,093 followers

5.2 Two bilingual grid posts were created on Instagram to draw attention to the Think Climate video that was created to promote the 'Let's Talk Climate Change' project on the Let's Talk RCT website. Instagram followers were signposted to links to the project and an introductory video was also posted to make them aware of the short polls that would be appearing in Instagram stories.

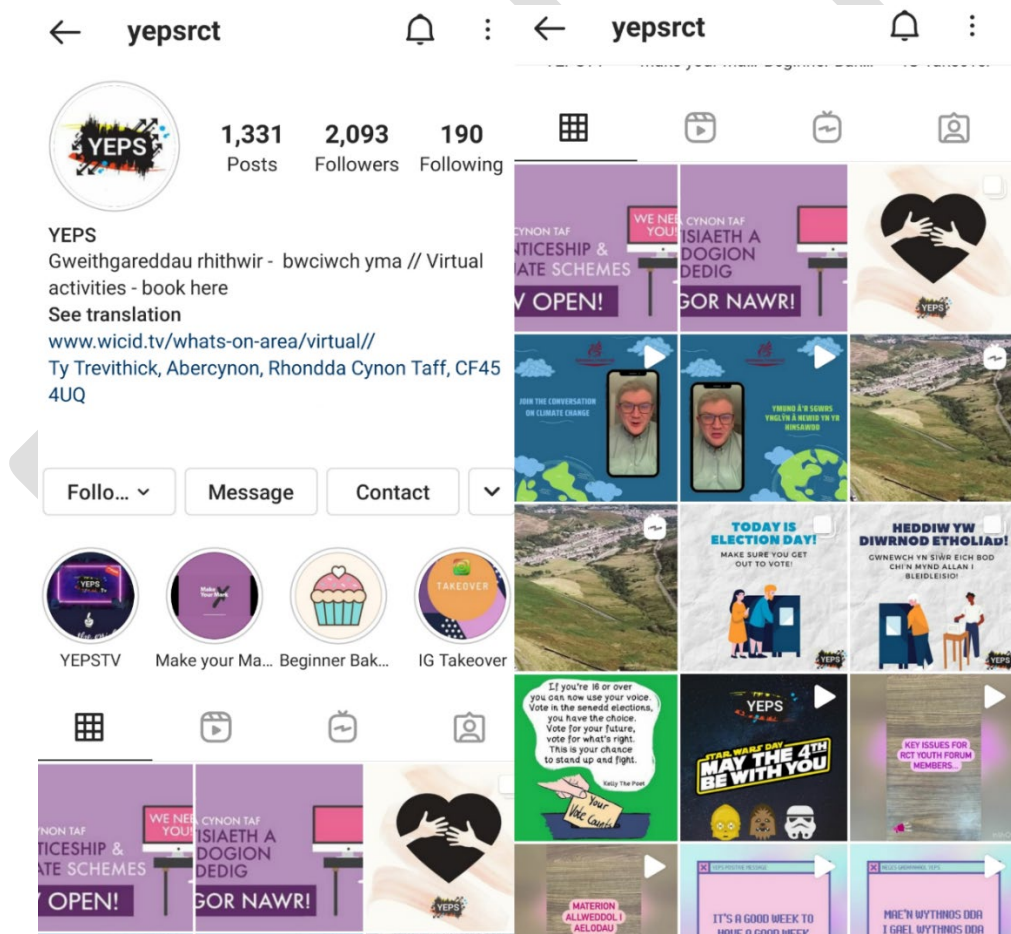


Figure 12 – YEPS RCT Instagram account

5.3 The figure below shows the grid posts that were published by YEPS to promote Let's Talk Climate Change RCT.

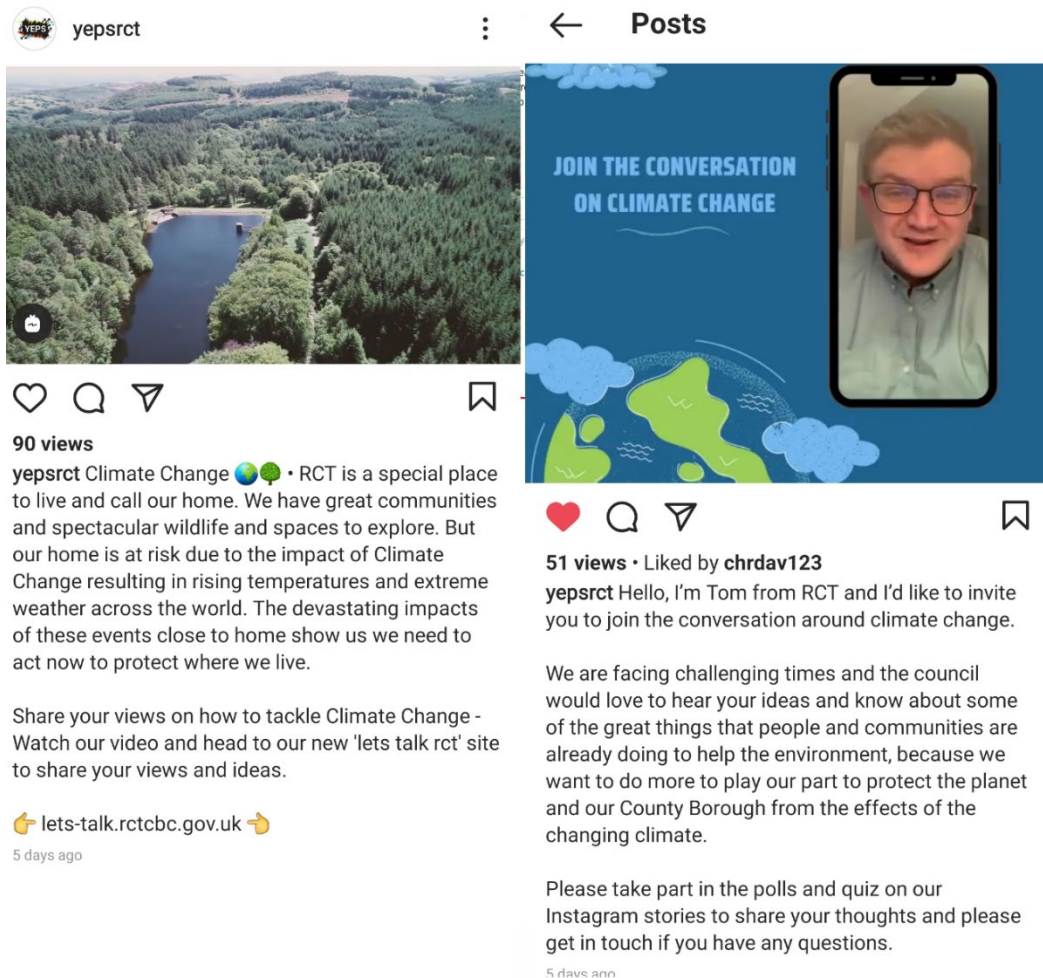


Figure 13 – Think Climate RCT grid posts

