



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

COMMITTEE SUMMONS

C Hanagan
Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach Vale, CF40 2XX

Meeting Contact: Sarah Handy - Members' Researcher & Scrutiny Officer (07385 401942)

YOU ARE SUMMONED to a Hybrid meeting of **CLIMATE CHANGE, FRONTLINE SERVICES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held on **WEDNESDAY, 26TH OCTOBER, 2022** at **5.00 PM**.

Non Committee Members and Members of the public may request the facility to address the Committee at their meetings on the business listed although facilitation of this request is at the discretion of the Chair. It is kindly asked that such notification is made to Democratic Services by Monday, 24 October 2022 on the contact details listed above, including stipulating whether the address will be in Welsh or English.

AGENDA

**Page
No's**

1. SCRUTINY RESEARCH

A scrutiny research facility is available within the Council Business Unit to support Members' scrutiny responsibilities and their roles as Elected Members. Such research strengthens Scrutiny Committee work programmes to ensure outcome-based topics are identified. For any scrutiny research requirements please contact scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk

2. 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.

3. MINUTES

To approve, as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting held on the 29th September 2022.

5 - 16

REPORTS OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATIONS

4. CONSULTATIONS

Information is provided in respect of relevant [consultations](#) for consideration by the Committee.

OFFICERS' REPORTS

5. CURRENT BIODIVERSITY WORKS IN RCT

For Committee Members to receive an update on the Biodiversity Works currently in place in RCT.

17 - 26

6. REPORT ON THE ON THE COUNCIL'S RECYCLING PERFORMANCE 2021/22

To update Members of the Climate Change Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee on the Council's Recycling Performance.

27 - 32

7. REVIEW OF MAINSTREAM SCHOOL TRANSPORT

For Scrutiny Members to receive the outcomes of the periodic review of the Council's mainstream School Transport Provision.

33 - 38

8. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any items, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency

9. CHAIRS REVIEW AND CLOSE

To reflect on the meeting and actions to be taken forward.

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

The Chair and Vice-Chair:

(County Borough Councillor C Middle and County Borough Councillor G L Warren respectively)

County Borough Councillors:

Councillor J Barton, Councillor P Binning, Councillor V Dunn,
Councillor E L Dunning, Councillor S Emanuel, Councillor D Grehan,
Councillor G Holmes, Councillor W Hughes, Councillor G Jones,
Councillor A O Rogers, Councillor W Treeby and Councillor R Yeo

Officers:

Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Roger Waters, Director of Frontline Services
Steve Owen, Service Director, Streetcare

This page is intentionally left blank



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE, FRONTLINE SERVICES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 29 September 2022 at 4.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor C Middle (Chair)

Councillor J Barton Councillor V Dunn
Councillor E L Dunning Councillor G Holmes
Councillor W Hughes Councillor R Yeo

Officers in attendance:-

Mr J Bailey, Head of Planning
Mr S Humphreys, Head of Legal Services
Mr S Owen, Service Director – Streetcare
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr A Roberts, Head of Energy & Carbon Reduction
Mr R Waters, Director – Frontline Services
Mrs S Handy – Members' Researcher & Scrutiny Officer
Mr C Hanagan – Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications

External Representatives:-

Ms K Clarke – Transport For Wales
Mr Holder – Transport For Wales

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the first meeting of the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee and thanked everyone for attending.

2 Apologies

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillors A. Rogers, G. Jones and D. Grehan.

3 **Scrutiny Research**

The Members' Researcher and Scrutiny Officer referenced the research facilities that were available to Members within the Council Business Unit. Members were advised that if they have any specific queries to email them to Scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk.

4 **Declaration of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declaration of interests received.

5 **DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23 AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communications presented the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Programme 2022-23 to Members in order to seek Members' comments and approval on the draft Work Programme for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

Members were reminded that the Scrutiny Work Programmes allows for a flexible approach to recognise the needs of emerging priorities and provides opportunity for Scrutiny Working Groups to be taken forward and training provided where requested. Members were reminded that this is a fluid document and may be subject to changes throughout the year.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Programme 2022-23.

6 **Welsh transport appraisal Guidance (WeITAG) 2022**

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications introduced the report to Members and advised that Scrutiny's response to the consultation will be collated and reported back to the Welsh Government. Following this, Kate Clark from Transport for Wales provided Members with an overview of the consultation through the use of a power point presentation.

The Chair thanked Kate Clark for the presentation and informed Members that he would be going through each consultation question on an individual basis.

Discussion ensued around each question as follows:

Question 1:

WeITAG 2022 places less emphasis on the use of cost-benefit ratios, and

more emphasis on well-being appraisal based on the ambitions and targets in the Wales Transport Strategy. Do you have any comments on this approach?

Scrutiny Members felt that there are benefits to a cost benefits ratio but also agreed that there are places where that wider well-being objective needs to be reflected in proposals. Members expressed concerns that the well-being would be taking over the cost ratios but agreed on the value at looking at the well-being too. Members reflected the importance of looking long term and looking at alternative approaches.

Question 2:

WelTAG 2022 introduces a new Stage 0 Case for Change and suggests that it should be done by the in-house team. Do you have comments on this?

Members felt that there needs to be accountability and scrutiny as the programmes continue. Members agreed that it should be done by in house teams, however, it was noted that this is reliant on resources. As Democratically Elected Councillors, Members agreed that they are best placed for this given that they all have links in their own communities and their own areas.