- 5.4 The following figures show the grid posts that were published by YEPS to promote Let's Talk Climate Change RCT. The first story poll that was published asked "Do you think you know enough about climate change?" 27 YEPS followers responded and 56% selected the thumbs down image to say 'No'. 44% responded 'Yes'.
- 5.5 When asked "Are you concerned about the impact of climate change on your local area?", 25 YEPS followers responded with 60% saying they were concerned and 40% saying they were not concerned about the impact of Climate Change on their local area.

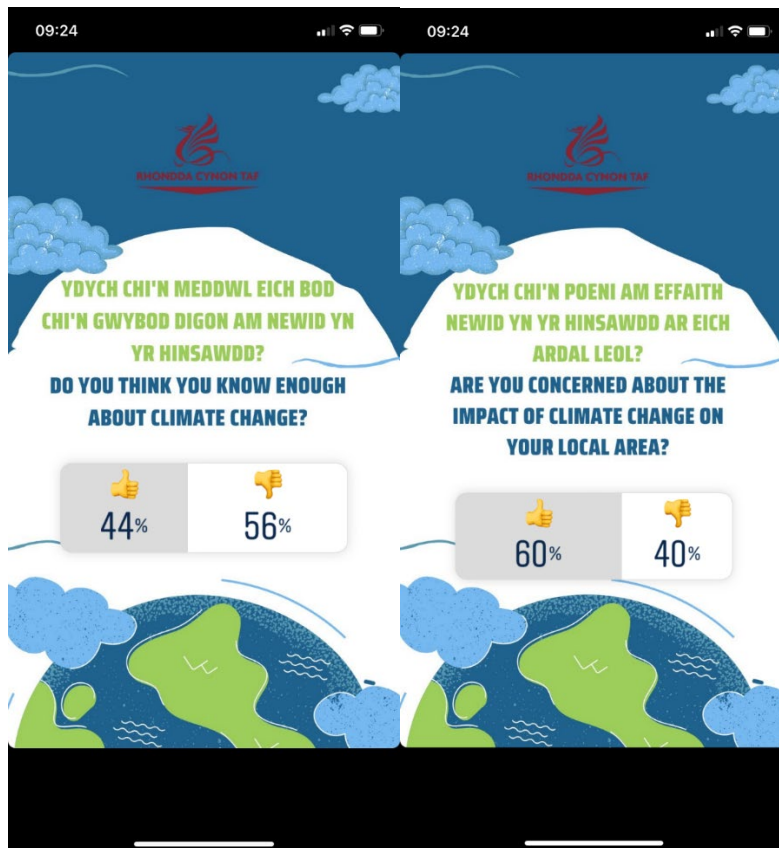


Figure 14 – Instagram polls

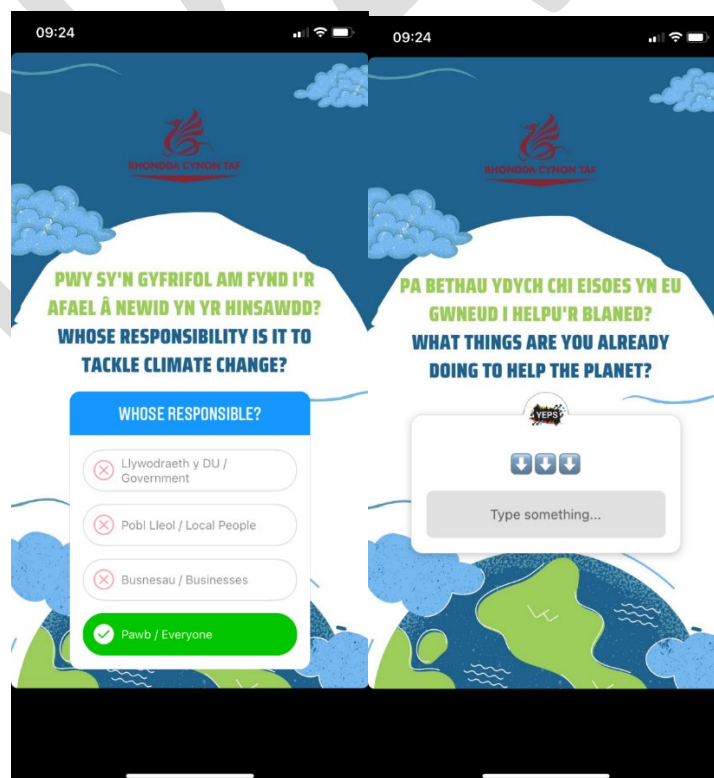
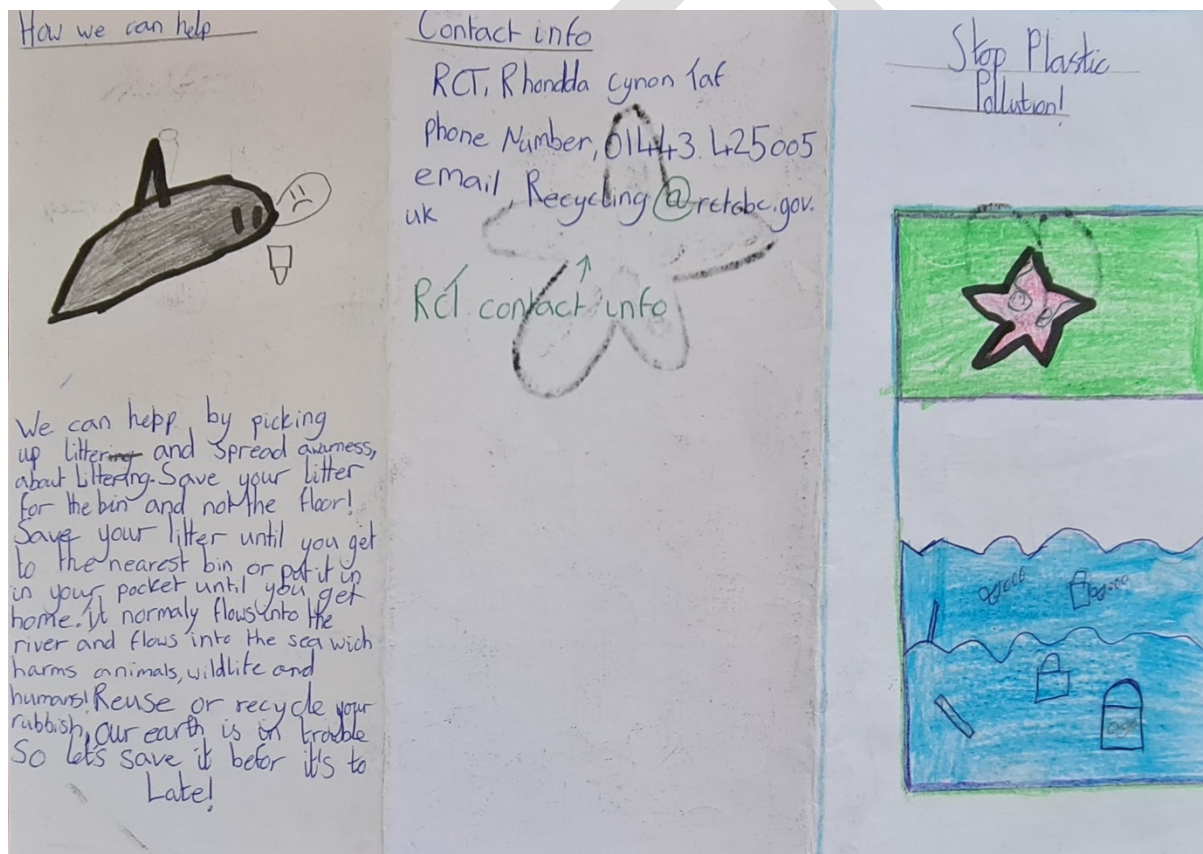


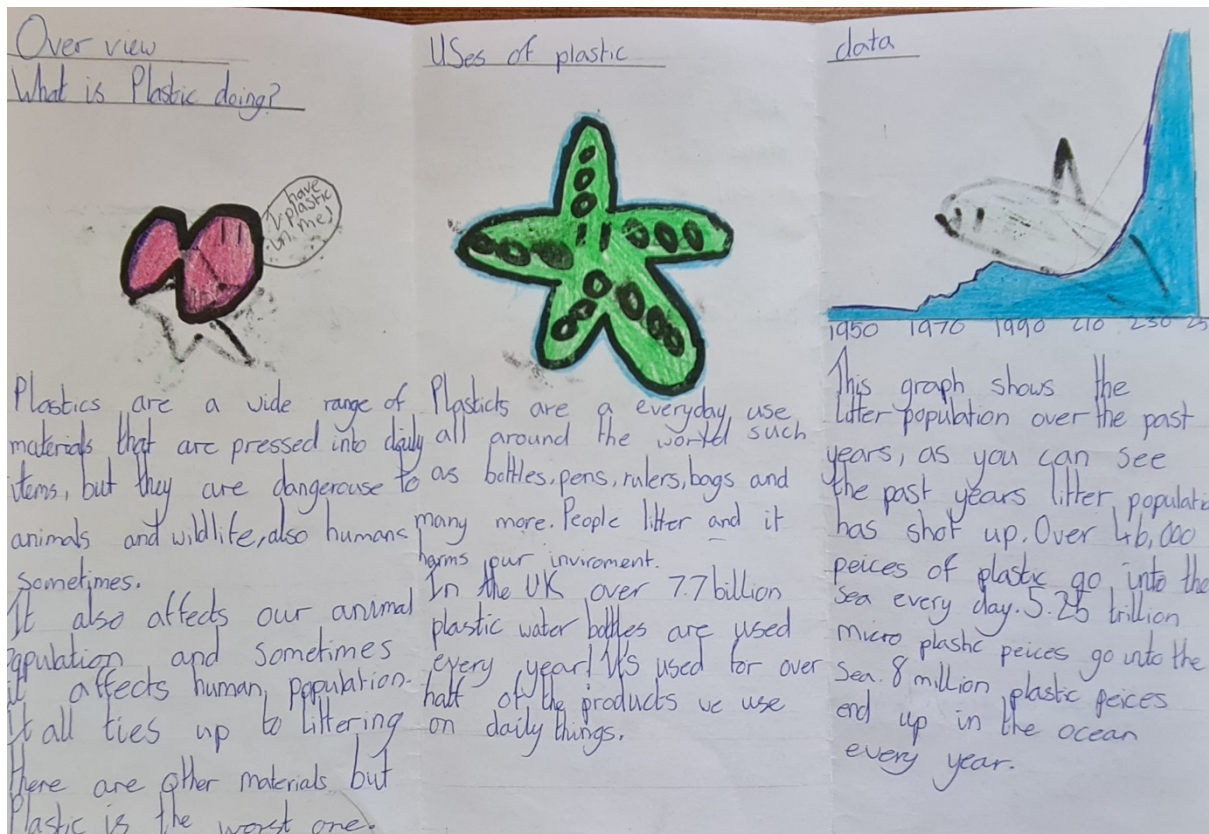
Figure 15 – Instagram question and comments

- 5.6 When asked “Whose responsibility is it to tackle climate change?”, 23 followers responded. 17 voted ‘Everyone’, 3 voted ‘Local People’ and 3 voted ‘The Council / UK Government’.
- 5.7 The final Instagram story asked “What things are you already doing to help the planet? One comment was received “*Not dropping rubbish.*”

Primary School Responses

- 5.8 A sample of responses in relation to the Climate Change consultation were received from Trehopcyn Primary School. Class 4 sent in some work that they had been doing on the environment, including a leaflet, letters and some posters, examples of which are shown below.