Question 3:

Would it be beneficial to use WelTAG at a strategic or programme level? If so, what types of transport interventions might best benefit from a strategic WelTAG approach?

Yes, Members agreed that WelTAG should be used at a more strategic level.

Question 4:

WelTAG 2022 provides guidance on aligning transport planning and land use planning. What are the key issues and how could we address them in the guidance?

Members agreed that we need to be working in one overall strategic way by looking at the long term outcomes of a programme and considering the planning outcomes of the project. Members agreed on the importance of looking at all the factors surrounding someone's well-being such as environmental factors. The infrastructure and planning aspects need to tie into the process and work together.

Question 5:

WelTAG 2022 introduces a proportionate approach to appraisal through three levels of detail – WelTAG lite, WelTAG standard and WelTAG plus. Most projects in Wales, including most active travel projects, should use WelTAG lite. Do you have comments on this approach?

Members had concerns that by using WelTAG lite it may mean that things are missed which are covered in WelTAG Plus.

Question 6:

We are developing technical guidance to accompany the main guidance. Can you suggest specific tables or templates that would be helpful? Which particular topics would benefit from further guidance?

Members felt that behaviour type projects would benefit from support and guidance.

Question 7:

Do you have any other comments or feedback on the draft WelTAG 2022 guidance?

No additional comments.

Question 8:

Do you have any suggestions for how the governance of WelTAG might be improved in order to ensure that studies are high quality, meet the needs of users and represent good value for money?

Members agreed that the consultation itself shows transparency and is a part of the democratic process.

Question 9:

We would like to know your views on the effects that WelTAG 2022 would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English. What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated

Members agreed on the importance of raising the accessibility of the Welsh language. The more that people travel by public transport the more they hear and see the language. The more that is used

bilingually the better it will be to enhance the use of the Welsh language. Its about using the language on an every day basis and normalising it for the rest of the population. Transport is critical in culture and language.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED**:

- For Scrutiny's response to be submitted to Welsh Government by the consultation deadline of the 3rd November 2022.

7 National Transport Delivery Plan: 2022-2027

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications presented his report to Members and informed them that the feedback from today's meeting will be collated and sent over to Welsh Government.

Following this, Mr Andy Holder from Transport for Wales, gave Members an overview of the consultation through the use of a power point presentation.

The Chair thanked Mr Holder for providing the Committee with a detailed overview and informed Members that he would deal with each question in order and on an individual basis.

Question 1:

The Chair commented that there wasn't enough detail regarding what was in the Plan to enable Members to answer the questions.

Discussions continued and another Member commented that the cost of public transport will prohibit the Council achieving Net Zero and advised that if we are to make it more sustainable then the cost of transport has to be addressed. Another Member agreed with this comment and stressed that Members need more detail regarding the Plan in order to enable them to answer the questions. The Member pointed out that in Germany residents can travel where they want for only £3 a day and that something similar is needed in this Country.

Mr Holder advised Members that there is a section in the NDTP on fairer fares. It is being addressed under the Plan. The Director of Frontline Services pointed out that when the Welsh Government took over the core valley lines, it looked at flattening the fares. The Fares are the same now whether you come from Treherbet or Pontypridd. However, communities in Rhondda Fach now feel even further away from Cardiff because they potentially have to catch a bus to catch a train therefore making residents pay the combination of the two fares. The Director also emphasised that another big push is around integrated transport and that the key from that is how you distribute the revenue to the rail and bus organisations.

Discussions continued and a Member commented that the whole challenge with consultations is that if the Welsh Government are still working on what fairer fares mean then this negates the purpose of the consultation.

The Chair also noted that the well being of the community is key and that travel has to be convenient and quick for people to use it.

The Director of Frontline Services advised that if there is a funding commitment from the Welsh Government then it sets the right framework for further development.

Another Member pointed out that the 20mph speed limit will also mean that there will be a lot more buses on the roads. The Chair agreed and noted that this could also be a bigger emphasis towards electronic vehicles such as bikes etc.

The Chair pointed out that it's disappointing that we got rid of trams and that we are almost going back to where we were with the trams in the valleys.

The Chair felt that further information was needed on the Delivery Plan and requested a bullet point summary from the Director of Frontline Services.

Question 2 and Question 3:

Members felt that they didn't have enough detail to enable them to answer any more questions. The Director of Frontline Services advised that Officers have drafted answers to the questions and that these can be circulated to Members following meeting.

The Chair noted that the Director of Frontline Services will give a summary and Members will have the opportunity to respond. The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications advised that officers will capture a proposed response from Scrutiny and will give Members the opportunity to answer each individual question.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to:

- Respond to the attached [consultation](#), contained within the draft National Transport Delivery Plan 2022-27 and decide whether they wish to make any further comments or suggestions as appropriate following further information from The Director of Frontline Services.

8 Community infrastructure levy annual monitoring Report

The Head of Planning presented his report to Members to seek Committee's comments to be forwarded onto Cabinet in respect of the

contents of the CIL Annual Monitoring Report and the Regulation 123 List.

Following this, Members had the opportunity to scrutinise the report.

A Member queried the items on the list and noted that a lot of them have been longstanding and questioned whether there was a timescale for them. The Head of Planning noted that the list of education and transportation schemes identified within the Regulation 123 List are the schemes that the Council have identified as strategic priorities.

They have to be on the Regulation 123 List to be able to use CIL monies towards their cost (either in full, or part). The Member responded back and noted that some items on the list may actually never happen.

The Head of Planning noted that if a scheme isn't on the list then it's not something that the Council have identified as a strategic priority.

Another Member sought clarification of the project at the top of the 'Education Projects' list regarding Mwyndy/Talbot Green and questioned if that is based on CIL money from other schemes that is needed. The Head of Planning advised that the order of those schemes on the Regulation 123 List isn't in priority order.

The List does reflect those sites where the Council has made allocations within the Local Development Plan or planning permission has been granted. It was further confirmed by the Head of Planning that CIL is only payable when full planning permission or reserved matters consent (pursuant to an outline planning permission) has been granted and development starts.

Discussions ensued and the Chair queried whether a CIL charge on social housing developments applied in the South of the County Borough. The Head of Planning advised that one of the exemptions that can be claimed against a CIL levy charge is social housing relief. Accordingly, if it's a social housing scheme and social housing relief is sought and granted then we don't get any CIL monies as a consequence of the development. The Chair expressed his concern regarding the sum of money going to some town/community councils in the South of the county borough where in the Rhondda there are no town councils. There are no ongoing CIL generating developments to mitigate the ongoing parking issues or highways issues as a result of social housing development. The Head of Planning advised that the CIL monies are supposed to address strategic priorities and issues. If there are site specific issues as a consequence of the development then it is legitimate to seek a section 106 agreement to deal with those site specific issues.

The Head of Planning also noted that the charging schedule was adopted by RCT at the end of 2014, and the world has changed since then in terms of building costs and viability. The Head of Planning advised that in

conjunction with the work currently underway to review the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) the Council will also review the CIL Charging Schedule to ensure that a balance is struck between the need to raise CIL monies to deliver infrastructure projects and ensure as far as possible the viability of new development schemes throughout the whole of the county borough.

The Chair questioned whether there was scope for the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee to investigate the planning permissions that have been granted over the recent years in respect of the the selling off of Council school sites which then resulted in new developments and the impact that may have had on the surrounding community; and also the extent to which any section 106 agreements had been imposed as part of those permissions. The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication advised that a lot of the specifics are directed by legislation and where there are Council specific policies there is scope for this committee to scrutinise those policies and make recommendations to the Executive, however, the Service Director advised that a lot of it is prescribed in terms of how we need to approach the requirements. The Head of Planning noted his agreement.

Discussions continued and a Member referred back to the charging schedule being adopted in 2014 and noted that at that time Members felt that the Tonyrefeil area was set too low and queried if this is reviewed regularly. The Head of Planning advised that the CIL Charging Schedule will be reviewed in conjunction with the ongoing LDP Review.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) Endorse the CIL Annual Monitoring Report (Appendix A).
- (2) Endorse the Regulation 123 List (Appendix B) for publication on the Council website for a period of 28 days and consultation as set out in paragraph 5.6.
- (3) Endorse the subsequent adoption of the Regulation 123 List if no adverse comments are received.

9 UPDATE REPORT ON THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STRATEGY, "IMPLEMENTATION PLAN"

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications outlined the history of this piece of work, particularly its journey through the Overview & Scrutiny Committee pre-pandemic and the strategy then being introduced to the last Overview & Scrutiny Committee just before the local elections.

The Director of Corporate Estates presented his report in respect of Electric Vehicle Charging "Implementation Plan" to Members prior to it going to the Climate Change Sub Committee on the 3rd October. Following this, the Head of Carbon Energy Reduction provided Members with an overview of the plan and where the Council is currently at to date.

Following the overview, Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions.

A Member queried if the strategy is just effecting Council buildings or does it go wider throughout the County Borough. The Member emphasised that if it goes wider then it will take a lot of investment to bring the infrastructure throughout our communities, especially in the Rhondda Valleys. The cables and infrastructure in the Rhondda Valleys are not suitable to take the massive increase in electricity. The Member added that a lot of properties would need a complete upgrade and questioned who would pay for that. The Member emphasised that hybrid vehicles should be the way forward for now. The Chair agreed and noted the challenges ahead.

The Director of Corporate Estates replied and noted that the strategy is meant to be for the County Borough. The Director noted that the Council wont be providing residents with electric for their vehicles in the same way they don't provide fuel for their vehicles now. However, they will put an Electric Vehicle infrastructure in place in RCT and there are ambitions to put a publicly accessible charger within one mile of every resident. The Council is looking at destination charging and workplace charging. The Chair emphasised that Members have queried the infrastructure needed if people start to have their own charging points. A Member agreed that there should be a halfway point where Members go to a hybrid approach first. The Chair noted that the other issue is the technology in place. A further Member noted that she supports the strategy but emphasised her agreement that the communication hasn't been right with the residents of RCT. The Member noted that residents haven't been advised that they wont have electric vehicle charging points in their homes and that they will have to walk a mile away to charge their car. The Member noted that this will not be popular and further questioned how we embed this in the planning system. A further Member emphasised that many people habent got gardens big enough to park their cas in and haven't got gardens that back on to a lane. The Member noted that this leaves residents needing to charge their cars on the street where they simply do not have the permission to park the car anyway. The Member noted that due to electricity costs this may only be 1p a mile cheaper to run than the petrol cars.