Figures 16a & 16b – Plastic pollution leaflets

Dear Portyrridd Council members,
I am writing to you today to address the issues referring to plastic and pollution.

Oil pollution is a major factor to the problem, a couple days ago I went down to the river taff and I was shocked to see the amount of oil that was in the river and by the banks. This means that the wildlife in the river are in danger because it's destroying their habitat.

It is astonishing how much litter is in Portyrridd and Barry Sillings, also the prickly chip. The people who litter have no care for the planet and are destroying it bit by bit. They need to be prosecuted.

Dog mess is another local form of pollution and again

people disregard it. It ruins the social environment and the street makes some places feel like a pig sty. People just ignore their dogs and it continues to happen. We need more enforcement.

Plastic is biggest factor to our problems. It is a deadly material to a lot of creatures like turtles, seagulls etc. We are losing a substantial chunk of marine life and we need to stop.

My solutions are to contact various oil companies and to ask them to stop dumping oil in the water, to place tighter restrictions on dog mess, encourage less littering and for shops to use less plastic.

Figure 17 – Letter 1



Figure 18 – Poster 1



Figure 19 – Poster 2

Youth Forum Zoom meeting

- 5.9 A Zoom meeting was set up with 5 members of Taf Youth Forum. The session began by sharing the 'Let's Talk Climate Change' site and playing the video to give an overview of the topic.
- 5.10 We asked the group if they had any ideas about what the Council could do to help tackle climate change and the following ideas were given:
- "Encourage people to ride bikes instead of using other transport to help."*
- "Change the vehicles the Council uses to be electric vehicles."*
- "Encourage people to shop more locally."*
- 5.11 The group also discussed their feelings on Climate Change and acknowledged that there could be more done to help young people understand the issue. The group discussed how they had noticed a change in the weather locally and the impacts of flooding in their area were also discussed.

The group were asked if they currently did anything with the aim of helping the environment and tackling climate change. One participant spoke about how they try to save plastic bottles and re-purpose them into plant pots. Most of the group spoke about how they and/or their families recycle but also highlighted some of the downfalls of trying to recycle more.

"We try to recycle everything but it's sometimes hard to know what can and can't be recycled. The plastic recycling is hard because some can and some can't be recycled."

"I tried to eat less meat. I was vegetarian for 6 months but found it difficult to keep up. Fast food options for vegetarians aren't great."

"I keep plastic bottles and use these as a craft to make them into plant pots that I then use to put plants in."

- 5.12 The group were asked the Quick Poll questions which lead to a number of discussion points. Firstly, they were asked:

Do you have enough information about the impact of Climate Change in Rhondda Cynon Taf?

All 5 participants said they currently did not have enough information.

The group again acknowledged that a lack of understanding on the main issues often prevents young people from knowing what they can do to contribute towards tackling the problem.

- 5.13 The group were asked to identify the best ways to share information with young people and the most popular response was through social media with Instagram and Snapchat being identified as the most used platforms. The group also highlighted how important it is for the information that is shared from the Council to be relevant and aimed directly at young people relating to topics that directly affect them.

"The information online should be shorter so you don't have to read a lot but then a link provided to a page with more information that you can use if you want to. It puts me off if there's a lot of words to read at once. This would have more of an impact I think."

"I didn't think much about the flooding at the time but then saw a programme on TV which showed people in the area and how they had been affected. I saw how they felt and it had a big impact on me."

A suggestion was made to utilise social media pages to promote weekly topics for discussion that they could have with their families or to set challenges that would help identify how they could make a difference.

"Have fun interactive ideas of things we could do daily to give ideas and challenges to talk about different topics."

- 5.14 The group were then asked the remaining poll questions with the results as follows:

How concerned are you about the impact of Climate Change in Rhondda Cynon Taf?

Very Concerned 4

Concerned 0

Not Very Concerned 0

Not At All Concerned 1

Who is responsible for tackling Climate Change in Rhondda Cynon Taf?

The group felt the responsibility lay with all groups referenced as options.

“It is for everyone to do their bit.”

- 5.15 Throughout the discussion it became clear that the group had an interest in the topic but felt they did not currently have the right information to be able to know how they could become involved in activities to help. One participant raised an issue of litter being in a lake nearby and asked for information about how they could become involved in clean ups to try to prevent wildlife being affected. The group decided that they could use this as a project to work on and look at how they can become involved in regular litter picks and projects to clean up local areas.

6 Older Persons Advisory Group

- 6.1 An online meeting was held with the Older Person's Advisory group as part of the engagement and the following outlines the main discussion points.
- 6.2 There were concerns about the environmental impact of litter and particularly the amount of take away cups, whilst businesses have been closed and more recently face masks. There are a number of local groups that help with the litter and this proactive community work is helpful. There were calls for more signage to discourage litter.
- 6.3 The environmental impact of Fly Tipping was also discussed and the need for the good enforcement work that is going on to be communicated more in the press and on social media, to deter people.
- 6.4 There was a discussion around alternative sources of energy. There was the example of a person wanting to have a small wind turbine on some land they own and how this could be achieved, perhaps working with the Council or other community organisations. An attendee asked if the Government still provided grants for solar panels.

How do we act to help tackle climate change?

- 6.5 As part of the discussion, the group were asked what they or their family does to play a part in tackling climate change. Comments included;

"I think most of us are using our cars less because we haven't been able to go anywhere."

"Most of us do as much recycling as we can...."
- 6.6 Recycling was discussed, and questions were raised about why some materials cannot be recycled easily, for example bread bags. The ability to recycle old medication and tablets at local pharmacies was welcomed. The group were happy to go out of their way to recycle items that the Council currently are unable too.
- 6.7 There was a discussion about the way things were done in the past and how they could now be perceived as eco-friendly, for example hanging washing on the line, rather than using a tumble dryer, turning lights off and only boiling the water that you need etc. It was suggested that this should be taught in schools. The conversation then went on to suggest that there could be some form of intergenerational working, with older people visiting schools to discuss or produce a leaflet to communicate the key issues.

What can communities do?

- 6.8 The group were not aware of many community sharing schemes in the County. One attendee suggested that they used to live in an area where there was an equipment sharing library and it would be good to pool resources and do

something locally here. Another attendee suggested that there is a community garden in Brynna Woods, where people can go in and pick up goods and also in Pontyclun.

- 6.9 Allotments were discussed as a means to grow your own food. Long waiting lists were reported and then a number of vacant sites were suggested that could be turned into allotments if needed. Indoor allotment sites in old factory buildings “Like a big glass house”, was one idea.
- 6.10 Communicating key messages was seen as important, with two examples given. Firstly, the cutting down of diseased trees, people are not aware and think that they are just being cut down, when on the other hand we should be planting more trees. The second example, was mention of the 50mph signs on the A470, which tell people the reason for the speed limit is to reduce air pollution, with the result that people are more informed.
- 6.11 The final point raised was the potential benefits of publicising the recycled products and things that are made out of recycled products? *“It’s amazing what they can make. If people knew what was being recycling and what it was being turned into, it could make a big difference.”*

7 Staff survey responses

- 7.1 An email was sent to all staff in RCT Council with a link to a question that asked for ideas on how the Council could tackle Climate Change within Council Services.

13 detailed Responses were received. A number of the comments are shown below, split by theme;

If you have ideas about how we can do more to tackle Climate Change within any of our Council services, please let us know.

Plastic use

"I think that as an organisation we need to commit to reducing our plastic consumption. When we were in the workplace, plastic was used a lot in things like packaging and catering (like coffee cups etc.) These are small changes that can make a big difference."

"Re-instate water machines in offices, to encourage staff to use less plastic bottles. Lots of people refuse to drink tap water."

"We need to find ways to change people's habits so that they will realise that small changes in the way we live, step-by-step, are easier than we think. Society must move away from over consumerism and realise that our ways are harmful to ourselves and the environment. We need to reduce, reuse and recycle. I find that many people are confused by what can be recycled and how. Perhaps we could find a way to teach residents the difference between the seven categories of plastic; which types can be recycled in the bags on the doorstep and alternative options for those that can't, how to look for the triangle and number symbol on the packaging."

Energy

"We should commit to using only (or majority) renewable energy and ditch fossil fuels completely as an organisation."

"Lights-out policy on Council owned buildings after a set time to save energy (understood it is required for security reasons in some cases)."

"I work at Maesnewydd Garden Centre and we have a large greenhouse with a gas boiler. If that was replaced by solar panels and a small windmill to service an electric boiler that would be more beneficial to the planet and eventually would pay for itself by the reduction in our gas bills. We already have solar panels on our building's roof."

Catering

"I think that catering needs to be considered when thinking about tackling climate change. Food being offered on RCT premises and services needs to be ethical, sustainable and eco-friendly. Reduce the amount of red meat and

dairy being sold and consumed. Increase the number of vegan and vegetarian options. Ensure that any meat, fish or dairy sold is sustainable.”

Procurement

“We need to look at the procurement process and evaluate the sustainability and ethics of our contractors and organisations used. Maybe a commitment to have basic requirements for these contracts (must be sustainable, must be ethical etc.).”

Remote Working/Reduce Office Space

“Discourage car journeys to attend meetings etc and encourage remote contact where possible”

“Reduction in office space footprint to encourage flexible working via hot-desk bookings”

“Continue with the home working where practicable.”

“Council office space could then be reduced which will save on heating/energy bills”

Electric Cars

“Electric pool car fleet for employees where regular travel by car is essential.”

“Purchase electric vehicles and also install charge points at the main offices / car parks. This may also encourage staff to purchase electric vehicles”

8 Email responses

8.1 Emails were received from the following:

- Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council
- Dr. Beth Winter – MP for Cynon Valley

8.2 The main points from the emails are found below;

Hirwaun and Penderyn Community Council

Overview

Hirwaun and Penderyn Community Council welcomes this document. This council endorses and supports all meaningful action taken by RCTBC to address the unfolding Climate and Ecological crisis which HPCC recognises as potentially the greatest ever existential threat to our planet and its lifeforms.

At present, a resident searching the RCT website would not be rewarded with any wealth of information on the council's response to climate change and would certainly not be informed of a coherent policy relating to it. We hope that this consultation and survey will pave the way to addressing this issue.

Comments on the draft document

Members of HPCC:

- were encouraged by the breadth and variety of initiatives that have already been actioned. It was felt that the council should celebrate these and raise public awareness.
- felt that the chilling quotes from leaders and activists, set the correct tone for this important document.
- noted that document is titled a "Climate Change Strategy" but the content encompasses wider environmental issues. The final document may benefit from a title that reflects this.
- thought that there was confusion at times, between which targets/actions applied to the council itself and which to the borough at large. This could be addressed in the final draft.
- wished that the document had been given a more reader friendly layout/organisation. This may have encouraged more members of the public to read and engage with it. Again the final draft could accommodate this.
- welcomed RCTBC's intention to continue its dialogue with residents regarding this overwhelmingly urgent issue. HPCC councillors were keen to be represented in this ongoing process.
- hoped to see RCTBC to set up a panel with wide representation that would have the role of stimulating and challenging the council on climate and environmental issues.

- did not believe that the public are sufficiently well informed of the crisis. It was felt that RCTBC should embark on urgent and extensive campaigns of awareness raising.

Conclusion

HPCC supports RCTBC in the aims of this document and would welcome the opportunity to work in partnership to further these aims.

Beth Winter – MP for Cynon Valley

Please find below the outcome of discussions held with my advisory groups in Cynon Valley to the consultation document on Climate Change produced by the Local Authority. I would like to also highlight two areas that are of particular importance to me. These are:

- There is a need to ensure that there is clarity around how and when targets will be met. This is an ambitious document but I remain unsure about how one would move to implementation of targets that are set.
- Processes of consultation are understandably often difficult and complicated to arrange and manage but the existential nature of this issue is such that ensuring adequate, comprehensive, representative and meaningful involvement of residents, including as wide a range as possible of organisations, is of paramount importance. The document falls short I feel on this.

On a positive note I, and my advisory groups, very much welcome this initiative by RCTCBC. It is a comprehensive and serious attempt to seek to address issues of climate change and I look forward to working with you to progress this initiative to the benefit, in particular, of our future generations.