Discussions continued and a Member queried what type of charging points are being provided as there are super fast charging points and standard charging points. This will be difficult to sell to residents. The Chair noted that the aim of this report is to endorse the implementation plan that is going to the Climate Change Sub Committee on the 3rd October. The Chair suggested putting this item on the Work Programme at a later date taking into consideration other factors in respect of infrastructure and the issues raised by Members. Members agreed.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED**:

- To endorse the Implementation Plan and Associated Action Plan for submission to the next Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee; and,
- To review the practicalities of the Implementation Plan at a Committee meeting scheduled at a later date and to amend the Work Programme to reflect this change.

10 Green Waste Collections

The Service Director, Streetcare and the Waste Services, Strategic & Ops Officer provided Members with an overview of their report in respect of updating Members on green waste collections following the implementation of sack collections and the 'RCT's Got A Brand New Bag' campaign.

Discussions ensued and Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions.

A Member queried how much consultation and feedback has there been from residents who actually use this service, has there been focus groups of people who should be using the service about why they aren't using it and how much can the Council do in terms of campaigning to get residents to do this recycling. The Member also pointed out that on a recent visit to the recycling centre there was several plastic bags in the green waste collection centre and there were no signage at all on the containers prohibiting this.

The Service Director, Streetcare responded by advising Members that over the last 2 years the team has had negligible awareness because they haven't been out knocking on doors due to Covid, however, they have now started to focus on target areas with low participation in order to raise awareness. In respect of Community Recycling Centres, Staff have been advised that they cannot monitor it all the time but the Service Director emphasised that it is a low minority of residents that do this. The Service Director also acknowledged what was said in respect of signage and agreed to make improvements in this area. In terms of the consultation and feedback, they have had very little adverse feedback other than in the initial stages where people don't like change, however, this has recently settled down and people seem to be happy with the scheme. The Chair pointed out that a visit to the recycling centre will also be upcoming for Members of the Scrutiny Committee. The Service Director also pointed out that the Education Centre has now re-opened so schools are now welcome to visit.

The Director of Frontline Services pointed out the quality of the green waste that is now sent for processing has improved since the removal of plastic bags for collections and replacement with reusable sacks.. The Director also emphasised that this has taken 3 million single use plastic bags out of circulation in RCT and it is important to look at whether this can be rolled out more widely. The Chair commented that he would like to see RCT Staff Workers not having to recycle on the kerbside like a lot of other Authorities do and that RCT's recycling is superb.

The Chair thanked the Officers for the continuous innovation and moving things forward.

Following this, Members **RESOLVED** to note the update in respect of green waste collection in RCT.

11 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business to report.

12 CHAIRS REVIEW AND CLOSE

The Chair thanked Members for attending the meeting and for contributing to such a constructive discussion. The Chair also reminded Members that the next meeting will be held on the 26th October 2022 at 5pm.

This meeting closed at 6.30 pm

**COUNCILLOR C MIDDLE
CHAIR.**

This page is intentionally left blank

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23

CLIMATE CHANGE, FRONTLINE SERVICES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 OCTOBER 2022

'ACTION FOR NATURE': THE LOCAL NATURE PLAN FOR RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Author: Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the progress of the 'Action for Nature' plan by the RCT Local Nature Partnership (LNP).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Scrutinise the progress made by the RCT Local Nature Partnership (LNP) and determine whether further information and/or further progress updates are required.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The 'Action for Nature' plan has been developed to benefit the wildlife and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf and to assist the Council in meeting its Biodiversity Duty obligations under s.6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Nature Partnership (originally called the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership) provides a forum for expertise and community knowledge relating to wildlife in RCT. The LNP has continued to meet regularly since 1998, and although the membership has changed over the years it has been fundamental in developing our understanding of the natural history of RCT and the changes it is undergoing.

- 4.2 The LNP includes representation from Natural Resources Wales, the statutory body for nature conservation, the Council's ecologist, local representatives of major conservation organisations such as the Wildlife Trust, Rivers Trust and Butterfly Conservation, as well as local groups such as the Glamorgan Bird Club and the Colliery Spoil Initiative. In addition, the Partnership includes representatives of much more local community groups with an interest in wildlife or associated with a particular location (examples include Cynon Valley Organic Adventures and the Beddau and Tynant group). Other partners include Wales Biodiversity Partnership, Southeast Wales Biodiversity Record Centre, the Health Service, FUW, staff and students from colleges and universities. Most importantly, the LNP provides a forum for local naturalists to share their knowledge and skills, whether they are paid experts or self-taught observers. This wealth of accumulated evidence is hugely beneficial in ensuring that nature conservation action is effective and successful.
- 4.3 The Partnership was originally set up in response to the UN Earth Summit and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan process. In Wales, each Local Authority or National Park was charged with producing a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) and the first RCT plan 'Action for Nature' was published in 2000. The Plan set out actions for all the national 'priority' habitats and species found in RCT, plus actions for habitats and species considered locally to be important. The partnership has been leading and co-ordinating work to progress these actions ever since.
- 5. 'ACTION FOR NATURE' – LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY PLAN FOR RCT**
- 5.1 In 2018 a further review of the RCT biodiversity/nature plan was proposed, and this coincided with a three-year funding bid by the Wales Biodiversity Partnership to Welsh Government for financial support for LBAP partnerships (The Local Nature Partnership Cymru project, funded by the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being Grant, April 2019 to March 2022). The project funded the RCT LNP co-ordinator for 1.5 days per week and supported the Partnership's review of the Action for Nature plan. The 'rebranding' of the LNP and the Local Nature Recovery Plan reflect this Wales-wide grant support. The review also provided an opportunity to consider the Welsh Government's Nature Recovery Action Plan (Welsh Government 2015) and guidance from the Wales Biodiversity Partnership.
- 5.2 Pre-covid, a programme of engagement events across 2 summers were planned to engage wider audience with the content and priorities for the new plan. Unfortunately, this had to be replaced with an on-line co-production process and a wide range of individuals and organisations were involved. It was agreed, at an early stage, that the plan should continue to be 'action' focused, drawing on the best evidence available.
- 5.3 The format of the new Plan has changed from the three-part pdf document produced in 2000 to a website <https://rctlnp.wixsite.com/rct-actionfornature>.
- 5.4 The design chosen has focused on 11 specific groups (including novice naturalists to wildlife enthusiasts, families, public bodies, etc) but there are also