Consultation response by Beth Winter MP; Economy Advisory Group; Welfare Benefits Advisory Groups & Constitution Advisory Group.

- Call for tighter legislation and clear enforcement on domestic & commercial burning. This would ideally go hand in hand with support for those who rely on burning solid fuel to incentivise and enable them to install greener heating methods.
- It's agreed that tone of consultation responses should reflect the positivity and ambition of the document.

- There is some confusion in the document between targets for RCT as an organisation and as a county borough council. This should be clarified. It is felt that there is a lack of detail on plans for how targets will be attained.
- Applaud that new- build houses will be carbon zero. RCT should use tools at their disposal to deliver widespread retrofitting scheme.
- RCT should work towards an integrated public & active transport network that complements the metro. Need to consider needs of more rural communities within RCT e.g. Rhigos, where public transport is virtually non-existent currently.
- RCT need to work rapidly on electric car charging points and communicate 'this is what we are doing', perhaps a named person to push this forward.
- Apprenticeship schemes should be used to up-skill local people on green infrastructure.
- Integration with Welsh Government to ensure a joined-up approach between WG & Local Authorities, with best practice spread and WG approach filtered down. Regular meetings between Julie James and named individuals at each local authority are suggested.
- Need to focus on e-bikes, mobility scooters and other forms of semi-active transport which are very energy efficient.
- Need a change of behaviour around waste. We applaud recycling where appropriate but need to move to less disposable elements on consumption. Need for a county borough wide emphasis on reducing and reusing.
- An emphasis throughout on a **fair transition**. Disincentives to drive are only going to hurt those who have no alternatives. Disincentives to burn solid fuel are only going to hurt those who rely on it. There need to be developed alternatives, financial support as appropriate and clear communication.
- Need to clarify consultation process – how and who is involved in the consultative body for RCT going forward – how representative is that body? Should Local Authorities also appoint Councillor for climate change?



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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24TH JUNE 2021

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP - THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY PROJECT 2021-22.

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION IN CONSULTATION WITH COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS (CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPION)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Cabinet with the recommendations of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group, which met on the 14th June 2021, to consider a report on the Queen's Green Canopy Project 2021-22.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the content of the attached report (Appendix A) considered by the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group on the 14th June 2021; and
- 2.2 Note the observations of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To acknowledge the work of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group and its recommendations.

4. THE CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

- 4.1 The Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group met on the 14th June 2021 to consider a report on the Queen's Green Canopy Project 2021-22.
- 4.2 To mark the platinum Jubilee in 2022, Her Majesty the Queen has recently launched the [Queen's Green Canopy \(QGC\)](#), to celebrate 70 years of service to the Nation. The campaign is focused on the role of trees and woodlands in enhancing our environment and includes elements of sustainable planting and the protection of ancient woodland and veteran trees.
- 4.3 As part of its work, the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group have considered various reports, which have outlined the opportunities available to

maximise carbon storage through the natural assets in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Furthermore, the Council's new LDP will provide opportunities to promote Green Infrastructure, in line with the Welsh Government planning guidance (PPW10) published in 2018.

- 4.4 The Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group were in support of the unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and acknowledged that the Council's participation in the project would make a positive contribution to the Council's climate change priority.
- 4.5 Members of the Group spoke of the need for officers to work together with individuals and community groups to send a clear message that areas identified for tree planting are appropriate for future manageability and maintenance.
- 4.6 One Member spoke of the need to engage with communities on the potential benefits of different tree species, such as carbon sequestration levels, the ability to habitat future wildlife and the ability to provide food for people.
- 4.7 Members suggested the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, which had been a subject of vast tree loss, be considered as an area of priority.
- 4.8 During previous discussions, the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group had noted that protecting the existing woodland, including ancient woodland, within RCT is a priority. It was felt that this approach should be maintained and for new planting in RCT is to focus on urban areas, where the greatest 'climate' benefits for local residents can be achieved, without threatening other important carbon storing and biodiverse habitats in the countryside.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the report.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equality or diversity implications as a result of the recommendations set out within the report.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no welsh language implications arising from the report.

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 8.1 Information relating to community engagement and the wider communication strategy of the QGC consultation is detailed within the attached report. A fundamental aspect of QGC, is public and community engagement to maximise participation in the project, to raise environmental awareness and the extent of tree planting achieved. It is proposed that the Council would establish engagement with residents and groups through use of the new engagement Tool- [Let's Talk RCTCBC](#) . This platform could be used to promote the tree planting locations identified from the work outlined in paragraph 4.5 and to encourage public participation in organised tree planting activities at these

locations. This will ensure the location of all green projects is managed and that they are compatible with the wider climate change objectives.

- 8.2 A wider communication strategy including use of social media networks would ensure broader awareness of QGC and encourage participation through the range of resources available on the QGC website and through the Partners to the Project. Communication approaches could specifically target Schools to promote the involvement of future generations in the Project.
- 8.3 Furthermore, Members of the Steering Group spoke of the intention to consult with the Community and Town Councils through a future meeting of the Community Liaison Committee.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 As detailed within the report, there may be financial implications from participation in the Queen's Green Canopy Project, which will be determined by the extent of involvement planned. In order to be sustainable and complimentary to the green infrastructure approach previously set out by the Council, any tree planting should comprise larger trees and species that are appropriate for each location, which may be more expensive than planting saplings.
- 9.2 Community Groups and Schools may be able to secure sapling trees free of charge from the Woodland Trust, which is a partner of the QGC Project. This approach can present increased, ongoing management and aftercare costs for the Council however while the trees become established and they have a higher risk of natural failure.

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

- 10.1 Participation in the Project would build on the Nature's Assets proposals and would contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, in particular the goals linked to ensuring RCT is a sustainable County Borough.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group has set out an ambitious programme to enable the Council to make progress towards achieving the 2030 target.
- 11.2 On the 14th June 2021, the Steering Group met to consider a report on the Queen's Green Canopy Project 2021-22.
- 11.3 The Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group recommends Cabinet consider supporting the content of the above-mentioned report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24th JUNE 2021

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING
GROUP**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND
COMMUNICATION IN CONSULTATION WITH COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS
(CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPION)**



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET STEERING GROUP

14TH JUNE 2021

THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY PROJECT 2021-22

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET'S
CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPION (CLLR RHYS LEWIS)**

**Author: Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection and
Community Services & Elizabeth Dean, Environment Planner**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Steering Group about the Queen's Green Canopy Project and seek support for the Council to participate in the initiative to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Steering Group:

- 2.1 Consider and comment on the proposal set out in this report.
- 2.2 That the feedback from the Steering Group is reported to Cabinet for consideration.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To enable the Steering Group to consider the opportunities for the Council, Businesses, Community Groups and Individuals in Rhondda Cynon Taf to participate in the national tree planting initiative, which aims to create a sustainable legacy in honour of the Queen.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 To mark the platinum Jubilee in 2022, Her Majesty the Queen has recently launched the Queen's Green Canopy (QGC), to celebrate 70 years of service to the Nation. [The Queen's Green Canopy \(queensgreencanopy.org\)](https://queensgreencanopy.org)

- 4.2 The campaign is focused on the role of trees and woodlands in enhancing our environment and includes elements of sustainable planting and the protection of ancient woodland and veteran trees. An Overview of the Project by the Queen's Green Canopy Board is provided in Appendix 1. Individuals, schools, communities, groups, businesses, and local authorities are being encouraged to get involved.
- 4.3 The QGC Project was officially launched on the 17th May with the Community Engagement phase running between May and October 2021 to coincide with the commencement of the tree planting season between October 2021 and April 2022. An Official National Celebration Weekend for the Platinum Jubilee will take place between the 3-6th June 2022 and a further tree planting phase will commence in October 2022 until the end of the Jubilee Year.
- 4.4 From the 'Nature's Assets' report to this Steering Group on the 16th November 2020, members will be aware that about a third of the County Borough is already wooded and that protecting our existing woodland, including ancient woodland is a priority. <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/ClimateChangeCabinetSteeringGroup/2020/NaturesAssets> The preference for new planting in RCT is to focus on urban areas, where the greatest 'climate' benefits for local residents can be achieved, without threatening other important carbon storing and biodiverse habitats in the countryside. This approach should be maintained while participating in QGC.
- 4.5 An initial search of Council owned land to establish the extent of ancient woodland (sites that were wooded in 1600) is underway and these could be a focus for community and Council action. A procedure to assess applications to plant trees on Council owned land is also proposed. This would ensure sustainable planting notably; '*the right tree in the right place*', the longevity of the proposed tree, as well as ensuring that the maintenance and management implications for the Council have been considered and that there is community support.
- 4.6 The Council may wish to consider planting a civic tree to commemorate the Jubilee. Careful site selection would be required to enable a long lived and eventually large specimen tree to be accommodated. If a suitable site can be identified this could be a focal point for Town Centre regeneration, contributing to COVID recovery and climate change objectives.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 There are no equality, diversity or socio-economic implications arising from this report.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no welsh language implications arising from this report.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 A fundamental aspect of QGC, is public and community engagement to maximise participation in the project, to raise environmental awareness and the extent of tree planting achieved. It is proposed that the Council would establish engagement with residents and groups through use of the new engagement Tool- [Let's Talk RCTCBC](#) . This platform could be used to promote the tree planting locations identified from the work outlined in paragraph 4.5 and to encourage public participation in organised tree planting activities at these locations. This will ensure the location of all green projects is managed and that they are compatible with the wider climate change objectives.
- 7.2 A wider communication strategy including use of social media networks would ensure broader awareness of QGC and encourage participation through the range of resources available on the QGC website and through the Partners to the Project. Communication approaches could specifically target Schools to promote the involvement of future generations in the Project.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 There may be financial implications from participation in the Queen's Green Canopy Project, which will be determined by the extent of involvement planned. In order to be sustainable and complimentary to the green infrastructure approach previously set out by the Council, any tree planting should comprise larger trees and species that are appropriate for each location, which may be more expensive than planting saplings.
- 8.2 Community Groups and Schools may be able to secure sapling trees free of charge from the Woodland Trust, which is a partner of the QGC Project. This approach can present increased, ongoing management and aftercare costs for the Council however while the trees become established and they have a higher risk of natural failure.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

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

- 10.1 Participation in this Project would build on the Nature's Assets proposals previously reported to this Group and to Cabinet. It would also contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, in particular the goals linked to ensuring RCT is a sustainable County Borough.
- 10.2 As a legacy Project, QGC is by its nature a long term programme being delivered collaboratively across the UK and with the aim of enhancing our natural environment and protecting a network on 70 ancient woodlands. To that end it will demonstrate the five ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act, while also contributing the Resilience and Global Responsibility goals of the legislation.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 This Council has already set out its commitment to increase our green infrastructure as part of the wider Climate Change Strategy. Participation in this national tree planting project offers a good opportunity for the Council, public and community groups to get involved in a sustainable programme that would make a contribution to the Council's climate change priority.

Contact Officers

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Project Overview

Vision

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) will see communities, charities, schools, youth groups, councils and landowners planting trees across the four nations to create a lasting legacy in honour of The Queen's leadership of the Nation, that will enhance our environment and the landscape for generations to come. This vision is captured in the QGC call to action, "Plant a Tree for The Jubilee".

Approach

The Platinum Jubilee offers a unique opportunity for people to unite in celebration of Her Majesty's lifetime of service. All across the United Kingdom, people will be encouraged to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee", encouraged to plant healthy trees so that they thrive and grow to maturation. The emphasis here is on quality not quantity – our aim is to plant the right tree in the right place and at the right time.

Led by an Executive Team and supported by the charity Cool Earth, the Queen's Green Canopy will see all counties of the UK being invited to create a network of individual or specimen trees, tree avenues, copses and woodlands. Planting new trees may take the form of:

- A Platinum Jubilee Avenue of medium-sized or large trees. Ideal for cities, large estates, new housing developments and parishes.
- A Platinum Jubilee Copse on private land or land allocated by the County or Council.
- A Platinum School Tree - schools in the UK will be offered a tree for the students to plant (provided free of charge).
- Platinum Jubilee Community planting project for youth groups, Parishes, Residents Associations. Community planting packs are available through the Woodland Trust or community groups may wish to purchase trees from approved suppliers.
- Ancient Woodlands and Veteran Trees with historic links will also be conserved through dedication to The Queen's Green Canopy.