a series of specific habitat actions (grasslands, woodlands, freshwater, ffridd, urban) and a number of generic actions that apply to all habitats (raising awareness, recording and monitoring, site protection and site management). In addition, there is a huge amount of information about the habitats and species of importance in RCT and case studies of a wide variety of local projects. The table below gives a few examples of the many actions in the plan.

How can I help?	Families and Children	Become a Spotter: Want to learn the names of some of our most common minibeasts, birds, plants and trees? Take a look at these spotter sheets from the RSPB and become a spotter! Keeping a notebook is a great way to keep track of what you've seen.
How can I help?	Public bodies	'Sustainability helps wildlife: Taking steps to become more sustainable e.g. through energy and water efficiency, reducing transport, waste etc. all help wildlife locally and globally'
General	Recording and Monitoring	'Promote participation in national surveys: For example, BTO Breeding Bird Surveys, BBCT Bee Walks, Garden Dragon Watch or swift surveys. These surveys increase our knowledge and understanding of nature in RCT and help local people to get involved.
Habitats	Freshwater	Biosecurity: Raise awareness of the importance of biosecurity for preventing spread of INNS e.g. plants and invertebrates
Habitats	Heathland/colliery soil/cliffs and scree/ ffridd	Heathland Assessment: Undertake an assessment of the ecosystem resilience of Heathland in RCT.

5.5 This sub-committee received a report on the work of the [RCT Local Nature Partnership](#) in November 2021 and Scrutiny Committee was advised of the formal '[Action for Nature](#)' consultation in February 2022. This closed in March this year and a report of the consultation has recently been completed (Appendix 1) and circulated to the LNP and to all the respondents. Following completion, the next step is to undertake the translation of the website and to promote it to benefit wildlife and communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 There are no equality and diversity or socio-economic implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

7.0 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 The Action for Nature website has been developed by the Local Nature Partnership through a two-year long co-production process, followed by a formal consultation. A report of the process, responses and changes is appended.

8.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no Welsh Language implications as a result of the recommendations set out in this report.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

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

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 Action for Nature takes into account the current legislation relating to wildlife. The information and action it contains will support the Council in implementing its responsibilities relating to wildlife issues, and in particular, to meeting the requirements of the Biodiversity Duty as set out in s6 Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

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

- 11.1 This report contributes to a wide range of the Council's priorities as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2020 to 2024. Specifically, it contributes to investing in our greenspaces and to delivering natural carbon storage solutions such as those provided by trees, peat bogs, marshy grassland and other natural habitats across the County Borough to enhance air quality and reduce the impact of greenhouse gasses.
- 11.2 The Action for Nature plan reflects the five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Biodiversity work must be based on long-term considerations and is focused on preventative and precautionary action. It seeks to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem resilience into projects to realise multiple benefits for local residents and wildlife. The Local Nature Partnership provides a valuable mechanism for involving all the relevant stakeholders and promoting collaboration.

11.3 Biodiversity work contributes specifically to the Resilience and Global Responsibility goals of the Act, but in the longer term it could have implications for all the goals.

12.0 STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

12.1 Successful implementation of the Action for Nature' plan will be of significant strategic importance.

13.0 CONCLUSION

13.1 Action for Nature provides the Council with a very useful, up to date resource relating to biodiversity action and information, based on the expertise and evidence collated by the RCT Local Nature Partnership.

Other Information: -

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Simon Gale (01443) 281114

This page is intentionally left blank

Action for Nature:
The Local Nature Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf
<https://rctlnp.wixsite.com/rct-actionfornature>



Introduction

The original 'Action for Nature' was produced in 2000 by the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) Partnership, set up in 1998. The Partnership has met, roughly quarterly, since that date to implement and monitor the Plan. The membership has varied from year to year but has continued to include statutory and voluntary conservation organisations, enthusiastic individuals, vastly experienced local naturalists and a diversity of community groups, local organisations and other public bodies. The Plan was refreshed in 2008 by the Partnership.

In 2018 a further review was proposed, and this coincided with a three-year funding bid by the Wales Biodiversity Partnership to Welsh Government for financial support for LBAP partnerships (The Local Nature Partnership Cymru project, funded by the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being Grant, April 2019 to March 2022). The project funded the LNP co-ordinator (1.5 days per week) and supported the Partnership's review of the Action for Nature plan. The review also provided an opportunity to reflect the Welsh Government's Nature Recovery Action Plan (Welsh Government 2015) and guidance from the Wales Biodiversity Partnership.

The Action for Nature Review began in 2019. The partnership meetings (Jan, April, Jul and Oct 2019) discussed the process and looked specifically at progress against actions, factors affecting outcomes and began collating 'success stories' from partner organisations. Pre-covid, the proposal was for a series of events, to be held across two summer seasons to engage a wider audience with the content and priorities for the new plan.

The involvement of Welsh Government funding led to a 'rebranding' as the RCT Local Nature Partnership and whilst the 'Action for Nature' title was retained, it became the Local Nature Recovery Plan for RCT.

This short report summarises the process and the evidence gathering that has informed the new 'Action for Nature' <https://rctlnp.wixsite.com/rct-actionfornature>

Summary of the preparation process 2018-2022

2019

- LBAP meetings: Jan, April, Jul and Oct
- Schedule of events attended by partners in summer 2019 (23 in total)
- Progress against actions since 2008
- Success Stories since 2000
- Changes to legislation and organisations in Wales and the impacts of austerity relevant to the review, note re Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act in relation to the review
- Appointment of funded co-ordinator (Rose Revera) for 1.5 days per week to March 2022

2020

- LBAP meetings: Jan agreed a timetable for the year based around events, April meeting was cancelled.
- Timetable linked to the Review of the Local Development Plan
- Post floods arising from Storms Dennis etc. and COVID, the timetable was revised and a programme of online consultations planned via TEAMS.
- The quarterly partnership meetings were resumed via TEAMS from October. A series of monthly meetings were set up, initially to gather evidence relating to species groups. The Oct partnership and looked at a possible web-based format for the Plan drawing on the information from the species groups and the 2019 events etc.
- 9/7/20 – Butterflies and Moths
- 06/08/20 – Mammals
- 8/10/20- Fungi
- 12/11/20 – Terrestrial Inverts
- 10/12/20 – Birds

2021

- Partnership TEAMS meetings were held in April (14/4/21), July (15/7/21),and October (14/10/21).
- The April meeting viewed the first iteration of the website which was structured around actions. The initial section ‘How can I help?’ focussed on actions for specific groups of people (such as novice naturalists, families with children through to public bodies, wildlife enthusiasts and research students). The ‘technical’ section was proposed to cover specific habitat and species actions. A further series of monthly habitat meetings was set up to focus on actions for each habitat group.
- The July and October Partnership meetings reviewed the progress via the ‘under construction’ website and looked at contributors for case studies, sites to visit, species, supporting information etc. as well as the actions.
- 14/1/21- Freshwater Inverts and Fish
- 11/2/21- Plants
- 9/3/21 – Reptiles and Amphibians
- 7/4/21 – Lower Plants
- 19/5/21- Structure of the Plan and Grasslands
- 9/6/21- Colliery Spoil, heathland, crags and scree, ffridd
- 14/7/21- Urban
- 11/8/21- Woodlands
- 8/9/21 – Freshwater
- 13/10/21- Actions for groups

2022

- Partnership TEAMS meetings were held in January (20/01/22) April (28/04/22) and July (07/07/22).
- The January meeting agreed the website as the basis for formal consultation which ran from 28th Jan to 11th March. Members were asked to review specific pages. The formal consultation was sent to:

- all members of the Local Nature Partnership and
- the mailing list for Communities in Action meetings
- organisations included in the Local Development Plan consultation list.
- It was also promoted through the Council's website,
- the CwmTaf Morganwg PSB website,
- the Wales Biodiversity Partnership,
- within NRW,
- within the Council (Senior Leadership Team and to staff generally) and
- through the LNP social media.
- The format used is given in the appendix.
- Changes suggested in meetings were made at the time.
- Observations received in writing were recorded and most changes made as requested (see appendix).
- Comments were generally supportive and the changes proposed typically related to correcting errors of fact, typing, linked sites, better examples etc.
- Some suggestions for specific habitats or species were not included as they would duplicate actions included for all habitats/species.
- A request for more support for community organisations to get involved was acknowledged as valid but a mechanism to do this is not currently available to the LNP. This matter will require further investigation, potentially a funding bid for a dedicated staff resource with long term sustainability.

The July meeting of the LNP considered this report and agreed to remove the 'under construction' banner from 29th July if there were no objections. RCT council would then be advised of the Plan' completion and the Welsh translation progressed.

This page is intentionally left blank



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23

**CLIMATE CHANGE, FRONTLINE SERVICES
& PROSPERITY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

26TH OCTOBER 2022

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF
FRONTLINE SERVICES.**

Author: Steve Owen

Agenda Item No: 6

**REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S
RECYCLING PERFORMANCE
2021/22**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members of the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee on the Council's Recycling performance.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report:
- 2.2 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth any further matters.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This Council as have all Councils in Wales has statutory targets set by Welsh Government. This year the target is again 64%, failure to meet these targets will result in the Council receiving a substantial fine. The fine is based on performance

with every tonne we miss the target by, will result in a minimum fine of £200 per tonne.

3.2 The Council's Recycling (& Waste) Service comprises 165 operational staff based in 3 main depots – Rhondda (Dinas Depot, Porth), Cynon (Ty Amgen Depot, Llwydcoed) and Taff (Ty Glantaf, Treforest Estate) and is responsible for the collection and management of household waste and related services.

3.3 The impact of the pandemic under the various periods and severity of lockdown measures has in the main been managed by changing operational practices to meet the Covid rules and guidelines to ensure services have been delivered safely both for staff and residents.