The majority of the work will be channelled through one of the following workstreams:

- Stewardship – to encourage a model of stewardship that ensures local communities take responsibility for afforesting public spaces.

- Conservation – to protect ancient woodland through a programme of permanent, living tree dedication.
- Urban Greening – to create prominent tree displays in towns, cities, and deprived urban communities, including majestic avenues.

The dual impact of the climate emergency and the Covid-19 pandemic are at the forefront of our planning and make this project particularly resonant.

Timeline

To build interest and maintain momentum in the lead up to the official Platinum Jubilee celebrations planned for June 2022, a phased campaign will be planned. This will comprise:

1. Soft launch (executed December 2020)
2. Official Launch – RHS Virtual Chelsea Flower Show (17-21 May 2021)
3. Community engagement phase (May 2021-October 2021)
4. Planting phase: (October 2021-April 2022)
5. Platinum Jubilee Official National Celebration Weekend (3/4/5/6 June 2022)
6. Planting phase: (October 2022-December 2022)

Partners

Collaboration is central to the QGC. We are proud to partner with the following charities, social enterprises and Government Departments to help us plant and protect trees across the UK.

Cool Earth

Cool Earth is the international climate charity working alongside communities living in the world's most threatened rainforest. Building on the successful Queen's Commonwealth Canopy (QCC) project, Cool Earth are the hosts of The Queen's Green Canopy, enabling the initiative through the provision of necessary infrastructure.

The Woodland Trust

The Woodland Trust is the largest woodland conservation charity in the United Kingdom, with over 500,000 supporters. The Woodland Trust works in support of a UK rich in native woods and trees for people and wildlife. In addition to sharing their expertise, the Trust has committed three million free saplings to schools and communities across the UK as part of the QGC initiative.

The Royal Horticultural Society

Committed to inspiring a passion for horticulture, the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) is the UK's leading gardening charity. The launch of the QGC coincides with the start of the RHS's virtual Chelsea Flower Show. The RHS will also be supporting the QGC during the physical event in September. As Patron, The Queen typically visits the flower show alongside Members of the Royal Family.

Trees for Cities

Trees for Cities (TfC) is a national charity operating in towns and cities across the UK with the goal to create healthy, accessible, functional and resilient urban forests for today and for future generations. TfC will support the delivery of the QGC programme in urban areas, helping to target places of greatest social and environmental need.

The Forest Canopy Foundation

The Forest Canopy Foundation (FCF) is made up of independent private sector forestry companies who manage an innovative scheme, combining public and private finance and landowner interest to achieve woodland planting that all can be proud of. The FCF will provide expert advice for companies wishing to participate in the QC initiative, particularly those who wish to do extensive planting.

DEFRA

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) are the Government department responsible for safeguarding our natural environment, supporting our world-leading food and farming industry, and sustaining a thriving rural economy. Trees planted as part of the QGC initiative will contribute to the UK Government's tree planting and woodland creation commitments.

There are many other excellent tree planting and forestry organisations and charities that we have reached out to. We believe that people taking action in the places where they live and work is a powerful force for change so through all of our partnerships we look to achieve local impact.

Outcomes

1. Stewardship

What distinguishes the QGC from many tree-planting initiatives is the emphasis on stewardship. We believe that when you plant a tree you cannot merely plant that thing in isolation, but must also steward the environment around it, and within it, so that the larger world at that one place becomes more coherent, and more whole.

The goal is to plant many trees well in celebration of the Platinum Jubilee. The emphasis however is on quality not quantity. It is expected that each county will have at least one significant planting, such as a new majestic avenue or new woodland/copse in Her Majesty's name. The QGC website will display advice on how to plant, when to plant, and a list of accredited Plant Healthy tree nurseries which will supply disease and pest free trees.

Ultimately, the QGC will lead – not by simply supporting existing projects but by actively shaping new ones. To achieve this goal, we will invest in technical training and green apprenticeships. Ability, local knowledge and experience are all important.

Outputs

- To create a model of stewardship that advises on how to plant, when to plant, and what recommended soil type to use.
- To create a pilot tree planting and forestry training programme for unemployed young people aged between 16-24 through specialist environmental college Capel Manor College.
- To build confidence and technical know-how through tailored volunteering programmes.

2. Conservation

Ancient woodland, rare habitats, woodland floors and veteran trees are all irreplaceable. These natural wonders deserve protection, not merely for the sake of combating climate change, but also because of the great abundance of life thriving under the ancient canopy.

By dedicating 70 ancient and veteran trees to Her Majesty The Queen, we will encourage trusteeship of these precious habitats, channeled towards the maintenance of the natural environment.

Our aim is to pass on to future generations – and if possible to enhance – the natural landscape and ecology of which we are the temporary trustees. Such dedications are a source not only of enjoyment but also of pride: they create new landmarks to which visitors make their way because they can see the significance behind them. Dedications provide a foundation both for a celebratory approach to trees and a conservationist approach to the land.

Outputs

- Through the dedication of trees in honour of Her Majesty The Queen, the QGC will create the incentives to conserve, rather than to deplete, the natural resources on which we collectively depend.
- Each dedication will be marked by a special commemorative plaque and will be uploaded onto a map of the UK to track all QGC projects over the two-year period.

3. Urban Greening

Another focus of the QGC will be planting in cities and the most disadvantaged urban communities. The QGC will partner with Trees For Cities to work collaboratively on urban

greening projects. Now more than ever, people want to address the ills associated with congested, concrete-ridden neighbourhoods. From draping plants and skygardens, to pocket parks, to tactical urbanism, many cities have been eager to showcase new, unconventional and innovative solutions to urban sprawl

These are all small-scale projects, but they are meaningful, and could, if replicated more widely, change the face of the country for the better. Here, our long-term goal is to inspire more urban tree-planting, not just because trees are beautiful, but because cities realise that trees are an important part of resiliency, health, and happiness. This is something the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated compellingly, as we seek solace from the nature around our homes and in our cities.

Outputs

- To plant trees in urban areas, including majestic avenues with mature trees through business and on local authority parkland.

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