4. UPDATE /ISSUES ENCOUNTERED/ CURRENT POSITION

4.1 RCT Council incrementally year on year has improved its recycling figure, this year has seen us contend with the continued impact of Covid 19 which had the potential to greatly affect the service's performance, this is due to a number of factors such as the reduction in enforcement activity on contamination of recycling, reduced awareness campaigns (eg door knocking) to further raise awareness of services available for recycling.

4.2 In addition to the points mentioned in above, we have seen a significant increase in residual waste levels and a higher proportion of contamination in the recycling with no real reason for this except more residents are at home. Despite this, the new Material Recycling Facility (MRF) at Bryn Pica has been performed well to maintain reasonable levels of recovery of quality recycle.

4.3 The table below shows our performance during the **full year 2021/22** as **67.23%** with the performance of **67.48% for the first quarter of 2022/23**.

	Recycling Rate	Food Waste	AHP	Green Waste
2019-20	64.78%	11,653.70	1,978.91	7,965.78
2020-21	66.74%	12,957.46	2,154.82	8,449.49
2021-22	67.23%	12,306.52	1,949.88	7,163.12
Q1 2022-23	67.48%	2,816.72	460.16	2,090.50

4.7 For the record the performance highlighted in the table, shows that we have achieved the target set out by Welsh Government (for 2020 of 64%) which

when you take into account the pandemic is a considerable achievement and has avoided any fines.

- 4.8 It should also be noted that last year's figures at this point were the highest ever achieved by this Council and to continue at that level against the continued challenges of the pandemic is testament to the resilience of our staff and our collection processes.
- 4.9 The next target for this Council is the 2024/2025 target of 70% (with the target of 80% being the Council's aspiration) so we need to work on further strategies and changes to further improve to reach the 70% target and work towards 80%.
- 4.10 The new MRF at Bryn Pica has gone a long way in helping us maintain our performance and recover high levels of recycling although the issue of contamination of recycling presented for collection by residents needs addressing.
- 4.11 The table below illustrates the tonnages for **green, nappy and food waste**

Food Waste

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2019-20	2,729.10	2,751.22	3,061.76	3,111.62
2020-21	3,218.88	3,064.56	3,301.48	3,372.54
2021-22	3,080.86	2,970.98	3,171.60	3,083.08
2022-23	2,816.72			

AHP

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2019-20	463.48	430.48	552.82	532.13
2020-21	522.16	511.08	534.94	586.64
2021-22	497.50	462.10	499.64	490.64
2022-23	460.16			

Green Waste

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2019-20	2,750.09	3,199.60	1,021.54	994.55
2020-21	2,827.43	3,496.82	1,034.57	1,090.67
2021-22	2,685.15	2,678.68	1,076.82	722.47
2022-23	2,090.50			

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no Equality or Diversity implications aligned to this report

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 There are no Consultation implications aligned to this report

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There are Financial implications in failing to achieve the statutory targets.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 There are no Legal Implications aligned to this report

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

9.1 The recycling processes we adopted align itself to the Corporate Plan and Corporate Priorities.

9.2 This clearly is linked with the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, helping to create a resilient Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 RCT Council are proud of its recycling services and how it performed during the pandemic to continue to deliver services and meet statutory targets. The

Council is grateful to the residents of RCT for positively engaging in the waste collection and recycling processes established across RCT.

- 10.2 The future 80% recycling targets set by RCT Council in the short term and those of the Welsh Government of zero waste towards 2050, will require fundamental changes across, not only the waste industry, but reaching into the supply side; all manufacturers, suppliers and producers of all materials, foods, packaging, electrical products, etc.

This page is intentionally left blank



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23

**CLIMATE CHANGE, FRONTLINE
SERVICES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

26th OCTOBER 2022

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF
FRONTLINE SERVICES**

Agenda Item No: 7

School Transport

Author: Geraint Roberts – Integrated Transport Manager

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Council's School Transport provision.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the contents of this report and
- 2.2 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth any further matters arising from the report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council provides school transport for approximately 9,100 mainstream learners, 930 Additional Learning Needs (ALN) learners, and 2,100 College students each day. This transport is provided through

the provision of contracted coaches, minibuses, taxis, and public transport season tickets.

- 3.2 The Council operates one of the most generous school transport policies in the country. As a result of these generous policies, the Council delivers the largest school transport service in the country, costing in excess of £15M each year.

4. UPDATE / CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The Council’s Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) has recently undertaken its annual “September Planning” task, following the start of the new school academic year. The return to school each year presents a number of challenges, including the addition of approximately 180 Primary School students, and 1,250 Secondary School students on to school transport.

- 4.2 Work on the return to school in September begins in March each year, with significant planning and communication taking place between the ITU and colleagues within Council’s Education Directorate, Schools, Parents, and Elected Members.

- 4.3 It is because of this embedded planning and proven process management that the ITU was able to declare a situation of “business as usual” by the Thursday of the first school week. This means that the level of outstanding Customer Relation Management (CRM) communications had reached a normal level, and that the majority of communications received were of a general nature, and not directly related to the new school year.

- 4.4 In addition to the beginning of the school year in September, the ITU is currently experiencing a number of operational challenges due to the current state of the transport industry. The main challenges being the volume of work being carried out on the highway network, the severe shortage of drivers, and the significant increase in operating costs being experienced by contractors since March 2022 i.e. fuel, driver wages, maintenance costs, etc. However, despite these challenges the ITU continues to maintain the level of service required to meet its service demands.

- 4.5 The following table demonstrates how the ITU schedules its contracted transport provision to ensure the most efficient use of available resources.

Number of learners carried by contracted bus	9,523
Number of school bus routes	199
Number of buses in operation	172
Average number of learners per vehicle	55
Number of learners carried by minibus/taxi	969
Number of minibus/taxi routes	237
Average number of learners per minibus/taxi	4
Number of learners carried by public transport	1,589

5. FUTURE PLANS

- 5.1 The ITU will continue to work with our operators to ensure we have a sustainable supply chain to deliver statutory and discretionary school transport services.
- 5.2 Operationally, the ITU is currently focussing on the re-location of 6th forms from Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High, and Cardinal Newman R.C Comprehensive school to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive school. A number of options are currently being considered; however, this will be influenced by the overall number of students that choose to attend Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School over the other options available i.e. Coleg y Cymoedd.
- 5.3 School transport bus fleets are contracted from operators, mainly local SME's based in RCTCBC. Fleet profiles are generally older than public transport fleets and they are typically in their final stage of usage – i.e. their primary purpose has ceased and they have been converted for schools use.
- 5.4 Their daily mileage is low, they all have diesel engines, and therefore they represent a huge challenge for carbon reduction. RCT has worked with the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority (CCRTA) to commission a study on decarbonising school transport. It shows that there is no business case to replace these vehicles with new ULEV coaches and it will be some time before the market generates second hand vehicles. Retrofitting options may evolve in the short-medium term.
- 5.5 RCT will continue to work with CCRTA and government to identify any opportunities to reduce the carbon impacts of school transport.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no negative or adverse equality or diversity implications associated with this report.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 There are no consultation implications aligned to this report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 The following provides a breakdown of the Council's contracted Mainstream Transport spend.

Overall daily bus cost	£43,328.56
Overall annual bus cost	£8,232,426.40
Average daily cost per bus route	£217.73
Average daily cost per bus	£251.91

Average daily cost per learner carried by bus	£4.55
---	-------

Overall daily minibus/taxi cost	£31,455.27
Overall annual minibus/taxi cost	£5,976,501.30
Average daily cost per minibus/taxi	£132.72
Average daily cost learner carried by minibus/taxi	£32.46

Overall daily public transport season ticket cost	£5,148.13
Overall annual public transport season ticket cost	£900,922.75
Average daily cost per learner carried via public transport	£3.24

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to assess the travel needs of learners in its area and to provide free school/college transport to those learners of compulsory school/college age who live beyond a safe walking distance of 2 miles or 3 miles from their nearest suitable primary and secondary school/college respectively.
- 9.2 Beyond the statutory minimum, the Council has determined that when assessing entitlement on the basis of safe walking distance, to use the discretionary powers afforded to it under the provisions of the Measure to make a more generous provision to learners.
- 9.3 As a consequence of this policy position, free travel is provided for nursery and primary school learners who live 1.5 miles or further from their nearest suitable school, and for secondary and post 16 learners who live 2 miles or further from their nearest suitable school/college.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

- 10.1 The delivery of home to school transport services support and promote the Council's Corporate Plan priorities for People – are independent, healthy and successful; Places – where people are proud to live, work and play and Prosperity – creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper.
- 10.2 These in turn support the seven well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This proposal contributes to the Well-being Goals and is consistent with the five ways of working, as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act.
- 10.3 In securing enhancements to the Council's home to school transport funding, the Council is able to continue to deliver and manage its statutory and discretionary transport obligations in an integrated and efficient manner, in a way that makes the best and most sustainable use of our resources.

- 10.4 Long-term resourcing of home to school passenger transports contracts in relation to this specialised service provision allows for more effective and predictable resource / financial commitments going forward. The uplifted funding would help to prevent a loss of transport provision, thus contributing to the well-being of our communities.
- 10.5 Collaboration with transport operators enables a more effective, efficient and inclusive service which delivers greater benefits to the community, increasing their resilience and providing feelings of security, safe in the knowledge that the Council will provide a consistent home to school transport service. Children will continue to benefit from reliable access to community schools and other education establishments. Communities will become more cohesive and regenerated, as new homes are built and jobs created, fueling network growth and use.
- 10.6 Home to school transport services are a vital lifeline to thousands of students across the County Borough, ensuring they can safely attend schools, colleges and special education needs centers. A reliable transport service to and from educational settings helps our children achieve their aspirations, improving their life chances, and preventing and removing themselves and their families from poverty. Continued service delivery makes services more attractive to use, reducing the need for private transport at peak times, contributing to better air quality and improving the local environment.
- 10.7 Collaboration and engagement with operators, understanding each other's needs and challenges, involves working together towards a shared goal. This allows operators to deliver, and the Council to manage, a sustainable and effective home to school passenger transport services which will increase user satisfaction and be of long-term benefit to all.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The ITU continues to successfully manage its schools transport service having delivered an excellent return to school for September 2022.
- 11.2 The supply chain is facing serious challenges which are anticipated to continue into the next financial year, impacting on contract costs and availability of resources.
- 11.3 Early engagement between the Council's Education Department and the ITU is enabling the evolving transport demands associated with the Council's 21st Century Schools programme to be planned for and accommodated.

This page is intentionally left blank